

Ascension of a Gamma

Chapter 28 Trusting Male

wear Checking out every dress in the rack = knee length, backless, sleeveless, plunging neckline they're all so beautiful but I'd be too embarrassed to on any of these and show off skin, especially in front of himni. Sighing. I med on to what else this closet had to offer.

Apparently, when Liam told me not to bring anything unnecessary, like clothes, he already had an entire wardrobe ready for me. I'd never had this many to choose from before – didn't know it was this difficult when one had more.

As I looked at myself in the full body mirror, my eyes

wandered into the stack of denim jeans

With so many pairs to choose from, picked... the back one with highi, pointed heels that sort of looked like boots. I slipped my right foot into the shor, instantly feeling taller. Zipped the gold-colored zipper om the side and checked it in the mirror – mot bad. How do I put the other?

Shifting my weight to my right, my arms waved in the air to steady myself. That was more difficult than I thought. I sat on the floor and pulled the shoe over my left foot. Then, supporting myself with the shelves, my shaky legs managed to stand. The incline was a bit uncomfortable, but when I looked behind my shoulder to see myself in the mirror, it looked

“good, I looked good, it even felt good. I -felt taller, beautiful, more confident, MoE Portu. If I knew the shoshthis SHTĚ witcherati.

Taking a deep breath, I slowly turned around. My feet swayed with every step before finding balance Arms to my sides now, I raised my right leg and... down. Then the next. And... another. I was getting close to the mirror now. Oh wow, this is tasy. I’m doing – Woah!

My legs wobbled. My ridiculous armi waves didn’t help this time. I fell forward, and my forehead hit the floor, sending waves of pain over my head. I curled myself into a ball, with a hand rubbing circles on the... small bump. Great. This is what I get for being too ambitious – should’ve chosen flats instead.

“Anna?” Rigel asked from outside as he knocked on the door. I bit back the pain and fought back the tears.

“You don’t sound fine, Rigel. What’s wrong?”

“I’m fine. Nothing to worry about. I was just... Raising myself off the ground with my arms, I pulled my legs and felt a twang of pain on my left ankle. Forcing myself into a sitting position, I bent my left knee to reach for my foot. “Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow...”

I couldn’t do it. Too painful.

“Anna?” said Rigel

his voice hinting urgency. “Anna, whatever you’re doing, cover yourself up TI coming in.”

"No!" I yelled. It'd be too embarrassing if he saw me like

this. Think, Anna. Think

One, two..."

n!" Teams he counted three and

the door swung open. His eyes found my Sonny lion the floor, SCARDING me

from head to foot as my cheeks heated up from the intensity of his gaze.

UIL hi

He bent on one knee beside my feet and carefully held my

left foot. Please don't," I said, looking down.

"Come on," he said, placing an arm around my shoulders. I

thought he was going to help me up. I swear my thoughts were innocent. Until

his left arm wrapped around my thighs and he easily lifted me off the floor.

Not that I was against it, just that...

– Uhm... I can walk on my own?"

Sure. You didn't have a problem

He let me down on my bed, then said,"

walking out the door. He could count on it. It wasn't like I'd be skipping

around when he came back

Raising my right leg, I took the shorts. As for the

other one, I'd rather wait for Rigel. The room fell quiet, and my phone was in

the closet

Higel came back after three minutes, holding an ice pack

and a roll of bandage.

"Took you long enough," I said, pouting

He grinned. "Missed me already?"

"No."

"I know you did," he said as he knelt in front of me. Carefully.

he raised my foot and slowly slipped the shoe off. I flinched when it scraped

TITY heel

You were gone for three minutes."

He put my foot down and sat on the floor before raising it

again "You were lonely for three minutes.

"I wasn't lonely.

"Sure you weren't

"Do = ow!" He twisted my foot to one side then the other.

"Definitely a sprained ankle

"Are you kidding me!" I screamed and he chuckled. "That

wasn't very nice, Rigel." Reaching for a pillow, I threw it at his face.

"I'm not a nice person."

"You're my knight," I said,

crossing my arms on my chest. "You're supposed to be nice."

Rigel didn't say anything more

Hy held the ice on my swollen ankle while his fingers aged

my foot to ease the pain. I watched him focus on what he was doing, his

eyebrows furrowed and a deep frown on his face. For him to claim himself as

"not a nice person", his actions today were different from his words.

