

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 11[1,500 words]

Chapter 11: Chapter 11

Calhoun's POV~

It was already dark when I stepped out of the shower. The steam clung to my skin as I dragged the towel over my hair, water dripping down my shoulders, leaving little trails on the floor.

A chime broke the silence. My phone lit up on the lampstand. I reached for it, but before my fingers touched the screen, a smaller hand slid in, blocking mine.

Carmela.

She gave me that sly smile of hers, the one that always carried something sharp behind it, then leaned in to press her lips against mine. "Let me take care of your messages," she murmured. I narrowed my eyes at her, searching her expression. Was she testing me? Fishing to see if there was someone else who held my attention? She should've known, there was no one but her.

Without a word, I pulled back, towel still in hand, and walked toward the desk. My laptop waited, files stacked like bricks in my head, demanding attention. I didn't bother unlocking the phone she held because she already had the access she wanted. She had it all.

But as I sat down, fingers brushing the keyboard, Elodie's face came back to me. That broken expression I'd left her with. Eyes glassy, lips trembling, carrying a pain I couldn't erase. The memory slammed into me without mercy, and my movements slowed.

A dull ache spread through my chest, twisting tight. I pressed a hand to it, as if I could rub the ache away, as if I could make myself forget. I wanted to call her. Just once. To hear her voice, to know she was still there. But Carmela was in the room, and I wasn't about to risk her suspicion.

So I buried it. I buried her. I pulled her out of my mind and shoved myself into the work in front of me.

Minutes dragged by. The sound keyboard typing filled the room until I finally glanced up. Carmela was still there, her eyes narrowed, lips pressed into a frown as she scrolled through my phone, swiping through screen after screen like she was hunting for ghosts.

I ignored her and looked back at the screen. My back ached, so I pushed away from the chair and stretched, the crack of my bones echoing through the quiet. When I looked back, she was already smiling. Wide and sweet.

I walked to her, my steps slow. She rose slowly.

“Anything important?” I asked.

She tilted her head, her smile softening into something that always used to melt me. “No,” she said sweetly. “Just spam. Nothing serious.”

She handed me the phone, her fingers brushing mine as she leaned up, pressing her lips to mine with a smirk. She kissed me again, softer, before leaning close to my ear. Her breath tickled against my skin.

“I want you,” she whispered. “Now. Alpha.”

My eyes darkened. I parted my lips to tell her I had work to finish, that the files on my desk mattered more than anything right now but the words died on my tongue. Because in the next breath, she loosened the silk knot at her side, and her nightgown slid to the floor.

I swallowed hard, my throat dry. My Adam’s apple bobbed at the sight of her naked body. She had nothing on.

She crooked her finger, her lips curling. “Come to me, baby boy,” she teased. “Let me take all that stress away this weekend.”

Something sharp twisted in my chest. I smirked, though it felt more like a shield than anything else. My body desired her but strangely my wolf didn’t react. No single attention from him. He entirely ignored Carmela but that doesn’t matter.

In one swift motion, I closed the space between us, scooping her up in my arms. Her laughter spilled into the air.

I crushed my mouth against hers as I carried her toward the bed, swallowing her giggles with a kiss that was rough.

I didn’t know how long it lasted. The sex, the heat, the emptiness that followed. All I knew was when my eyes fluttered open, the room was drenched in pale morning light, the clock glaring six a.m.

Saturday. I shouldn’t be disturbed.

I turned, dragging my gaze to the side of the bed where Carmela lay curled, her body naked, tangled in sheets. Peaceful. I reached for the blanket to cover her bare skin, when my phone blared.

A sharp, insistent sound that clawed at my ears. Then again and again. Calls. Chimes. Dings piling over each other until my jaw clenched so tightly I thought my teeth would snap.

What the fuck is going on?

I slid out of bed slowly, careful not to stir Carmela. My steps were heavy, dragging me to the desk across the room. The screen lit up with missed calls stacked one after the other, all from my assistants.

My frown deepened. A knot curled in my gut, a bad feeling pressing into me harder than I wanted to admit. I didn't even know why but it was there, gnawing.

I pressed the phone to my ear, spine stiff, blood boiling. The line clicked and the moment I heard the silence on the other end, I barked, "What the fuck is your problem? Are you out of your goddamned mind? Disrupting my sleep? It's Saturday! Aren't you only meant to call during weekdays?!"

The noise on the other end from voices chattering, and a low hum went silent in an instant. Then Tristan, my beta's voice came, heavy with guilt.

"Alpha..." he sighed. "Three neighboring Packs—the ones interested in the gold business, they sent emails yesterday. They wanted an urgent meeting. They're already here. They've been waiting in the conference room for an hour now."

My heart skipped, and irritation drained from my bones in a snap. My spine shot straight. "Where the hell is Elodie?" I snarled. "Why didn't she inform me beforehand? Why didn't she sort this out before it got to me? She handles everything, emails, schedules. Where is she?"

Tristan hesitated. Then quietly, "Alpha... I'm sorry. Elodie resigned yesterday. She's gone. Took all her belongings with her."

The world stopped.

A cold dread gripped my spine, holding me frozen. My hand clenched the phone so tightly my knuckles burned white. My ears rang as though I'd slipped into a nightmare I couldn't wake from.

"What the fuck did you just say?" My voice cracked dangerously. "What rubbish is that? Did I agree to her resignation? Did I sign her papers? How dare she leave without my say-so?" My throat worked around the words, rough, desperate, but I tried to mask the panic rising.

Tristan's voice was still there, saying something, explaining but I didn't hear it. None of it made sense.

Elodie. Gone?

Why? Was she still pissed about yesterday? Was she really that fragile, letting a small issue drive her out? How many times did I have to make her understand Carmela came first. She was my intended mate. Elodie was supposed to keep her behavior in check, not rile Carmela, not sulk like a child. She should've known I'd pacify her later. I always did.

How dare she ghost me? Walk out? Resign without a word?

The thought coiled in my head until it burned, stupid, maddening, and I hated her for it. Hated her for daring to defy me.

Hands slid around my waist, soft, and warm. I stiffened. Carmela's head pressed against my back, her voice a whisper. "What's going on? Why are you shouting?"

I forced the air out of my chest, biting down on the fury ripping through me. "Nothing," I muttered, lowering my tone, smoothing it over. "It's work related. Go back to sleep. I'll handle it."

She clung tighter, her voice low, sulking. "I don't want to sleep alone. Please, Calhoun... come back to bed."

Her face tilted up, and for a moment I saw the faint break in her expression, the vulnerability she only showed me. My jaw clenched, but I had no choice. I turned, lifted her into my arms, carried her back to the bed. I lay with her, held her until her breathing slowed again. Until she slipped back under.

Only then did I reach for my phone under the cover of the sheets. I texted Tristan:

"Push the meeting one hour. I'll be there."

The reply came quickly. "Sorry, Alpha. The deal is gone. They left fifteen minutes ago."

My heart sank. My wolf stirred, a growl rumbling low, hungry for blood. I was about to throw the sheets aside, ready to tear my way to the source of this disaster, when my eyes caught Carmela's sleeping face. Peaceful. Fragile.

And something in me froze.

I don't know why. But something pushed at me. A whisper I couldn't ignore.

I unlocked my email.

Scrolled to the trash.

The moment I opened it, every drop of blood drained from my face.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 12 [1,703 words]

Chapter 12: Chapter 12

Calhoun's pov~

I opened the trash like a man opening a wound.

My hands shook. For a second the world went grainy at the edges, like the light had been turned down inside my skull. One scroll and the abyss yawned back at me, several emails from the Pack partners, all of them, every single one of their messages, their interest, their meeting requests were deleted. Not archived. Not ignored. Deleted. In my trash.

I blinked until spots swam. How? I'd been buried in files last night. I hadn't touched my phone. The only other person who had been in this apartment was Carmela. That realization hit me hard. White-hot rage crawled up my veins and took my hands. Carmela.

That sheltered princess of a woman who'd never punched a clock in her life. Carmela, who wore power like perfume but had never actually worked for it. Why would she delete emails she didn't understand? Why would she throw away a deal that meant profit for the Pack? For us?

My mouth tasted like metal. Losing this would cost...no, not just cost. It would gnaw a hole in the quarter, in the numbers I fed my decisions with for the Pack, in a dozen calculated places I couldn't afford to bleed from.

I fished my phone out and dialed. I scrolled contacts, found Elodie's number and pressed call. The line clicked, rang, and went straight to voicemail. Again. Again. My heart did something dumb in my chest. It slid, then missed a beat and fell into a pit.

Elodie never let anything go to voicemail. Ever.

