

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 41

But I freeze.

Shit.

What am I doing?

This plan is fucking insane.

How the hell do I seduce a man who turns me into a mess just by looking at me? I can't even touch him without risking fainting or collapsing like some lovesick fool.

I don't even get a second to rethink it.

"Kali," his voice rumbles through the door like a command I feel in my bones.

"I know you're out there. Come in. I can smell you... you know that, right?"

"Shit," I mutter under my breath.

I open the door slowly and step inside. My feet feel heavier than usual, my fingers twitch nervously. The office is massive – all leather, glass, and dark wood. Powerful. Just like him.

And there he is, standing by the window, bathed in the golden light of late afternoon, already staring at me like he expected this.

I tuck a strand of hair behind my ear and mutter, "Hi."

Jack turns fully, his hands slipping into his pockets as he studies me with amused eyes.

"I didn't expect you," he says with a tilt of his head. "Not that I'm complaining. You're free to come in anytime." His words curl around me like smoke, warm and dangerous. I smile, shyly at first, then meet his eyes. We stare at each other for a beat too long before he clears his throat.

"So," he says, voice deeper now. "To what do I owe the honor?"

I bite the inside of my cheek. Just say it, Kali.

"Don't do any introduction ceremony for Celestia," I blurt out, all in one breath.

His brows rise. "Repeat that?"

I grit my teeth, eyes narrowing slightly. "I said, don't do an introduction ceremony for Celestia."

He crosses his arms slowly, the smirk dancing back to his lips. "Why not?"

His tone is teasing but with an edge. He's testing me. Pushing.

"Can't you see?" he continues, stepping closer. "My pack is asking me

– begging me – to introduce her. They want a Luna. And as their Alpha, I don't see why I should deny them."

"Because I say so!" I yell, louder than I mean to.

His smirk turns wicked. "Kali," he says, voice low and taunting, "have you forgotten? You're the one who said we should take things slow. We should date-remember that?"

I flinch, and his words keep coming.

"Well, my pack isn't patient like you. They don't want slow. They want a Luna now. Unless..." His eyes lock onto mine. "You've got another way to convince me.

I straighten. "Introduce me first." He blinks, surprised. "You?"

"Yes," I say, standing taller now. "I want to be the woman you introduce before tady Celestia."

He laughs softly – not mocking, but something more dangerous. "And why would I do that, Kali? You haven't even accepted the bond between us." He leans in. "Will you accept me? You have to convince me, Kali."

My mouth opens, then closes. I want to scream yes – but fear tightens around my throat.

So I do the only thing I'm apparently good at lately.

I run.

I burst out of the room like fire's licking at my heels. I don't look back, just keep moving, furious at myself.

"Coward. Idiot. Weak." My wolf snarls at me.

"You pathetic little thing," she snaps. "Is this who you are? You run when he challenges you? Are you going to let that bitch take our place?"

I stop halfway down the hall, chest heaving.

"Let me show you how it's done."

And just like that, she takes over.

I spin around and storm back, grip the door, and slam it open with enough force to rattle the hinges.

Jack is standing now behind his desk, about to sit.

Too slow. I march toward him like a force of nature and shove him hard into his chair. He falls into it, wide-eyed and caught off guard.

Now it's my turn to smirk.

Seduction burns in my veins, fueled by fury and something far more dangerous – power.

I lean forward slowly, bracing my hands on the arms of his chair, trapping him there.

“Still want to know how I plan to convince you?” | purr, voice low and husky.

He doesn't say a word – just stares, eyes locked on mine, his chest rising a little quicker with each breath.

“Kali.. what are you-

I don't let him finish.

My hand moves swiftly, reaching for his crotch before he can react. His breath catches as I tug down the zipper, a seductive grin tugging at the corner of my lips, watching his eyes widen in stunned disbelief. The air around us crackles with anticipation as I run my splayed fingers down his growing erection.

His nostrils flare as he watches me, but he makes no move to stop me or even recoil; that alone gives me so much power.

Without breaking our eye contact, my hand slips into his pants, taking hold of him. He inhales sharply, his steely gaze darkening into pools of obsidian.

My hand seems feeble in comparison to the veiny monster that is staring back angrily at me. I should be afraid, but instead I feel heat pulling at my core, soaking my panties.

“Kali..” he growls in warning, his chest rumbling as he grips the armrest of his chair so tight it might splinter beneath his hold, but I'm not one to back down from a challenge, especially when it is him in question.

“Yes..Alpha,” I drawl, my voice low and seductive, almost feathery, like a stark contrast to when I'd mock his title, his authority, as I slowly go down on my knees in front of him, his large mahogany desk behind me shrouding my frame.

His eyes follow my movement almost instinctively, his jaw tight from how hard he was clenching it. Slowly, without breaking eye contact, I begin to massage his cock, his breath hitching with every movement.

I lean in, pressing a slow open-mouthed kiss to the bulbous tip, looking up at him from underneath my lashes as I seal my lips around his tip, sucking softly.

“Fuck,” he growls, his hand finding its way to my hair almost instantly and gripping at the roots firmly but not enough to hurt me.

I begin to bob my head up and down his shaft slowly, and he loses his cool as he hisses, throwing his head and hand against the headrest.

I don't slow down; instead, I pick up the pace, his veiny shaft sliding down the length of my mouth as my hands are wrapped around the base and hitting the back of my throat with every bob as he throbs beneath me, bouncing on my face.

Jack growls endlessly as I alternate between sucking and licking the parts of him that I can't fit in my mouth, my sex clenching with need.

Saliva drips down the base of his cock as I get more daring and swallow him deeper and deeper. His grip on my hair stills as he rams into the back of my throat with a jerk, my eyes watering immediately from the intensity of his thrust, but I'm greedy for his cock; I want more even as I choke and gag on the veiny appendage.

The feeling of my gagging on his cock makes him even harder, and he guides my head as I suck him faster, the lewd sound of saliva on skin squelching so loudly the guards in front would have heard if they listened closely.

My eyes flutter shut on reflex as I pick up my pace; the intensity of it has him shaking, his free hand gripping the armrest, the wood splintering under his nails as he tries to hold back something deep within him that is clawing to burst through him.

I don't care that my throat is raw and my neck is tiring, but my need to pleasure my mate clouds all reasoning as my eyes flutter open, watching him take large inhales and exhales.

He can smell my arousal, the tangy scent pungent, driving him mad as I feel slick drip down the side of my thighs, staining the carpet beneath me.

I can imagine his cock ramming into my pussy instead of my throat; the imagery fuels my hunger as I suck harder, and not even the sound of his office door opening deters me from my quest.

"Alpha, I'm sorry for barging in like this, but it's important," came a voice I despise more than most – Beta Khaos.

Fuck.

Jack's eyes snap to his Beta, obsidian and blazing with fury at the interruption. He's pissed – rightfully so. But me? I'm not. I take pleasure in knowing Khaos can smell the thick scent of our arousal lingering in the air. I'm pleasuring the Alpha – that makes me Jack's equal and Khaos's superior. Let's see if he dares disrespect me again after this.

In fact, the Moon Goddess herself could walk through those doors, and I wouldn't stop pleasuring my mate to pay my respects to my maker because, as far as I'm concerned right now, Jack is the centre of my universe.

"Spit it out," Jack grits, voice tight, breath hitching when I pull back and suck on the sensitive tip with my mouth.

“Alpha, I can’t keep the pack calm any longer,” Khaos blurts. “Some are getting violent, demanding an official introduction ceremony for Lady Celestia. If this continues, I fear it could stir serious unrest.” he rushes out, and Jack growls, his response coming out without hesitation.

“There will be a ceremony tonight, but it’ll be for my mate...” His eyes are flashing between silver and obsidian; I can tell he is close, but he is fighting to hold himself back. I suck harder, silently urging him to make the only right decision.

“She will be introduced as mine before anyone else, and I don’t care if Lady Celestia is the alpha king’s daughter.”

His voice is raw, powerful. Final.

Khaos stammers a quick, shaken, “Yes, Alpha,” then turns and rushes out, slamming the door behind him.

He was angry.

Good.

“Fuck Kali,” he rumbles, his breath trembling.

Not a second later, Jack grips my hair tightly, his fingers digging into my scalp as he all but roars to the roof, the armrest snapping off and clattering to the floor as something hot shoots down my throat unexpectedly, causing me to choke and rear back as he keeps spurting jets of hot cum all over my face.

I’m breathing hard as I look up at him, head thrown back as he grips his enraged cock, groaning as he spurts endlessly, his cum dribbling down the side of my lips and the image imprinting in my memory.

I want more.

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Alpha Jack

I breathe heavily as I gradually descend from the high she just pulled me into. My eyes flutter open, the haze slowly lifting, and the first thing I see is her.

She’s still on her knees before me, my release glistening on her lips-lips she’s now biting with deliberate, sultry intent. Her gaze is fixed on mine, dark and heavy-lidded, filled with mischief and molten heat.

Goddess, she looks divine like this—covered in my cum, kneeling before me like the perfect submissive she-wolf. The sight stirs something feral in me, and I feel my cock already hardening again.

“Take her. Now.”

My wolf snarls in my mind, restless, demanding. I grit my teeth to resist the urge, every muscle in my body taut with restraint.

“Not yet.”

I watch her rise to her feet with slow, feline grace, dragging her tongue across the corner of her lips to catch the last taste of me. Then she turns, casually trying to walk away—as if she hadn’t just undone me.

My body snaps into motion before my mind catches up.

“Where do you think you’re going?” I growl standing swiftly to catch her wrist and pull her back until she crashes into my chest.

She smirks, that infuriating, seductive smirk that always tests my control. “Well,” she purrs, half-turning away, “I thought I was done here.”

I growl again-deeper, hungrier. Wrapping my arms around her waist, I lift her effortlessly and set her down on my desk.

She gasps, startled, her eyes wide as they lock with mine—flashing with something between alarm and anticipation. She knows exactly what she’s doing. And so do I.