I assumed he was done when he

put the ice pack down. But then his thumb pressed down around the swollen

and traveled towards the heel. He continued to massage my foot – the pain
dissipating. When he was satisfied, he put my foot down slowly
"Try moving it," he said, and I
did, "Better?
"It's not as painful as before,"
I mumbled. "Thank you."
He sat beside me. "Pity you
won't be coming with us tonight. We're going out for a drink."
"I... can't drink," I replied,
seething until I remembered something
"Where's that coming from?" he
"What's what coming from?
"Anma, you rarely smiled since
You came here. What's it about this time?"
"It's embarrassing." I said,
looking down and he chuckled.
"You've embarrassed yourself
twice today. What's one more?
I playfully slapped his arm. "Don't
tell anyone. Please put my shoes back before someone sees.
"Too late," he said, and I
didn't have to question him to know why. The door opened with a bang. Liam
walked in his eyes on me, burning
Thamely like the day we first met

I looked at Rigel and he

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e

UNDMEsSion on Cli, he didn't snitch on me. That's my knight!

"Hi" I said at Liam as he

stopped in front of me. His gaze shifted to my injured foot and to the shoes on the floor. He raised a brow at me, and I looked to the side. I was not saying anything

"I need to talk to her, Rigel,"

he said gruffly. There was something between these two I didn't know. I made a mental note to ask Lexy... if I could bring myself to

Rigel stood with a lazy yawn. "See you around," he said.

Thanks again, Rigel. Have fun

tonight." He tossed Liam the bandage as "he passed him by. They're going out for a drink tonight," I explained.

Sid. I waved to Rigel as he closed the door, and he returned it with a un
#Are you alright" Liam asked.

My storm was putting on an robotic show, his scent was filling my lungs, and we were alone in my room. I couldn't feel anything from him because of the sprain in case he does something upsetting. This might be the Goddess's way of punishing me for what I did back then. A small price to pay = noterets

Answered him. "I'm fine. It's just a sprain."

Kneeling in front of me, he held

my foot gently. His touch sent a tingling sensation across my skin. "Stay indoors for now."

"I'm going nowhere in this

condition. I sprained myself before

would be lianned to m

i him."

"Ihya't really visited him

Since the incident." I missed him... I was ready to meet him. He wouldn't have

approved. I was inore grateful to Rigel

Liam began to wrap my foot with

the compression bandape. "I understand. I haven't visited them since it

happened, too."

When did we get to this level

– sharing each other's past? Did Sunething happen to him since he suddenly

walked out that night?

He worked silently, and a deafening

e, his elbows resting on his thighs.

This wasn't like him – his lips set on a deep scowl and his forehead creased as

he thought about something something that bothered him.

I scooted nearer to him, using

my arms to raise myself. Leaning to my side, I rested my head on his shoulder.

The action caused him to jolt, and I leaned back as he straightened his back." First

condition?"

"It's alright," I said, pulling
the corners of my lips. I felt his arm snake around my waist, and the other
around my thighs. Then he lifted me up and made me sit on his lap. I might've
been manhandled twice today, but it was sort of flattering that I weighed like
a feather.

Liam grinned and suddenly

"What?" Tasha. Was he happy now?

His moswines were unreadable. Lery had been teaching me things but it was
harder than I expected. It was a better look on him though.

You got heavier," he said.

*Hey!" I punched him lightly on

his very... hard chest. I'd been eating more than I usually did since I arrived.

here, but I couldn't possibly have put on weight because of it, right? I placed
a hand on my stomach

Relax, babe. I think it's a

good thing," he said, pushing my head against his chest

"Your heart's beating so fast,"

I said, hearing a fast rhythmic beat like he had been running

Only happens with you," he

El bild only happen with me,

I replied, causing my arms on my chest.

Are you still mad at me, babe?

hxd. "I'm any I didn't tell yoni

"It hurts, Liam," I said,

remembering the morning of our arrival.

The lies, the secrets, living here

knowing she is too. Tell me something, Liam. What is she to you?"

His hand held mine and he rubbed

circles with his thumb. His heartbeat Traced faster. I could hear my OWTI.

matching his, but mine felt a pang of pain.

"I'm sorry, Anna," he said. "I

had no choice."

That doesn't answer my

question."

""She's not you," he said.