I dug through the trash folder with my thumbs as if my hands could claw her back. My throat was raw. Then there it was: a message. And I hit restore. What I saw wasn't an apology. It wasn't a reason. It was a goodbye.

"Nine years loving you in silence. Five years pretending it was enough. This is the end of the line. Alpha Calhoun, I'm no longer your assistant. I no longer have feelings for you. We're just two strangers now. In this lifetime, let's never cross paths again."

The text ended and the room spun.

The message burned on my screen.

I read it once. Twice. Ten times. Each word hammered into me like some blade, and yet I kept going back to the beginning, waiting for it to twist into something else, waiting for my anger to finally show up, the relief, anything. But there was nothing. Just silence. A hollowness that spread through my chest.

I should've been glad. Isn't this what I wanted? For her to finally cut herself free of me, for me to stop carrying that weight, that relentless gaze that always clung to me. I should've felt free, finally able to devote myself to Carmela without Elodie hovering in the background like some starved ghost. But the only thing I felt was coldness. Like something had been ripped out of me, leaving behind a carcass that still breathed.

My phone slipped from my hand onto the desk with a dull thud. I stared at it as though it had betrayed me. My body refused to move.

Elodie's face came back to me, uninvited. The way she used to look at me like I was worth worshipping, like she'd crawl through fire just to carry my sins for me. God, she was a fool. My fool. That puppy-dog devotion, it used to disgust me. And yet, there was a night... I can't erase it. The night I fucked her for the first time. I took her virginity.

I remember the way she clung to me, desperate, trembling, like I was her entire goddamn universe. I had felt something then, something foreign and ugly that I refused to name. I shoved her away after, told her she could never own me, that my heart belonged only to Carmela. And I saw her eyes die at that moment. The light went out of them, and she swallowed her hurt like poison. That was the day she should've left me. But she didn't. She stayed. She burned quietly in the background, waiting for scraps, never asking for more.

And that... that was the reason I never let her go.

For years I told myself she was just a Gamma who didn't know when to quit. A hopeless little idiot clinging to crumbs. I thought that's all she was, someone to warm my bed, to fill my silence, to obey. I gave her nothing but bones and she gnawed them down to dust, smiling like it was enough. My car. My penthouse. The office couch. The house I let her stay in. Every corner of my life carries her ghost, her scent, every mark of our sex. The bruises we left on each other. The way her nails dug into my back like she wanted to carve her name into me. And I let her. Every fucking time, I let her.

She was perfect in her place. The perfect assistant. The perfect shadow. She never asked for more than what I tossed her way. And now she's gone. Just like that.

I should feel relieved. Freedom. Elation. But instead my chest feels like it's collapsing in on itself. A dark cloud hangs heavy over my head, and I can't breathe through it.

Why does it feel like she ripped my heart out, when I swore I never gave it to her?

Alright, love. I hear you loud and clear. You don't want robotic rhythm, you don't want clipped lines, you don't want "pretty but hollow." You want this raw. Human. Emotional. First-person, inside Calhoun's head, cruel and cold but still bleeding through with ache. You want the reader to feel goosebumps, to feel the weight of silence, the sting of rejection, the dark tension of a man who can't admit he's broken but is. Let's do this right.

I pulled away from the desk like the damn thing was cursed. My phone sat there, screen black, but I swore it was still burning holes into me. My chest ached—strange, sharp, unfamiliar—and I hated that I didn't know why. If Elodie wanted to go, then so be it. I wasn't going to chase after her. She wasn't worth chasing. That's what I told myself as I poured whiskey down my throat, but the taste was bitter, not sharp enough to drown her ghost.

Days passed. I buried myself in Carmela. Luxurious dates, mindless trips, restaurants that bled money just for a table. Designer bags, shoes, perfumes—whatever she wanted, I threw it at her. I wanted her laughter to drown out the silence Elodie left behind. I wanted her presence to choke out the emptiness gnawing at my chest. But no matter how many bottles of wine we spilled, no

matter how many times I fucked her against the sheets of some overpriced hotel suite, the ache stayed.

It was in my ribs when I woke up. In my spine when I sat in board meetings. In my dreams—especially there. Elodie kept slipping through the cracks of my mind like smoke. Her laugh. The way she noticed every single thing about me without me ever asking. The way she stared like she saw past my bones, past the monster, like she still wanted what was rotting inside.

And wasn't it strange? Carmela never noticed the change. She never asked why my eyes stayed distant. She never asked why I gripped my glass too tightly, why I drifted into silence in the middle of her chatter. She didn't see me—she never did. Elodie always did.

I sat parked in the Ferrari, engine off, outside a boutique Carmela had disappeared into for hours. I leaned back against the seat, staring at nothing, the ache crawling back under my skin until I couldn't breathe. When Carmela finally came out, arms full of shopping bags, her face split into that practiced smile, I felt nothing. No spark. No flutter. Just a hollow thud in my chest.

Before she reached the car, I pulled out my phone. My thumb hovered before I let the words spill.

“Don't forget, you can always come back. If you want, you can come back only as my Gamma and nothing else.”

I sent it. My chest clenched immediately after, like the message itself had stabbed me. I stared at the screen, waiting for that little line to shift delivered. But instead it turned red. Failed. Blocked.

My stomach dropped. My hands shook. Elodie had never done that before. Never cut me off completely.

A knock at the window snapped me back. Carmela. I unlocked the doors and she slid inside, bags filling the backseat, her perfume filling the car like suffocation. I barely looked at her. My eyes stayed on my phone, praying, waiting. Nothing. The screen mocked me. My jaw locked so tight I couldn't crack my teeth. I shoved the tremor out of my hands, forced my breathing steady. She couldn't notice.

“Sorry, darling,” Carmela giggled, her voice syrupy sweet. “Took forever in there, I know. But some of the people recognized me, wanted pictures, you know how it is. Anyway, we should totally check out the Lucious boutiques tomorrow, mmh? Their new season just came in and I heard the shoes are to die for. What do you say?”

I locked my phone, slid it into my pocket, my face carved flat. “I won't be available,” I said coldly. “I need to return to the company. There are unfinished matters waiting. Let me handle everything, and after that, we'll go wherever you want. Alright?”

Her smile faltered. She stared at me for a long second, sulking, lower lip jutting out like a child's. Finally she sighed, then pasted that saccharine grin back on. “Fine. That's okay. I'll help you out tomorrow, sweetheart.”

I nodded once, gripped the wheel, and started the engine. The car roared, but my head was silent. Too silent. Seeing her smile again smoothed something small, but not enough. Not nearly enough.

Elodie's shadow was still there, curling around my ribs, cutting into my chest no matter how hard I tried to shake her off.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 13[1,977 words]

Chapter 13: Chapter 13

Calhoun's POV

The next morning, I stepped out of the car with Carmela beside me. My shoes had barely touched the company's grounds when I noticed Tristan and a swarm of assistants waiting, their faces pale, their eyes wide. Panic clung to each of their faces. The sight of it made my chest tighten with unease, a sharp skip in my heartbeat before anger swallowed it whole.

Tristan was the first to approach, clutching a fat, swollen file in his arms. "Thank goodness you're back, Calhoun," he said quickly, voice strained. "Here are several Pack reports you haven't gotten back to. The land disputes, profit gains, agreements we should've sealed days ago—"

His words grated on me. My eyes dropped to the thick file he was hugging like a lifeline. My jaw clenched, my teeth grinding together.

One by one, the others began to speak over each other.

"Alpha, the Western Pack is threatening to pull their investments—"

"The landowners are demanding settlement or they'll take it to the Council—"

"The company's logistics department reports massive delays—"

"The contractors are refusing to move forward without your approval—"

Each of their voices clawed at my skull, nothing but a pure barrage of whining, panic, and uselessness.

I didn't respond. Not even a word. I walked through them like they were air, ignoring every frantic face, every trembling plea, every file they tried to shove into my hands. My silence was way heavier than my anger.

By the time I entered my office, the air was buzzing with tension. Carmela glided in first, perching herself on the chair beside mine. The others filed in behind me, laying their stacks of files onto my desk like offerings to a god they feared but didn't understand.

I sat down, blood boiling under my skin, and began flipping through the mess. Each of the files I opened stank nothing but incompetence. Each report was another failure, another reminder that in less than a week without me, everything had started to rot.

My chest tightened with rage. My vision blurred. And then I snapped.

A guttural growl tore from my throat as I swept the files off the desk, sending papers flying across the room. I slammed my fist down on the desk, the crack echoing against the walls. Everyone froze. Eyes wide, mouths clamped shut. Only Tristan stood still, his brow furrowed, as if he'd expected this. He had lived long enough under my rule to recognize the storm before it hit.

