

# Ascension of a Gamma by C. C. Chapter 54

## Chapter 54 Beta Order

-Gale

Alpha Flynn was seated on his office chair and I opposite him. The more I visited packs, the more I confirmed that our pack was the odd one out. Every high ranking wolf dressed to show off their position, while we usually wore casual and avoided wearing a suit and tie unless necessary. Either we were weird, or we simply didn't have the same fashion taste. Or I was distracting myself with nonsensical thoughts because the long wait was getting to me.

They should be here any minute now.

Right on cue, the door opened with a bang. Liam entered first followed by Rigel. Both had a heavy look on their faces. I didn't have to ask. There were no leads again this time

Alpha Flynn sighed. Getting up, he paced to a corner of the room and began to pour drinks for the four of us. Meanwhile, my brothers settled themselves on the single-seaters, exhausted from the search and from the dark circles under their eyes,

in the dark circles under their eyes, they needed a long sleep. We could all use some.

"Thanks," said Rigel as Alpha Flynn handed him his drink. Minutes ticked by and none of us said a thing. Drinking, letting the bitter drink take the edge off. Personally though, I would've preferred coffee.

"No more," my wolf whined, sticking out his tongue.

"Just for a few more, Gil. At least until we find her."

Gil whimpered in my head. It'd been three months and we still had no clue as to where she might be. Every lead turned to a dead end.

"The car's been parked there for months. Clean," said Liam tiredly. His patience was running low, but so was hope. We knew who our enemies were. We kept tabs on them and none of them did this. Whoever did this, they weren't on our list. This was a new enemy, one bold enough to take our Luna yet too scared to show themselves.

Luca wasn't acting up. For now, it was a

na wasn't acting up. For now, it was a good sign. She wasn't hurt, at least. But how much longer will this relief last? The anxiousness was beginning to take a toll on each one of us, wearing us down and making us lose hope that we'll find her soon. It'd be easy to point fingers, but that wouldn't solve a thing. We needed everyone. But if this went on any longer, this already delicate truce would soon tear.

They didn't have to say it. We were guilty of letting her go and turning our backs on Liam. He was guilty of something he'd rather keep to himself. And Alpha Flynn – he might just challenge Liam into another death battle even if it'd kill him.

Knowing Liam, he'd accept just for the sake of it. I'd seen him lose his world before, saw what it did to him. It was my fault. And over my dead body would he have to go through it again. I don't think he could, and I didn't want to see him succumb to grief once more. This time, it'd kill him.

I'd already lost way too many brothers – I wasn't losing another.

"Your sister came over," said Alpha

our sister came over," said Alpha Flynn. "She's been looking after Carson all this time. I can't thank you enough."

"He defended our Luna," Liam replied.

Alpha Flynn's hand tightened around the glass.

"It's the least we can do."

Setting down the empty glass, I slowly rose to my feet. "If you'll excuse me, I best be going now."

"Call me if anything happens," said Liam. "Anything."

"I'll call when I get there," I replied then after nodding at Alpha Flynn and Rigel, promptly left the room.

The pack was getting restless. News of their kidnapped Luna had them worried for all of us. They were doing well by handling the small matters themselves, though it was still my duty to make sure they were safe. Some of our sisters from the Red Circle were lending a hand, but with the four of us frequently away, a surprise rogue attack like the last one would be catastrophic.

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From the office, I made my way around the mansion. Having spent some time here, I had almost the entire layout memorized. We were given rooms of our own, and so I headed inside mine which was on the third floor's right-wing. It was almost as wide as the one back home. It still didn't feel like it. After gathering all

my laundry in a bag, and checking that the room was clean, I locked the door then made my way to the fourth floor.

It was the only room with a sliding door. I knocked to let her know I was outside.

"Hi," I said softly, offering her a weak smile as I walked inside.

Carson was a minimalist. One look around the room led to the conclusion. The only pieces of furniture were the bed, the nightstand, and the dresser. Brightly illuminated through the glass walls, Carson laid on his bed with wires and tubes exposed outside the blanket.

"Hi," she replied.

Lexy hadn't been enthusiastic these last months. My noisy, loud-mouthed partner in crime sat with him on his bed

Ortner in crime sat with him on his bed looking the thinnest I'd ever seen her. She seemed to have lost her spark, the sunshine vibe that she always gave off, but the way she looked at him brought a glimmer in her eyes that couldn't be mistaken for anything else.

Lexy knew since Liam and her came here for the ceremony. She never said a word about it for the sake of Liam and Anna. It was crucial that the Blue Moon Pack fuck off. She understood it well, thus, she sacrificed her relationship with her mate. 2

You silly thing.