"Then why is she still here?" I

asked. It was mean. I didn't even know her, and I already wanted her out of

here. She cared for Liam, she seemed to love him bulmal way, I felt like I

was the mistress. If I wasn't here, she'd have Liam to herself.

Lexy shared a bit of their past

with me, but it didn't mean he wanted nothing to do with Salina. I was taking

him away from her, and even though he was rightfully mine because of the bond,

it still didn't feel right. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to..."

His jaw clenched, "She won't be

staying here for long."

I instantly felt guilty. "I mean

if she wants to stay..."

He pressed me unto him by my

shoulder, his arm around my waist as he hugged me to him. "Whatever happens next, know that it's not because of you.

YUL Sed me, Anna Y

ved the

Hok," he said in a pained voice. "Leave the rest to me."

Liam found his male – me. The

reenerit shumild be hundred And yet, it felt like things wouldn't go smoothly like he was leaving me. I wrapped my arms around his waist, hugging him back.

He was so warm, he made me feel protected. It could've been his nature as a Alpha, but I liked to think it was for a reason more than that.

"I'm sorry I was late," he said.

"I'm sorry I wasn't there when you needed me."

I rubbed a hand down his back to

comfort him. "It's alright. I'm still here." It wasn't my time yet to meet him, them.

"I'm sorry."

"It's alright," I said. Then a

He chuckled at my words, "

w

ild if I

VOL."

"I'm sorry. I'll be more careful

next time." The incident could've been a simple rogue attack, but for a single 1
rogue to cross the pack's boundaries, it was a death wish. Patrols should've

been aware, but it got almost close, and to the Alpha's residence, not at the pack's. I wanted to ask him, but I understood this wasn't the time. I just hope that this wouldn't escalate or happen again.

Liam pulled away from me and met

my gaze. "There won't be a next time," he said, growling "I promise."

His face came closer... and

closer, his eyes took on a deeper shade. And I closed my eyes as I felt his

lips and I gave in to the kiss, granting him permission to push his tongue in

and explore my mouth. He sucked the air out of me, and I greedily wanted him

1. to. Then he let me go, both of us panting for air. I touched his cheek lovingly as

he stared back at me with a soft expression on his face. I jerked my head up,

reaching for a kiss as I whispered, "I trust you, my Alpha." o

Chapter 29 Little Things

– Liam

I woke up with a weight on my

chest. The tingling sensations that washed over me told me who it was. I was on

a dopamine high, and so was Luca. Ever since I almost gave in to Salina's 2

seduction, something I want to beat myself up to until today, and after the

exhausting run, I put him through, he took advantage of my lowered guard and

took over. I didn't have the strength to stop him, and at that point, I didn't

care for what he intended to do. Turned out, he just wanted to comfort our

mate. He had been keeping quiet since.

It was for the best.

If it wasn't for him warning me that something wasn't

.O REDMI NO Tight, I wouldn't have left the office to

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search for her. What was she doing

Search for her. What was she doing

out there anyway! I shook my head – that was the wrong question. She should be

safe everywhere she goes within the pack's territory.

It was my fault. I took it back. Carson voted against it

because he was worried for her safety, just in case she somehow got herself in

trouble. Lexy voted against it because she was worried that Anna might try to run

away. They were just worried that something might happen to her and neither

wanted her to do anything that'd hurt herself.

But I couldn't bring it to myself to have my men guard her

at all times without her knowledge. It was an invasion of her privacy, and

after she learned about my engagement the first day she was here, I felt like I

at least owed it to her – to give Anna her OO REDMI NOTEeds, adhere to her conditions

O AI QUAD CAMERA

freedom, adhere to her conditions

strictly.

It didn't occur to me that she would grant me permission

to break the first condition, to let me hold her in my arms.

I ran my hand down her hair. Thank you ... for letting me

1. in.

I let her down this time, but next time she calls for me,

I would be there. I'd keep her safe, at the cost of my life.

The rogue's invasion was an urgent matter. Gale had been reporting the progress of the investigation while Lexy nagged me until she got tired and slept, both via a mind-link. She was letting out her frustration and guilt on me for not answering Anna's calls, and I was sure later today she'd

mumble an apology. As for Gale, he better OO REDMI NOTE 198 no stone unturned

AI QUAD CAMERA

mble an apology. As for Gale, he better leave no stone unturned.

Of all the pack warriors, it had to be Rigel. My mate easily drew attention to herself and she doesn't even know it. She was either innocent or apathetic. Her best friend may be decent, but Rigel... the word didn't exist in his dictionary.