"The fuck is wrong with all of you?" I roared, my voice vibrating through the room like thunder.

Silence. No one dared breathe. Some of them shifted back, heads bowing low, as if afraid I'd rip them apart for daring to exist in front of me.

My chest heaved as I glared at them. For fuck's sake, I had been gone for days. Not weeks. Not months. Days. And this was what they had reduced everything to? Utter chaos?

I turned my glare on Tristan, the one man I expected to at least hold the line. But even he had failed. Even he.

"You all are a useless piece of shit," I snarled. "Why the fuck do I pay you all? To stand around making stupid complaints? To shatter my mind with your whining? Can't a single one of you hold the goddamn reins for a few hours without me?"

They trembled, shifting under my glare.

And then, from the corner of the room, a soft, shaky voice broke through. One of the assistants, a woman, braver than the rest, or maybe just foolish, stepped forward, her hand raised slightly as if she needed permission to speak.

She stopped a few feet from me, trembling, her voice quivering as she said, "Alpha Calhoun... we don't know. It was Elodie. She usually handled all these seamlessly. Alone."

Her words hit me like a fist to the chest. Like a slap across the face. My throat closed for a second, my vision darkening. I felt the air shift, but I wouldn't let them see it. Wouldn't let them see me stagger.

I rotated slowly, my eyes burning holes into the floor. My hand pointed at the door. "Then go. Get Elodie." I snarled.

The room went utterly still. They knew. I knew. She was gone.

Fuck.

When that realization settled on my chest, rage exploded out of me again. My fist pounded the desk once more, wood splintering under the impact. Several of them flinched visibly, as if they thought I'd leap across the table and tear them apart.

"Fix this mess!" I bellowed, seething. "Do whatever the fuck it takes, or lose your wages and your heads if the company or Pack falls into jeopardy!"

They bowed lower, silent, cowed. My office was suffocating with fear and failure as well.

And then, from beside me, Carmela cleared her voice softly. She rose gracefully, walking closer, her hand settling on my shoulder. She leaned down.

"Why are you so pissed like this?" she cooed. "Relax. I'll handle everything. After all, it was just a Gamma who left. She can be replaced easily."

Her words iced my veins. For a few seconds, I froze, my chest stilling, my mind blank. Then I nodded slowly, my lips curling into something that wasn't a smile.

I lifted my eyes to the room, to the trembling cowards who dared call themselves my assistants. "Carmela is right," I said flatly. "Elodie was just an assistant. And she's gone. From now on, Carmela will be in charge of company affairs."

The silence that followed was deafening. Eyes widened. They stared at me as though I'd lost my mind. Maybe I had. Maybe I didn't care anymore.

I grabbed my phone, my patience burned to ashes. Without another glance, I stood and headed for the door, their stunned gazes piercing my back.

The door had barely clicked shut behind me when something made me pause. Instinct, maybe. My wolf twitched inside me, ears pricking. At first it was silence then the sound of heels cutting against tile. Carmela's voice followed.

"You," she hissed. "Don't play innocent with me. I saw you, bitch. Throwing yourself at him, pressing those files against his chest like you wanted him to notice your tits. Putting on that fake little panicked face just so he'd touch you. You think I wouldn't see through that?"

I frowned, brows pulling together as I stood just beyond the door. Confusion creased through me. The fuck was she talking about?

There was a sharp gasp, one of my the assistants. My wolf's ears twitched, picking up every crack in her voice.

"Excuse you?" she shrieked. "Don't you dare accuse me of something that disgusting. Alpha Calhoun is my boss. My Alpha. You think I'd risk my position, my life, just to—" her voice cracked with unhidden venom, "—flash my boobs at him? Don't insult me, Carmela. You'll drag us both into trouble with that kind of filth."

The way she bit back, the way her tone dripped with rage, made it clear, if this wasn't an office, she would've gone for Carmela's throat right then and there.

I shook my head. Petty women's squabbles. Not worth my time. My company was bleeding, partners pulling away, numbers crashing and these idiots wanted to claw at each other like feral cats? I ignored it, turned, and walked away.

Hours passed. Hours of clawing through paperwork, drowning in broken deals, putting out flames left and right. My temples throbbed. I told them all I wanted to be left alone. No one. Not even Carmela.

But when the knock came on the door, I knew I wasn't going to be granted that peace.

"Come in," I muttered through clenched teeth.

The door creaked open. She walked in like she owned the place. Not in the skirt and blouse she'd worn this morning, no, now she was wrapped in some sinful gown, clinging to her skin.

I froze mid-pen stroke, my eyes cutting up to her.

She purred, dragging her heels across the floor, hips swaying as she crossed the room. "Hello, Alpha Calhoun," she whispered, low and husky. She leaned close, her breath against my ear. "Busy? There are certain things you need to take care of first."

My jaw clenched. My frown deepened. "What the hell is with the outfit?" I growled. "This is my office. You think this is appropriate?"

Her lips curved. She rounded my desk with slow steps. "Appropriate?" she repeated, mocking, before perching on the edge of my desk like it was a throne. She leaned forward, pressing her chest against me, her hand trailing down, down, until she gripped me through my cock. "Every other thing can wait. This first."

A low sound left me, half-moan, half-snarl. My restraint snapped. Files flew off my desk as I grabbed her, hauling her up into my arms. Her lips crashed against mine, demanding. My body betrayed my mind.

By the time I fucked her senseless, hours had vanished. I woke on the leather couch, sweat cooling on my skin, Carmela draped across me. I felt hunger immediately, my stomach rumbling and then rage.

Elodie would have been here. She would've knocked lightly, brought me food without asking, set the tray down with that steady look in her eyes that told me she knew how close I was to unraveling. She was gone now. Gone. And all that was left in her place was this emptiness gnawing through my chest.

I ripped my phone from the desk and punched the line. When Tristan's voice came through, I didn't let him breathe.

"Tristan," I snarled, venom dripping from every word, "what the fuck is with you? You're my Beta, you should see to everything without me asking twice. Where the hell is my meal? I told you before, I don't want to repeat myself. Get it done. Now."

“Alpha Calhoun, your girlfriend kicked us all out,” the voice on the other end said flatly, tired to the bone. “We’ve talked it over. We’re done. None of us are Elodie, none of us can take that kind of abuse and keep functioning.”

I froze. My grip on the phone tightened. “What the hell are you talking about? What happened with Elodie?”

There was a long sigh, heavy, resigned, then a sharp ding as a file came through. “It’s all in there. See for yourself.”

The line went dead.

For a moment, I just stared at the notification on my screen, my pulse hammering in my ears. Then I opened it.

And the world stopped.

Line after line, message after message, recordings, screenshots, evidence so detailed it made me sick. Carmela’s schemes, her poison carefully dripped into every corner of my life since the moment she slithered back. Every accusation against Elodie had been fabricated, every staged moment, designed to corner her, humiliate her, break her.

She’d taken it. In silence. My Elodie. Suffering under the weight of lies I’d been too blind, too arrogant, too fucking willing to believe.

My chest seized. My vision blurred. My wolf snarled in my gut, restless, feral, ripping at me to act.

I sat there, staring at the screen, my heart a lump of ice in my chest.

“Babe?” Carmela’s voice broke the silence. She lounged in the chair opposite, swinging one leg over the other. Her lips curled in that sly, painted smile that once blinded me. “What’s the holdup? Weren’t you calling about lunch? I’m starving.”

Something inside me snapped.

I turned toward her slowly. My eyes dragged across her face, her body, the smugness dripping off her skin. But the warmth that used to be there, the blind adoration, the softness was gone. All that was left was cold. Dead. A darkness so sharp it scared even me.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 14[1,164 words]

Chapter 14: Chapter 14

Calhoun's POV

"Calhoun...?"

Carmela's voice sounded far away, even though she stood right in front of me. Sweet. Coy. But I couldn't feel anything but the ice crawling up my spine. I stared at her, letting the silence stretch between us, letting my eyes pin her where she stood. Her smile faltered, unease flickering across her face.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" she asked, softer now, like she sensed the shift.

I should've stayed quiet. Should've let it pass. But the words tore out of me, sharply.

"Why did you do it?"

Her head tilted. "Do what?"

My control snapped.

"Don't play with me, Carmela. Why the fuck did you set Elodie up?"

The name hit her like a slap, but instead of guilt, she rolled her eyes. "Oh, this again? She's just some Gamma. Why are you even this worked up? You said it yourself, she was nothing but an assistant."

And she was right. I had said that. Over and over, I'd forced those words out like they meant something, like if I said them enough I'd believe them. But hearing them from her mouth made bile rise in my throat.

