

Chapter 7 - Wild Jasmine Waits for No Full Moon

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Vincent had just escorted Seraphina to her car and turned around when he caught the last few words of my sentence.

He strode over, his gray eyes narrowed in suspicion. "Who's leaving?"

I realized he hadn't heard the part about canceling the ceremony. I needed a quick excuse.

"A friend of mine," I said casually, "leaving Chicago soon."

Vincent studied me for a moment, as if trying to detect a lie. Eventually, he nodded and let it go.

My wolf scoffed. He didn't care. If he did, he would've noticed the bond between us was already hanging by a thread, barely there.

Four days before my departure, Vincent returned from his Amalfi Coast trip with Seraphina, bringing along their "souvenir photos."

Holding his phone in one hand for a video call with Seraphina, he used the other to lift an ornate silver frame, showing it off to the screen. His face lit up with a softness I'd never seen before.

"Seraphina, look, the photos are printed," he said, his voice warm. "When I picked them up, the staff said they look like something out of a movie poster. Perfect, just like us."

I happened to walk out of the bedroom to get some water at that moment. Our eyes met briefly in the air. For a split second, I caught a flicker of guilt in his expression—maybe he finally realized how inappropriate it was to flaunt his romantic vacation with another woman in front of his future Luna.

But the guilt was fleeting. He quickly averted his gaze.

I glanced at the photo briefly and offered a neutral comment. "It's beautiful."

In the photo, Vincent looked breathtaking in a white linen suit, standing against the backdrop of the Mediterranean's vivid blue waters. Golden sunlight bathed them, turning the image into a work of art.

It was everything I'd once dreamed of for our honeymoon—a white dress, his arm around me, and a timeless moment captured by the sea.

The only difference was, the woman in the photo wasn't me.

But my heart no longer ached at the sight. Since the day I learned about Seraphina's pregnancy, all the emotions I had for Vincent had been drained from me, little by little. The bond that had tied us together for twenty years was now withered, hanging by a single fragile strand—ready to snap at any moment.

Vincent, however, froze.

He suddenly realized that I hadn't spoken to him in weeks. Not even a single message while he was away on his trip.

It made him uneasy.

On the video call, Seraphina rambled on about where to display the photos in her family's estate and her plans to gift their travel souvenirs to the pack elders.

Vincent shook his head, suppressing the strange feeling gnawing at him. He told himself I was just stressed from the ceremony preparations. Once it was all over, things would go back to normal.

No, my inner wolf whispered in the depths of my mind, nothing will ever go back to normal.

Two days before leaving, I went to the pharmacy to pick up some supplies. In the parking lot, I ran into Vincent and Seraphina, fresh from her prenatal check-up.

Vincent's eyes flickered with obvious panic when he saw me. He opened his mouth, as if to explain, but Seraphina beat him to it.

She hurried over to me, grabbing my hand with a trembling grip. Her body leaned forward dramatically, as though she was about to collapse.

"Eleanor," she choked out, her voice quivering with emotion. Tears welled in her eyes. "I know you're struggling to accept the fact that Vincent and I are having a child."

Her voice broke as she continued, "But I don't have much time. The doctor says I only have a year left at most. All I want is to see my baby born, just once in my life."

She clutched my hand tighter, her nails digging into my skin. "After the baby is born, I promise I'll leave. I won't interfere with your union. I swear it."

Before I could respond, Vincent rushed over, pulling her into his arms with a face full of concern.

"You're too weak to be doing this," he scolded gently, his protective tone overflowing with tenderness.

Then he turned to me, his gaze sharp and cold. "Now that you know, I won't hide it anymore."

"Don't worry," he added, his voice firm. "This won't affect our ceremony. I'll mark you when the time comes. The bond will be completed. Seraphina's child is just... a special case."

A month ago, this would've broken me. I would've screamed, cried, demanded to know why my Alpha, my mate, was choosing to have a child with another woman.

I might have wondered if it was my fault—if I wasn't good enough to make him stay.

But now, after weeks of torment, I finally understood.

It wasn't me. It was him. Vincent didn't love me.

He didn't love me, which was why it was so easy for him to hurt me. He didn't love me, which was why he'd never feel my pain.

I looked at them both silently, my voice calm and steady as I said, "I understand."

Then I turned and walked away, taking my bag of medicine with me. I had one day left to pack my belongings and finalize my departure.

Behind me, the two of them clearly hadn't expected my reaction.

Vincent, in particular, stood there, his expression a mixture of confusion and unease. He stared after me, watching my retreating figure as if something didn't sit right with him.

He couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong.

Just a month ago, I'd been fighting with him endlessly about Seraphina. Now, faced with undeniable proof of her pregnancy, I was calm. Too calm.

This wasn't normal.

Something was definitely wrong.

I had just reached the stairwell when I heard hurried footsteps behind me.

Seraphina caught up to me, grabbing my sleeve with her hand.

Vincent was busy getting the car, and the parking lot was deserted. With no one else around, the mask she wore slipped.

"Eleanor Hayes," she sneered, her voice low and dripping with malice. "How does it feel to watch your Alpha have a child with another woman?"

Her eyes sparkled with cruel satisfaction as she leaned in closer. "Did you know? During that week in Amalfi, he was with me every night. We stayed in the same suite. He told me stories when I couldn't sleep, took me to watch the sunrise, and cooked me breakfast with his own hands—"

"Enough," I interrupted her, my voice icy.

I didn't want to hear it. Not because it hurt, but because I simply didn't care anymore.

I shook her off and turned to leave, but the motion caused her to stumble. She lost her balance and tipped backward.

Instinctively, I reached out and grabbed her arm, stopping her from falling down the stairs.

Before I could let go, an enraged voice roared behind me.

"What are you doing?!"

Vincent had returned just in time to see the scene. To him, it must've looked like I was trying to push Seraphina.

Seraphina immediately switched back to her helpless act. She clutched her stomach, her eyes red with unshed tears.

"Vincent," she whimpered, her voice trembling. "I just wanted to thank Eleanor for her understanding, but... maybe I said something wrong. I didn't mean to upset her..."

Her hands covering her stomach made Vincent's face darken instantly.

"Eleanor Hayes!" he thundered, disappointment and fury lacing his voice. The weight of his Alpha authority bore down on me like a physical force. "I can't believe you'd stoop to this! Apologize to Seraphina. Now!"