I kept the pack channel open just in case something came up, any small matter that could easily be overlooked. Listening to different voices in my head, filtering and analyzing every message that was sent, it'd divide my attention and drain my mental energy, but for my Anna, it was a small thing.

If the rogue was sent by the one person on my mind, I swear

.O REDMI NOTÉo better start praying. I wasn't losing

AI QUAD CAMEPone anymore. I wouldn't let him

anyone anymore. I wouldn't let him

take another from me. As always, there was no proof that it was his doing. But

someday, he'd get what he deserved and more.

A murmur reached my ears. Cracking an eye open, I looked down to see Anna blinking her eyes open. Then she yawned. Her arms went to my sides, hugging me as she rested her head back down on my chest. "Good morning,"

she whispered, still half-asleep.

"Good morning... mate." She was so adorable. And innocent.

If it wasn't for her ankle, I'd have already turned us over. Her scent was driving me insane that my canines were itching, and I just woke up for fuck's sake!

I shook my head – these thoughts need to be stored in the

DMI NOTE back of my mind for now. I had to AI QUAD CAMERÃOritize her safety... and the party we

had

oritize her safety... and the party we had

to organize. If she'd have me – I know she would, but the doubt was still there

for some reason. I'd be honored to introduce her to the pack as my Luna. Let

be known across the werewolf community that Anna Bella Fiora was mine and Liam

Rose was hers. Soon... she'd be more than Anna Bella Fiora.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked, interrupting my

thoughts.

"Nothing," I replied.

She was still using me as a pillow. Not that I mind, I

would gladly be her pillow, her comforter, her mattress. Fuck, anything that

REDMI NOTEUS make her comfortable. Except that, AI QUAD CAME painfully hard down there and

JU, Tsaid. wny would I want to forget seeing my

girl...

Pompf!

A pillow came down on my face. I kept laughing as she assaulted me with it. I raised a hand to cover my head, but my girl was completely energized that she didn't stop until her arm was tired. Lucky for me, she couldn't move her leg. Else, she might've suffocated me instead – who knew what she might do! She brought the pillow down one last time and left it there.

So adorable. I couldn't help but laugh. This was what I wanted – moments like this where it was just the two of us and she was being adorable. It felt good. It felt right. I felt alive.

REDM NO'Des't be mad, babe," I said, taking the AI QUAD CAME pillow off. "It

won't be the last –

I stopped when I saw her. She had her small back to me.

She was leaning forward with both her legs straight. I sat up and placed a hand on her shoulder to get her to turn around and face me, but her face was covered with both of her hands, her long hair falling to the sides of her face. "Anna?"

I asked, my mind working equations as to what just happened.

Was it something I said? Which one? What did I say?

"You saw... everything, didn't you?" she asked in a hushed tone.

"It wasn't exactly hidden from sight," I said, scratching

my head. Was it that?

"You saw the scars."

00 REDMI NOTEsild feel her heart break the moment CO AI QUAD CAMESaid those

words. I didn't want to talk to her about it. I saw those scars the first time

I laid eyes on her trembling body. It sent my blood boiling in anger amidst the excitement that I finally found my mate. It was a very personal matter, and we were both, just as she said, "basically strangers." So, all this time, Lexy and I kept it to ourselves and we had never spoken a word about it.

We weren't at a level yet where I could ask her about it.

I knew I should've done more on that fucking Flynn! Fuck!

He touched my girl, and she didn't give a flying fuck!

"Shut the fuck up," said Luca, snarling.

"Now you show up."

"Cause you won't shut up when mate needs you," he said.

REDMI NO Sigised. He was right. Damn it! That

fucking Flynn ruined

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everything, even the memory of our first meeting

"Anna," I said, sliding down the bed to be beside her. I

pulled her hands gently away from her face, tipped her chin up so she'd look at

1. me. "Anna..."

I cupped her beautiful face with both hands, swiping my thumb

over her trembling lips. Her honey brown orbs stared at me; fear etched deep

within them. I kissed her. I kept still, relishing the feel of her soft lips against mine. "I don't give a fuck about your scars."

"But – «

No buts. I hushed her with my mouth before I could

hear her belittle herself. My tongue danced with hers and as always, I gained

dominance. I explored her mouth **REDMI NO** hungrily as her fingers tugged on my **AI QUAD CAMERA**

hair. So

hair. So

sweet...