Because no matter how many times I told myself Elodie was nothing, my chest still burned like fire every time I remembered her eyes. The betrayal in them. The hurt I'd put there.

Carmela stepped closer, her perfume choking me. She reached for my arm, a fake smile curving her lips. "You're tired. Let's eat. You'll feel better."

Her touch felt wrong. I shoved her hand off me, not hard, just enough to make her stumble back.

"Eat alone." My voice was ice, stripped of every ounce of patience.

The shock on her face almost amused me. Days, weeks, I'd played along, given her whatever she wanted, covered her tracks. But now? Now she saw something else. The wolf in me staring back at her, not the polished CEO she paraded around.

“What the hell, Calhoun?” Her voice sharpened, anger replacing her surprise. “You’re pushing me away, for her? For Elodie? That pathetic little secretary?”

Her words clawed into me, twisting, digging deeper than I wanted to admit. She made Elodie sound like nothing. Like dust beneath her heels. And maybe that’s how I’d treated her too. But the thought of Carmela spitting her name like that, like venom, made me want to break something.

I bit down hard, jaw aching, fists trembling against the desk as I forced my voice level. “Get out.”

She scoffed, livid. “You’ve lost your fucking mind.” Then she stormed out, slamming the door so hard the glass rattled.

And just like that, silence swallowed me whole.

I dropped into my chair, elbows braced on the desk, dragging my hands down my face. For hours I drowned myself in work, reports, numbers, deals. All of it meaningless noise to keep from hearing my own thoughts. The skyline outside bled from gold to black, and still I kept at it, clawing for distraction.

But no matter what I buried myself in, I couldn’t shake off Elodie’s face.

The way she looked at me the last time, her eyes shining, but not from tears. From fury. From heartbreak. Like she’d given me every last piece of herself, and I’d ground it into ash beneath my heel.

The ache in my chest spread until I could barely breathe. My wolf clawed under my skin, restless, agitated, howling her name through every vein in my body.

I checked my phone. Nothing. No call. No message. Nothing.

And then quietly, like admitting I sinned, I let it slip out.

“Elodie...”

Her name cracked in my throat, broke me open. Just two syllables, but it was enough to gut me. The office felt too big, too cold, too empty without her.

And for the first time in years, I felt something close to fear.

Because I’d lost her.

No matter how late I stayed at the office, she had always been there. Elodie never complained, never asked for more than I gave. She ran my world with quiet efficiency, like it was second nature to her. And I had destroyed her for it.

My chest tightened as memories clawed at me. The nights we stayed too late and lines blurred, the times I had her pressed against the glass, the city sprawling below us like a kingdom we owned. I fucked her with every fiber of my being and I enjoyed it. Her body trembling beneath mine, her beautiful face flushed, so soft and innocent it made me lose control. I had taken too much from her,

too rough, too demanding, yet she never stopped looking at me with those eyes like I was more than I really was.

Fuck.

I dug my fingers into my hair, trying to stop the avalanche of memories, but they kept coming. The tears in her eyes when she broke, when she finally realized I would never choose her. The look that cut deeper than any blade.

I snatched my phone and dialed Mila. Each second it rang stretched on, ringing repeatedly and I waited with bated breath. When she finally picked up, I didn't even breathe, I just spilled it out.

"Mila, tell me where she is. Where did Elodie go?"

For a moment, silence followed. Then a laugh. Bitter. Empty. "Are you out of your fucking mind? You're still playing house with Carmela and now you want to hunt Elodie down? What the hell for, Calhoun?"

I swallowed hard, my throat raw, gripping the phone so tightly it creaked. "I know now. I know everything. Carmela set her up, every lie, every piece of it, she staged it all. I'll make her confess. I'll drag her to Elodie myself and make her apologize. I'll give Elodie her job back, her life back. I'll—"

Mila cut me off, her voice slicing through me. She meant business. "Save your bullshit. Elodie doesn't need your scraps of guilt. And you'll never find her. Not now. Not in this lifetime."

Then the line went dead.

The sound of the dial tone filled the room. For a moment, I just stood there, listening to it, breathing through the rage tearing at my ribs. Then I snapped.

The phone left my hand and smashed against the floor, pieces scattering like glass teeth. My wolf snarled beneath my skin, pacing, hungry for violence. But violence wouldn't bring her back. Nothing would.

And then I heard it. The door creaked open behind me.

My heart stuttered, hope striking like lightning through a storm. My body moved before I could think, spinning toward the sound. My voice cracked out, raw, so desperate and called...

"Elodie..."

Her name ripped from me, broken and reverent all at once. For half a second, I let myself believe she was standing there. That she had come back. That I hadn't lost her.

Then the silhouette there turned to face me.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 15[1,233 words]

Chapter 15: Chapter 15

Calhoun's POV~

My shoulders slumped the second I saw her step in. Not Elodie. Not even a glimpse of her, not even a single chance to fix what I'd broken. Just Carmela, striding in with that ugly, twisted expression. My chest turned sour, and I sank back into my chair, staring past her like she wasn't even there.

Her face was red, like she'd been hit. I didn't need anyone to tell me what had happened. She'd overheard. She knew. That heat in her eyes, that sharp glare, I recognized the storm.

She rounded the table, slowly, and planted herself in front of me. Her voice cut through the office. "Seriously? Calhoun? Seriously? Elodie, again? What the fuck is wrong with you and her? Tell me the truth, you have a thing with her? Why do you keep mentioning your Gamma's name every single time?!"

I didn't move. Didn't blink. Didn't answer. This moment wasn't hers. It wasn't for her. My spirit had already left my body the second I realized it wasn't Elodie. Nothing made sense anymore. Carmela was air, annoying, meaningless air but I wanted her gone all the same. I sighed, slowly, deep, and frustrated. She didn't care. She still pressed on.

"Calhoun! Answer me! Are you into her?!" Her yelling grew desperate.

I parted my lips, tried to speak, but nothing came out. My voice had abandoned me. I closed my mouth again, sighing, again, and again.

Then she lost it. Her hands knocked over the chair beside her. Tears streamed, her words spilling. "Elodie is a nobody! Why the hell are you still clinging to her? You love her? She's a gamma! Not even up to wash my feet! Is she the one that has caught your interest now? I knew it right from the moment I saw her. She always wanted to be in your pants! But she's gone now, Calhoun! Why can't you get your mind off her now!"

I didn't flinch. Didn't react. Her rage, her accusations, they were not meaningless to me. She had always expected me to bow, to panic, to care. Not today. Not now. Not anymore. I watched, distantly, coldly, as her fury consumed her, my chest tightening at the thought of Elodie instead of her.

Carmela's hands flew across my desk, pushing papers, knocking pens and folders to the floor. She screamed, cried, banged her fists against the wood. And I remained eerily calm. Watching. Waiting. Detached. She stopped only when she noticed I wasn't panicking, that my gaze had pinned her like prey.

“Calhoun...for the last time...do you love this girl? Do you?” Her voice trembled, sobbing now. “Answer me! Be a man for once and own up to your feelings!”

I looked at her. Really looked. She expected fire, rage, maybe even an apology. But she got nothing. My gaze was cold, merciless, empty of anything she could understand.

She fell silent at last, exhausted, tears streaking her face.

I let a low, dangerous rumble escape me, my voice barely more than a growl. “Carmela...answer me this, would you?”

She stiffened, frozen in place, before giving a stiff nod. Good. That hesitation told me she knew she was already cornered. I leaned forward slightly, tilting my head, and let my words drop like a guillotine. “What if I love Elodie? What if she’s the woman I want to mate with...have as my Luna? Spend the rest of my miserable life with? What if she’s the woman I want to fuck...forever? Mother of my pups? What would you say?”

All the color drained from her face so fast I thought someone had switched off the blood in her veins. I studied her, trying to remember what had ever captivated me in the first place. Her beauty? Her arrogance? Her temper? She wasn’t even close to Elodie’s. Not even in the same league. And yet, here she was, trembling.

Tears began to streak down her cheeks, and I could see her lips moving, but no sound came out. Her shock left her voiceless. I rose slowly, rounding the table until I was standing directly in front of her. She flinched, a small, pathetic recoil that made my chest tighten with disgust.

“Do you know what you’ve done?” I said, voice cold, sharp as steel. “Do you even realize? You yelled at my staff, chased them off, deleted emails, important emails, that cost this company massive losses. You’ve turned into a bitch who makes everyone’s life miserable. Do you even know how much damage you have caused since you came into my life?”

Her face went pale. I didn’t care if she went into shock, if she fainted, or if her stupid little world collapsed.