I step between her thighs, forcing them apart with my hips before she has a chance to resist. Our breaths mingle in heated sync that has my blood racing with anticipation, and brace my hands on either side of her on the desk, leaning in close.

So close, I can see the tiny flutter of her lashes, the faint freckles across her cheeks, every pore, every contour—her button nose and plump, upturned lips that beckon me like a siren’s song.

She swallows hard, her earlier confidence slipping, melting into something far more vulnerable. I see it in the way her eyes dart from mine, in the tremble of her breath.

Before I can give in to the overwhelming temptation of ravishing those lips, I straighten up and step back, running my tongue across my teeth as I drink her in. The tension between us crackles like lightning in a storm.

“Now,” I start in a low husky tone, my heavy gaze never straying from hers, “spread your legs; I’d like to return the favour, mate.”

My wolf purrs at the thought of tasting her, of watching her unravel beneath me. It would be a damn honor to watch her writhe, to take her to the very edge of euphoria and back.

Her cheeks flush with color, and I almost laugh at the sudden shyness blooming across her face—so innocent, so unexpected, after everything she just did.

I hadn't expected her to get on her knees and take me in her mouth like her life depended on it. But I wasn't complaining. That's exactly what I'd wanted—to push her, to provoke her with jealousy, to show her what others saw in me. I wanted to remind her that the pack begged me for a Luna—but she came to stake her claim.

She came to claim me and now it's my turn.

"Don't be shy now," I murmur, voice low and rumbling. "It's not the first time I will be eating you..."

Her blush deepens, rising all the way to her ears.

"W—we need to take things slow... remember..." she stammers, trailing off as her eyes flicker everywhere else but mine.

"This is me taking it slow," I growl, running a hand up the smooth skin of her thigh. "If I weren't, you'd already be shaking beneath me."

"Jack..." she breathes, squirming beneath my touch. Her lips part as if to protest, but no sound escapes.

"I want to hear you beg," I say, my voice thick with sinful promise. "Beg me to touch you. To make you come. Say it loud enough for the entire pack to hear—so they know who my true Luna is. So they know it's you, Kali... not Lady Celestia."

I lean in, pressing my mouth to her ear, my breath hot against her skin.

She turns her head, her lips brushing mine as she trembles and whispers, "Touch me..."

That's all the permission I need.

I crash my lips to hers in a fierce kiss that steals her breath—and my sanity—with it.

She moans into my mouth, her hands finding their way into my hair, tugging hard at the roots. My wandering hands trail down her sides, lingering at her thighs. My fingers find the warm, damp heat between her legs. I hook my thumb around her panties and push the fabric aside. My thumb finds her slick nub, and I gently flick my thumb over her clit.

Her whole body shudders in response, her moans slipping from her lips like gasoline on the fire of my desire. I break the kiss just enough to watch her expression twist in pleasure, savouring every sound that escapes her that seems to fan the haze of my lust.

"You're so wet for me, Kali," I murmur against her mouth, our breaths mingling—hot, fast, and hungry. I crush my mouth against hers again, desperate, like I've been deprived of her for centuries.

My control is slipping. The beast inside me no longer wants to be contained.

With a sharp tug, I tear her panties clean off, the fabric ripping beneath my grip. A low growl rumbles from my chest. She gasps, her eyes flying open as I push her flat onto the desk, gripping her thighs and spreading her wide. Papers scatter, files tumble to the floor, forgotten. I don't give a damn. All I see is her-laid out before me like a feast meant only for me.

My focus narrows to the heat of her body, the way her chest heaves, and the way she looks up at me like I'm the only thing that matters.

lower my mouth to her centre, tasting her in a hot, hungry slurp.

She cries out, her voice sharp and breathless— sound that lights something wild inside me. I flick my tongue over her clit, then dip into her entrance, alternating between teasing and devouring her, savouring every taste like it's the last time until she's squirming, gasping, crying out beneath me. Her thighs quake, but I hold them open, fingers digging into her soft flesh to keep her from closing them.

"Oh, Jack!" she sobs, her hands pulling at my hair as her climax nears.

I know the whole pack can probably hear her. Let them know exactly who my Luna is.

"Come for me, baby," I growl against her core, the vibration of my voice pushing her over the edge.

She screams, her body convulsing violently as her orgasm crashes through her. Her release gushes over my mouth and chin, and I groan, lapping it up like a man possessed-intoxicated by her taste.

Then-

Bang.

The door slams open.

Even through Kali's panting and soft moans, I hear it clearly. A sharp gasp follows—and I don't need to turn to know who it is.

Lady Celestia.

Her scent gives her away instantly-roses and bitterness-hits me like a wall. My lips curl into a slow, unapologetic grin against Kali's trembling thigh.

Good.

Let her see exactly who I want. Let her understand-this is my mate, not her. Let her choke on the truth.

I lift my head slowly, my mouth still wet with the evidence of my mate's pleasure. My gaze meets Kali's-her breath still shallow, lashes fluttering as she fights to stay conscious, a soft moan of satisfaction slipping from her lips.

She's breathtaking.

Then I turn to the intruder still frozen in the doorway. Celestia's eyes are wide with shock, her mouth opening and closing, speechless. She looks pale, as if reality has just struck her like a blade.

"How dare you?" she finally breathes with fury and disbelief. "How dare you humiliate me like this? Disrespect me?" She stares at me as if I've torn her title from her chest with my bare hands. "Jack... your entire pack heard her screaming-because of you! I will never forgive you for this humiliation. I swear it with my life."

I rise slowly to my full height, not bothering to hide my bare, glistening mouth or the raw satisfaction in my eyes. "I don't care," I say, my voice cold as ice. "You're interrupting."

Her eyes widen further, her lips parting-but I cut her off before she can speak..

"Leave," I growl, each word edged with alpha authority. "Now. You're not welcome here-and you sure as hell aren't wanted."

She flinches, as if struck. Then, without another word, she turns on her heel and storms out, the door slamming behind her like a clap of thunder.

I feel no guilt.

She knew the truth from the beginning yet chose to ignore it. I only kept her close to provoke Kali—to make her confront the bond between us. I never expected Kali to give in so soon... but now that she has, Celestia is no longer of any use to me.

The silence that follows is thick, heavy with tension and satisfaction.

I glance down at Kali-already drifting off, her body slack and serene, as if lost in a dream. She looks peaceful and radiant.

She's mine.

My wolf purrs with contentment, more at ease than he's been in years.

And yet... something gnaws at me.

Her rejection still lingers in the air but the strangest thing —the most shocking thing-is that it doesn't hurt the way I thought it would. Her rejection should have broken me. It should have crushed my soul and sent my wolf spiraling into madness.

But it didn't.

Instead, I feel... numb. Hollow, yet still standing. The pain is there, yes, but muted-like a wound that's been bleeding too long to sting anymore.

Still, I can feel the toll it's taking.

I'm growing weaker.

Not in body, but in spirit. My strength is dimming, fading beneath the weight of her unspoken refusal. It's not sustainable. I can't hold out forever, not with the bond gnawing at both of us.

All that remains is for her to open her eyes—to truly see me, to accept what we are. Because if she doesn't... I'm not sure how much longer I can fight this war alone.

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The little girl is back again.

This time, she's curled beneath a massive wooden bedframe, her knees hugged tightly to her chest, just as her mother told her to. Her wide eyes brim with fear, darting toward every shadow. But how long has she been there?

The room is cloaked in darkness now—no sliver of light from the doorway, no warmth from a lantern or candle. Just silence. The kind that makes your chest tighten.

Her small hands press against her belly as it growls with hunger. She shivers and whispers,

“Mum?” But there's no reply.

She waits a little longer. Her stomach growls louder this time, and she flinches at the sound. Hunger begins to outweigh fear.

Slowly, she crawls out from beneath the bed, dust clinging to her clothes. Her bare feet pat softly across the cold floor as she pushes open the door and tiptoes into a hallway that takes my breath away.

It's grand-overwhelming, even. Marble stretches from floor to ceiling, polished to such a gleam it reflects her tiny form as she walks. Thick red banners bearing a crest hang from the high ceiling, swaying gently with a breeze she cannot feel. Gold lines the corners, catching the faintest hint of light. It looks like a place meant for royalty... but it feels abandoned. Lonely.

She wraps her arms around her rumbling stomach. “Mum..” she murmurs again, eyes flicking around lost. “Tom?” she adds, as if calling out to a friend.

No response.

Then – yelling.

Her head snaps toward the large, ornate doors at the far end of the hall. One of them is slightly ajar. Curiosity overtakes fear. She pads toward it, her tiny fingers pressing against the heavy wood as she peeks inside.

It's a massive chamber thick with tension. Dozens of people-warriors, elders, nobles-stand in a semi-circle around three imposing thrones at the far end.

The center throne towers above the rest, almost menacing in size.

Someone sits upon it, but his face is hidden in shadow, blurred-like her mind refuses to remember him.

A voice echoes through the hall, deep and commanding. It sends a chill down her spine.

"Your Highness, you must make the decision now. For the good of the pack."

Then, another voice-strong, yet aching. It cracks something inside me.

"How can you all expect me to sacrifice... my only daughter?" A pause. "

I am her father."

The first voice cuts back in, cold and merciless. "Being an Alpha comes before your duty as a father. You must do whatever it takes."

She grips the edge of the door, eyes wide, lips trembling. Then, barely above a whisper: "Dad.."

Everything blurs.

I jolt awake with a gasp.

My eyes flutter open slowly, blinking against the soft light streaming through the curtains. The ceiling greets me-familiar, comforting.

I'm home.Well... this home. Jack's home.

I sit up slowly, the comforter slipping down to my waist. A soft sigh escapes my lips as I press my fingers to my temple. My head feels heavy, burdened with a thousand unanswered questions. That dream.... no, not just a dream. A memory. The third one now. The little girl-me.

And her last word... Dad.

That was my father... wasn't it? The second dream was about my mother. The first, I'm almost certain, was me in the witch's hut.

