

Ascension of a Gamma by C.C. Ongoing

Prologue

She could count it.

One.

Two.

The first light of day brightened her surroundings, and she drew a deep breath – it was time to go. She slid a thumb under each backpack strap and whispered goodbye. This was it. There was no going back after this. Standing on the territorial borders, a couple of steps and she'd be branded a rogue.

She exhaled loudly and just as she was about to take the first step, a rustling sound came from behind her.

“Stop!” a voice boomed, and she suddenly couldn't move. Her legs wouldn't walk forward as she wished so she simply stood, awaiting the next command.

“You've never used the Order on me, Alpha Fraser,” she said flatly, hiding her annoyance. He only ever used the Order on kids, and she certainly wasn't one.

“That's because I never had a reason to, until now. Now turn around and face me, Anna.”

She did as instructed and wanted to glare at him, but the pained expression he wore made her feel guilty. "Undo the order, Alpha. This is for the best," she declared.

"No, it isn't. Everyone's been looking for you and are expecting your return," he said firmly.

He walked towards her, his eyes locked on hers, and when he was at arm's length, he added, "Especially him."

Her hands clutched the straps, and she remembered her failure last night, and the disappointment that she saw in everyone present. Anna didn't see his face, how could she? He was just as let down as the rest, she was sure.

Anna looked away from him, and in a matter-of-fact tone said, "I let him down. I let all of you down. I'm unfit to serve the future Alpha and I cannot protect the pack. The Goddess made it clear last night."

"Don't make me do this, Anna. You are going back, and if it means dragging you back, I will do it," he warned.

Her head snapped to him and this time, she showed her annoyance. "Don't you dare. I am not going back, and you can't make me!" She crossed her arms and raised her chin slightly to show defiance. "A werewolf without strength is useless. It's an unwritten rule and we all know it."

He smirked, then went down on one knee. She raised a brow at him while maintaining her pose, not really knowing what to expect.

"You know -," he began, taking her hand before adding, "- you were born in the pack, raised by the pack, and you will die in the White Lake Pack, missy. You're one of us, and you know it."

She watched him take off his ring and offer it to her. It was a blackened silver with a wolf-head sitting

on top, a lustrous black pearl trapped in between its open mouth – the Alpha’s ring. “And you will stay, because you’re the pack’s future Luna,” he said, smiling.

“W-What?” She blinked a few times as her mind processed the information. It couldn’t be. Was he giving her his blessing?

The Alpha’s hopeful eyes locked on hers, he wasn’t lying. When it finally sank, she blurted, “But I’m not suited to be Luna!”, her cheeks blushing.

He laughed at her flustered expression, and in the blink of an eye, took her hand and slipped the ring on a finger. It was too big for her slender finger that it dangled, but he looked at it with a satisfied smile. “You may not be as strong as a werewolf, Anna. But you will carry with you the strength of the pack, as Luna.”

She removed her hand from his and curled it against her chest. He stood straight and awaited her response.

A small smile played on her lips and she asked, “Does he know about this?”

“Ha! If only you saw him last night,” he said, chuckling. “Now come on, they’re all waiting. Sorry to ruin the surprise, but could you pretend you didn’t know?”

“I haven’t even said yes... yet,” she said playfully and he grinned.

“You just did.”

Rolling her eyes at him, she said, “I’d like to have control over my body now.”

“Ah!” She yelped in surprise as he held her in a bear hug and raised her off the ground as he undid the

Alpha Order. He spun her around once before putting her down while laughing his heart out. "I want lots of grandchildren," he said casually, making her blush.

"Why would he still want me? I can't be of any use to him. And when he finds his mate – "

"You are his mate, Anna," he said, cutting her off. "He's decided and I know you want the same thing. Don't you?"

Her cheeks took on a deeper shade of red as she nodded her head. "I do."

"Good. Now save those words for the ceremony," he teased.

He offered his arm and she linked hers with it. They walked in comfortable silence as she played with the ring, and his chest swelled with pride. Suddenly, a number of howls came from different directions. Rogues.

Anna looked up at him and saw that his eyes were rolled back, showing white, as he received a mind-link.

"Have you found her, Alpha?" the voice asked with urgency.

"She's with me," he assured. "What's the situation?"

"Rogues. I can't put my finger on it, but something's wrong. Their movements are coordinated, and their numbers are by the hundred," the voice reported. "Rogues aren't this tactical. It's almost like... like they're a pack."

"That's impossible," said the Alpha. "Even with a leader."

“There’s no time, Alpha. They’re zoning-in on your location. We’re on our way.”

“Meet us by the clearing. Tell your men to retreat to the packhouse, lure them there,” he ordered.

“Yes, Alpha,” the voice said. “And Fraser, keep my daughter safe.”

“She’s one of us, Aiden. No need to say more.”

