

# Ascension of a Gamma by C. C. Chapter 45

## Chapter 45 Losing Scares

– Liam

A solemn look fell upon everyone's faces as our comrades retrieved our fallen. Seventeen from our borders with six more from the infirmary. All their lives were on me. I should've been more

careful at the Alpha Duel. I should've woken immediately. I should've remembered soon. They needed me and I wasn't aware they needed me.

Growing up, our predecessors instilled that there was no greater honor than giving our all to the pack in honor of the Moon Goddess. Now I hoped that our fallen brothers and sisters found peace in her arms.

I felt a hand squeeze down on my shoulder.

"It's not your fault, Alpha."

A rumbling came from the skies and harsh winds blew. Then it rained heavily, drenching all of us. They shifted into their wolves and howled and whimpered, There was no moon tonight, but their

their wolves and howled and whimpered. here was no moon tonight, but their cries should reach Her, nonetheless.

They shed tears masked in rain and sent silent messages on links that'd never light up again. The stench of death, blood, and salt brought up memories I'd rather forget. The last time and this time

Goddess, help whoever set this up because I'm coming for him...

"We don't get to choose tomorrow Liam. We can't undo the past. We can only trust that they're with the Goddess," said Helia.

I turned my back on them, dragging my feet in the mud, thinking of nothing. When I looked up, I was already at the front of the mansion.

I kept her waiting. She must've had questions for me to answer.

It was early in the morning. She was most likely asleep by now. Sighing, I made my way inside. I took my shoes and socks off, dropping them before I reached the bottom of the stairs.

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## **DULLUM UI Te Stairs.**

She'd most likely yell at me for keeping it a secret. If I was in her shoes, I'd get furious at myself. She had every right to, but this could all wait for later.

I hesitated in opening the door. If it was I who got mad, I knew what the room would look like. Gathering courage, I slowly turned the handle and pushed it open slowly.

Her sweet scent instantly calmed me, but I frowned at the saltiness, which was similar to the night I found her. She was on the bed, hugging a pillow between knees and chest. Then she stirred, putting the pillow down to the side.

Did she wait for me? I couldn't find the words to speak.

She got out of bed hurriedly, then ran to me.

Here it comes.

I waited for a sharp slap, maybe another kick down there, for her to scream at me and call me a jerk for lying to her. I waited for her to break down in nervousness for leaving her alone while I joined the fight. I waited for her to cry so

## **VTILCUPIUTTICI LUULECI CU VITIT**

nousness for leaving her alone while I joined the fight. I waited for her to cry so I could comfort her the soonest.

She didn't do any of those. She wrapped her arms around my waist and buried her head in my chest, holding onto me tightly like I was going to disappear if she didn't.

I stiffened at the suddenness, my arms to my sides.

I felt her warmth through my drenched shirt. I heard the relief in her voice when she murmured my name.

I could hear my own breathing and the racing beats of my heart. I let her scent calm me, then I hugged her back.

She made a move to let go but I didn't. Not yet. She was warmth...

"You're soaked," she whispered.

Not only was I dripping on the carpet, but my clothes were also sprayed with blood and mud. Hesitantly, I let her go.

"Sorry."

She held my hand and pulled me towards the bathroom

the ballroom.

“You need to change out of those clothes before you catch a cold.”

That made me smile. I hadn't caught a cold since I shifted. A little rain wouldn't get me sick, although the idea of staying in bed with her dotting on me appeared rather pleasant. Could I still get sick? Since I shifted, I never had a fever.

I helped her take my shirt off, noticing how her fingers lingered longer on my skin, then I let it drop to the floor. The glint in her eyes made me smirk. Unbuckling my belt, I pulled it off before it clamored on the floor. Her eyes still glued on mine, she breathed through slightly parted lips.

A zip, a struggle, and my pants were on the floor. I stood before her, revealing all of me. My breathing as laborious as hers, my eyes just as hungry.

As if snapping out of a trance, she shook her head slightly and held my hand, leading me inside the shower. With her clothes still on, warm water cascaded on both of us as I held her by her hips.

I kissed her hair, then her forehead, her

issed her hair, then her forehead, her nose, then her soft sweet lips.