Completing the mating bond with Jack will unlock the rest-I know it.

Every missing piece will fall into place once its done.

"Fuck," I groan, tugging at the roots of my hair as frustration blooms inside me. I want the truth, I need it-but the idea of completing the bond with Jack just to unlock my past makes me feel like I'm using him i somehow.

Except... I don't regret a single moment with him. In fact, I've cherished every second. It's like killing two birds with one stone-reclaiming my memories and stopping Celestia from being introduced before me.

I swing my legs off the bed, about to stand when something catches my eye.

A note. –

It's folded neatly on my nightstand. I frown, reaching for it and unfolding the paper.

"I wish I could keep watching you sleep, beautiful, but unfortunately I have pack-business to deal with. Jasmine will be there soon to help you prepare for tonight's celebration."

My lips twitch.

"Aww, he called us beautiful," my wolf coos dreamily.

"Calm down," I mutter, rolling my eyes. "That's the bare minimum.

Have some dignity."

My wolf snarls in protest. "Speaking of dignity-guess who walked in on us with Jack? Lady Celestia. She saw us."

That gives me pause. I don't remember anything after losing consciousness in Jack's arms. I must've blacked out from the pleasure.

"Good," I say aloud. "Maybe now she'll finally give up and return to whatever gold-plated rock she crawled out from."

But my wolf's tone turns wary. "Kali.. the look in her eyes before she walked out. I don't think she's done. I've got a bad feeling."

I open my mouth to respond, but a knock on the door makes me jump, heart leaping into my throat. I whirl around, startled.

"Coming!" I call out, already hurrying to the front door.

The second I pull it open, I'm greeted by the sight of Jasmine nearly toppling over under a ridiculous number of bags—over her shoulders, arms, and even clutched between her teeth.

"Oh my goddess-Jas!" I exclaim, grabbing some of the bags from her arms before she faceplants.

She lets out a dramatic huff, spitting out the handle she'd held with her teeth. "Finally! I thought I'd die right here on your doorstep and you'd just step over my corpse."

I laugh, taking more of the bags and leading her inside. "What the hell is all this? You moving in?"

“They’re your clothes, dummy,” Jasmine grunts, tossing a bag onto the bed. “Jack asked me to get you a whole new wardrobe-and a killer dress for tonight’s introduction ceremony. Apparently, your current wardrobe consists of one shirt and a pair of attitude.”

She smirks and pulls out a dress from one of the bags. I pause, fingers brushing the soft fabric of a deep sapphire-blue gown-elegant and flowing.

“You. picked out all these?”

“Yeah, well, I wasn’t sure about your style, so I grabbed a bunch of options. Don’t complain-I had to argue with a snobby designer who wanted to charge triple because ‘a Luna deserves premium silk.’” She mimics air quotes, rolling her eyes.

A lump rises in my throat. Seeing this-someone putting in the effort, caring enough to do this for me—it hits harder than I expected.

“Thanks,” I murmur, voice soft as we start sorting the dresses, sleepwear, and undergarments into the once-empty drawers. My cheeks burn a little at some of the more... intimate pieces.

“The whole pack is going nuts,” Jasmine says after a beat, glancing at me with a mischievous grin. “Apparently, the Alpha King’s daughter stormed out of the territory with all her guards. Everyone’s whispering that it’s your fault. What the hell did you do to make her run before a formal introduction?”

I shrug, trying to look innocent. “It’s a secret.”

Her jaw drops. “Oh, my goddess.” She grabs a pillow and smacks me lightly. “You savage.”

I wink and duck her next swing.

She drops the pillow, leaning her hip against the drawer. “So... does this mean you’re accepting my brother.”

I blink, surprised. “How the hell did you know I rejected him in the first place?”

Jasmine smirks and points to my neck. “Uh, no mark?”

I open my mouth to argue-then freeze. “But... you don’t have a mark either.” I fire back.

Jasmine’s smile falters. Her cheeks flush a deep red, and she quickly looks away. I curse under my breath, immediately wishing I hadn’t said anything.

“I didn’t mean—”

“It’s fine,” she cuts in, forcing a small smile. “Mine’s... complicated.”

I bite my lip, holding back the words I want to say. I saw the asshole beta who thought hitting a woman was strength. She doesn’t deserve that. No one does. Her pain is still raw, and I can see it in her eyes. I look away, giving her the dignity of not dragging it out.

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She clears her throat and says softly, “But my brother isn’t like that.

He’s not the big bad Alpha he pretends to be, Kali. Jack’s got a good heart.”

I sit down on the edge of the bed. “I’m still thinking about it. About him.

I just want to make sure he’s not playing some long game, you know?”

She gives me a faint smile. “Also....If it’s the pack you’re worried about, don’t be. They don’t actually, like Lady Celestia. It’s her title they’re obsessed with. She’s the Alpha King’s daughter. Power. Prestige.

Everyone wants a piece of that.”

She laughs bitterly. “Honestly, for all we know, you could be the Alpha King’s daughter and they’d be lining up to kiss your ass.”

I burst out laughing, the thought too ridiculous-too absurd.”Oh

‘Please! Imagine me, a daughter of an Alpha king. I’d trip walking into a royal hall and flash the whole kingdom.”

Jasmine laughs so hard she snorts. “And I’d be there filming it.”

We both dissolve into laughter-the kind that makes your stomach ache and your eyes water. When it finally fades, Jasmine wipes a tear from her cheek.

“It’s been a long time since I laughed like this,” she says softly, her smile dimming just a little.

I reach out and gently squeeze her hand. “Same here.”

Her expression shifts, becoming more serious as she straightens up.” Alright, enough of the mushy stuff. Let’s try on the dresses. We’re running out of time-the party’s tonight.”

I start flipping through the dresses until my fingers stop on the deep blue one I saw earlier. I pull it out, letting the fabric drape elegantly over my arm.

“Oooh,” Jasmine coos. “If only you had a blue necklace to go with that, you’d look stunning.”

Blue necklace.

My fingers twitch at the memory.

“I think...”I whisper, dropping the dress on the bed, I might have something.”

Jasmine's eyes flash-the unmistakable sign she's mindlinking. "Okay, I'll see you at the party! I've gotta run," she says quickly before bolting for the door.

"Jas-wait!" I call after her, but she's already gone.

I sigh, staring at the door with a tight feeling in my chest. I don't need anyone to tell me who called her.

Her mate-Beta Khaos.

God, I hope she'll be okay.

Shaking off the unease, I hurry to my wardrobe. I search through the drawers, shuffling through the clothes and bags until I see it-right at the bottom. My bag of gold tucked into the corner like it was placed there with care.

Jack.

He must've kept it safe for me, without ever asking how I came to possess that much money.

I open the bag, my hands trembling as I pull out a velvet pouch and loosen the strings. Inside lies the delicate blue necklace. It catches the light, the sapphire at its center shimmering like the ocean.

I hesitate. The last time I wore this-it burned me. Scorched my skin like I wasn't worthy.

But now.

I slowly lift it, cradling it like something precious. My heart races as I press the cool metal against my skin.

No pain. No burning

Just warmth.

Relief blooms in my chest and I fasten the necklace around my neck, then step toward the mirror. I stare at my reflection.

The sapphire glows softly at my throat, my dark curls cascading over my shoulders.

| look... different.

I look like someone who belongs.

Not just here.

But everywhere.

"Almost like royalty," | whisper, lightly touching the pendant, a small smile tugging at my lips.

And suddenly... I wonder if Jasmine's joke wasn't a joke at all.

The sky outside my window is already cloaked in inky darkness, scattered with the soft glow of stars. The air buzzes with anticipation-tonight is the introduction party, and somehow, I'm the center of it.

I smooth my palms down the sides of my dress again, nerves pricking at my skin. The deep blue fabric hugs my figure in all the right places, flowing like liquid silk around my legs. It pairs perfectly with the sapphire necklace resting just above my collarbone, catching the light with every breath I take.

It feels like a part of me now, as if it was always meant to be there.

I glance at my reflection one last time, hardly recognizing the woman staring back. Jasmine didn't return to help, which worries me more than I'd like to admit-but thankfully, she left a box of makeup. I managed to apply enough to enhance my features, and for once, I feel ... beautiful.

A loud horn blares outside, making me jump. My heart stutters as I rush to the window and peek out.

Jack.

He's standing beside a sleek black carriage, dressed in a navy-blue suit that hugs his broad shoulders and fits him like sin. His dark hair is slicked back neatly, his jaw sharp and clean. Two guards flank the carriage, but all I can focus on is him-and the ridiculously romantic bouquet of roses in his hand.

He's looking straight at my window.

I bolt out of the room before my thoughts can catch up with me and fling open the front door-just as he reaches it. He drops to one knee without hesitation, eyes sparkling.

"Flowers," he says, his voice rich and low, to complement your beauty."

I arch a brow, trying to act unimpressed. "Really? This from the big, bad Alpha who wants a submissive mate? You kneel now?"

He grins, completely unfazed. What can I say? You bring out the worst ...and the best in me."

Inside, I'm screaming. But I play it cool.

"Thanks. You don't look bad yourself."

Jack rises and offers his arm. "I tried to match your beauty. I failed - but I tried."

"I never knew you had a romantic bone in you," I murmur as he leads me to the carriage.

"Me neither," he chuckles, opening the door for me with an exaggerated chivalry "But here we are."

Inside the carriage, it's quiet but not uncomfortable. Jack reaches for my hand, threading his fingers through mine. I glance at him, and for the first time, he looks... nervous?

"We could've walked," I tease, resting my head gently against his shoulder.

"In a dress like that?" he scoffs softly. "You're supposed to be treated like a queen."

I roll my eyes, but a small smile tugs at my lips. The moment feels easy

—like we're just two normal mates, no games, no politics.

When the carriage comes to a stop, Jack helps me down. My heels sink slightly into the grass as I take in the scene before me: outdoor celebration lit by lanterns strung between trees. Music plays softly, laughter ripples through the air, all beneath the glow of the moon.