His eyes went back to normal as he cut the link, then he looked down at her anxious face. “Anna, whatever happens, just run. Don’t look back and keep running, alright?”

She swallowed the lump in her throat and nodded. She would only burden him and decrease their chances of surviving an attack. The packhouse was kilometers away that help would take a few minutes. She dropped her bag and prepared to run. “Come back to us, father-in-law.”

“I’ve been waiting for years; I wouldn’t miss it cause of a few rogues,” he said, chuckling. “Now go!”

Anna sprinted through the woods, unhindered by the trees and protruding roots. She had only one thing on her mind – she must stay away from the Alpha to buy him enough time for the warriors to arrive. The thunder of paws echoed around her, but she paid it no heed. Although the rogues wouldn’t pick up a scent from her, she wasn’t completely safe. She wasn’t a target, for now at least.

However, luck wasn’t on her side.

A brown wolf jumped in front of her and she halted in her tracks. Two more brown wolves joined from both sides, snarling, and snapping their jaws. They inched towards her and her shaking legs carried her backward.

They seemed to enjoy watching their helpless prey retreat, a small payback for their loss. One of the wolves sped towards her and she ran to her left, hesitating to lure the rogues to the Alpha.

In their wolf form, they should've been able to catch up to her easily, but they purposefully slowed their pace, raising her hopes of escape, adding more thrill to the chase.

She didn't glance back once and continued to run, praying to the Moon Goddess for protection. As if hearing her plea, she saw a gray wolf running towards her, its eyes a light blue. Anna's eyes lit up. "Father!" she exclaimed but in her distracted state, failed to notice an arching root and she tripped over.

The rogues were almost upon her, but the gray wolf leaped in the air and latched his teeth into a brown wolf's neck. It happened too fast that the enemy's companions froze for a moment. The gray wolf ripped the flesh off and immediately attacked another.

However, as his canines were buried into his second kill's neck, the last rogue managed to bite on his shoulder. Aiden let go of the dead rogue, who dropped on the ground, choking on his own blood.

He tried to shake off the rogue on his shoulder, but it only worsened the pain. He snapped his jaws to bite into the enemy's body, but the latter was out of his range. Then, the rogue suddenly howled in pain, releasing him. He took advantage of the opening to rip the rogue's throat then turned to face a smiling Anna.

"Wolfsbane powder," she said proudly, showing off a teensy vial that hung around her neck on a silver chain. "A werewolf's poison."

Aiden noticed the Alpha's ring on her finger and smiled inwardly to himself. Soon, he will give his daughter away. She shifted on one foot. Aiden signaled for her to climb on his back, but she shook her head.

"The Alpha needs you, Father. I'll be fine on my own," she said. He growled in disapproval and

lowered himself on the ground. Then he whimpered while looking up at her with pleading eyes and she couldn't help but give in. He always knew how to get to her.

"Fine!" she said and straddled his back. He ran towards where she came and the howls came again, louder this time. The rogues were getting close.

He mind-linked the Alpha and they met up within seconds, speeding towards the packhouse, with the enemy on hot pursuit.

As they focused on escaping, they didn't pick up on the scent of a man who waited for them. Patiently waiting behind a tree, he intentionally sent his pack to chase their targets into the clearing, and when they came into view, gunshots rang in the air, followed by a thud as heavy beasts made abrupt contact with the ground.

Anna was thrown off at the sudden stop and rolled a few feet from her father. She hastily got on her feet. Horror painted her face at the sight of the mighty Alpha and his Head Gamma panting heavily as red coated their furs. Their wounds weren't healing, and warm liquid oozed continuously, which meant that the bullets were not only silver but they were also coated with wolfsbane.

The enemy caught up to them and began to surround them. Tears invariably streaked her cheeks, but she wiped them away and slapped her face to get herself to focus. She bit into her left wrist, puncturing the delicate skin and letting the blood drip into each gaping wound of the gray wolf. He whimpered as the wounds healed at a snail's pace.

"Come on, come on," she said as she squeezed more of her blood. She moved to the Alpha and did the same. But it wasn't enough – the blood, time – she desperately needed more.

The enemies continued to encircle them but didn't dare attack. Then a howl came from behind her and the rogues parted to carve a path for their leader.

He had inky black fur and the dominating aura of an Alpha. An ugly jagged scar stretched over his left

eye, catching her attention. But she couldn't determine which pack he was from – she had never seen him before in any of the gatherings.

He approached them slowly, biding his time like a predator stalking its prey.

Her protectors forced themselves up and staggered on their feet, intent on keeping her alive. She wanted to scream at them to stop but the fear invoked by the newcomer made her choke her words.

The two communicated in a mind-link and formulated a plan. They knew death was imminent but neither cared for it. They would gladly return to the Goddess if it meant keeping her alive.

The rogues backed away from them to provide more space for the much-anticipated boss battle.