She relinquished control, and I explored every inch of her mouth, gliding my tongue against hers. Intoxicating, addicting – every aspect of her was mine. I grabbed her thighs and pulled her up, then slammed her to the wall. I pressed myself against her, the scent of her sweet arousal clouding my mind.

“You do this to me,” I whispered in her ear, then I nibbled lightly at the tender flesh.

She relaxed in my hold as she sighed. Then her hand grabbed my length and pumped it gently, swiping her thumb over the head with added pressure. I growled when she looked me in the eye and flicked her tongue at her thumb to taste me, her lashes fluttering as she savored my cum.

Unable to hold back any longer, I impaled her in one hard thrust.

So tight...

“Her beautiful moans made me harder as I built a steady rhythm, pumping in and out of her faster and faster Her legs.

So tight...

Her beautiful moans made me harder as I built a steady rhythm, pumping in and out of her faster and faster. Her legs swung to the side as I kept her thighs parted, my hands on her breasts as I placed kisses on her neck.

Liam..."

My name left her lips in the most sensual manner. Her moans, her sweetness, this blissful feeling we shared...

I don't want to lose you, Anna.

Liam!!!

Her limbs shook, she bit down on my chest, then she clamped down on me as she came. Beautiful... So fucking beautiful

Eyes shut as she threw her head back, her walls clenched around me, milking me as her sweetness coated me. Her parted lips begging to be bitten.

This face she makes was mine. No one will ever see it but me.

As she came down from her high, I could feel mine coming. Thrusting faster and

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I mine coming. Thrusting faster and harder, I groaned as I released deep inside her. I kept spurting as I moved in and out slowly, determined to let this last longer. Her warmth exploded on my dick once more, and I shuddered as I filled her again.

Don't leave my side. I'll protect you so stay by my side.

"I love you," she whispered between pants. "I love you, Liam."

I'll make you happy.

I kissed her breathless then pulled out. 1

I'll let you break down my walls... just promise me your words are true – that you'll always stay beside me.

We showered, dried ourselves, then slipped in bed. Both of us didn't bother with clothes, and I was more than alright with it. I sighed as my body sank.

Exhaustion hit me like a ton of bricks, the adrenaline from my system now gone. With her head on my chest and an arm around my waist, her body heat warmed

1. me.

What are you thinking of Loked

und my waist, her body heat warmed

1. me.

"What are you thinking of?" I asked.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

I was tired, but I explained everything to her.

She pecked me on the lips as a sign of forgiveness. She could be so adorable. 5)

"What do we do now?"

"Carry on," I replied.

Bury our brothers and sisters, keep their memories in our hearts, and live on with our lives. Wounds heal into scars, and some wounds never heal, but... if the Goddess wills..

"I'm sorry."

"You have nothing to be sorry for, Anna. This happens all the time with our kind. There will always be a conflict between packs, among pack members, and we will never run out of rogues. The most we can do is carry on."

She kept quiet, keeping her thoughts to herself. I kissed her hair and inhaled her

e kept quiet, keeping her thoughts to herself. I kissed her hair and inhaled her scent. Her breathing now calm, I pulled the sheets over us.

I love you, too, Anna Bella Fiora. But if I told you, I get this feeling that I'd lose something...

## Ascension of a Gamma by C. C. Chapter 46

### Chapter 46 Opening Locks

-Anna

The elders prayed to the Moon Goddess with the rest of the pack silently praying on their own. Dressed in black from head to toe, we gathered around the graves of the brave men and women who fought for us. Their families wailed in their dirt covered graves, clutching at the headstones that summarized their entire identity, the life they lived. Soon, plants of their choosing would be planted by their spouse, or their parents, or their children, whoever they have left behind.

Today was particularly chilly. Mud dirtied our shoes and the atmosphere, melancholic.

I watched all these unfold with a heavy heart, holding back the tears as I felt their pain – the pain of losing a loved one. They were warriors to me, as someone else to the rest – a son, a daughter, a mother, a father, a wife, a husband, a friend. They lived their lives with a different identity to each person in their life but died with the same everyone had and will remember them by.

It was nothing short of cruel, but such was reality, and it'd take time to overcome the grief, though it didn't always happen.