"How's he doing?" I asked, standing beside the bed. Carson had a bandage wrapped around his head and more on his torso and left arm. His right leg was in a cast and was held up. They did quite a number of him – thank Goddess he lived. His wolf had been healing him, but the process was too slow. Lexy was passed out for three days after she was done with

him.

"He'll be fine," she answered without taking her eyes off him. "He'll wake up."

"When were you planning to let us

When were you planning to let us know?" I asked and her head shot up in

shock. "I didn't tell them."

She sighed. "Is it too obvious?"

"Your hair is tidied up in a high ponytail when it's usually in a messy bun. You smell like vanilla whenever you pay him a visit, which according to my count is at

least three times a week," I said, smirking as she blushed. "Do I have to say more? Liam and Rigel don't see it now, but they'll eventually catch up."

With a sigh, she raised her head and stared at me with dejected eyes.

"Don't blame yourself, Lex. We couldn't have known."

"If we believed bro, none of this would've happened," she said, looking back at Carson. "Lia's not talking to me. Our mate might never wake up, and Anna's missing." 1

"We'll find her," I replied. Tipping her chin so she'd look up at me, I smiled at my little sister. "Lia's not upset with you, Lex. Let Gil talk to her."

"Thanks, bro," she said, forcing a smile.

Thanks, bro," she said, forcing a smile

"Leave our brothers to me. You focus on your mate."

"Are they here yet? How'd it go?"

I slowly shook my head.

"I asked him to reject me," she said, holding his hand. "He was from Anna's pack. I didn't trust him then. When he didn't, I rejected him. He never accepted. I couldn't understand why."

She raised his hand to her lips. "Our packs weren't rivals, but we weren't allies either. Alpha Flynn abused Anna. That, I can't forgive. He's the Beta. He should've understood the consequences. Lately, I've been thinking... that maybe I was too cruel to him. He asked me what it'd take for us to be together. I told him it was impossible because our packs weren't allies—" she paused, taking a deep breath to calm herself, then continued, saying, "- and he said it didn't matter. The night we left for home, he promised he'd go rogue if it'd make me change my mind. Could you believe he said that?"

She let out a small laugh. "A Beta going

e let out a small laugh. "A Beta going rogue for a mate? He must be out of his mind!"

"Lexy..."

Her shoulders shook and her voice cracked. "He asked me again that morning and I said 'no'. I pushed him away. I wanted my mate, Gale. Whenever Anna talked about him, I realized I was wrong, but I couldn't simply accept him. I ... I rejected my mate and now... I'm starting to think I might never have the chance to take it back."

She looked at me through tears. "I've always wanted my mate; you know it more than anyone. What if he never wakes up? What if he wakes up and accepts my rejection? What if--"

I quickly wrap my arms around her, and she breaks down. I came here to cheer her up, but I somehow ended up doing the opposite.

Way to go, Gale.

I patted her back as she cried.

"Do you remember what your Mom used to say to your Dad all the time? We often

say to your Dad all the time? We often heard it from her when your Dad does something stupid."

She giggled between sobs.

"Say it with me."

"Unforgivable!" we said at the same time. I smiled. "Then your Dad will say the cheesiest lines and she'll forgive him anyway? Remember those, Lex?"

"They were embarrassing," she whispered.

"Remember those times he upset her, and we'd gang up on him to avenge your Mom? He'd knock the three of us right away, but you'd only get pushed aside gently." Lexy giggled.

Letting her go, I held her by her shoulders.

"If your Mom can forgive your Dad many times over, even on those times, I'm sure Carson will understand. You are a strong and loyal sister and I'm proud of you. You put the pack first before your mate. Now please trust the pack and those two to me. You deserve your mate, Lexy. Don't you dare think otherwise. You deserve to be

re think otherwise. You deserve to be happy, too. Trust your brothers, alright?"

"Mm." She nodded.

"And no more hiding secrets like this, alright?"

She nodded again.

"As of now, you are temporarily relieved of your post. Your priority is to look after your mate. Any medical assistance to the pack should be authorized," I said firmly.

Her eyes widened and her mouth slowly gaped.

"This is my Order, as Beta of the Red Claw Pack."

Our link glowed a bright red, signifying that the Order was in place.

"Wha-Why?"

I stood and turned my back to her. As the door slid, I looked back at her and smiled.

"I can't help it when my sister's a crybaby."

