

### 3

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I met his gaze steadily. "An Omega has no place in the main pack registry. I'm just... adapting to my new reality."

Marcus's expression turned distressed. "You'll always be my Luna, Sarah. You have a place here in our pack."

I met his gaze steadily. "As your future Luna, I should follow pack law. I won't embarrass you as an Alpha."

He pulled me closer, voice thick with emotion. "You always think of me first. That's why you're perfect for our pack."

I suppressed a bitter smile at his performance.

"Marcus, I want to leave the hospital."

His body tensed immediately.

"Absolutely not. You haven't healed enough. I won't risk it."

I tugged at his arm playfully, forcing a bright smile.

"But didn't you mention adopting a pup?" I made my voice small, worried. "Alpha pups are rarely abandoned. Will we be able to find one?"

It was the first time in five years I'd acted vulnerable with him.

Marcus's expression softened. "Don't worry about that. A friend of mine, another Alpha, died in a territory war two years ago. His pup is in our pack's orphan den. We can visit him."

He hesitated, then added, "I've been checking on the pup occasionally. Making sure he's cared for."

On the drive there, Marcus reached into the back seat and brought out a stuffed wolf toy.

He claimed he'd bought it specially for me, to cheer me up.

But the tag clearly stated "Suitable for pups ages 3-12."

I set the toy aside and closed my eyes, pretending to feel unwell.

This five-year deception needed to end.

At the orphan den, I sat in the wheelchair, my burned body still too weak to walk.

A small boy, about three years old, immediately ran to Marcus.

"Daddy!" he cried, wrapping his arms around Marcus's legs.

Marcus's face flickered with panic before he quickly explained:

"Don't misunderstand. I sponsor this den. I've visited several times, and this pup... he's just attached to me. Calls every male visitor 'daddy.'"

I nodded, reaching out to touch the boy's cheek.

"He looks so much like you. If you hadn't explained, I'd think he was yours."

The boy had Marcus's exact eye color. His small features echoed Rachel's.

"What's his name?"

"Oliver. He's... he's the one I thought we could adopt."

I stroked the boy's hair, noting how his scent carried traces of both Marcus and Rachel.

Even with my dulled senses, there was no mistaking it.

Before Marcus could explain further, Oliver started crying, asking where his mother was.

Marcus's face went pale instantly. I could smell his fear-scent spike.

His eyes darted to me anxiously.

"It's fine," I said smoothly, forcing my lips into a gentle smile. "Go comfort him. He has strong Alpha blood - he'll make a perfect heir for our pack. His aura already shows such potential."

My words visibly relieved him.

Marcus hurried into the healer's office with Oliver in his arms, the boy's small hands clutching his father's shirt with familiar ease.

I made an excuse about getting my burn medicine, lingering near the door.

Even with my weakened senses, I could smell Rachel's signature lavender perfume from inside.

The pack members' voices drifted clearly through the gap.

"Why is Alpha Marcus pretending his own pup is an orphan? Those clothes are pure silk from the Mountain Pack's weavers - worth more than my yearly salary. The moonstone buttons alone cost thousands! Who'd believe he's an orphan?"

"You don't understand. Alpha's got it all planned out. This is the only way to make the pup his legitimate heir. Be smart and keep your mouth shut around Sarah - she can't know."

"Of course Rachel is his true choice. They used to run patrol together in college, always volunteering for the night shifts. I knew they'd end up together! And now, alone in that office..."

Their knowing laughter made my chest tighten until I could barely breathe.

I moved closer to the door, and familiar voices became clear.

"How is he treating you?" Marcus asked softly.

"Fine enough. He's away on pack business most of the time, which makes things easier. This way, he won't discover about Oliver. He even talks about having pups with me." Rachel's voice held barely contained amusement.

Marcus's laugh was bitter. "Once Oliver is officially in the pack house, you won't have to worry. If you need anything, just call me. I'll always provide for you both."

"Oh, I got you something. A healing crystal from the Ancient Pack. Cost me ten million, but it's worth it - it can heal any scar completely."

Rachel gasped as she opened the box. "Another gift? You've given me so many wedding presents this year, my closet is overflowing! Sarah would be upset if she knew."

She protested, but her hands eagerly cradled the crystal.

Oliver cuddled against Rachel's side, nuzzling into her neck in the instinctive way of wolf pups with their true mothers. "Mommy! Mommy! Can we go home now?"

"What if Sarah figures it out?" Rachel asked. "These burns... if she learns you gave me a healing crystal..."

"She won't need it," Marcus said. "An Omega's scars don't matter to the pack."

Oliver's laughter echoed from the room - pure and happy, secure in his parents' love.

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