The memories were our attachments to them that transcended their physical company, and it'd continue to remind us that they once were, by our sides. Sometimes the feeling of a ghostly presence would linger when we found ourselves staying in places where we used to spend time with them, and the nights were worse because of the eerie silence that filled the room.

At least it was how it was for me. I felt their pain in every way because I knew what it was like to lose someone, to have someone fight bravely for me that it cost them their life. To me, it was an exchange. Their life for mine – so I could live one more second, one more day, one more year – then celebrate a "birthday".

They were brave, fearless even; my only regret was never getting to know who they were when they were still around. It was an honor, to be a part of the pack they served, loved, and protected.

they served, loved, and protected.

The warriors stood straight in formation, with Rigel and Gale on the front. Their faces solemn, hearts grieving and undeniably even more furious than mine.

Gale shifted first, into a gray wolf with black patches of fur and clear blue eyes. Rigel followed, then the rest of the warriors.

Liam let go of my hand, then shifted into his own. Bigger than the rest, he was a beautiful black wolf, too dark it almost looked like a thick dark blue, his eyes black. He sat on his hind legs, then raising his head, he let out a long, pained howl, soon succeeded by the warriors. Then everyone in the pack had shifted into their own wolves and howled along with him.

Their families had shifted too, some of them whimpering. I wished I could shift too. At this very moment, I wanted to. I wanted to join the pack in their grievance, in sending them off, a farewell for our dead, but I couldn't.

Tears didn't measure, and so I continued to pray instead. Afterward, the pack started to leave until it was only their

rted to leave until it was only their families. Then, it was only Liam and me. He laid on his stomach, his head on his forelegs. I squatted to reach his level, then ran a hand on his back, soft, thick fur enveloping my fingers.

Luca whimpered. I kissed the top of his head. Looking around the graveyard, it was near impossible to get a picture of the number of the deceased for there were different plants growing around, from flowers to shrubs to evergreens. The pack lost many, yet at the same time, it didn't feel that way with the view. Perhaps this was their way of immortalizing their loved ones – by giving them another life in this world.

His tongue

darted out and licked my hand. I scratched from below his jaw down to his side. I smiled

softly at him. He didn't do anything, but I could feel just how much it grieved him, and the regret of not supporting them sooner weighed on his shoulders.

It'd be easy to tell him it wasn't his

fault. I really wasn't. He shouldn't blame himself for their deaths. However, I felt like keeping my mouth shut and just

He keeping my

mouth shut and just staying beside him would speak more than whatever word might leave my mouth. In whatever way I could, I'd let him know that I was right here with him, all the way.

Getting up on his paws, he rubbed his head on my thighs before turning around. I walked beside him, occasionally rubbing his back. He kept his head down, ears flat on his head. I wished I could do more...

Instead of walking out the graveyard, he led me behind a curtain of thick vines. Hidden and separated from the rest were more headstones. The graves had different plants, too, and as we passed them by, I noticed on the visible headstones a recurring name, "Rose". It was his family's

He stopped in front of two graves that were side by side. White roses grew on each grave. He laid right at the middle before these, closed his eyes, then whimpered. One read "Sarina Rose", his first mate, and the other, "Samila Rose". I didn't know who the latter was, but I could tell both of these women mattered the world to him.

He kept whimpering like he was physically hurt but he wasn't, it was more than that. I sat on my butt this time and patted his head. Holding both sides of his head, I motioned for him to spread himself across my lap, to which he did.

His massive body was heavy. But he was also warm. I could tell he was being careful to not put all his weight on me. I ran my hand soothingly across his massive body, sometimes leaning forward to kiss him wherever. His scent was stronger, and it calmed me down. He also quieted down; his eyes still closed.

Then he blinked them open, got off my lap, and shifted back to his human form. He sat beside me with a plain expression. Putting a hand on his shoulder, he raised those eyes at me. Profound sadness stared back from his brown gaze. They said, "eyes are the windows to the soul" – I was staring straight into it right now. He was letting me in, showing me what was usually concealed. Oh, Liam.

A tear escaped an eye and I wiped it with a thumb. After all these years, he carried it alone – regrets, grief, anger...