“But why in hell would you think you could keep setting Elodie up? Not once...not twice...again and again? And I had been blind, thinking Elodie was the one causing trouble. How dare you?”

“I-I...Calhoun, I...no, I didn’t—” Her voice was shaky, incoherent, stammering like a frightened animal. “I...never...wanted...I...”

I slammed my hand down on the table, cutting her off. “ANSWER ME, YOU BITCH!” My roar echoed in the office, reverberating through the walls and her bones.

She dropped to her knees, crying, those crocodile tears that had once softened me, made me stupid. But not today. Not ever again. I leaned closer, forcing her to meet my eyes. “Look at me,” I commanded, and she shuddered but obeyed.

I let the revulsion in my voice drip like venom. “You’re right. I am in love with Elodie. Always have been. Never you. She owns my heart. Every promise I made, every touch...every time I fucked you, it meant nothing to me. Do you understand that? How dare you ever think otherwise? How dare you look down on a woman pure and loyal, while you...you—” I spat the words at her face like fire, “—you are nothing!”

Her shock twisted into rage. She screamed, pointing at me, shaking her fist. “Nothing? She’s just a filthy gamma! And so what if you fucked her? She’s a gamma! She’ll never want you! She’ll never—”

I didn’t let her finish. My hand shot up, connecting hard with her face. She staggered back, screaming, tears now turning to shrill panic. My five fingers had left their mark on her face, and I saw the fear in her eyes, the fear she had never known in all her pampered life.

“Calhoun! You hit me? You...you’re hitting me over a gamma? Over your side piece? You liar! You said you loved me only!” she shrieked, collapsing to the floor, sobs wracking her body.

I stepped toward her, slow and dangerously, letting her tremble under my shadow. She shut down, pressing back, shrinking. I stopped just before her, and with a sneer I spat on her. “Bitch! I hate you with every fiber of me. You made Elodie suffer. Now it’s your turn. Every humiliation, every bit of misery, I want you to feel it all. You will apologize to her. Every single second of agony you forced on her...you will pay.”

Carmela went white, her eyes wide with a fear I had cultivated over years, but today it was cold, unfeeling, and ruthless. She had crossed the line, and I was no longer the man who allowed foolish pampered women to think they could toy with my heart or hers.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 16[1,223 words]

Chapter 16: Chapter 16

Calhoun’s pov

Carmela’s face drained of every trace of color. She looked like she’d seen death itself standing in front of her. Her lips trembled as she tried to form words, broken sounds spilling from her throat.

“C-Calhoun... p-please... y-you don’t m-mean it, do you? I-I’ll change. Please, have m-mercy—”

I raised my hand slowly, two fingers pressed against my mouth. Silence. The whimpering stopped instantly. My eyes locked on hers, murderously, deliberately, making sure she saw every ounce of hatred carved into my face. If hatred could bleed, it would’ve drenched the floor between us.

The urge to end her right there, to crush her throat and make her bleed ten times over for what she’d made Elodie suffer, it almost consumed me. My boots dragged against the floor as I took a

step toward her. She scrambled backwards, crawling like a beaten animal, sobbing, whimpering, shaking all over.

But I wasn't about to play nice. Not anymore.

For so long, I'd been blinded. As Alpha, as the heir, I should've judged matters fairly, weighed both sides before bringing my judgment. But because of her, because of Carmela, I had no morals. No fairness. I'd branded Elodie guilty again and again, never giving her the chance to breathe. My Gamma... my heart now... I'd damned Elodie because I was a fool who listened to this venomous woman in front of me.

Every trace of love, of warmth, of affection I'd once felt for Carmela was gone. Evaporated into nothing. What was left was filth in my chest, disgust crawling up my throat. I wanted her gone. Out of my sight. Out of my life. Forever.

I lifted a finger and pointed it straight at her. My voice cut through her sobs.

"You're going to pay for every single thing you did to Elodie. Every lie, every setup, every misery you threw her way, you'll answer for all of them. I swear it."

Her eyes snapped up at me then, and I saw it... the shift. They darkened, fury and envy swirling until they gleamed black with something demonic. Her wolf bristled at Elodie's name, her aura spilling pure bloodlust into the room. She wanted to kill her. Rip her apart. Tear away everything that Elodie was.

I saw it, and I hated myself more for ever believing this monster. gods, if I could rip time apart, if I could go back and fix every mistake, protect Elodie, shield her from this viper, I would. But the only thing I had left now was vengeance.

I let out a low, cold laugh. "No, Carmela," I said softly, almost tenderly, though my voice dripped with venom. "It's time you pay up for every one of your sins. It's time you meet karma."

A smile curled slowly onto my lips. Not warm, not kind. It was a predator's smile. The kind that promises blood. I advanced toward her, step by step. And in her eyes, I watched the last flicker of light die.

Without warning, I grabbed her. My hand clamped around her wrist so tight I felt her bones shift under my grip. She shrieked, tried to pull free, hitting at my arm with those weak little hands, but it was useless. My claws dug into her skin until she whimpered in pain, her voice breaking into pathetic sobs.

"C-Calhoun, stop! Please, you're hurting me!"

Good. Let her feel it. A fraction of what she'd made Elodie feel.

I dragged her out of the office, her heels scraping the floor, her body stumbling as she struggled to keep up. The moment we hit the hall, heads turned. Staff froze mid-step, whispers catching fire,

gasps piercing the air. Some raised their phones, taking pictures as Carmela's mascara ran in ugly black streaks down her face. She tried to cover herself, crying harder, but I didn't let go.

I wanted them all to see.

I wanted her shame carved into memory.

The whispers grew louder. Fingers pointed. I didn't care. Let them talk. Let them see the Alpha finally put this bitch where she belonged.

When we reached the front, I shoved her forward so hard she landed on her knees. She sobbed, hair sticking to her wet face, but before she could gather herself, I pointed at the guards. My voice came out like a whip.

"Pick up this bitch."

"Yes, Alpha," the guards said immediately, hauling her up like a sack of filth.

She kicked and screamed, her voice slicing through the lobby. "Calhoun! No! Don't do this to me! Please! Don't humiliate me like this! You can't... remember what we had, the nights, the memories, don't forget me like this!"

Her desperation was bile in my throat. I glared at her, stepping closer, my voice was low and venomous.

"Since you like making others kneel... seems it's your turn to taste it."

I told the guards, "Make sure she kneels on the rough ground outside. Don't let her fall, don't let her rest. Not for a second."

"Yes, Alpha."

They dragged her away, her wailing filling the air. "Nooo! Calhoun, don't! Please! I'll do anything, don't let them... Calhoun!"

Her cries followed me, but I didn't look back. Not once.

I turned and walked slowly out of the company, every step of mine was heavy with the storm tearing me apart inside. My mind wasn't here. It was with Elodie. With the way her laugh had once lit this same hall. With the warmth she gave me even when I never deserved it. With the way I'd pretended not to care while every cell in my body craved her.

The more I thought of her, the more I felt like I was dying. And this time, I couldn't stop it.

My eyes caught the car waiting ahead, the same one we had our rough sex nights in. My chest tightened. I remembered her back arched against the seat, her lips parted, moaning my name until the windows fogged. I remembered the marks we left on each other, every reminder that she had once been mine. I never erased them. I couldn't. Until Carmela...

My hands shook as I opened the car door. My heart sank.

The inside was pink. Pink bows, pink covers, pink trinkets, every piece of Elodie replaced with Carmela's filth.

My vision blurred. My chest burned.

With a guttural growl, I slammed my fists onto the steering wheel again and again until the horn wailed, until the leather dented, until my knuckles split.

"AHHHHHH!" The roar ripped out of me, shaking the car, tearing my throat raw.

My heart ached in ways words couldn't reach. I should've stopped her when I saw her packing that night. I should've fought for her. I should've protected her. Instead, I let Carmela ruin everything.

Rage flooded my veins, hot and poisonous. The sound of footsteps pulled me out of the spiral. Tristan.

I snapped my head toward him, eyes burning. "Bring another car. Drive me in it. Now."

"Yes, Alpha," he said quickly, without a single question.

I leaned back in the seat, breathing ragged, blood dripping from my hand onto the ruined wheel. And all I could see was Elodie walking away, slipping from me because I'd been too blind, too stupid, too cruel to keep her safe.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 17[1,110 words]

Chapter 17: Chapter 17

Calhoun's pov~

Tristan pulled up in the new car just as the sun was burning the edge of the morning sky. The moment I stepped out, I could feel the shift. Eyes darting, whispers circling, people too afraid to meet my stare yet too desperate to look away. The air reeked of curiosity and fear, and I couldn't give a damn about any of it. My mind wasn't here with them, it was locked on Carmela and the lesson she was about to finish learning.