When the rogue's leader was close enough, the two sprang into action. One faced off the enemy while the other lifted her off the ground and sprinted into the woods. The rogues immediately set chase, to drag them back in front of their leader.

Anna looked back, just in time to see the enemy rip off her protector's throat - an image that was forever burned into her memory. Tears crept down her cheeks and her throat muscles tightened as she let out silent screams.

When they were a good distance away, the Alpha dropped her carelessly on the ground. His deep blue eyes locked with hers, for one last request. Then in a flash, he was gone, heading off in the opposite direction to distract the enemy.

It wasn't long before a triumphant howl echoed through the air, followed by many more.

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Part One: Broken Hearts and Fragile Souls

Chapter 01 Fated One

~Anna~

I found solace in these early mornings - alone and covered in darkness. The deafening silence comforted my soul as the cold gnawed on my skin. Music flowed in my ears, the soft pitter-patter of rain outside and the constant dripping sound of the droplets that leaked from the roof's tiny holes.

In these moments my thoughts would drift from one to another, often a recollection of the past. I remembered everything as if it all happened yesterday.

I made a promise and after the passage of roughly three years, this day has finally come.

And like every morning since, I silently prayed to the Moon Goddess for strength.

Afterward, I forced myself to get off the dirty rag, groaning as pain shot through my limbs like lightning. I stretched for a bit to relieve myself of the stiffness in my back and stepped into the

bathroom. I took a freezing shower, dressed myself with old clothing, and made my way to the kitchen.

As usual, there were pills in one of the cupboards left by an anonymous person. In a pack of around three hundred, this kind soul chose to help me. I downed the pills, burned the plastic, and started to prepare the pack's breakfast.

Around two hours later, the Omegas came and took out the food to serve to the pack. I skimmed through the menu for today's lunch and dinner. It's going to be a long day.

While everyone was in the dining room, I drank as much water as I could stomach to ease the hunger and started prepping the meals. The same Omegas came back later to drop off the dirty dishes and their usual words of insult before leaving me to man this kitchen. They worked on another kitchen, so they wouldn't have to mingle with me, not that they wanted to.

From time to time, some Omegas would walk by and I'd overhear their conversations. Some talked about the awaited Luna and others about finding their mate. Sometimes they'd gossip about other packs and they'd usually fawn over the Alpha.

Of course, who would pass up on the opportunity to bed an Alpha? Sheesh, most of these Omegas are thirsty.

At least they could sense their mate while I lacked the ability to sense mine. When I turned twenty last month and not a single male of my pack was drawn to me, I concluded that he would come from another pack.

I suddenly heard excited screeches outside, the guests must've arrived. A girl sounded panicky saying, "It's Alpha Liam. He's here. He's here. He's here."

Seriously girl, you need to calm down. And of all the bachelors out there, you'd choose that psycho?

With ten minutes to spare, I managed to have everything ready. Unlike this morning, a number of Omegas came to take out the food while I stood in a corner with my head turned to the side, lending a deaf ear to their insults.

I still have my pride as a Gamma, girls.

When the Omegas left, Alpha Flynn came in, his musky cologne filling the room. Wearing a pale blue tailored fit suit, it accentuated his electric blue eyes. I would've swooned right there and then if it wasn't for the aura he gave off.

His stare sent shivers down my spine as his eyes met mine, aflame with hatred, and I knew why. Then he turned around, rummaged through the kitchen, and sternly said, "Sit."

Keeping my head low, I squatted on the floor. He placed my food in front of me – leftovers from this morning in small portions and a glass of water.

"Eat," he ordered, and I did, using my hand to scoop the food into my mouth as fast as I could before gulping down the water in one breath – he didn't like to wait.

"You know what today is, don't you?" he asked after I finished.

"Yes, Alpha."

"Tonight, I find my mate, my pack's Luna and I expect you treat her the same way you do me, understand?"

He purposefully referred to the pack as "my", to remind me that I did not belong. The same thing had repeated itself over the years, but it still hurt to hear.

“I understand, Alpha.”

With a huff, he left, and I started to work once more. By eleven-thirty in the evening, the food and refreshments have all been served. The celebration of the Alpha’s twentieth birthday could be heard all the way to the kitchen and of course, I wasn’t invited. They didn’t want me embarrassing the pack.

It didn’t matter and I was happy that they didn’t. It was an advantage for what I planned to do. Everyone should be at the party, making it easier for me to sneak out.

I briefly looked around today’s workplace and let out a long sigh. That was when I felt exhaustion land on me like a ton of bricks. The scene swirled in my head and my vision became unsteady. Before I could register what was happening, I found myself meeting the cold hard floor.

When I came to, it was difficult to move my limbs and the ticking of the clock urged that I hurry. It was way past my curfew, and I should already be in my room. If anyone found me, I’d be locked up. Then I wouldn’t have a chance to execute my plan – to fulfill my promise.