Alone – regrets, grief, anger...

He was no different than I for although I acted like I had moved on; the truth was that I still cared so much about the past. Living with the White Lake Pack was all I had to keep me going. Their sacrifice and a promise – I would've ended my life a long time ago if it wasn't because of them.

Going to the human world was me thinking I'd live a better life away from werewolves. That maybe, if I wasn't involved with them, I'd find a reason to continue living. I should've realized it was far from that. I questioned the Goddess often why I didn't die that night, why I was saved by a second mate. And perhaps this was her answer – we were a somewhat perfect fit. Just two broken souls trying to live life because of a past that chained us down.

His lips parted, then he bowed his head and a sob broke from his throat. I pulled him to my chest, running a hand down his back as he clutched on my sleeves and cried. And I cried with him.

Surrounded by the graves of his bloodline, in their silent embrace, our tears fell freely, and the only sounds we

heard fell freely, and the only sounds we heard were our own cries. At this moment, the world faded, and it was just the two of us once more.

Eventually, our wails turned to sobs, to hiccups, then heavy breaths. My clothing was soaked where he cried, and so was the back of his shirt, for my chin rested just past his nape. I took out a handkerchief from a pocket to blow my nose and he let go of me and turned to his side to do the same.

Then he turned to face me, and I chuckled. Eyes swollen; nose, red; and his lips still quivering. He offered a small smile, then tucked a strand of hair behind my ear. "Between the two of us, I think you look worse," he said, then we laughed aloud like we haven't been crying just a minute ago.

It felt good to cry, and have someone to cry to, but it felt better to have someone to laugh with. I rested my head on his shoulder. My lower back ached from our previous position. He intertwined his fingers with mine, and I was comforted by the warmth that came from him. He kissed my hair and sighed. I smiled.

Kissed my hair and sighed. I smiled.



"Sarina was my mate. She's the first. But you already know," he said as he placed a hand around my shoulders. "I met her when the Blue Moon Pack came to visit, years after my uncle had taken over as Alpha of the pack. He married the daughter of their last Alpha, who was sick at the time. When he was my father's Beta, he was married to his mate in this pack. Sarina and Salina, their mother was from our pack. But she passed away at childbirth, and my uncle insisted on taking his daughters with him when he was banished for fucking mated she wolves, one too many times. Dad had no choice but to let them go. He was the Alpha, but he wasn't the children's father." 3

My head shot up to find him looking down at me with a soft smile. I was curious about this since Lexy's short version, but was I ready to hear it? He didn't have to force himself.

As if he could read my thoughts, he leaned forward to kiss my forehead.

I relaxed then and snuggled closer to him.

"He was banished, but he wasn't a rogue.

He was banished, but he wasn't a rogue. He became an Alpha. It was a meeting of Alphas; Dad couldn't lose face and I think he was relieved to see that his brother was doing well for himself. I was in my mid-twenties, five years ahead of her. He brought her daughters with them, and that was how we met." 3

He stared at her tombstone with longing. My heart ached with jealousy, much to my dismay.

"She was... bubbly and bright, and constantly annoyed me. I was sleeping around with whoever, I felt like I didn't deserve her."

I rolled my eyes – typical. Just how many came before me.

"Are you mad at me?" he asked.

"For what?"

"For sleeping with a number of women."

He didn't have to ask! No mate would be happy about it. While most of us kept ourselves untouched for our mate, some, especially Alphas, Betas, and Gammas still chose to do it with whoever was willing, which I'd imagine was never a

problem since many women were as thirsty as them.

"Would you be happy if I slept with men before you? You almost killed Flynn that night, and that was my first," I retorted.

"No. I'd be angry at you, too," he said as he rubbed small circles on the back of my hand. "Babe, he wasn't your first. I am. He saw nothing while I saw everything. He tasted nothing while I tasted all of you. He doesn't wear your scent; I do. And if he took these away from me that night, I would've killed him, no regrets, even if it brought a war at our borders. You saw how far my warriors would go to protect the pack. How far do you think they'll go to protect their Luna?" 1

He asked the question with conviction that it scared me. I didn't want anyone dying for me, and yet a lot of them just did. I didn't want anyone fighting over me; I wasn't worth it.