"Good mor!

"Oh."

Someone interrupted. They interrupted. She broke away, and

we both looked towards the door. Lexy stood there holding a tray on both hands,

a wide grin on her face. Gale was already turning on his heels to walk away. He

had more sense in him to know when his presence wasn't welcomed, unlike my sis

who happily went to us.

She was doing this on purpose. "Sorry to interrupt but

you're needed," Lexy said, pointing at me. "Gale has to talk to you."

"No, he doesn't!" Gale yelled. "Take your time, Alpha!" 5

Too late for that now, isn't it?

REDMI NOTE es you later, gorgeous," I said, then **AI QUAD CAMERA**

pecked her

TECRUTO

lips. "Don't go anywhere." I got off the bed, giving Lexy a glaring side glance, and went out of the room, closing the doors behind me. She better let me have this chance.

Gale was already at the top of the stairs." What is so important that it can't wait for later, Gale?" I asked as I calmly made my way over to him.

"Salina was looking for you since this morning," he said.

Is he fucking serious right now?

He flinched and took two steps down." And?" I asked, taking a step closer.

"Her father's coming today."

Chapter 30 Subconscious Denial

– Liam

This was expected. I'm surprised it took him a week to get here. He wasn't welcome in my pack – he never was until that day. This would be the last time he gets to see this place. And it would be the last I get to see Salina. It'd be hardest for me, but as Alpha, I must do what was best for the pack. 1

"Inform the pack," I ordered. "Find Rigel. Meet me in my office after twenty minutes."

"Yes, Alpha," said Gale and hurriedly went down the stairs then out the door.

Lately, I'd been thinking that I might actually have a shot at this. That maybe things would also be better for me, as long as she was around, as long as she stayed by my side. That maybe, just maybe, this was what Sarina would've wanted for me.

I went to my room, half-expecting to see RED Salina but she wasn't there. What I was surprised was her scent, the same familiar

A

gered was her scent, the same familiar scent of lavender and peppermint that I couldn't get enough of. This was wrong, I understood it since day one. But it kept me afloat... it kept me alive.

I took a quick cold shower to clear my thoughts, feeling the weight of an impending decision. This was inevitable. The Moon Goddess granted my wish – it shouldn't be this hard to let her go.

I'm happy with her.

Anna was opening herself up to me, little by little.

She trusts me.

What more could I possibly ask for?

"Hey," Luca said casually as I wrapped a towel around my waist and stepped out of the bathroom. I went into my closet and looked around for what to wear.

"Hey," he said again.

"What do you want?"

A suit didn't seem proper. He wasn't O RED ICOM!Eorie to dress up for and I didn't need

to assert my position. He knew who I am

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assent my position. He knew who I am – everyone in our world knew.

"Don't find a way out of this," he said, growling

"I'm not."

I should go casual. Dark denim jeans and a baby blue shirt; roll up the sleeves. I combed my hair in front of the mirror; decided against putting on cologne. Then I chose an Oyster watch in yellow gold, with a black dial, and a black Oysterflex bracelet; the fluted bezel adding an elegant touch of luxury. One last look and I was ready

Luca whimpered. "We have a mate now."

"We also had a mate."

"I don't want to lose her, you idiot!"

I sighed as I closed the bedroom door behind me.

"I don't want to lose her, too."

He retreated to the back of my mind. I

went down the stairs and to the right, REDMI Npassing the library and the study.
Now at AI QUAD CAME

the side of the mansion, I watched the

side of the mansion, I watched the warriors train on their own. Which reminds me, we were set to launch a raid soon. Once our spies return, they should all be ready by then.

For now, I had to win this messed-up game. Reaching my office, I opened the door to find Rigel and Gale already waiting for me. Rigel, as usual, was wearing nothing but basketball shorts. He'd been spending more and more time in the woods, with his wolf, and some pack members have reported seeing him asleep, naked, on varying areas. And by reported, it was more like the trending gossip in the pack channel by the she wolves. He yawned as I entered.

What the fuck tires him?

I sat on my office chair and gestured for them to sit across me.

"Who wants to go first?"

"Yeah, how long do I have to be here?" Rigel asked, earning a sigh from Gale.
What? Some of us have work to get back

0." 2 REDMI NOTE 9S AI QUA CAWhat work?" Gale snarked. "You rarely

what work?" Gale snarked. "You rarely train the warriors and word is that you're sleeping naked everywhere! I'm getting tired of your lazy ass."