But the second Jack leads me forward, the laughter dies. The music fades. Heads turn. Whispers begin to rise like smoke in the night.

And suddenly, I feel like I'm wearing nothing at all.

I tighten my grip on Jack's arm and he responds with a reassuring squeeze.

"She looks so beautiful... almost like a princess," someone whispers.

"No, no... she looks more like a queen."

"Look at that necklace. Is it real? It's sparkling like it's alive."

"Are we sure she's not royalty?"

My steps falter, but I force myself to keep my chin high, even as my thoughts spiral. I hate this—being at the centre of attention. But what can I say? I asked for this.

Jack stops at the centre, straightens his posture, and lets go of my hand just long enough to raise his voice—commanding, clear, and unapologetically alpha.

"Tonight," Jack announces, "I'm not just introducing any woman. I'm introducing the one chosen for me by the Moon Goddess herself—my mate. My dearest. My soon-to-be Luna."

Gasps ripple through the crowd like a wave disturbing still water.

There's a pause—just a heartbeat—of stunned silence.

Then—

"Soon-to-be?" a voice jeers from somewhere deep in the crowd. Male.

Rough. Loud enough for all to hear. "If she's your mate, Alpha, this shouldn't be some weak introduction party—it should be a full ceremony! And unless my eyes deceive me, she doesn't even

bear your mark. When does she start acting like a Luna? When does she start bearing your pups?"Did he just-?

My cheeks flame in humiliation. Beside me, Jack's body stiffens. For a second, I think he's going to explode. But instead, he slowly turns his head, scanning the crowd with a glare sharp enough to slice through bone.

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 45

"Not that it's any of your business," he begins, each word sharper than the last, "or that I owe you an explanation. But I'll say this once, for all of you-what happens between me and my mate is private. You want to know why this isn't a ceremony?"

He pauses, his tone now biting. "Because all of you demanded I introduce another woman to you-Lady Celestia-even though you knew I had already found my true mate."

Uneasy murmurs rise again-this time, it's heavy with guilt.

Jack turns to me and takes both of my hands in his, gently this time.

My heart flutters as his thumb brushes over my knuckles.

"This is only an introduction," he continues, looking back at the crowd." To make it crystal clear. Lady Celestia or anyone else will never be Luna of this pack. The woman standing beside me will assume her role when she is ready. And when that time comes, she will stand by my side not just as my mate, but as your rightful Luna."

I blink rapidly, caught off guard. His words take me by surprise. He's been kind and sweet all evening-romantic even-not the arrogant Alpha I was used to.

And I feel myself slowly, helplessly, beginning to fall.

I offer him a small smile-just for him. This moment feels perfect.

Almost like a dream.

Jack's lips curve into a confident smile. "So tonight," he announces, "we celebrate. We drink. We dance. And when the full moon rises, we run in our wolf forms. My mate and I will lead tonight's run, as it should be."

Cheers erupt from the crowd, loud and wild.

But me?My body turns to ice.

The moment his words register, my hand slips from his without meaning to. I choke on a breath I hadn't even realized I was holding.

Run? In wolf form? In front of the entire pack?

No fucking way.

Jack notices instantly. “Kali?” he asks, his brow furrowing. “Are you alright?”

I nod a little too quickly. “Yeah.”

“You’re just nervous,” he says, smiling gently as he brushes a strand of hair behind my ear. “Once the moonlight touches your fur, you’ll feel better. You’ll see.”

“Do I... do I really have to run? I’m not... I mean, I’m not Luna yet-”

“You’re my mate,” he cuts in, pride swelling in his voice. “That’s more than enough. And yes, you have to be there. They need to see you-know you’re capable. Show them you can lead.”

I try to breathe. Try to pretend I’m calm.

But inside?

I’m spiraling.

My wolf isn’t like a normal she-wolf. If they see her... they’ll call me a freak-or worse, a threat.

I open my mouth, ready to say something-maybe lie, say I’m wolf-less, let them pity me instead of fear me-but before I can speak, a warrior appears beside Jack, murmuring something about the preparations for the run.

“I’ll be right back,” Jack says, winking as he gives my hand a gentle squeeze before heading toward the treeline.

As soon as he’s gone, I exhale sharply, my shoulders sagging. Fuck, what do! do?!

“Luna?” a familiar voice breaks through my panic.

I look up to see Fury stepping beside me, concern in his eyes.

I force a smile. “Yeah... I’m fine. Just... a lot of eyes on me tonight.”

He nods slowly.

“Did you... um... did you deliver those letters for me?” I ask quickly, hoping to change the subject before he pushes further.

“I did,” he replies. “Til let you know as soon as I hear anything.”

| I nod, grateful. “Thank you.”

He’s about to speak again when a hush suddenly falls over the crowd

Whispers roll through the air like fog.

“..Is that Lady Celestia?”

“She’s back?”

“.. Why would she come now?”

“Maybe for revenge.”

The crowd begins to part, slowly, as if something dangerous is walking through it.

Then I see her.

Lady Celestia.

She’s walking tall, lips curled into a knowing smirk, flanked by several royal guards. But it’s not her presence that makes my skin crawl.

It’s the man beside her—an older man, hunched slightly, walking with a dark wooden cane. His eyes... gods, his eyes-black and soulless-Lock onto mine, and.I feel a chill race down my spine like ice water.

Something about him feels... wrong.

Just then, beside me, I hear a low, stunned voice.

“Mate.”

I turn sharply.

Fury.

He’s staring straight at Lady Celestia, his expression frozen, unreadable. The word lingers in the air like a curse.

People Gasps. Eyes widen. Murmurs rise.

Everyone begins to glance between Fury and Lady Celestia.

Even she seems caught off-guard for a heartbeat-but then a wicked smile curves on her lips.

“Well,” she says, her voice smooth and dangerous. “Isn’t this... unexpected.”

Fury? Fury is Lady Celestia’s mate?

Fuck.

Suddenly, everything falls into place—No wonder they both acted so strangely around me... stiff, awkward, irritated. The Moon Goddess really has one hell of a sense of humor.

Whispers ripple through the pack like wildfire.

“They’re mates?”

“Lady Celestia... mated to a low-ranked pack warrior?”

“No, no. Fury’s not just any warrior—he’s the strongest one in the entire pack.”

“Strong or not, he’s still a nobody, not worthy of an Alpha King’s daughter.”

“I thought she’d end up with someone like Alpha Jack—not some nobody.”

Laughter follows that comment—ugly and loud.

I glance at Lady Celestia, just in time to see her face flush a deep, furious red—not from bashfulness, but from pure embarrassment. The smug, proud smirk slips off her face like melting wax. She looks like she wants to disappear... or murder someone. And unfortunately for Fury, all her burning hatred lands squarely on him, like he’s the reason her world just fell apart.

But even in the sea of judgmental whispers, my skin prickles with something else.

A presence. A stare. Unmoving. Cold. It burns into me.

I shift my gaze and find him—the man with the walking stick and those strange, unsettling eyes. He’s standing silently beside Celestia and the guards, but it’s not me he’s looking at. No—it’s my necklace. His eyes are fixed on it with a hunger that sends a chill slicing down my spine.

Who the hell is he?

Before I can dwell on it, Lady Celestia’s irritating voice pulls me out of my thoughts.

“Well, let’s not waste any more time and get this over with,” she says, as if discussing the weather. “I, Lady Celestia, daughter of the Alpha King, reject—

She pauses, smirking now, turning toward Fury like this is some twisted performance rather than the breaking of a sacred bond.

“what’s your name again?”

Before Fury can answer, I step forward, anger burning through the fear clawing at my chest.

“Why reject the one the Moon Goddess gave you?” I snap, glaring at her. “So you can go after mine? You don’t deserve Fury, but the Goddess still gave him to you as your other half. You should be grateful, not acting like a spoiled brat.”

The entire clearing falls silent. Fury glances at me, clearly shocked.

But Lady Celestia?

Her glare swings toward me, vicious and sharp enough to skin me alive, and I swear the air between us trembles. Her upper lip curls in disgust. "Shut your fucking mouth!" she hisses, practically spitting the words. "Jack is supposed to be mine. And today-today, I will have him.

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She gestures to the man beside her. "That's why I came back. To have you arrested if you disobey. My father, the Alpha King, ordered it."

The man with the walking stick steps forward now with a slimy smile, and something about his presence makes the hairs on the back of my neck rise.

He pulls a scroll from his coat and lifts it. A royal seal gleams in the moonlight. "I am the messenger of the Alpha King," he announces with a smug grin, holding it out like it's sacred. "By royal decree, you are to be arrested immediately."

I barely hear him. My eyes are drawn to his-no, not just his eyes-but his entire gaze. That intense, obsessive stare is still fixed on my necklace, as though he sees something in it that I don't even understand.

Murmurs rise, louder this time.

"Where's Alpha Jack?"

"Why isn't he here? His mate is about to be arrested."

I straighten my back and lift my chin. I refuse to show weakness. I open my mouth to speak, but—

"I will accept your rejection, Lady Celestia," Fury says suddenly, positioning himself between me and Celestia like a living shield. "On one condition," he adds.

She blinks. "What condition?"

"That you leave immediately-without hurting my Luna."

Celestia scoffs. "I'm not negotiating with a nobody," she spits. "Mate or not." Then don't," Fury replies with a cold shrug. "But you know as well as I do-if I don't accept your rejection soon, our bond will only grow stronger. Our connection will deepen. That wouldn't be good for you...

Do you really want to be tied to a nobody forever?"

"Fine," she snaps.

Fury nods. "I don't have a name in particular. I was an orphan... the pack named me. They call me Fury. That will work."

Celestia swallows hard. Her voice trembles just slightly now. “I, Lady Celestia, daughter of the Alpha King, reject you, Fury, as my mate.”

The moment the words leave her mouth, Fury’s body jolts like he’s been shot. He staggers forward, clutching his chest as a low, painful sound escapes him. He drops to one knee, face contorted in agony.