"Sorry," I mumbled, unsure of what I was saying it for.

"I'm sorry, too. I felt like I should let it out," he said, sighing. "Do you want me to continue?"

I nodded.

"I didn't fall on my knees in front of her or changed into a one-woman man overnight. I silently rejected her for two straight days and avoided her as often as I could. But as I said, she found ways to annoy me. She'd follow me wherever I go and keep talking non-stop. I even kissed a girl in front of her, so she'd leave me alone. I felt like shit, but it worked. She left me alone for the rest of the day. You can already guess what happened next."

"You bastard," I said firmly. My first seriously wanted to hit him right now. I was hurt too – hurt that he did that to Sarina. "You jerk of a bastard."

"I know," he breathed. "I deserve every curse word you throw at me. I was an asshole, and more. I didn't deserve her. Lexy even lectured me that night. The meeting was over the next day. I'd never see her again and I convinced myself I was fine with it."

He suddenly laughed, and my eyes narrowed at him.

**Tamrowed at num.**

"You'd never believe what she did! She came to my room at two in the morning, or I was it three? She picked the lock, snuck into my room, and woke me up – so she could tell me she forgives me, and that if I really didn't want her, she asked me to reject her and she'd respect any decision and accept."

I smiled. She sounded like a strong

woman.

"Long story short, she changed me. I cut off all my connections with... them, and after the meeting ended, we told our parents. And well, Lexy already told you the rest."

"She told me about the agreement," I said quietly.

"I didn't care for it. I was happy with her and it was all that mattered. She lived with us and so did her sister. They reunited with their mother's side of the family. I've never seen Auntie J as happy as she did then. She loved those two like they were her own. She still does."

That explained why she was cold towards me. It was hard for her to lose Sarina, and

It was hard for her to lose Sarina, and she knew she was about to lose Salina because of me.

"We were happy then," he whispered fondly. "But all good things must come to an end. Our parents were ambushed by rogues when they left the pack for a meeting, I took over as Alpha, and it was difficult for the pack, for the family, but we pulled through because of her. We eventually got married, and I thought it'd be great from then on, but she suddenly got sick. Lexy was still training then, and she had suspected that Sarina was poisoned. I think she still does; I do now. She got well, fortunately, and her pregnancy wasn't affected." 1

My blood ran cold. This wasn't what Lexy told me.

His hand started shaking.

"I placed more guards around her before I left for a meeting. Three hours later, my pack was screaming at me to get back. Rogues were attacking from all sides."

He inhaled sharply.

"Liam," I called, holding his hand

jam," I called, holding his hand between mine. "It's alright. You don't have to"

"You have to know," he said, cutting me off. "Nobody knew how she got out of the mansion, what she was doing in the woods. She was guarded, but..."

He took a sharp inhale. "I watched her life get taken in front of me; I didn't drive fast enough, didn't run fast enough to get to her. I killed the rogue; my men killed the rest. But we lost her."

His voice cracked as he continued, breaking my heart further. "She died in my arms. And do you know what she said? She told me to carry on. Samira's the name of our child, our first, our baby girl. I lost them both. I lost them together. And I had myself to blame for it."

"Oh, Liam," I whispered, fighting back the tears that threatened to fall.

"The rumor's true, Anna. I did kill my mate. We had an argument the previous night. She didn't want me to go to the meeting. I think there was more to it, but I can't remember. Now, I can't remember why I was so eager to gain allies. I

was so eager to gain allies. I couldn't even tell her how sorry I was that morning. She sent me off with a smile. I planned to surprise her when I got back... something good, something she liked. But I killed them instead. I killed them..."

"You didn't kill them, Liam," I whispered as I ran a hand down his back.

His shoulders shook as he sobbed. The big bad Alpha crying, shaking, and afraid beside me – this was the real Alpha of the Red Claw Pack. He had a taste of life just like everyone else, and he had a heart that could withstand life's beatings. Here he was with his shoulders hunched and head down like he was a scared little boy. This was Alpha Liam Rose – a beat-up soul who still carried on.

I waited until he calmed down.

He looked worse than before now – his eyes were puffed up; I was sure he'd be squinting by tomorrow.