"Well guess what, Beta?" said Rigel, pointing to himself. "This lazy ass saved our Luna."

He slid down his chair, hands behind his head, with a smirk on his face.

Gale's upper lip twitched. He was losing it. I don't blame him – he'd been taking over Rigel's duties for months now.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Do you want us to build a statue for you? Award you a fucking medal?"

My Beta was cussing now. I pinched the bridge of my nose – why couldn't these two at least try to get along?

"I don't see a reason why not."

Gale got up and pushed the sleeves of his shirt up.

"That's it!" he said, pulling an arm back,

fist in the air. OO REDMI NO C AI QUAD CAM Gale." I gave him a hard stare until he

resigned back to his chair, sighing.

signed back to his chair, sighing.

"Pussy."

"Rigel! Salina's father is coming and if talks break down, I need to know that you are with us."

"With you?" he said, moving his jaw from side to side.

"No. No fucking way. Get yourself killed for all I care. You'd like that, won't you? At least when you're dead, you wouldn't have to pretend anymore."

My hands balled into fists as I fought to keep myself from punching that smirk off his pretty-boy face. This was fucking important for the pack – at least as Head Gamma, he should take this matter seriously.

"Gale!" I said sternly as he was about to stand. He brought his fist to his lips, knuckles turning white from the urge to put Rigel back to his place.

Rigel chuckled.

"Look at you two. Can't fucking do shit." REDMI' Me raised himself up and crossed his Alarms. His eyes met mine, his smirk

1. ns. His eyes met mine, his smirk replaced by hardened features. "With her? Yes. I'll have your back when you need me. Know that this is for your precious mate and not for you, Alpha."

I could make do with that. I just needed him to hear it from himself. "Thank you," I said. "We need you on this one."

"No shit."

"It's your duty as Head Gamma, Rigel," said Gale while glaring at him.

"Now you talk about my duty?" he replied in a bored tone. "I'm keeping her safe, Beta. Something the two of you always fail to do. So, don't fucking tell me what my fucking duty is." He grinned at the two of us, his eyes flickering to a deeper and clearer forest green. If it wasn't for the circumstances of our situation, he might've turned those eyes at me – hungry, angry, and murderous. The tension in the room grew tenfold. 2

"Are we done here?" he asked, his eyes back to their normal color.

REDMI NOYes." I said, sighing. There'd be no AI QUAD point in keeping him here longer.

Еслиш кеершг III nere longer.

"Great!" he said, getting up and already heading for the door. "Good luck!"

For a few minutes, neither of us spoke a word. The shouts of the warriors could clearly be heard, a filter for the unspoken thoughts that ran through our minds.

I broke the silence. "He didn't mean it, Gale."

"He's right though," he said, gazing up at the ceiling. "He always is."

"He'll protect Anna," I assured him. Rigel, even with his carefree attitude, would protect her. It was the only thing he could do now. "I've something else for you."

"What?" he asked, lowering his head.

"Set a separate team to continue the investigation on the rogue."

"He used wolfsbane to hide his scent. Question is how he got past the patrollers. I have a team interrogating those on duty at that time. If someone's

feeding an enemy information..." REDMI NOTE 9S O AI QUAD CAWIs gaze hardened.

His gaze laardened.

"... do I have your permission?"

Torture. Not many in the pack knew this, but a special unit specializes in breaking a werewolf's will. It was organized by my father. The first unit, unfortunately, died from wolfsbane poisoning. Not long after I took over as Alpha, I organized another unit, personally handpicked from the best among the warriors.

"Yes. Do whatever is necessary," I replied. No one... harms my Anna. "Keep your guard up. Do a thorough search."

"We've spies tailing them now. They should be reporting anytime soon. Anything else I should know?"

I decided it'd be best to be blunt. "The agreement won't be honored."

Gale nodded. He didn't bother asking why – he didn't need to. "What'll you do?"

"There's only one way out of this," I said, looking him right in the eye.

His eyes went wide in realization. We said

the answer at the same time. "An Alpha Duel." 1

"An Alpha Duel." 1

"Rigel knew," he said. "Do you have a fucking death wish, Liam?"

"I've no other choice. This will make it clear to both packs."