I forced myself to stand. I tried to walk, but my legs were unsteady. They wobbled at each step, then a wave of nausea hit me, and I was on the floor again.

When I regained consciousness, my body felt too heavy to move. The ticking of the clock resonated within the walls, sounding louder than it should. Its constant tick-tick-tick urged me to hurry but I couldn’t.

So, I remained still, taking my time to gather enough energy. My skin numbed after having been in contact with the cold floor, adding to my discomfort.

I let out a sigh and focused on one thought - at least I was alone. It didn’t matter that the room was pitch black, if anything, it was comfortable. But the silence was broken when sounds of heavy footsteps echoed throughout the corridor.

My heart pounded in my chest, painfully loud in my ears and I breathed slowly in an attempt to not make any sound that would alert the person outside.

It seemed as though the person was in a hurry. The sounds grew louder as the person approached closer and I could only hope the person wasn't headed to where I was.

My eyes zoned in on the small space between the door and the floor. The corridors were lit, and light seeped through it, forming a line.

Louder... closer...

Then shadows disturbed the otherwise perfect line, indicating that the person stopped right in front of the door.

No...

Cold sweat erupted from every pore on my back. I tried to crawl into a corner, but my arms were too exhausted that I barely moved from my spot.

'Turn around. Walk away. My mind begged in silence, but the person wanted to enter. The door swung open and light parted the darkness, revealing my helpless figure. A familiar scent filled the room and my heart dropped.

I opened my mouth to speak but he spoke first in disgust and anger. "You? The Moon Goddess fated me to you?"

The same musky cologne and the same cold voice; both were something I'd recognize in the middle of a crowd. How could I not? Both were attributed to none other than him – Alpha Flynn.

Fated? Moon Goddess?

No, I must've heard him wrong.

As my mind tried to wrap around his statement, his next words confirmed my doubt.

"Did the Goddess think I would gladly accept you because you're my mate?" he mocked.

He's my mate? The... Alpha?

If any other girl out there found out her fated one was an Alpha, she'd be screaming her heart out in joy and thanking her stars. But I could only curse mine in despair because I was fated to him.

Funny. I used to dream of having him as my mate and now that he was, I didn't want it. Not him. Anyone else but the Alpha looking down on me.

He loathed my existence and made me feel so, by keeping me around to suffer instead of banishing me. Sometimes I thought of whether it hurt him too, but I didn't want my emotions to justify his actions.

Tomorrow night, the mating rituals would be held but there was no point in waiting for it now. I thought my mate would be one of the guests and he'd find me then, but the Moon Goddess clearly had other plans.

A strong hand gripped my hair and pulled me off the floor. I screamed, silenced by the slaps that landed on my cheeks. His arm swung back and forth, his hand never missing its mark, landing a painful blow over and over again until I could taste metal in my mouth.

Tipping my jaw, he forced me to look him in his cold and unforgiving eyes. He sneered. "You should've

never been born. You don't deserve to live, and you don't deserve love. You are a failure to your kind and this pack. You are nothing but a disgrace!"

My body ached, my face stung, and my heart broke at his words. Tired and hurt, I closed my crying eyes - this wasn't an image of him that I wanted to see.

He kicked me with unrestrained force and pain seared in my chest. It sent me crashing on a wall before I crumpled on the ground, front first- I think I broke a rib or two.

He walked towards me saying, "I will never accept you as my mate. Not you."

When he was a few feet from me, he kicked me in the abdomen with the same strength and I went flying to the wall once more. Then he forced me up, with a hand gripping my neck. I struggled to breathe but I was too weak to fight back.

I searched for his eyes and locked gazes with him. The message was clear, and I knew he understood. My eyes challenged him to end me, but amusement danced in his blue orbs.

He chuckled at my defiance. "Your sole purpose for living is atonement. Did you think your death would be enough?"

The lack of oxygen was taking its toll, my head started to feel woozy. He smirked at my state. Then he said, "I, Alpha Flynn Astra, reject you, Gamma Anna Bella Fiora as my mate."

Yes, I couldn't sense my mate, but the bond still tied me to him. With every blow and hateful word, my heart continued to break. And if a broken heart could shatter even more, his words had such an effect.

"Now say you accept," he said, loosening his hold on my neck. I gasped and took in lungfuls of air. My heart and mind clashed, the emotional part and the rational part offered different voices. "End this!"

shouted the latter.

But... how could I?

“If we break the bond, we might never find a mate again. You may never have a Luna,” I said with a shaky voice. After all that he did to me, I shouldn’t care about him having a Luna, but I was bound to a promise.

Pa!

More slaps landed on my cheeks.

“I’d rather have no Luna if it means rejecting you,” he seethed.

“You don’t mean that!” I shouted, the words slipping out before I could stop myself.