"I'm sorry. I should've told you earlier. I kept you in the dark for so long. I'm so sorry," he said, whispering the last part.

"I'm not," he replied, pulling me into his lap. "You're right. I have 'absolutely no reason to be jealous of'."

He leaned forward, his hand creeping to the back of my head.

"Say it," he murmured, kissing my hair. "Let me hear you say why."

His warm breath fanned the side of my neck, his lips teasingly gliding down to his mark. "Anna..."

My name rolled off his tongue in a soft whisper, luring me into his trance. I gasped when his tongue licked at his mark, my thighs closing tight.

"Say it."

"I'm yours," I breathed, shivering when he inhaled my scent.

He growled.

"Liam..."

"Mine!" He sucked on the skin harshly that I couldn't suppress a moan. Then he traced kisses all over his mark, then my neck to my jaw, before finally claiming my lips into a dizzying kiss.

lips into a dizzying kiss.

I'd never get enough of this.

It got colder, suggesting it was time we got back. My chest felt lighter now that we had this talk, and I could tell he unloaded a heavy weight from his back.

I whispered a silent "Thank you" to Sarina and Samila.

We left the graveyard and headed back to the mansion, walking hand in hand. The smile on his face was brighter than before.

"I just have one question," I said, resting my chin on my fingers. "If Aunty J is Rigel's mom, and she's Sarina's aunt, that means Rigel's their cousin, right?"

"Yes?" he replied.

"But if her father's your uncle, doesn't that make her your cousin, too?"

It'd make them first cousins! A rather valid reason for her father to disapprove of their relationship, whatever his reason was. I never wanted to see him again – he planned to kill my mate! And I was too scared to ask Liam what his plans were...

What means Rigel's their cousin, right?"

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"He's adopted," he replied. "My grandfather found him in a pack that had just been attacked. He was the only survivor unless there were others who escaped. Pack wars aren't as frequent now because of alliances and truces, but it continues in other ways." 1

That was a relief. It was sort of weird if it were the case.

"Liam?"

"Yeah? Ask me anything, babe."

I giggled. "I love you."

My heart dropped. He didn't say it back, again. At least his "I forgot everything self" said it back. "Thought you should *Of*" said it back. "Thought you should know."

"I do. I feel the same way about you," he replied, pulling me to his side and kissing my hair. 2 So why won't you say it?

## Ascension of a Gamma by C. C. Chapter 47

### Chapter 47 Balanced Life

Rigel –

The pack was recovering from the attack. I was forbidden to involve myself in the cleanup and other matters that needed my attention by none other than the one woman who controlled my life – my Mom. We're all we had since Dad died in a n attack, and she'd been looking after me like I was still a child. So here I was, lying in bed, nursing my recovering wound, bored out of my mind.

The thought of Gale picking up the slack made me happy – poor kid. None of them contacted me yet today, and it was already seven past two in the afternoon, Must be busy.

Mom was in the kitchen – she was working overtime again to feed everyone. While she was my biological mom, everyone in the pack considered her their paternal mom and so everyone had a soft spot for her. Strict in the kitchen but was a real softie inside – I should know.

Sighing, I swung my legs to the side and

thing, I swung my legs to the side and stared at the ceiling. The cool draft from the window right above the headboard made the heat bearable. My wolf wanted t o run, but it might open up the wound so he could only whimper, and he'd been whimpering since this morning.

"Shut up, will you? Can't you stay quiet for five minutes?"

"I'm bored," he replied.

"So am I. Now keep quiet."

"Can't we go outside?"

"I'm bored and hungry. We'll take a walk when Mom gets back," I answered.

Lunch was over hours ago, and I was waiting on my Mom for my lunch. I could fix myself something, but I felt too lazy today to do... something as boring as making a sandwich.

Our conversation was cut short when a familiar voice came from below.

"Hello?"

I immediately sat up, rubbed my ears, and listened in again.

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gulti.

"Aunty ), are you home?»

My wolf growled. She wasn't supposed to be here! Footsteps thudded on the stairs,

"Aunty J?" she asked again.

"She's not here!" I yelled from my room.