Celestia isn’t any better-she cries out and buckles, her body curling inward under the weight of the bond snapping. She turns toward him, her voice full of rage and desperation.

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Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 45

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He looks up at me, eyes glossy with unshed tears... but also shining with something else: relief.

And then, he exhales.

“I, Fury,” he rasps, “accept your rejection.”

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 46

The pain vanishes from his face almost instantly. He slumps forward, hands braced against the ground, chest heaving.

Across from him, Lady Celestia stumbles back like she’s been gutted.

Her eyes go wide, one hand clawing at her chest as if she's trying to hold herself together-or stop something from slipping out.

For a second —just a second-she looks... broken. All the arrogance and venom she wore like a crown has been stripped away. She no longer looks like royalty. No longer powerful. No longer the predator she always pretended to be.

Just a girl who lost everything.

She lost him.

The crowd is dead silent, but not for long.

Suddenly, the man with the walking stick takes a single step forward, slow and calculating, like a predator that enjoys the chase more than the kill. And for some damn reason, his eyes are still on me—no, not me ... my necklace at my throat.

“Where are you from?” he asks, his voice low but carrying like thunder.

“What pack were you part of before now?”

My eyes narrow. “Why does that matter?” I snap before I can stop myself. “You’re the Alpha King’s errand boy. Stick to being his mutt and stay out of my life.”

A cold chuckle slips from his lips—a dark, joyless sound that crawls under my skin.

“So the rumours are true,” he says softly, his voice thick with promise and poison. “You’re fiery. With a mouth that begs to be tamed. You’ll be fun to break.”¹ I open my mouth to fire back-but Celestia interrupts, suddenly gasping for breath. She coughs harshly, dragging herself upright as if her lungs are failing. When she finally speaks, her voice is rough, and her legs barely support her.

“Take her,” she orders, pointing a trembling finger at me. “Arrest her now.”

Fury shoots up from the ground, stepping in front of me like a goddamn wall. “You promised,” he growls. “You said if I accepted your rejection, you’d leave her alone.”

Celestia’s laughter is sharp and cruel. “And you were stupid enough to believe me? Why would I ever keep a promise to a lowlife like you?”

The man with the walking stick leans down and murmurs something in her ear, too low for anyone else to hear-but I hear it. I hear it.

“We can’t take her to your father. Plans have changed. We return-for now.”

Celestia jerks away from him, her eyes wide with disbelief. “What? No!

I came back for this. I asked my father for royal permission! We must arrest her!” she snaps. “Do your duty!”

A low, guttural growl cuts her off. It rumbles from deep in the man's chest like a beast waking from slumber.

The man-whoever the hell he is-glares at her, and in that moment, he no longer looks like a mere messenger. Something in his eyes changes. Celestia, proud, sharp-tongued, fire-forged Celestia... wilts.

She falls silent-like someone slapped the voice right out of her. Her mouth clamps shut, and she bows her head, standing there stiff and obedient, like a chastised pup.

What the actual hell?

What kind of royal messenger makes the Alpha King's daughter shut up like that?

For fuck's sake, she is the Alpha King's daughter... and she just tucked her tail between her legs like a whipped dog.

Something's wrong here, Deeply wrong.

Suddenly, the air shifts again, thick and electric.

Jack.

I feel him before I see him.

He bursts through the crowd in a blur of heat and rage, eyes blazing as they lock onto mine. "Are you okay?" he demands, grabbing my arms and scanning my face like he's terrified of what he'll find-blood, bruises, anything.

"I'm fine," I whisper, shaking my head. My chest still trembles, but I mean it. Now that he's here. "Fury stepped in."

His eyes flick briefly to Fury-then harden as he turns to face the man with the walking stick.

But his voice is no longer calm. It burns with fury-rage.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" Jack snarls. "You dare step onto my land without permission? You really think I won't snap your other leg and send you crawling back?"

The man doesn't flinch but smiles

"Hello, nephew."

My breath catches.

What?

Nephew?This man... this terrifying figure... is Jack's uncle?

The very uncle Fury warned me about-the worst of them all.

Jack's fists clutched at his sides. His chest rises and falls with controlled fury, his teeth bared like-his wolf is close to the surface. "You are not welcome here," he growls. "Get. Out."

The man doesn't move right away. His gaze slides to me again-but no, not me. The necklace.

That look... it's not curiosity. It's obsession.

"Until we meet again," he murmurs, voice soft but chilling.

He turns and walks off like he owns the world, his guards falling into line behind him. Celestia follows, silent now, like a puppet whose strings are being yanked.

Jack watches until they vanish beyond the crowd, then exhales a breath that sounds like it's been trapped in his chest for years. "The party continues," he announces to the crowd, his voice devoid of emotion. "But the run is canceled. I'm returning to the house-with my mate."

There's no room for argument. Just his command.

I let out a breath I didn't realize I was holding. My legs feel like jelly, but Jack's hand finds mine and gives me something solid to hold onto.

As we begin walking back toward the house, my wolf stirs in my head.

"Remember when I said I didn't like the look in that bitch's eyes?" she growls. "We need to be careful with her."

"No," I whisper inside. "I think it's Jack's uncle we should be more worried about. more afraid of."

And I'm right.

Because whatever just happened here tonight... it wasn't the end.

It was the beginning.

Submission is Not My Style – Chapter 47

We walk back to the house in silence, the cold night air wrapping around us-as we move along the moonlit path. I had asked Jack if we could skip the carriage-I needed the fresh air, something to clear the chaos in my head. He didn't ask questions, just nodded and walked beside me.

By the time we reach the house, my limbs are heavy with exhaustion. I don't wait for him to open the door-I push it open myself, step inside, and head straight to the bedroom.

The moment I enter, I begin kicking off my heels. The dress feels suffocating and I reach behind me, fingers fumbling with the zipper as I start to peel it off.

But halfway through tugging it down my hips, I feel it-that unmistakable sensation of eyes burning into my back. I pause, frown, and glance over my shoulder, only to blink in disbelief.

“What the hell, Jack?” I sputter, yanking the dress back up-even though I know it’s already too late.

“What?” he says innocently, eyes twinkling with mischief.

“Can’t you see I’m undressing?”

He grins-full-blown and devilish. “Exactly, would be a shame to miss the show.”

My jaw drops as my cheeks flood with heat. “Get out, you pervert!”

“This is my room too, sweetheart.”

I gape at him.

“Wait-what do you mean your room?”

Jack shrugs off his jacket, tossing it over a chair, and begins unbuttoning his shirt like this is the most normal thing in the world.”There’s only one bedroom in the entire house, Kali.”

“What?!” I nearly trip on the damn dress. “Didn’t you plan for-children’s rooms or something? You know, with your future mate?”

“I didn’t,” he says smoothly. “I figured I’d enjoy my mate first before we start popping out pups.” His gaze flickers down my body, hot and teasing. “But now that you’ve brought it up, I don’t mind practicing the act of making them.” He winks.

“Jack!” I squeal, grabbing the nearest object—a pillow-and hurling it at him.

He catches it mid-air, laughing like this is the best entertainment he’s had all week.

Mortified, I rush to the drawer Jasmine had filled earlier and yank out a soft cotton top and matching shorts. I dart into the bathroom and slam the door behind me, locking it with a shaky hand. My heart is racing as I quickly change, muttering curses under my breath.

When I finally emerge, I nearly drop dead.

Jack is shirtless, sprawled across the bed like some Greek god drunk on confidence. His muscles flex with every slow breath, golden skin glowing under the dim light. I try not to look. I fail. And the way his arm is tucked behind his head like he’s posing for a magazine doesn’t help.

I just stand there awkwardly, clutching the hem of my shirt.

He pats the empty space beside him. “Come on. I don’t bite... unless you want me to.”

I roll my eyes but stay rooted in place. I know he bites hard.

“This isn’t the time to act shy. We’ve done worse, remember?”

My whole body flushes. Damn him. Damn him I cross the room and climb into bed, making sure there’s a healthy distance between us. I lie stiff as a board, silently freaking out. It’s the first time I’m actually sharing a bed with a man. I don’t even know where to put my hands.

Jack lets out a long sigh beside me.

“Stay far away from my uncle. He’s dangerous.”

The humor in the room vanishes like smoke sucked out by a vent.

glance over. His jaw is clenched so tightly I can see the muscle ticking. It’s like he’s holding back the urge to snap something-or someone-in half.

“Did he... did he do something to you?” I ask softly.

Jack’s eyes grow darker, shadows pooling in them. “He killed my father.” he says, voice flat, like he’s forcing each word past his teeth.” Tried to take the alpha position while my father was sick. Thought he could use his weakness to steal the title. But I was faster. Younger.

Stronger. I’d already gotten my wolf, and I used it. Beat him. Broke his leg. That’s why he limps.”

I stay quiet, heart sinking.

“After that, he ran to the Alpha King for protection,” Jack continues.” And the bastard got it. Since then, we’ve had... clashes.” His fists clench. “One day I’ll end him.”

I don’t know what to say. I remember Fury’s warning-three men to fear. Now I know why Jack’s uncle tops the list.

“I’m not scared of anyone,” I say lightly, hoping to ease the tension.” Though, clearly, I have a gift for getting under people’s skin.”

Jack glances at me, the shadows softening. “You’re a stubborn little wolf.””Damn right,” I say with a playful smirk.

He chuckles, and for a moment, the heaviness in the air lifts but then he turns serious again, eyes shadowed with something deeper.

“I don’t want to lose you too. Like | lost the first..”

His voice trails off, raw and vulnerable.

“I know he had something to do with it. I just... can’t prove it.”

I know who he means. His first mate.

I bite my tongue, holding back more questions. His face is too raw. Tod exposed: And for the first time, I realize-Jack bleeds too.

So I change the subject. "Hey, um... do you have a pack library or something?" I ask, trying to sound casual.

He blinks. "Yeah. Why?"

"Just bored," I shrug. "Need something to read while you're off being Alpha-y."