“Yes. I do, Anna,” he said in a soft voice, it shocked me. I haven’t heard him speak in such a manner or call me by my name for a long time. It tugged on my heartstrings; I missed this Flynn.

His eyes met mine and I saw pain... and affection. His pupils dilated and the color began to turn into a deeper shade – his wolf was raging to take over.

Oh, Farrel. You have always been kind. I missed you too.

“Don’t do this,” I whispered, a déjà vu of what I told him then. The same three words that came from the heart, a simple plea, for him instead of me.

The deeper shade was pushed back, and an enraged Alpha glared at me. He slammed me back to the wall and demanded, "Say it! Say you accept!"

I'm sorry, Alpha. I've failed you once more.

In between sobs, I spoke the words he wanted to hear. "I, Gamma A-Anna Be-Bella Fiora...ac-accept your re-rejection...Alpha F-Flynn As-tra."

As soon as I ended the sentence, pain of unimaginable degree reverberated throughout my body and I couldn't hold back the scream that escaped my mouth, silenced when his fist connected with my jaw.

My head whirled as I felt something within me snap and disappear, leaving a feeling of emptiness behind, like a part of me was taken. This man isn't Flynn Astra. This isn't my best friend, my old flame, my Alpha.

I thought I heard him groan in distress, but it must've been my imagination. Torrents of pain wracked through my being – physical and emotional –overwhelmed my mind and body until I collapsed once again.

Chapter 02 So-Called Psycho

~Liam~

"Hey baby, dance with me," a chick said as her curvaceous body moved in a wave-like manner. Her dress hugged her torso tight and it shimmered in gold glitter and sequins, despite the low lighting. Its

length ended mid-thigh, and my eyes traveled from her long legs to the promised heaven in between them. The plunging neckline exposed the top of her supple chest, enough to make a man lose his senses.

I wrapped an arm around her waist from behind, until she could feel me poke her ass. My head settled at the crook of her neck and I took in her jasmine perfume. She didn't irk away from my hold, instead, bucked her hips against mine.

This little tease. You want this, don't you?

My tongue flicked at her soft olive skin, tasting her.

Fuck. Her sweet arousal tastes so good.

I've lost count of how many women attempted to seduce me tonight, most of them intoxicated. But this little tease didn't stink of alcohol, she smelled pleasant, just how I liked it.

She suppressed a moan and cocked her head to the side, asking me to make her feel more.

I could mess you up so badly you won't walk for days and still want more.

My hands traced her torso down and settled on the curve of her hips. I pulled her to me, and she gasped as the monster pressed right at the center of her cheeks.

"Do you want this, baby?" I whispered in her ear.

"Yes," came her breathy reply. "All of it, Alpha."

But you don't deserve it, baby. No woman in the world does. None of you deserve what I can give you.

I released her with a slight push and took a step back. She turned to face me, still smiling expectantly.

Being the gentleman that I am, I flashed her a smile and politely said, "Sorry baby, not tonight," then quickly made my way out of the crowd. She kept calling for me, most likely to demand an answer, but the booming music drowned out her voice.

For a birthday party, this Alpha went all out, turning his own house into a nightclub. The dance floor was packed with unmated werewolves, their primal need for sexual satisfaction more intense than usual with the mating ceremony drawing near. And I'm no exception.

I glanced at my trousers; the thing demanded attention. The heated atmosphere didn't help, not when I could smell arousal from every direction.

I have to get out of here.

Taking a whole bottle of unopened champagne from the buffet table, I discreetly made my way out of the main hall, taking a swig directly from the bottle while I searched for a quiet place. The problem would have to sort itself out.

"For a second there, I thought you were going to give in," said a voice from the back of my mind. "Do you regret it?"

"No, I don't, and you already know why," I replied.

He smiled and said, "Will we find her tomorrow?"

“We better. Get ready to sniff her out.”

“Leave that to me. Can I count on you to be on your best behavior?” he chided.

“Asshole.”

Flashing a smirk, he retreated.

I’m running out of time, my dear. If I don’t find you tomorrow, I never will. This will be the last I get to search for you, so please, won’t you appear?

A stifled moan came from the right, followed by the sound of flesh hitting flesh, interrupting my thoughts.

Looks like some already found their mate.

I continued walking, no specific destination in mind but with every intention to put as much distance between me and this lustful atmosphere. I went up a set of stairs, heard moans, went back down. I took lefts and rights only to retrace my steps back; this was one horny night.

As I walked in on more couples, I started to regret leaving the party and even considered giving in to sinful desires. Because unfortunately for me, the problem kept asking for attention and the alcohol wasn’t helping.

Fuck. Calm down. I’m not an uncontrollable sex maniac.

I took in deep breathes until it went back down. Then I picked up my pace and continued to wander until I finally came upon a corridor free of couples making out. Only then did I realize that I was completely lost.

“Idiot,” the voice said.

“Not now!”