The door opened, and she peeked in before opening it wide. She stood by the doorway with a grin on her face. Pink crop top and skintight jeans showed off her skin and figure, and she had light make-up on. Drop-dead gorgeous; it

could drive any person at her mercy until they found out what kind of person she really was.

"What are you doing here?" I asked, growling. "Who gave you permission to be here?"

She rolled her eyes at me and crossed her arms across her chest.

"Seriously, couz? For once, can't you be happy to see me?"

"No."

"Where's Aunty J?" she asked, leaning on the frame.

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How did you get in?"

Right after the attack, she was suddenly paying a visit?

I didn't buy it. She wasn't allowed within the territory, so how did she get this far without anyone apprehending her?" You're banned from the territory."

"Am I? Your guards didn't think so," she replied, making quotation marks in the air with her fingers as she said "guards".

I growled. Nobody insulted my warriors.

She eyed me up and down then scoffed." What happened to you?"

My stomach was wrapped in bandages and I had bruises and cuts all over. I raised a brow at her.

"Don't act like you don't know. I asked you a question, Salina. I expect an answer," I said, getting up and walking over to her.

"Aunty J missed me, and I missed her. Guess who asked me to come over?" she said, raising her brow higher. "If she's in the kitchen, I hope you don't mind me

kitchen, I hope you don't mind me waiting for her. I'll also be staying for a couple of days... or a week. I don't have any plans on leaving anytime soon."

The pack knew about my Mom's condition. She was her usual self in front of them, but within these walls, she needed help. While Sarina's death affected all of us, she took it hardest. Mom saw Sarina in Salina, and just like me, she treated my cousin as a little girl. They were close like they were mother and daughter and I had no problem with it, but it wasn't healthy for her.

The more time Salina spent with Mom, she became convinced that Sarina was still alive. At times, I caught her calling my cousin Sarina and asking for Salina instead. I thought it was an honest mistake the first time it happened, but it was occurring more frequently recently.

"You shouldn't be around her," I said, grabbing her wrist but she pulled her arm back. "You have to leave now."

She had to go before Mom found out she was here. However, I was too late for I heard Mom yell from below.

neand mom yeun rom below.

"Rigel Axia Johnson! Why is the front door open, young man?"

Salina smirked at me and said loudly, "Hi, Aunty!! Guess who's here?"

My mom shrieked in excitement.

I had to cover my ears.



"Sarina? Is that you?"

There she was again. This bitch was aware, and she was letting it happen!

"Don't." I warned, glaring at her.

"I'm not what you think of me, Rigel," she spat as she turned around and went down the stairs.

"Aunty, it's me, Salina!" she whined. "You didn't miss me at all!"

My mom laughed. Only Salina could make her laugh right now. I was spending more and more of my days and nights out of this house just to get away from her. It was just the two of us, but she never smiled or laughed around me. Since I took after my Dad, the more I grew, the more she was reminded of him. It should explain why her eyes never lit up the way

lain why her eyes never lit up the way they did whenever Salina was around.

"Should we tell Liarn?" asked Rain.

To be honest, I didn't know. "What do you think?"

"It's too much of a coincidence," he replied.

"Agreed."

"So how do we do this?" he asked, wagging his tail.

I locked the door and went to the window; pulled myself up then jumped right out. My feet landed on the grass. They were talking and giggling in the living room. Now was my chance. I sneaked over to the next house before speed walking it out of there.

"Can't you heal me faster?" I asked, annoyed that the wound was throbbing

now.

"Wolfsbane, man. You should blame yourself for your hero syndrome."

"You're fucking lazy. And I don't have a hero syndrome," I retorted.

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Teventually reached the inansion. Hopefully, this wouldn't end up like that morning. I shrugged at the memory.

Why bring it up now!

I found Anna and Liam in the dining room. They stopped talking at my arrival.

"Rigel!!!" Anna screamed as she pushed back her chair and excitedly ran over to me. She hugged me tightly as she jumped up and down, rubbing herself on my front.

"I haven't seen you all day! How's your wound?" she asked, pulling away, ignoring the growling Alpha.

I smirked at him. He glared back. It was always fun to annoy him.

"I'm doing well, princess. Do you mind if I join you for lunch?"

"Not at all!" she said.