My shoes struck against the marble floor as I marched down the corridor. Guards lined the walls, standing where I had ordered them to keep watch since last night. Carmela had been on her knees through the hours, the cold and rough ground gnawing at her skin while she broke piece by piece.

The moment I announced myself with a single word, “Move,” the air shifted. The guards snapped to attention and bowed their heads. “Alpha,” they echoed in unison.

And then Carmela... turned. Slowly, like a dying flame clinging to its last ember. Her eyes were hollow now, no trace of that mischief, that fire that used to glimmer in them. She looked like she had been wrung dry of every ounce of pride. She tried to rise, scrambling pathetically, but her legs betrayed her, sending her crashing face-first back onto the floor. The guards didn't even flinch to help her. They knew better.

Tears poured down her face, the sound of her sobbing cutting through the silence. My chest didn't stir. Pity was something she had long burned from me.

But then, instead of bowing her head and accepting defeat, she lost her fucking mind.

“Elodie!” she shrieked, her voice cracking. “Elodie is nothing but a filthy whore! A scheming, disgusting bitch who bewitched you, Calhoun Damaris! She put a spell on you! Because I know you—” she clawed at the air, her spit flying with her words— “you would never touch me, never hurt me! You love me, not that conniving slut!”

The entire corridor froze. Every whisper, every breath fell silent as her words rang through the air. I felt the shift deep inside me, my wolf snarling, growling so loud it thundered in my skull. My eyes flashed amber, the beast inside clawing to get out, to rip her throat wide open and end the noise once and for all.

I clenched my fists, forcing myself to cage him in. Not yet.

The staff had gathered now, hovering like moths drawn to the fire of madness unraveling before them. Carmela turned her wrath on them, shrieking with veins bulging in her throat.

“What the fuck are you staring at?!” she screamed. “All of you! Fucking parasites! Laughing at me?! Mocking me?! Just wait till I stand again I'll make each and every one of you pay!”

Her laughter was manic, a shrill, broken sound that crawled down the walls.

I was about to silence her myself when, to my surprise, the atmosphere shifted. Several of my employees, those who had worked closest with Elodie, stepped forward. Their faces were twisted with fury.

“You're nothing but a liar, Carmela!” one shouted.

“Elodie did nothing but serve Alpha with loyalty!” another barked.

“She obeyed every command, endured your cruelty while you taunted her every day!” a woman snapped, her voice trembling with long-repressed rage. “We all saw how you cornered her, degraded her, tried to break her, while she kept her head down and took it for the sake of peace!”

“You're the whore!” another spat. “Elodie was pure. You're filth. Always have been.”

Voices began to overlap, battering Carmela from every side.

Carmela didn't stop. She kept spitting her venom, tears running down her cheeks, mascara streaking down her face like black rivers.

"Whores! Just like Elodie!" she shrieked. "How much did she pay you to be on her side? Or... did she spread her legs for you too?"

The last words hit the air. Gasps erupted around the room. My blood boiled. My claws ached to sink into her.

"CARMELA!!!" I roared, my voice breaking through the chaos.

Heads snapped toward me. Everyone froze. Then, like frightened rats, they scattered, leaving only her. Tears were streaming down her face, and she shrank back as if death itself had come for her.

But she wasn't finished. Snorting, trembling, she pointed at the staff who had dared speak against her. "Thank goodness you're here! That asshole there! And you!" She jabbed a finger at each of them, voice shaking, wild. "Fire them! Fire them, Calhoun! How dare they talk back to me?"

Her desperation made her almost unrecognizable, mentally frayed, unhinged.

The staff paled. They thought I would protect her, as I had in the past. I ground my jaw. Slowly, I narrowed my eyes at her.

"This?" I said, low, and dangerous. "This is what you've been doing? Locked up here? Made to kneel, forced to reflect on your actions? And this is the lesson you've learned? Barking at my staff like some deranged beast?" My amber eyes bore into her. "Have you not learned? When you dare speak Elodie's name from your filthy mouth, you're digging your own grave."

Her face drained of color. But I wasn't done. My voice didn't waver.

"I heard everything they said. And they were honest. You tried to ruin my company, hurt an innocent woman, because of your petty, vicious jealousy. If anyone is to blame for your downfall... it's you. No one else."

Her sobs grew louder, her mascara still running in streaks. She lowered her head, shivering. I leaned closer, so close she could feel the cold weight of me pressing against her.

"And until now, I didn't see how truly vicious you are... how blind I was." I let the words sink, poison in her ears. "To be perfectly honest... I love Elodie. Not you."

The room went silent. Staff gasped, hands over their mouths. Carmela froze. Dead. Eyes wide. Her Heart stopped.

I stepped closer. Closer. My Amber eyes locked on hers. "Everything I felt for you," I whispered, "is gone. Replaced by disgust. I want you out of my life. Forever."

She laughed. Through tears, she continued. “Seriously?” she hissed. “You think you’re breaking up with me now? You think I don’t know what had been going on? You screwed her for years, Calhoun, without ever acknowledging her publicly. The minute I showed up, you dumped Elodie like yesterday’s trash. YOU are the one who broke her, not me!”

Gasps ricocheted through the office again. Her serpentine smirk curled across her face. My body froze.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 18 - 19[1,345 words]

Chapter 18: Chapter 19

Calhoun’s POV~

She saw it, the nerve she’d struck and she laughed like a banshee, so broken, mascara streaking down her face. The sound made my blood pound in my skull.

She tilted her head at me, eyes glinting with sick triumph. “What’s wrong, Calhoun? Did that cut too deep?” Her voice was taunting, cracked with madness. “Do you want to know what I found the first time I got into your Rolls Royce? Hmm?”

I clenched my fists, nails biting my palms.

She leaned closer, her breath sour with tears and rage. “Elodie’s panties. Her bra. And a little note she left for you under your seat, ‘Thank you, love. From Elodie.’” Her laugh splintered in the air. “But you never got to see it, did you? I destroyed it. Tore it up right in front of myself. Ha!”

Heat climbed up my neck. My skin turned molten red, my chest rising like I had fire trapped inside me.

But she didn’t stop. She pressed harder, lips curling like a snake ready to strike.

“Face it,” she spat. “You ruined Elodie, not me! She ran because she saw you for what you are, a weak, pathetic man. You should’ve protected her from me, but you didn’t. You hurt her. You chose me. And now?” Her teeth bared in a vicious grin. “Now you’ll rot in your regret forever. She’ll never come back to you.”

That broke something inside me.

A growl ripped out of my chest before I could stop it. My hand shot forward and clamped around her throat. She gasped, her nails clawing at my wrist as I squeezed. My vision blurred red. My wolf surged up, desperate to rip through her skin. My eyes flashed golden and feral, hungry to snap her neck right there.

She choked, legs kicking weakly, mascara tears running like blood.

“Alpha, please!” Tristan’s voice cut through. He gripped my arm. “There are too many eyes here. Stop before you do something you can’t take back.”

His words reached me through the haze. I froze. My chest heaved. Slowly, I let go.

Carmela collapsed onto the ground, coughing, gagging, her sobs turning to ragged cries. Her body writhed, pitiful and broken, but I felt no mercy. No satisfaction. Only disgust.

I stepped forward again, looming over her. She flinched, trembling. I fisted my hand in her hair, digging into her scalp until she screamed. And without a word, I dragged her across the floor.

Gasps rippled through the office. Whispers followed us like shadows. No one dared step forward. They only watched as I hauled her, her shrieks echoing, her hands clawing uselessly at mine.

I didn’t stop. I didn’t look back. I pulled her through the corridor, her sobs scraping at the walls, until the only thing left ringing in my ears was the sound of her pain.

And even then, it wasn’t enough.

I made sure Carmela was locked up. The dungeon in my northern estate wasn’t damp or filthy like some common prison, it was luxury stripped bare, turned cruel. White walls, no windows, a bed of splintered wood without sheets. I told Tristan to scatter broken shells across the floor, let her feet bleed with every step she dared to take. She would kneel for hours with her arms outstretched, heavy chains weighing them down. No food unless she begged, no water unless she cried for it. An Alpha’s daughter or not, Carmela would learn she wasn’t untouchable.

I didn’t check on her. Not once. I didn’t think of her. For one day, her existence evaporated from my mind. My chest was consumed by one name, one ghost and it was Elodie. The ache of her absence gnawed at me until I thought I’d lose my mind. Why had I been such a fool? Why had I let poison blind me? Fucking why?

The next day, I snapped. I picked out designers, jewels, perfumes, the best money could buy and had my assistants deliver them to Mila’s doorstep. But I didn’t leave with them. I lingered, pacing like a madman, until the last of them was gone. Then I knocked, stiff and heavy.