I blocked him before getting back to this new problem. I stood on one end of the corridor, with two more adjacent to it on each side and another straight ahead.

Where the fuck do I go now? I’ve never been to this area before.

As I contemplated which path to take, I heard a woman’s scream echo throughout the walls, immediately cut short. My fight mode switched on. A door opened from the corridor straight ahead and I hid behind the one on my right, my figure concealed by the shadows.

The sound of heavy footsteps grew louder, and a man passed by stomping, his breathing heavy, and there was no mistaking the smell that hung around him – blood. I counted fifteen seconds to ensure that he was a good distance away, then carefully made my way into the room from which he came. I planted an ear on the door and heard nothing, neither labored breathing nor crying.

Fearing the worst, I hastily opened the door and scanned the room. I saw an image that I’d seen many times before, but it didn’t become easier to handle. It was always an image that I could never rid my mind of, and I wasn’t entirely sure that I wanted to forget.

A woman was passed out on the floor, bleeding. The smell of blood and salt hung heavily in the air. I went to her side and checked her pulse. It was too weak, but it was there. Turning her over slowly, I saw the horrific state of her face – red, bruised, bleeding, and tear-streaked. She needed medical attention, quick. Not wasting more time, I picked her up bridal style and carried her out of the room while mind-linking my sister.

“I need you to give me directions back to my room. Grab your things and meet me there right now. Someone needs our help.”

She guided me through this maze of a house which took longer than it should because I had to avoid getting seen and when I got there, she was on standby. Good, she was sober – the best-case scenario.

I laid the unknown woman on my bed and nodded to my sister; she knew what to do. Then I left the room and went to hers, which was beside mine.

“The rooms have been checked for bugs,” she said in a mind-link then cut it off before I could reply.

I sat on the couch and began to make out what I could of the situation. She was clearly a victim of abuse and the Alpha was involved. It was beyond me how an Alpha could treat any of his pack members that way when he should be a father figure, a leader, to all of them. Their strength and their protector. Not a fucking tormentor!

Getting up, I poured myself a glass of bourbon and drank in silence, downing glass after glass to keep myself from barging out the room and laying carnage on the White Lake Pack. Fuck the presence of the other packs, let them watch.

I could get her out but only if she wanted to. Since my Beta wasn't with me, Lexy should do the talking. If I tried to get information out of her, I might just lose it and scare her instead of gaining her trust.

Haha. Lexy would kill me if that happens.

The alcohol appeased my anger then I remembered the bottle - it got left behind in the kitchen.

Hmm... that'll do.

After a few hours, I received a mind-link from Lexy.

“You can come back now,” she said.

I hurried to my room and saw her leaning into the bedpost, her eyes closed.

Even the best healer has a limit.

“You’ve been drinking again, haven’t you? I saw you leave the party,” she said.

“That doesn’t concern you. How is she?”

She took a deep breath and said, “A couple of fractured ribs and multiple cuts and bruises. She’s fatigued. I gave her soporifics, let her sleep for now.”

“How long?”

“It could take a couple of weeks, maybe more,” she said.

My blood boiled at her words and I held back a growl.

Her wolf has weakened too much.

“And one more thing -” she said, turning to look at the sleeping woman, “- she’s wolf-less.”

To say that she was rare would be an understatement. Throughout werewolf history, the gap between the paucity of those born without a wolf could reach centuries.

He left her to die, because of something beyond her control.

The growl escaped and it was louder than I intended. My pack was already asking for instructions via mind-link from the open channel. I'm fucking itching to massacre this pack! And the look she gave me was silent approval.

Chapter 03 Threatening Alpha

~Liam~

Continuous rapping on the door woke me up. I spent the night in Lexy's room and she in mine, after a briefing with the pack yesterday.

My head throbbed from the hangover and the pounding sound only made it worse. Annoyed, I opened the door to give whoever is behind it a scare, but I was instead greeted by a cheery face in pigtails.

"Good morning, Sir. We regret to inform you that breakfast will be a little late. We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience," she chirped.

"Did something happen, dear?"

"Only a minor issue at the kitchen, Sir. We're working on it as fast as we can," she said like she was reading off a script and I chuckled.

“Tell me, dear. Would you like to play a game?” I said with a smile, a proper one so as not to scare her.

She stared at me for a few seconds, her eyes clearly saying yes before they directed their gaze on her shoes. Looks like there was more to this than one abused woman.

“Hmm. I don’t know if I can wait. My tum-tum is growling,” I said, placing a hand on my stomach and rubbing it in circles. Then as an added emphasis, I playfully said, “Grawr.”

She giggled at my gimmick. Glad it amused her or else I would’ve ended up looking stupid for nothing.

“Grawr,” she mimicked, her voice sounding cute it could melt anyone’s heart, then she giggled at her actions.

I squatted on my toes so I could be on a somewhat equal level to her and said, “What’s your name, dear?”