She grabbed my arm and led me to sit on the chair beside her. Liam glared at me as she fixed me a plate of vegetable stew. She even got me a glass of pomegranate juice.

She's sweet.

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Thank you, princess. You didn't have to do this," I said, ruffling her hair.

"I don't mind," she replied. "I'd like to do something for my knight too."

By this time, Liam was silently drinking from his glass.

Anna got up from her chair, saying, "Oh, grow up, will you?" then moved beside him to place a kiss on his cheek before quickly sitting back down.

She just shut the Alpha up and made him blush.

Now that's a sight you don't see every day.

"Should've brought my phone," I said, fake sighing

Giggling, she reached up and kissed my cheek too.

"I'm glad you're back, Rigel," she said, smiling up at me.

I smiled back at her.

"Get the fuck out," Liam said in a mind link.

It was more fun with the two of them around. I should've left the house sooner. I leaned to my side to whisper something in her ear and she giggled.

Then we both started eating like nothing had just happened.

Liam glared at us. If a glare could kill...

When we were done, Liam asked me to go with him to his office. Anna gave me a worried look. I winked at her. Standing, I ruffled her hair as I said, "I'll see you later, princess."

She nodded.

Once in his office, Liam sat on his chair and took a deep breath.

"Happy?"

"Yeah. I was bored back at the house. It's fun hanging out with you two. I might do it more often," I replied, plopping down on a chair opposite him.

"Goddess, when will you grow up..." he said, sighing

"Beats me," I said, shrugging. I was in my late twenties now. Werewolves usually

te twenties now. Werewolves usually found their mate by eighteen. Then again, having a mate would cost me my freedom so I was just fine with things as they were now. Also, there was too much shit that went into relationships.

"Why are you here, Rigel? Last I heard, you were grounded."

"Grounded?" I asked, sounding annoyed.

He chuckled. "Yeah, grounded. Your mom's been telling everyone since this morning. You're trending again."

Fuck, that's fucking embarrassing.

"Where's Gale at?"

"Doing what you're supposed to," he answered.

I really was covered for now

"So, what are you here for?"

"Salina's at the house," I replied.

His brows furrowed as he leaned forward on his table.

\*Fuck," he said, turning his head to the side. "She's banned! How did she get in?"

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He was barely keeping it together because this was my Mom.

"Mom invited her over."

"What about the guards?" he asked." Goddess, Rigel, we just had an attack! We already talked about this."

"I know, I know," I said, trying to calm him down. "I'll ask her to leave but let her stay with my Mom for now. She's been missing her lately."

Liam sighed. I knew this was difficult to ask of him, and as much as I didn't like her presence, it was the only thing I could do for my Mom right now. Until we had concrete evidence that the Blue Moon Pack was involved in the attacks and that Alpha Myron planned to poison Liam, Salina was in a way, neutral.

Fuck! Something about this whole thing didn't settle well with me. Everything about this and that bothered me.

His swivel chair turned.

"Two days, one night. Nothing more," he said. "She'll be tailed for the duration of her stay and a kilometer from the borders

stay and a kilometer from the borders when she leaves. I'll take care of the guards."

"Thanks, Liam," I said, getting up.

"It's for Aunty J. As much as I don't want to do this to her, she has to accept that she can't entertain Salina within the territory, again. If she wants to meet her, she has to do it outside the pack lands," he said firmly. "I'm sorry, Rigel. I can't risk it."

"It's more than what I hoped for. Thank you for doing this," I said, and I meant it.

"Now get out of here. Hearing you thank me is sickening."

Laughing, I left his office and went out of the mansion. It was peaceful again. The tension in the air was gone and the stench of death cleared off. I could hear the warriors training, and there were children playing hide and seek in the woods near the mansion.

The pack was recovering. They had their own tasks and I had mine. Sighing, I disappeared into the woods, into the opposite direction of where the children were playing. A sudden gust of wind came

re playing. A sudden gust of wind came from their direction, carrying with it the scent of arousal.

It's fucking mid-afternoon for Goddess's sake!

I mind-linked my team. The wound was healing, but there were other wounds that needed treatment.

I sighed. There was much work to be done. I might need a certain form of... relaxation.