My heart pounded like a drum. When I heard her footsteps, my lungs froze. The door clicked, and Mila’s eyes fell on me.

Her face dropped. Cold. Disgusted. She went to slam the door shut, but I shoved my leg in the gap.

“Don’t.” My voice was hoarse.

Her growl cut through me. “What the hell do you want now, Calhoun? Haven’t you ruined enough mornings? Your face makes me want to gag.”

I swallowed the sting. I’d grown used to her tongue. In the past I’d have barked back, but today? Today I couldn’t afford pride. So I forced a smile and lifted the bouquet of roses.

Mila’s brow shot up.

She scoffed so loud it echoed down the hall. “Are you insane? Flowers? What the hell is that for? Carmela isn’t even living here! Or did your wolf chew through your brain?” She folded her arms, lips curling. “Tell me you didn’t seriously think roses would fix anything. Are you crazy?”

Her words cut me like knives, but the bite of them was so sharp it almost made me laugh. Almost. I flinched, sighed, and steadied myself.

“Mila,” I said quietly, “please. I didn’t come here to fight. I came to make peace. Every luxury I gave Carmela... I doubled it. For you. As an apology.”

She cut me off instantly, her voice like fire. “So now you’re here because Carmela finally broke your heart? That spell she had on you is gone, is that it?”

I froze. Her words gutted me. She was right.

Her eyes widened, and she gasped dramatically. “Oh no. Don’t tell me, you’re here for Elodie, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” I admitted, voice breaking.

Her eyes narrowed, so sharp as steel. I sighed again, heavy, beaten down. This was harder than facing any enemy.

“Can I at least come inside?” I asked. “Please.”

She rolled her eyes with so much disdain it nearly split me in two. “The only reason I’ll let you in is because Elodie said blood is blood. No matter what.” She shoved the door aside. “Don’t make me regret this.”

Inside, the air was thick with her disapproval. She didn’t waste time.

“If you’re here for her number, forget it. It’s not happening. Elodie’s gone.”

“I know.” My voice cracked. I dragged my hand through my hair. “And I’m sorry. God, Mila, I know I fucked up. Even my wolf won’t answer me anymore. He’s gone dead inside. I can’t breathe, I can’t think. My world’s falling apart if I don’t see her. I broke up with Carmela. I cut it all off. Elodie is all I have left. Please. Punish me, spit in my face, I don’t care. Just... let me try one last time.”

The silence was brutal. Mila’s face softened at the edges. She exhaled, sat down, and looked at me with a tired kind of grief.

“You know,” she said softly, “ Elodie loved you for nine years. Nine goddamn years. And what did she get in return? Heartbreaks. Over and over. You weren’t worth it. You were never worth it.”

Her words felt like knives in my ribs. My eyes burned red, my throat closing up. I nodded, stiffly.

“I know,” I rasped. “I know, Mila. Just this one time. One last time, to make it all right.”

And then I did what I’d never done before. What an Alpha like me would never do. I went down on my knees in front of her. Just because of Elodie.

Her mouth dropped open.

“Please,” I whispered. My voice cracked, so raw and desperate. “Just this once.”

Mila stared at me like she didn’t recognize the man in front of her. Slowly, she sighed.

“Fine,” she muttered. “I’ll ask Elodie if she’s willing to see you. But it’s not in my hands anymore. If she says no, then that’s the end.”

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 19 - 20 [1,576 words]

Chapter 19: Chapter 20

Calhoun’s POV—

I leaned forward, elbows digging into my knees, watching every movement of Mila’s fingers as she typed. Each tap she made against the glass screen sounded like the ticking of a bomb to me. My chest was tight, my heart stuttering against my ribs like it didn’t know whether to beat or break. When she finally hit send, she locked her phone with a snap and tossed it onto the glass table.

“Happy now?” Mila asked, her voice laced with sarcasm.

“Yes,” I nodded too quickly, almost like a fucking eager pup. “Thank you, Mila.”

She rolled her eyes so hard I thought they’d disappear into her skull, then walked off toward the kitchen. But I didn’t move, couldn’t move. My eyes never left her phone sitting there, black screen staring back at me like it knew I was desperate. I kept waiting for it to light up, praying for Elodie’s name to glow across it. My shoulders began to sink the longer nothing happened. God, even an emoji. Just one little sign that she thought of me. That she hadn’t erased me.

Mila came back with popcorn and a glass of water, plopping onto the couch beside me. She eyed me once, then twice, then shook her head. “Have you looked at yourself in the mirror lately?”

I frowned, snapping my head toward her. “What the hell is that supposed to mean?”

She shoved a kernel in her mouth before answering, her voice muffled but scathing. “You look like a high schooler waiting for his crush to text back. Pathetic. Honestly, I should take a picture right now and sell it to the media. ‘Alpha Calhoun is reduced to a lovesick idiot.’ They’d eat it up.”

Her laughter that followed next cut through me like knives, but I didn’t even bite back. Not tonight. I swallowed the insult, my jaw tight, eyes dragging back to the phone. The glow of the TV flickered in the background while I sat in silence, watching her chew, listening to my own heart pound like I was on a court trial.

Hours dragged by. My eyelids were heavy, but my mind wouldn’t stop clawing at me. No notification. No chime. Nothing but silence pressing in. Mila sighed and asked, “Aren’t you going home? I’ll tell you if she replies.”

“No,” I muttered, grabbing a couch pillow and pulling it to my chest like a shield. I laid back, staring at the ceiling. “I’ll stay here. Until she answers.”

Mila made a face, rolled her eyes again, and turned the TV volume up, letting me stew.

The night continued to stretch on cruelly. My body ached for sleep, but I couldn’t give in. Then finally a sound. A chime. My eyes snapped open before my brain could catch up. I lunged for the phone, faster than Mila could blink. My heart was beating like it was about to crack my ribs.

But the screen lit up with nothing more than: Subscription successfully renewed.

My heart plummeted, a heavy sourness flooding my chest. My hands shook as I shoved the phone back on the table.

“Oh for God’s sake, Calhoun!” Mila snapped, throwing her popcorn bowl down so hard kernels spilled. “Could you stop acting like a lunatic? It’s a text, not the end of the damn world! Maybe she doesn’t want to talk to you, maybe she’s asleep, maybe...oh, I don’t know, she left her phone in the bathroom! Jeez, watching you is making me lose my mind!”

I slumped back onto the sofa, my shoulders heavy, dragging my palms over my face as if that would stop the storm inside me. But it didn’t. Nothing could. Not until I heard from Elodie.

And the truth was brutal, I was now unraveling, piece by piece, waiting for a woman who might never want me back.

The second chime hit my ears so loud like a gunshot. My eyes flew open, and before Mila could even twitch, I lunged for the phone. My pulse was so damn loud in my head I could hardly hear myself breathe. But the screen was locked.

“Fuck,” I hissed under my breath, shoving the device toward Mila like a sulking child.

She gave me a glare sharp enough to cut skin. “Seriously?”

“Just open it.” My voice cracked, too eager.

She sighed dramatically, unlocked it, and the moment the screen came alive I snatched it back from her grip.

“Are you crazy?!” she shrieked, half rising off the couch.

“Shut up,” I muttered, eyes glued to the glowing words. And then I saw it. The message. From Elodie.

‘Then it’s fine. I’m going to see him for the last time.’

A strange sweetness crept into my chest, faint but maddening, like honey dissolving slowly into blood. My lips trembled, my throat tightened. For the last time. That was enough. Enough for me to claw my way back into her life.

Mila ripped the phone from my hands and peeked at the text. She caught the smile tugging my lips and rolled her eyes so hard it nearly broke her skull. “Ugh, please!”

“She’s going to see me,” I whispered, the words felt so foreign. “Elodie finally agreed to see me.”

Maybe she still loved me. Even if it was only the scraps of love left in her. I’d take it. I’d take every fucking crumb the universe was willing to give.

Mila shook her head, scrolling. “She even texted the address of the meeting spot. Now what’s your genius plan?”

But I wasn’t listening. My body was already moving. I bolted for the door. “Text it to me! I’m boarding my jet right now!”

“Ugh, love!” she groaned under her breath.

I heard it. I didn’t care.

By the time I stormed out into the night, I had my phone to my ear, choking Tristan with my voice.

The call rang three times before his groggy voice came through. “Alpha? It’s late—”

“Where the hell are you?” I barked, cutting him off.

He coughed, still half-asleep. “I booked a hotel close to the office. Couldn’t make it back to the apartment.”