"There has to be another way," he said, brows furrowing

I kept quiet. This was the only answer to keep the Blue Moon Pack at bay without spilling innocent blood, as it should. This was personal, just between me and him. I'd have to be the one to settle it. For my pack and Luna, I would win.

Chapter 31 Doubtful Vision

– Liam

Salina stood beside me, wearing short denim shorts and a long thin shirt with a deep V-neck. She had her hair loose past her shoulders, and I forced a smile on my face. She clung to my side; I let her be. This would be the last she gets this close with me. 2

"You were with her last night, weren't you?" she asked quietly.

Unlike her usual chirpy self, she was quiet today as we waited for her father to arrive. "I waited for you, but you didn't

come."

"Don't make it sound like you're my wife," I said as gently as I could.

All this time, she was beside me. She wasn't a horrible person, just... clingy and too obedient, I guess. For the last two years, she spent her days here just because her father insisted that it'd be better for her to stay with me, her fiancé

until the given grace period expires. OO REDN C AI QUAD TI Ríully, I found Anna before it did.

FIT

HY, ITUUTTU Anna before it can

"Can I stay?" she asked. "I don't want to leave. I want to stay here."

This was for the best. "She doesn't want you here."

"My family is here! I don't want to leave Aunty J and Rigel." 2

She removed her arm from mine and turned her back to me. I heard her taking deep breaths as if to calm herself.

"I'll live with them. I'll leave your room and won't bother you."

She faced me again, looking up at me with pleading eyes that I felt a pinch in my heart.

"Please let me stay."

"I'm sorry."

"Can I come visit?"

"No. I'm sorry, Salina. The Blue Moon Pack won't be welcome here after this." 1

I didn't have the right to take her away

from the Johnson's. They were her REDMI Nether's side of the family, and Aunty J Al Q would be heartbroken. Rigel might finally

have a more pressing reason to step down as Gamma.

"Don't I mean anything at all to you, Liam?" she asked with a tone of anger, poking my chest as she rebuked me. "I know you kept me around because of her. Because I was a breathing, living reminder of her. Because I have her face, her body, and her scent. Because you could never forgive yourself for taking her away from me, from all of us." 2

Her lips trembled and a tear slid down her cheek which she quickly wiped away with the back of her hand.

"What? Now that you found your second mate, you think everything will be alright for you? No... Her ghost will haunt you forever, Liam. My sister's soul won't rest until you're miserable."

"Is that all?" I asked through gritted teeth. I did use her. She made it easier for me to cope with the loss of Sarina because at the end of the day, I could still smell her... see her, even though I never

* touched her. Many times, I thought "Why OO REDMI NDER? Why did it have to be my Sarina?"

O AI QUAD

Those were horrible thoughts, but I couldn't help it then. Over time, those thoughts were directed at me – "why not me?"

"You and I both know what your father's after. You and I both know this day would eventually come. We were never anything, Salina," I said, watching her eyes throw daggers at me. "You're her sister. That's all you will ever be to me."

"Her sister who felt your dick pressed up against her last week," she snide. 1

"That was a mistake."

"Was it?" she asked, smirking. "Settle what you will with my father. If you ever need me, you know where to find me."

Her lips pulled into a smile as a black SUV came into view, a convoy of three. They stopped in front of the mansion, and the driver of the car in the middle came out. He was wearing a suit, his black shoes polished. He opened the door of the passenger seat and a trail of smoke

disappeared into the air as he stepped out. OO REDMI CO ATQUAD "Daddy!"

Salina squealed happily and skipped towards Alpha Myron. He opened his arms for her, and she jumped onto him, hugging him tightly. A hearty laugh came from him as his free hand, the left that wasn't holding a stick of cig, patted the small of her back. "I missed you so much!" she screamed.

"I missed you too, sunshine," he said as she pulled away. He held her arm as he looked her over with a grin on his face. "Look at you. Still as gorgeous as ever."

"Only for you, Daddy," she chirped, then pointed at me. "And my Alpha."

I went over to them, plastering a smile on my face. If it wasn't for his status, both in the werewolf community and in her life, I might've buried him alive already.

"Liam!" he exclaimed. "Glad to be here again. I see it hasn't changed much."

Take it all in because you won't be stepping in here again.

"It's still the same as always," I replied.