“My friends call me Mary. You’re funny, mister.”

Heh. I could be funny too. In your face, Lexy.

I smiled at her and said, “Mary, it’s a beautiful name for a beautiful girl. Do you want to play with me later, Mary?”

She slowly shook her head. “I’m training with my friends,” she said flatly.

“Training?”

“Mm-hm. Alpha said we should train.”

“And do you like training?”

She crossed her arms and pouted.

Heh. Little fighter.

“I don’t like training! I want to play hide and seek and swim in the river and eat ice cream.”

Cute little fighter.

“How about we go for ice cream after breakfast? Would you like that?” I said and she beamed.

“Can I bring my friends? They like ice cream too, like me! We love chocolate and vanilla and strawberry!” she exclaimed as she jumped up and down excitedly.

I chuckled. “Bring everyone along. I’ll buy you as many scoops as you want.”

She held out a fist then raised a finger, “Pinky promise?”

I linked mine with her and said, “Pinky promise. Now go tell your friends.”

Her unusual dark blue eyes moved to the upper right as she remembered something. “I have to tell other people about breakfast!”

“It’s quite alright, dear. They already know,” I said, so she wouldn’t have to knock on my room. “Everyone from this section has been informed.”

She stared at me with her eyebrows furrowed. Then she pointed and said, “A mind-link! You used a mind-link!”

“I did. You’re a smart girl, aren’t you?” I lied. She knew about it, but not how it worked yet.

Her lips curved to a grin. “Thank you, Mister. Uhm... What’s your name?”

“Liam. Call me Alpha Liam,” I said, still smiling. “Now run along, Mary. Come find me after breakfast, alright?”

She nodded then walked away while singing a made-up song to herself, “Ice cream. Ice cream. We’ll be eating ice cream.”

As I watched Mary leave, a voice came in my head. “Don’t you have a meeting later?”

“Why didn’t you tell me sooner? I already made a promise to her!”

“Idiot,” he mocked before blocking me.

I closed the door, mind-linked my pack, and instructed them to discreetly investigate this pack. Some protested, obviously still entangled with their mate and I grinned knowing they’d do what I asked of them anyway.

Then I created a private channel between me and Lexy and told her that she had a date with a cute

little girl and her friends on an ice cream parlor after breakfast. She taunted and laughed at me first for 'acting so unlike the scary Alpha' before agreeing.

An hour later, I was in a loud and crowded dining hall. I joined the Alphas' table, greeted them with a nod then munched on the juicy slices of fruits while they engaged in conversations of their own. They pretty much left me alone, a silent submission to my power. We only did discuss matters that concerned the packs.

But one of them had the guts to speak, as expected. Alpha Flynn greeted me and initiated conversation saying, "Several women were looking for you last night, Alpha Liam. You left the party quite early."

"I only attend parties for the drinks. I understand you are now at the expected age of finding your mate?" I replied.

His upper lip twitched. "Unfortunately Alpha, I may have to wait. Not that I'm in a hurry."

"That makes the two of us, then," I said.

The conversation was cut short as a line of Omegas entered the room and began serving everyone. The Omega blushed as she put down my plate and I asked her to get me a bottle of red. I smiled, her blush deepened, and she almost tripped on her way out.

What can I say? I'm feeling good today.

Alpha Flynn laughed at her reaction. "A lady-killer, aren't you, Alpha?"

"I'm not the only one," I replied, gesturing towards the other Alphas. The Omegas serving them were blushing as well, the bachelors already chatting them up while the mated ones chose to remain polite. Which was the right move since the Lunas' table was right next to ours.

He watched them intently, like a lost dog looking for its owner. I would've taken it upon me to console him, say that he may find his mate tonight but the event from last night dismissed the idea.

When the Omegas left, all smiles, he turned his attention back to me. "Perhaps I could indulge you with a more special collection, Alpha Liam?" he offered.

"Thank you but I'd have to decline. You should save your collection for special occasions. This is merely a whim as I didn't get to finish a bottle last night," I said in a matter-of-fact tone.

He pursed his lips then smiled to hide the fact that he got the message. I left it at that.

After we had our fill, he led us to the conference room along with the Betas present. It was time to get down to more pressing matters. Alphas had to come to an accord every year regarding the release of their members who were mated to another pack. Of course, when it came to mine, the process was quite easy since none of mine ever left so I just sat there, watching them bicker.

Hidden by our civil appearance was a wicked twisted game of power. It was a common tactic for Alphas to use mates as spies or assassins, which was why an Alpha must banish his pack member before turning the latter over to another, thus, breaking the mind-link. There were still risks that came with bringing a new member in, but this was by far the most effective measure.

Alpha Myron, nearing mid-forties, watched the scene with his steel-gray eyes, his lips pursed tight. Every once in a while, he would throw a side-glance my way, but I pretended not to notice. The father of my mate, we never really talked much but then again, we were never close since he left the pack.