"You want books?"

I nod, hiding my real motive.

"My private library has everything you need. It's in the main pack building."

He reaches to the nightstand and tosses me a heavy gold key. "It's better than the public one. More... complete. Don't lose it. That place is sacred."

I clutch the key with a grateful smile, but my mind is elsewhere.

The necklace.

I'm deep in thought when suddenly Jack pulls me close, wrapping an arm around my waist. His warmth seeps into my skin. tense, startled... but then slowly, I relax.

I let him hold me and let myself feel something close to peace.

Just before sleep takes me, I hear his voice-soft and broken:

"I'm sorry I wasn't there in time to protect you..."

And my heart cracks a little.

Because somehow... I believe he means it.

**

Morning light pours in through the curtains, warm and golden-but his side of the bed is cold

Jack's scent still lingers faintly on the pillow, but the space beside me is empty, as if he vanished with the night. I press my hand to where his body should've been, and the chill of the sheets makes something inside me ache in a way I don't like.

No. Don't go there, Kali. I shove the feeling down hard, swallowing it like a bitter pill knowing that I can't afford to get attached.

Pulling the covers back, I swing my legs over the edge of the bed, stand, and stretch. Today, I need to find answers. Not distractions. Not comfort. I need to find out what this necklace around my neck means-and why Jack's uncle looked at it like it held the key to something ancient.

After a quick bath and dressing in something simple and easy to move in, I leave the house, locking the door behind me. I keep my hood up, walking with purpose toward the main pack building-but something in the distance catches my eye.

A figure moves along the dirt path ahead-slim, graceful. Familiar.

Jasmine?

She's walking alone, far off, her steps uneven like her mind isn't really in her body. I quicken my pace, calling out, "Jasmine!"

No response. She doesn't turn around.

"Jasmine!" I shout again, louder this time-but it's like she can't hear

me. Like she's somewhere far away, locked inside herself. She keeps walking, slow and disconnected.

A strange heaviness forms in my stomach, and I follow.

We walk for what feels like forever until she finally stops in front of a small, weather-worn house at the end of the path. It's tucked away, hidden, as if someone wanted it to be forgotten.

I stop a few feet from the porch, torn between stepping back or going in. Maybe she just needs space. Maybe-

A loud crash shatters the silence. Glass, maybe? Then a sound that twists my stomach—a soft, broken whimper.

I swallow hard.

Without thinking, I rush to the door. My body moves on instinct as I push it open, and the noise hits me first-heavy breathing, something scuffling against wood-and then I see it.

Beta Khaos. Dragging Jasmine by the hair down the hallway. Her feet barely graze the floor, her body limp with pain. Her face is contorted, tears pouring down her cheeks—and for one breathless, horrifying moment, I can't move.

I always suspected he was hurting her. But seeing it—so raw, so brutal -it paralyzes me.

Jasmine catches a glimpse of me, but says nothing. Shame floods her eyes like she wants to disappear. Like she wishes I hadn't come.

I force myself to move. One step. Then another. Quiet and careful, my nails dig into my palms so hard they might bleed.

He drags her into a room. The door doesn't shut all the way.

I inch closer, staying hidden."Who was that man you were talking to?" Khaos snarls.

"I wasn't talking to any man," Jasmine gasps. "Stop imagining things-

"That's a fucking lie, you bitch!" His voice rises, cruel and unhinged. "Is he the reason you haven't accepted our bond yet? Is that why you still won't let me mark you?!"

Jasmine trembles, trying to pull away. "Please, let me go-

He lets out a harsh, guttural laugh. "So you can run back to your alpha brother? Report me again like the little rat you are?" His voice turns savage. "This time, Jasmine, I'll break your fucking limbs... I'll cut your tongue out so you can't speak another word against me"

That's enough.

I storm forward before my brain even catches up. I stop in the doorway, planting my feet firmly as I face the monster inside.

Khaos whirls around, startled-his eyes narrowing when he sees me.

I meet his gaze without flinching, fury burning hot in my chest. "As your Luna, I order you to let her go-right this fucking minute."

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A heartbeat of silence.

Then another.

Suddenly, his hand unclenches, releasing Jasmine's hair with a vicious shove that sends her stumbling against the wall. She gasps as she collapses to the floor.

His bloodshot, furious eyes snap to mine, glowing red with rage.

"You fucking bitch," he snarls. "How did you find this place?"

He whips his head toward Jasmine, his jaw clenched as he glares at her like she's nothing but dirt beneath his boot.

"You told her, didn't you?" he spits. "Think she's your savior now just because she's mated to your precious Alpha brother?"

His hand lifts again, faster this time, ready to strike.

“Touch her again,” I growl, my voice laced with the raw edge of my wolf, “and I swear to the fucking Goddess—I will end you.”

He freezes mid-motion, his eyes narrowing.

“End me?” he says with a twisted grin. Then he laughs—a cold, ugly sound that poisons the air. “Do you even know who the fuck I am? After Jack, I’m the strongest in this pack. I could snap your neck in half before you even blink.”

He puffs out his chest with pride.

I step forward, lifting my chin and holding his gaze. “Then leave. If you want to keep your body in one piece, get the fuck out-while I’m still being nice.”

That stings. His eyes twitch, nostrils flaring as his jaw tightens.”What are you going to do?” he sneers. “Call Jack? Beg him to save you?” He leans in closer, his eyes gleaming with cruelty. “You don’t even bear his mark. You can’t mindlink him. So tell me, Luna-how exactly are you going to save her? Or yourself?”

He paces now, circling me like a predator. “You’re nothing but a pretty little toy he brought home. And once I’m done with you, no one’s going to find your body.”

Jasmine lets out a soft whimper, but I don’t break eye contact with Khaos. His words are cruel, meant to cut-but they only sharpen the blade I’m holding inside me.

I give him a faint smirk. “Don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

A flicker of something passes through his eyes-challenge, defiance, pride:

He can’t back down now.

He roars-and lunges.

And that’s when the shift takes over.

I feel the snap of bones, the rush of power through my veins, fur erupting along my skin in an instant. I shift mid-air, my wolf bursting forth with a power that shatters the doorframe behind me and cracks the wall with the force of my leap.

I hear Jasmine gasp sharply.

But my focus is locked on Khaos.

His eyes widen in horror as my wolf slams into him, the sheer size of me knocking him off his feet like a ragdoll. He hits the floor hard, and I don’t give him time to recover.

My claws sink into his face.

He screams.

Good.

I rake my claws down again, fury exploding with each swipe. Blood spurts, his hands flailing-weakly, trying to push me off-but it's useless. He's nothing compared to me.

He whimpers. Whimpers. That big, proud, snarling Beta is whimpering beneath me.

Pathetic.

He falls to his knees, face shredded, sobbing and shaking. Blood drips from his chin, forming a growing pool on the floor.

I shift back in a blink, my feet landing gracefully beside him. My clothes are still intact-thank the Moon Goddess-and I stare down at him, grinning with dark satisfaction.

"You should've stayed in your fucking place."

I step over him like the trash he is and turn to Jasmine.

She's frozen. Wide-eyed. Barely breathing.

"Jasmine," I say gently.

She doesn't move. Her hands are trembling, lips parted like she wants to say something-but nothing comes out.

So I walk over, bend low, and slide my arms beneath her, lifting her like a child. She's weightless in my hold, soft and silent, her head falling against my chest as I carry her out of that cursed house. –

She doesn't speak, but her fingers curl against my shirt, and that's all! need to know-for now.

She's safe.

And he'll never touch her again.

"Take me to the treehouse," Jasmine whispers against my neck, her voice so fragile I almost think I imagined it.

I glance down at her in my arms. Her face is pale, her eyes glassy with exhaustion. I nod silently and keep walking, holding her close like she might break if I let go. Her body trembles-and I know it's not from the cold.

We reach the giant tree nestled in the heart of the forest, hidden from every predator, mate, and monster. She mutters something under her breath, and just like before, the bark ripples and shifts.

I step inside without hesitation.

The familiar warmth hits me instantly, wrapping around us like a blanket. Wood and herbs. Dust and memory. –

I head straight to the tiny bedroom tucked in the corner and gently lay Jasmine on the soft, messy bed. Her fingers twitch when I start to pull away.

“I’ll give you some time to rest-”

“Your wolf...” she says suddenly. Her voice is small but clear, cutting through the quiet like a pin dropping.

I turn around.

She’s sitting up now, leaning against the headboard, her fingers gripping the blanket like a lifeline. Her wide eyes search mine, filled with disbelief and fear.

“It’s unlike anything I’ve ever seen before,” she murmurs, her voice shaking. “She’s probably bigger than all of the male wolves in the pack.

How... how is that even possible? You’re just a female.”

The word just lingers in the air like an insult. Her voice isn’t cruel-but the implication stings all the same. Curiosity cloaked in condescension.

I stare at her for a long moment, saying nothing. I know Jasmine doesn’t mean any harm. She’s just shocked. Still, her reaction is exactly why I’ve always hidden that side of myself.

Until today.

My wolf isn’t dainty. She’s not the graceful Luna everyone expects.

She’s fierce. Monstrous. Powerful. And mine.

I sigh and lower my gaze to the floorboards. “I didn’t have a choice,” I say quietly. “There was no way I could’ve taken Khaos down in human form. So I trusted my instincts.”

Silence stretches between us like a bridge ready to collapse.

“Rest,” I murmur. “When you wake up, maybe it’ll all feel like a dream.”

I turn to leave.

“Don’t go,” she pleads quickly, reaching out. “Please. Don’t leave me alone.”

I freeze. I can feel her fear-raw and real. She’s not afraid of me anymore. Not exactly. She’s afraid he’ll come back.

“I can’t stay,” I say gently. “I need to get to Jack’s private library. There’s something I need to find -”

“Jack’s library?” she cuts in with a small scoff. “You mean the one I helped organize from top to bottom? Do you know what that means? I know where every book is. I’m the best person to help. That place is huge and full of nonsense-half of it isn’t even worth reading.”