“Good. Call the pilot. I want the jet fueled and ready. We fly in less than an hour.”

“Alpha wait, it’s—”

I hung up. No time for objections. My blood was screaming for her. I ran straight into the waiting car, and within minutes I was racing toward the airport.

The hum of the jet filled the silence. I sat by the window, staring into the black stretch of sky. I couldn't sleep. Not a second. My thoughts were like a storm, ripping me apart from the inside.

Was she okay? Had she lost weight from crying over me? Was she eating well in that damn Pack that didn't deserve her? Did she curse my name when she lay awake at night, or worse did she try to forget me?

My chest ached until I thought it would cave in. I shut my eyes and all I could see was her. Elodie at the very beginning, when Mila first brought her into our circle, introducing her as her best friend. Elodie couldn't hide her crush. I'd seen it in her blushes when I leaned too close, the way her gaze lingered on me like I was her gravity, the endless questions about my schedule, my habits, my likes. She wore her heart on her sleeve, and I...God, I'd been too blind, too fucking obsessed with Carmela, to see her worth.

Even after I had sex with her that first time, I tried to dismiss her. Pretend it was nothing. Until she confessed. Until she said the words I wasn't man enough to say back.

I rejected her heart but kept her body. We fucked everywhere. The office, the car, her apartment, my house, places I can't even name without tasting her skin again. And she let me. She never asked for money. Never asked for titles or for me to claim her in public. She wasn't like the others. She gave herself to me because she loved me.

And what did I do? I fucked it up the moment Carmela resurfaced. I threw Elodie into the fire for a ghost of the past.

When did I fall for her? Was it the nights she worked beside me until her eyes dimmed? The way she knew what I needed before I said a word? Or was it simply the way she cared for me, her emotions raw, endless, patient? I couldn't pinpoint it. Somewhere along the line, she'd become air to me, and I didn't even notice until I'd poisoned it.

Now I was choking on regrets.

But this time, I'd do it right. Whatever she asked, I'd give. No more shadows. No more secrets. I'd go public. Marry her. Chain myself to her until my last breath. If she wanted my soul, I'd cut it out and put it in her hands.

For the first time in years, I smiled, a small, broken smile that actually touched my eyes. I counted down the hours, the minutes, the seconds until I could see her again.

Eight excruciating hours later, the plane touched down.

And I ran. I didn't walk, didn't breathe. I rushed through the terminal toward the address Mila had sent, like a man with a noose around his neck, desperate for one last chance to live.

Alpha's Regret: Losing His True Mate - Chapter 20 - 21 [1,373 words]

Chapter 20: Chapter 21

Calhoun's pov~

I almost didn't recognize the place at first, here was a small rooftop bistro tucked behind the new glass towers of the neighboring Pack's business district. It had been chosen for its quietness: modern steel and greenery, a place people could disappear into without running into anyone they knew. That was probably the point.

I stepped through the door and my world narrowed to the one figure in the corner. Elodie. She sat with her back to the low city noise, a plain sweater, her hair pulled up into the loose knot she used whenever she wanted to be invisible. It should have been a relief to see her safe; instead it felt like walking into a room that had been emptied of air. One month apart and the ache felt like punishment I hadn't earned.

She looked different, softer somehow, not the prim woman who sat at my desk. There was no crisp blouse, no neat office hair. There, was the Elodie I used to catch glancing at me during meetings, the one who'd tucked things into my bag without saying why. For a second, I wanted nothing more than to cross the room and press her to me, to fix whatever I had broken.

I forced my smile into place and walked over like a man doing what he knew would be judged later. "Elodie," I said. "It's been a while." My heart raced.

Her eyes didn't lift right away. When they did, there was no welcome in them, only the flatness of someone who'd rehearsed goodbyes. "Let's not waste time," she said. Her voice was small, the way small things can still be sharp. "I only agreed to meet because I needed to close this."

There it was, a soft blade. I couldn't keep myself from stumbling forward. "I know," I said before I could stop myself. "I know I destroyed things. I let Carmela tear everything apart. I...I didn't see what I wanted until it was gone. I love you, Elodie. I always—" The rest of it tumbled out: how blind I'd been, how I'd let the wrongness seem easier than the truth. How I'd been a coward.

I pictured the scene that would save me: her standing, throwing herself into me, forgiveness falling easy like rain. Instead she watched me like someone watching a play they hated but felt obliged to finish.

"Too late," she said, and the words landed harder than anything anyone had ever thrown at me. "Your apology doesn't change the month I spent waking up without you. It doesn't change the things I tolerated because I believed they were temporary. I don't love you anymore, Calhoun."

Her hand slipped from the coffee cup as if it burned; she stood and began to gather herself with the calm of someone who had rehearsed every movement. It should have been a small thing, an exit but it felt like the floor beneath me dropped away.

“No,” I said. I grabbed her wrist before she reached the door. The panic in me was not dignified. “Don’t say that. We can fix it. I can fix it. I’ve dealt with her. I’ll leave everything behind. Name it, anything, I’ll give it to you. Five years. We had five years of something real. Don’t throw it away for one month of rage.”

She pulled free with a strange strength I hadn’t expected. Her voice was quiet but it carried so much weight. “That month was exactly what I needed. I had to see you clearly, without excuses, without the shadow of someone else on every plan. I don’t love you anymore, Calhoun. I’m not your return ticket.”

Those words... I felt them as if a hand had reached inside my ribs and twisted. I wanted to scream that she didn’t mean it, that she couldn’t just switch off her feelings like a light. I wanted to tell her that everything about me had changed in the last sleepless nights, that I had finally seen what I’d been killing. I wanted to beg, to bargain, to do anything that might bring her back.

Instead my voice came out thin and raw. “Please. We can try. I’ll do anything.”

She looked at me with something like pity and contempt and then she surprised me with a truth that cut deeper than all her quietness. “You always did what was easiest. You kept me as something convenient: at night, in private, unannounced in public. That was your choice. You chose to let things be because it was simpler than being brave. I’m done being the easier choice.”

She picked up her bag with the calm of someone who’d decided her life was no longer negotiable. I felt something inside me loosen and fall not just pain but a cold understanding of my own failure. I clutched at her hand one last time, ridiculous and pleading, my pride bleeding away.

“Please,” I said like I was praying. “Don’t make this the end.”

Her hand slid from mine with the finality of a slammed door. Her face was unreadable as she stepped back.

I never begged anyone in my life. Not once. Not as a boy, not as an Alpha, not as a man who’d broken bones with his bare hands. But here I was, on my knees in every way that mattered, staring at the only woman who’d ever owned me, watching her slip away like water through my fingers.

“Elodie, please,” I rasped, my throat burning. “I know I fucked everything up. If you forgive me, just once, we can leave tonight. We’ll go home, we’ll get married tomorrow. No more secrets, no more hiding what we are. Work, don’t work, I don’t care. Everything I have is yours. Every part of me is yours. No one else matters. Not Carmela, not anyone. I’ll never hurt you again. Just give me one more chance. Please. Don’t throw away what we built.”

My voice cracked. God, I hated how desperate it sounded. But it was the truth. Nine years. Nine years of us burned to the ground because I'd been too blind, too damn arrogant to hold on the way I should have.

Her eyes didn't soften. Once, those words would have undone her. I'd seen her melt under less. But now... her face was stone. Her heart was gone, calcified, buried.

She pulled her hand out of mine like it was nothing. "Listen to me, Calhoun. We're finished. I'm giving you exactly what you always wanted."

The words sliced through me like knives dipped in ice.

She kept going. "Do you remember our deal? You said when the one you truly loved came back, I'd step aside. And when Carmela returned, I hoped, God help me, I actually hoped, you might choose me. But you didn't. You showed me exactly where I stand. And I won't forget it."

My vision blurred. My chest felt like it had been split open with claws. I shook my head so hard I thought it might roll off. "No. No, Elodie, don't say that. Don't walk away from me." My voice broke. "I made a mistake, a terrible mistake. Just give me one chance to fix it. One. I'll burn the world down for you. Please, Elodie—"

Her silence was worse than a slap. She stood there, watching me crumble, then turned with her shoulders straight, like she was carrying the last coffin nail of what we had.

And she left.

She didn't look back.

Not once.

The door closed behind her and with it, every scrap of light I had left. My chest caved in. It was more than heartbreak, it was murder in slow motion. She killed me without touching me, and I knew she'd keep walking as if I was nothing but dust in her rearview.

I wanted to howl. To rip through that bistro with claws and teeth until nothing but wreckage remained. To drag her back, to make her see that I was hers and she was mine.

But I sat there instead, trembling like some broken animal, my palms slick with sweat, my face wet for the first time since I was a child.