He used to be my father's Beta until he was banished for rebelling then he married the daughter of another pack's Alpha, thus, securing his position. Cheap move.

If it wasn't for the alliance, he wouldn't have given me his daughter's hand. Another cheap move.

The meeting came to an end. We exchanged niceties as formality dictates and I waited for them to leave. Most threw worried glances on Alpha Flynn's direction, but none dared interfere.

"I believe we have nothing more to discuss, Alpha Liam. I would have to ask you to see yourself out."

"Alright. I prefer to let my actions do the talking anyway," I said, getting up.

He crossed his arms and tapped his foot. "You have no right to involve yourself in matters concerning my pack. Whatever dirt you managed to dig up is groundless."

I sat back down, arms behind my head. "We'll see about that. You see, I found a rather interesting woman who willingly shared my bed last night."

I smirked as his face contorted in anger. Then he stomped his way to me, grabbed me by the collar, and demanded, "What did you do to her!?"

"I'd watch my tone if I were you, pup. You wouldn't want to end up forgotten now do you?" My voice came out cold and I commend him for not backing down.

"Alpha!" came his Beta's urgent cry.

"Get out!" he yelled, without breaking his glare on me.

His Beta hesitated for a second but still chose to obey, leaving the two of us to settle this our – no, my way.

"I know about your stories, murderer. If you ever dare harm my pack, it'd be the last thing you do," he

said as he pushed me out of his grip.

My wolf stirred at the name, baring his teeth in my mind. He shouldn't have said that. Using one hand, I lifted him off the ground and the momentary panic that flashed in his eyes amused my wolf.

Luca was getting restless since yesterday; this idiot had a death wish. "New prey," he said, and I laughed.

"You think my resolve is funny!? You don't scare me!"

I stopped and gave him a death glare until he looked away. "The fate of your pack lies in her hands. If she wants to leave, she will be taking whoever she wants to. If she wants you dead, I will be more than happy to oblige. Enjoy today, Alpha. She decides tonight."

I released my grip and walked out, not waiting for a reply, to find Alpha Myron waiting for me. The Beta from earlier entered immediately after a curt nod.

Hmm. Interesting.

Without saying a word, Alpha Myron motioned for me to follow. We walked in silence as he led me to the gardens, past the green shrubbery, to a bench in front of a small fountain.

From the mansion, the small area hid from view and there was nobody around. He sat on the bench and tapped the space beside him. I chose to face him, standing.

"Still stubborn, I see."

If he wasn't my mate's father, I would've punched that smug look off his face. But for her sake, I kept reining my anger whenever I was near him. I kept a placid face as I said, "What do you want?"

“To remind you that tonight is your last chance. I trust you’ll honor your word as Alpha, Liam.”

“I’m well aware and when I find her, you better honor yours,” I said with a smile.

He frowned. “It’s Alpha Myron to- “

“And it’s Alpha Liam to you,” I said firmly, cutting him off.

Shit. My control slipped a bit. “If you have nothing more to say, I’m leaving.”

He directed his gaze on the fountain and I walked away, feeling his gaze on my back. I smirked. There’s more to being an Alpha than having the title.

I headed to Lexy’s room, in need of a drink but found that it was fresh out of alcohol.

“You don’t have to do it. I don’t want to,” said Luca.

“It’s settled, Luca. There’s no turning back now,” I said, going to my room.

I opened the door slowly, to not disturb the patient. Lexy should still be out with the kids. At least she’s having a better time than me.

The plan was to sneak in, grab a bottle then out. But I didn’t expect the smell when I entered – a blend of vanilla and freshly-cut roses.

I took a deep breath. It was really there. It wasn’t perfume. This was stronger and more... organic. And

I wanted... more.

My head turned to my left, where the smell seemed strongest. And there on the bed, sat the unknown woman, wide-eyed and shaking.

My legs instinctively carried me forward. The scent seemed to tease me. It sent my heart racing, and it was so pleasantly sweet I could taste it on my tongue. There was no mistaking it, the scent emanated from her.

And it woke my wolf. Luca howled wildly and without warning, fought to emerge. As I fought for control, another smell overpowered the sweetness – fear.

Fuck. I scared her.

Chapter 04 Obliviously Sweet

~Anna~

Bright light hit my face and warmth covered me. It felt so nice and I wanted to sleep more but the strong smell of antiseptic wouldn't let me. Opening my eyes, I found myself staring not at the usual dark ceiling.

My chest felt constricted and when I placed a hand on it,
felt that it was wrapped in bandages. Memories of last night came crashing into
my mind and my heart immediately ached.

Are you happy now, Flynn?

Is this what you wanted?

Is this the Alpha that you wanted to be?

I didn't want to know the answer, to continue to feel
sympathy towards hi