I blink, taken aback, as she pushes herself off the bed, still swaying slightly, but already marching toward the tall bookshelf nestled in the treehouse wall.

“I’ve got everything here,” she adds, waving a hand at the towering shelves. “All the books that matter.”

A laugh escapes me before I can stop it. “Fine,” I say, smirking. “You win.”

She flashes me a small, tired smile and walks us to the shelf. A fireplace crackles nearby, painting everything in a warm orange glow.

The scent of burning wood and old paper fills the room, grounding me.

The first time I came here, it felt like a dream. It still does. No wonder this is her sanctuary. A place where even her mate can’t reach her.

“So,” she says, running a finger along the spines of the books, “what exactly are we looking for?”

I pause, eyes drifting over her eager expression.

“You’re scared,” I say quietly. “You think I’ll go tell your brother what happened. That’s why you want to keep me close.”

She sighs, lips pressing into a thin line. The answer is written all over her face.

“I get it,” I continue. “But you just found out my secret-my wolf is my biggest secret. You think I’d turn around and betray yours? Even if you hadn’t seen her... I’d still keep your privacy safe.”

Our eyes meet. “Now we both have something to keep from the world.”

Jasmine looks away. Her voice is small when she says, “But what about Khaos? He knows your secret too...”

I let out a short laugh, surprising her.

“He won’t tell,” I say, smirking. “His pride won’t let him. Imagine having to admit to the entire pack that he got his ass handed to him by a woman. Yeah, we’re safe. For now.”

She nods, some of the tension finally draining from her shoulders. “Alright... So what are we looking for again?”

I hesitate. “A necklace. You weren’t at the party when I wore it.”

“What did it look like?”

“It’s delicate... silver chain, but the pendant is this blue sapphire. The Kínd that catches the light and shimmers like the ocean.”

Jasmine tilts her head, thoughtful. Then she starts pulling books off shelves, muttering to herself.

I follow her lead, scanning pages, flipping through volumes thick with dust and time. We move fast but carefully, the silence broken only by the occasional whisper of paper and the crackle of fire.

After what feels like an hour, Jasmine suddenly gasps.

“Is this it?” She says, rushing to my side with a book open in her hands.

She points at a detailed illustration.

My breath catches.

It’s the exact same necklace.

“It looks exactly like mine,” I say, grabbing the book.

She reads aloud from the passage beneath it. “This necklace is crafted only for the Alpha Queen, passed down through generations. Worn as a symbol of divine right and unity, its magic binds the bloodline to the throne ‘*

Her brows shoot up. “You sure it’s not fake?”

I stare at the image, the blue stone glittering on the page like it’s alive.

A cold knot coils in my stomach.

“... I don’t know,” I murmur. “There’s no way I should have something that belongs to an Alpha Queen.”

But deep down, I know.

It’s not fake.

And that’s what terrifies me.

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I stare at the necklace on the page as if it might leap out and fasten itself back around my neck. The sapphire glows on the paper just as it did against my skin-under the moonlight.

“That’s exactly what I’m saying!” Jasmine leans in, jabbing a finger at the picture. “It means yours is fake.”

I hum low in my throat, not trusting myself to speak. HmMMM. You're probably right," I say, though everything inside me screams otherwise.

I don't want to argue. I just... keep staring.

Jasmine sighs dramatically and folds her arms. "Where did you even get it? Was it a gift? Ugh, I hate when people give fake jewelry as presents-it's so insulting."

My lips part before I even know what I'm going to say. "But let's say, for a moment, that it's not fake. Then what would that mean?"

Jasmine pauses, lifting a hand to her chin. Her brows pinch in thought." If-impossibly-it's not fake, and it really is the Alpha Queen's necklace ... then maybe it was stolen."

I blink at her. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," she says slowly, meeting my eyes, "maybe the person who gave it to-you stole it from the Queen. They could've been a servant or someone close to the royal family. Who gave it to you?"

"My adopted mother," I murmur, the words pulling a tight string across my chest. "She said she found it with me when I was a child..."

Jasmine's face falls. "Oh. I'm sorry-I didn't know you were adopted."

I wave a hand dismissively. "It's okay. It's not your fault. I was taken in by a beta family." I hesitate, swallowing down the bitterness. "It wasn't the best experience. But my adoptive mother-no, my mother-she was an angel. An angel in a house of wolves."

Jasmine nods gently. "I'm sure you've heard the rumors," she says, her words drawing my gaze back to her.

"What rumors?"

"About the royal family."

I shake my head. "No, I haven't."

Her voice lowers to a whisper, as if the trees might be listening." There's an old, forbidden story. The Alpha King had two daughters. But one of them... went missing. No one's allowed to talk about it. People have been punished for less."

My heart stumbles in my chest. "So... Lady Celestia has a sister?"

"Had," she corrects. "I think she's older. She disappeared long before Celestia was born."

I narrow my eyes at her. "Why are you telling me this?"

She scoffs. "Are you really that dense, or just pretending? You just said you were adopted."

“So? That doesn’t mean anything.”

“Maybe not. But what about the necklace?”

“You said it was fake, remember?” I raise a brow at her.

She rolls her eyes. “Yes, I did! But let’s say-just for one impossible moment-that it’s not fake. And your wolf...?” Her voice lowers again.” I’ve seen Alpha wolves shift, Even royal guards. But yours? It’s different. It’s... terrifying.”

I shift uncomfortably. “That could just be... another coincidence.”

“I don’t believe in coincidences,” she says flatly.

Suddenly, her eyes glaze over, changing shade ever so slightly. Her hand lifts to her temple. She’s being mindlinked.

“Jack just messaged me,” she says, snapping back to the present. “He’s been looking everywhere for you. He sounds... worried.”

I straighten immediately, brushing dust off my clothes and turning to leave, but Jasmine grabs my wrist.

“Forget what I just said,” she blurts, her eyes wide with something close to fear. “I must be crazy-losing my mind-to think you could be the Alpha King’s missing daughter.”

I scoff, trying to ignore how deeply her words cut. “Yeah. You’re insane,” I mutter with a small, awkward laugh. “There’s no way Celestia is my sister. We look nothing alike.”

“Plus she’s gorgeous,” Jasmine smirks, and we both laugh-though there’s something stiff and uncomfortable behind it.

A silence settles between us, heavy but not hostile.

Then she speaks again, her voice low. “Promise me you won’t tell Jack what happened with Khaos. Please. If he finds out, he’ll kill him.”

“I won’t,” I say firmly. “But promise me you won’t go back to Khaos.”

” won’t,” she whispers, almost like she’s trying to convince herself.

I nod once. “Good.”

She walks me to the door of the treehouse. The air is cooler now, the breeze gentle as it rustles the leaves above us. I wave at her, and she gives me a small smile-one that doesn’t quite reach her eyes.

As I make my way alone through the forest, I can’t stop the thoughts

from creeping in.

Jack's looking for me.

Why?

I told him where I was going. Shouldn't he be busy fulfilling his duties as an Alpha?

The thought of him being worried about me sends a strange warmth through my chest. My lips twitch, fighting off a smile.

Then my thoughts drift again... to the necklace... the rumors... the missing daughter.

No. That's impossible. It has to be.

I press a hand to my chest, to the place where the necklace once rested, and keep walking -one step at a time-back to Jack.

Back to the only place that's ever felt like it could be home. And maybe ... just maybe... there's more than just comfort waiting for me. Maybe there's a future. A real one-with him.

A home filled with laughter.

Children.

And one day... maybe even a bigger house.

The thought makes me laugh under my breath, a blush rising to my cheeks.

Dear Moon Goddess... What is happening to me?

The moment I push open the front door, my voice echoes through the house like a hopeful whisper.

"Jack?"

No answer.

I step into the living room, expecting to find him pacing—or maybe waiting with a smirk and a lecture for not going to his library like I promised. But I freeze.

Fury is sitting on the edge of the couch, hunched over, elbows resting on his knees, his foot tapping rapidly like he's ready to explode. The second he sees me, he shoots to his feet like I've lit a fuse.

"What are you doing here?" I ask, instinctively stepping back. There's something off about his expression-anxious. A kind of fear that doesn't suit a warrior like him.

He swallows hard, his eyes darting, like he's searching for a gentle way to break a bone.

“I received news,” he says slowly, “from the spy in the Red Night Pack.”

My heart stumbles. “W-What kind of news?” I ask, my voice barely holding itself together. “Did my mother... did she get my letter? Did she send one back? Where is it?”

Fury shakes his head. “There’s no letter.”

“What do you mean?” I whisper, already knowing I’m not going to like his answer.

He draws a shaky breath, his voice grave. “Your mother... she’s been locked in a cell for almost two months.”

I blink, my mind refusing to catch up. “W-What?”

“She helped you escape. The Luna found out,” he says, voice clipped and furious. “They imprisoned her as punishment. They’re trying to use her to lure you back.”

“No,” I breathe, my knees giving out.

Fury lunges forward and catches me around the waist before I hit the ground, holding me against him like I’m made of glass.

“She’s being tortured, Kali,” he whispers. “They want her to confess your whereabouts. But she hasn’t said a word. Not one. She’s protecting you with everything she has.”

A sob rips from my throat as I claw at his chest, desperate to break free.” have to go,” I cry. “I have to get her out! She’s in pain-because of me!

I can’t just stay here. I have to save her.”

“Kali, stop-listen to me-”

“No! Let me go!” I scream, thrashing against his hold, nails digging into his arms. But Fury only tightens his grip.

“It’s too dangerous,” he says through gritted teeth. “The Red Night Pack won’t just let you walk in. We need a plan. You need Alpha Jack. He’s the only one with the power and rank to help you. He can bargain for her life.”

“I don’t want to wait for Jack! She’s all I have!” I sob. “This is my fault!

She’s suffering because of me! I should’ve taken her with me-I can’t let them keep hurting her. I won’t!”