•
REDM He hugged Salina to his side, his arm AI QUAWEZAped around her waist like she was

apped around her waist like she was his girl, and I don't mean his daughter. It was strange to me at first, but I was used to it by now – they were really close. 2

"Looks like it," he said, his eyes scanning the mansion behind me.

The other passengers had gotten out of the cars and were joining us. I recognized some of his men – they'd been his escorts during his visits. What caught my attention was a woman who got out of the third car. She wore a long silk black robe with a large hood that hid her face. She wore a black dress underneath it, the length reaching the ground. A pungent smell came from her, and my first instinct was to restrain her while her pale, wrinkly hands were still and to her sides.

"Sister Katrina," said Alpha Myron, beckoning her over. "Meet Alpha Liam."

He turned to me, and added, "Liam, this is Sister Katrina. She used to be from the Black Star Coven and is currently under my employ."

REDMI NOShekeld the sides of her robe and VAI QUAD Curtsied before me.

ZUILOTCU ULIOILMTC.

It is an honor to meet you in person, Alpha Liam Rose of the Red Claw Pack," she said in a raspy voice as she raised herself. "Tales of your bravery and cunning are known throughout the lands, it is a feat unlike no other."

"The grapevine exaggerates, Sister," I said, chuckling

She raised a finger in the air, showing off a bony finger and a cracked hard nail. The tips of her fingers were black. Their prolonged constant exercise of magic eventually changed the skin color, and it was said that the more the color covered, the stronger the witch. It showcased their practice, their knowledge, and thus the time they spent perfecting their craft. Hers was only until the first knuckle. She was strong, but I could still take her on in

a one-on-one fight.

"To a certain extent, Alpha," she said.

She sucked in air slowly, then her bony figure trembled. Her voice changed into an imposing tone.

REDMI NO Beware, Alpha, of enemies known and CÓ AI QUA O C

unknown, living and not living. Beware

the man who seeks redemption. Beware the man who seeks destruction. A flower gone, a flower blooms, the flower wilts, and another blossom.”

The way witches speak made me want to facepalm every damn time. The younger ones were well-accustomed to the modern world, but the older generations were averse to change. They also preferred to remain secluded in their covenants. I’d imagine they were brewing potions and researching. Witches sought knowledge, for whatever purpose.

Her shoulders shook as she muffled a low, dry laugh.

“Their anger boils and simmers. The pressure begs to be released. Keep both eyes open. Keep both eyes closed. Win, lose, win, lose again.” 1

I didn’t understand what she just said.

“Thank you, Sister,” I replied with a smile. “I’ll heed your advice.”

She whispered, “It’s a vision.”

REDMI NOTE Sister Katrina turned around, humming a AI QUAD CAMER

tune to herself, pausing to mumble

something incomprehensible before humming again. Then, right before our very eyes, as she continued to walk, she suddenly vanished. As if there was an invisible door that only she could see and she slipped into that door that led to who knows where

Alpha Myron slowly shook his head.

“She says it’s a vision but who knows for sure what witches say? She also does that, disappearing into thin air. I hope you wouldn’t mind?”

There were no talks about a witch’s involvement. To bring a witch into another pack’s territory required certain permissions and protocols. No Alpha would be dumb enough to let a witch wander around...

“Not at all,” I said, leading the way into the mansion with the two of them following me. 1

Alpha Myron’s jaw dropped slightly, and I suppressed a smirk.

On our way to my office, my mind

wandered back to Sister Katrina’s words. OO REDMI

. She could’ve lied about it being a vision,

AI QUADCA

Ce could've lied about it being a vision, but what if it wasn't?

If there was one thing witches had in common, it was that they were all betrayers. Each acted to benefit herself, regardless of whose expense on a certain what, which was often life. Even sisters in a covenant betrayed each other.

There were a few covenants still around, and fewer were like Sister Katrina, an outcast. Covenants kept to themselves, strictly living their lives according to the rules that bound them to the covenant. Outcasts were more dangerous – if a witch in a covenant was like a domesticated animal, these ones were wild animals, only looking out for themselves. For Alpha Myron to employ an outcast, he must either be batshit crazy or scheming or both. Having known him for quite some time now, it was both. He had the witch on display; an open show of his confidence that he'd surely succeed in his plan.

If he kept her hidden, he might just have a sliver of a chance at winning. Unfortunately for him, he should've thought this more thoroughly – the Red

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pught this more thoroughly – the Red Claw Pack prided itself with another ace, something...someone... no other pack has.