My sobs wrack my body as Fury pulls me into his chest, holding me like

*I might shatter at any second. I bury my face against him, consumed by fury and guilt until all I can do is scream inside:

And then it happens.

A feral, guttural growl rips through the house-savage and thunderous, like a violent storm tearing through the walls.

I freeze, tears still on my cheeks, my breath caught in my throat. Fury's arms go rigid around me, his body suddenly still as stone. Slowly, I lift my head.

Jack stands in the doorway, his chest heaving, eyes glowing silver. His jaw is clenched so tightly I hear the crack of his teeth grinding. His aura crashes over the room in fury, suffocating everything in its path.

"Jack-" I start, taking a step forward.

Too late.

In one breath, Jack is across the room..

Fury is ripped away from me, lifted like a ragdoll and slammed into the wall with such force that the plaster cracks. Jack's hand wraps around his throat, claws partially extended, pressing hard enough to draw blood. Fury dangles, boots scraping helplessly against the wall.

"How dare you touch what's mine," Jack growls, his voice low and lethal.

"Jack-stop it!" I scream, rushing forward.

Fury gasps for breath, eyes wide, but he doesn't fight back.

"It's not what it looks like!" | yell, grabbing Jack's arm. "He was just-he was just holding me because-because I broke down!"

Jack doesn't acknowledge me. His gaze is fixed on Fury, his voice dropping into a deadly snarl.

"She. Is. Mine."

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Alpha Jack

I don't see red.

I am red.

My grip tightens, fingers digging into his skin until I hear the sickening, satisfying pop-crack of bone shifting. He bares his neck in submission, choking-but it does nothing to calm the wildfire raging inside my chest.

He touched her.

He held her.

She was in his arms.

“Jack, let him go! Please!” Kali’s voice breaks through the storm in my head-high-pitched, terrified. I feel her hands pushing against my chest and when I look down, I see her eyes. Those beautiful eyes.

Shining. Red-rimmed. Brimming with tears.

Tears.

For him.

A bitter taste rises in my throat. Jealousy-raw, ugly-chokes me.

I was looking for her. I’d gone to my private library to surprise her.

Thought maybe we could sit together and read. Maybe, in that quiet, romantic atmosphere, she’d finally let her guard down and accept me.

Open up to me.

I hate reading-but for her? I was willing to turn pages until sunrise if it meant seeing her smile.

But she wasn’t there.

I waited.

Ten minutes turned into thirty. Then an hour. Every second felt like a noose tightening around my chest.

Where the hell was she? even mindlinked my sister out of desperation. She told me Kali was home.

And I came racing back like a fucking lunatic-like a man in love. Only to walk in and find her in his arms. Her face buried in his chest.

No male should ever have to see that. No Alpha. No mate.

I finally blink. My jaw clenches as I force myself-physically force myself-to let him go. Fury collapses to the floor with a violent cough, clutching his neck and gasping for breath like a wounded mutt.

Kali drops to her knees beside him, hands trembling as she checks him over.

“Are you okay?” she asks softly, full of concern.

My stomach knots.

"I've had worse," Fury rasps, managing a weak smile like a damn hero in a bad play.

I see red all over again.

"You're in love with my mate, aren't you," growl darkly.

Fury looks up at me, eyes wide despite the bruises on his throat. But before he can speak, Kali is already on her feet, fury blazing in her eyes -how ironic.

"Now you're just being delusional, Jack. You're talking nonsense," she snaps, stepping between us like a shield.

"Nonsense?" I laugh coldly. "It's obvious he's madly in love with you! Tell me-what kind of man accepts a rejection from his mate without a fight? You think that's normal? You think he just woke up one day and said, 'Sure, I'll throw away destiny'? He did it because he fucking got his fucking eyes on you! That's why!

"We both know Lady Celestia is a bitch," Kali fires back. "No one in their right mind would want to be mated to her. The only reason he accepted that rejection so quickly was to protect me from being arrested."

"Exactly," I roar, eyes locked on Fury. "He did it for you. You don't think that's suspicious? I would've protected you myself!"

"But you didn't! You weren't there when it mattered!" Kali shouts in my face.

She turns her head slightly.

"Fury, leave," she commands.

Fury hesitates, glancing between us as if he wants to speak. I growl-Louder this time-daring him to stay and confess. I want him to. But he Lowers his head, turns, and walks out like he's under a spell.

Not mine.

Hers..

"FURY!" I roar, my voice echoing through the room.

He doesn't stop and keep walking like I don't exist.

"I'm going to kill that son of a bitch," I mutter, voice low, murderous."

Til tear out his eyes if he even dares look at you again."

The front door clicks shut behind him, but the silence it leaves behind is deafening.

I turn-and I meet her glare.

“What the fuck was that, Jack?” Her voice shakes.

“I was staking my claim,” I bite out.

“Your claim?” She lets out a bitter laugh and steps closer until her face is inches from mine. “Let me hold your hand and say this to you clearly, Jack-and I’m only going to say it once, so listen carefully, Alpha.” Her voice drops, calm and sharp as a blade. “I don’t belong to you”

That hits harder than a punch to the ribs.

My voice is cold. “If you don’t belong to me... then who? Fury?”

” belong to no one,” she fires back, fire flashing in her eyes. “And if you can’t trust me enough to know that, then maybe-just maybe-you should accept my rejection. Then I’ll be free to run straight into Fury s arms.”

My fists clench so tightly my nails dig into my palms. “You were in his arms, Kali. I saw the way he looked at you. That bastard is in love with you.”

“I was crying!” she yells, her voice cracking. “He was holding me so ! wouldn’t fall apart. Because he told me my mother is being tortured,

Jack!”

The rage evaporates instantly, replaced by confusion-and guilt.

“What?”

She nods, her voice fragile now. “She’s being held in the Red Night Pack. And it’s because of me.” Her voice breaks. “I asked Fury to help me send a message to her, and that’s how he found out what happened

—how she’s being tortured. He only came here to break the news.

That’s why I ended up crying in his arms.”

My knees threaten to give out. “Why didn’t you tell me?” I ask, my voice rough and strained. “For Moon’s sake, Kali-I’m your mate. I would’ve helped you. I should’ve been the one to carry that burden... not him.”

“Maybe if you weren’t so busy trying to claim me like I’m some kind of possession, I would have,” she snaps.

Im still your mate-

She cuts me off.

“You might be my mate but I never accepted you.” She shakes her head, tears brimming in her eyes again. “And after seeing your animalistic behavior just now?” She pauses. “I don’t regret it.”

I stagger back, breathless.

“Kali...” I whisper.

But she doesn’t hear me. Or maybe she does-and just doesn’t care.

She turns away, walks to the door.

And slams it behind her like she’s never coming back.

I fall to my knees.

The hardwood floor bites into me, but I don’t feel it—not really. My chest heaves like there’s a goddamn boulder sitting on top of it. I grit my teeth and squeeze my eyes shut, fighting back the scream clawing its way up my throat.

The pain... fuck, it’s not numb like before. It’s not distant or dull. It’s alive. Burning. Gnawing. Bleeding.

My soul feels like it’s being torn to shreds from the inside, and my wolf -my damn wolf—is whimpering like a dying animal, curled up somewhere deep within me, too broken to rise.

She said she doesn’t regret rejecting me. She slammed the door like she’d never come back.

And I believe her.

The silence in the room is deafening, wrapping around me like a shroud. My fingers claw at the floor, my jaw clenched so tight I’m sure I’ll crack a tooth. Every breath feels like inhaling shards of glass.

Then—

The door creaks open.

My heart stutters. Kali?

My head snaps up, eyes wide, hope splintering through the haze of agony-

But it’s not her.

It’s him. Again.

Fury rushes in, eyes darting around the room before landing on me.” Alpha-shit-are you alright?”

The whimper in my throat warps into a guttural growl. “Don’t fucking touch me,” I snarl. “Or be ready to take your last breath.”

Fury freezes mid-step, hands raised slightly in surrender, but he doesn't back away. "Alpha... I didn't mean to disobey you. I swear it. But I couldn't explain it. When she said the words, I had to listen. Her voice

-fuck-it was like it wasn't even her. It was... something more.

Commanding. Powerful. I didn't stand a chance."

I sneer through the pain. "Stop spitting bullshit." I drag myself up a little, breathing heavily. "You're in love with her, aren't you?"

Fury's expression twists with something like guilt—but not the kind" expected. He drops to his knees beside me, shaking his head. "Alpha, i swear on my life-‘ve never once thought of her that way. Not as a lover. Never

He pauses, gaze distant for a second, like he's remembering something that hurts.

When i first saw her.. it-wasn't desire I felt It was_ familiarity. Like i knew her. Like—like I'd found someone from a life I don't even-remember. I've had dreams, Alpha. Flashes. Bits and pieces of a childhood I can't explain. They all started when I met her.*

I stare at him, panting. His words rattle around in my brain, not quite settling, but not quite lies either. My wolf isn't snarling anymore-just listening.

I finally let out a harsh, shaky sigh. Fury reaches to help me to my feet, and this time— | don't push him away.

Because for some stupid, fucking reason.. I believe him.

Fury steadies me, eyes urgent. "Alpha, if I've done anything to offend you or disrespected your claim, punish me. I'll accept it. But please-please-help the Luna."

My blood runs cold.

"What?"

"She's gone," he says, voice tightening. "She's marching straight into the Red Night Pack on her own. No backup. No strategy. Just raw anger. She's determined to get her mother out, and she wont listen to anyone. Alpha, it's a suicide mission. And you're the only one who can stop her."

For a second, my heart stops beating altogether.

Kali.

"She's walking into hell..."

Fury nods grimly

And that's all it takes.

The weakness evaporates, burned up by the fire that flares to life in my chest. My fists clench, and I feel my strength return, even through the ache, even through the rejection still clawing at my insides.

She might hate me right now.

But I'll be damned if I let her walk to her death.

"Get the warriors," I rasp, fire in my eyes. "It's time the Red Night Pack remembers why they fear my name."