## Ascension of a Gamma by C. C. Chapter 55

### Chapter 55 Missed Details

-Gale

It was early morning when I got back in the pack. Instead of heading to the mansion, I ditched the car right outside the village and went into the woods. I should get myself a car, one for personal use. These SUVs were getting tiring to drive around

This was forbidden grounds. Only the Alpha, the Head Gamma, and I could come here freely until the Red Point Unit

was authorized

Not long after, the building came into view. Its walls fifteen three meters of concrete and steel, the windows barred and set at the top. The high glass ceiling was the only way out, but they were tied down to ensure an escape wouldn't happen. It'd be too dangerous to let any prisoner out, not for the pack, but for the escapee. The Red Point was... oddy creative with what they...we... do.

The tools and toys, including the experimental ones, hung on the walls, some in glass casings for display and

experimental ones, hung on the walls, some in glass casings for display and some for "special occasions", whatever those were. The neatly laid-out blades on top of the metal table were a mix of the usual everyday tools and their own "inventions". It was a hobby of theirs too bizarre for my taste that it being around them took getting used to when we were with the pack. They cared for the pack and for each other, their loyalty proven time and time again.

No one would suspect these guys were cold-blooded, torture-loving people. If I didn't know any better, Liam kept them because they were the best at it.

But who am I to judge? We all have our shadows.

They had their own morals to abide with, and I had mine. It just so happened that this time, we were on the same side.

“Enough,” I ordered, and the masked man stepped back. Here, we used no names. They were different, and so they wore masks, each custom-designed to their liking. This one wore a metal mask with a line of chains from where the cheeks ought to be. It had holes for his

peeks ought to be. It had holes for his

eyes, ashen gray – his wolf was in control.

“Leave us.”

After a slight bow, he hung his mask by the door then left. I sat on a chair opposite the prisoner. At least Rigel had enough sense in him not to kill the rogue, immediately. The cuts on his face began healing, and so did the rest of him. He must’ve pissed Metal Mask off...

His face shined with a layer of sweat and blood as he panted heavily for air. Gil growled at me.

This was taking too long. Taking a bottle from the table, I opened the cap and moved closer to him.

Impressive.

He held his murderous gaze without flinching.

“Tough, aren’t you?”

Bound on the floor with wolfsbane laced silver chains on a kneeling position, the rattling sounds made as his bundled muscles flexed were always, to some

iscles flexed were always, to some

degree, satisfying.

Fisting his matted brown hair, I held his head up.

“Drink,” I ordered, as I held the bottle close to his chapped thin lips.

“Fuck... you...,” he said with much difficulty.

The hard way it is then...

His wounds healed faster after drinking the potion. I waited for his breathing to normalize. Too tired myself, I wanted this to be over with so I could report to Liam.

Thankfully, Liam spared his life. When Anna went missing, almost all our prisoners... died... in the most gruesome way. It was rather creative, what he did. Then again, he revived the Red Point Unit

when the founding members were all killed, and the program was shut down.

"You know, this can all end once you start talking. Which pack are you from?"

"Aghost pack," he answered gruffly.

I'm not in the mood for this. I shouldn't

y not in the mood for this. I shouldn't

have sent Metal Mask away.

"A few days after you attack our Luna, our pack comes under siege," I said calmly, then shouted, "Where is she?"

He raised his eyes at me, mockery visible in them. My wolf whimpered in my head.

We shouldn't sympathize with the enemy!

"Every once in a while, the Beta takes pity on his prisoner and asks for some time alone. At first, he watched on the sides. Over time, his pity gets the better of him. He gives his prisoner potions," he said with a mocking tone.

"I don't do it out of pity."

A burst of roaring laughter erupted from his mouth. "Your hair color matches your scent. Do you want to know what you smell like to your mate, Beta?"

Gil whimpered louder.

"Enough! Tell me where she is right now, or I will end you myself. Don't you think for a second I won't do it."

"Ha! Do it, then. Let's see if you have the

"Ha! Do it, then. Let's see if you have the balls to do something other than bark." His lips pulled into a smile as he beckoned me to act upon my words. "What's wrong, Beta? Can't walk the talk? Can't... kill your own mate?" He started laughing as I stood frozen



Then he stopped. I threw a knife at him, shutting him up.

"Well, well, well... looks like you have a soft spot for me after all."

The knife merely grazed his cheek. It was already healing when I raised my head at him.

"You're not my mate," I said firmly. "You're my enemy."

"Ooh... I don't think my niece would be happy to hear that," he said smirking.

Who?

"You look surprised, Beta. Well, frankly, you look like shit." He chuckled. "For giving me a cut, I'll tell you something good. Don't you think if she wanted to be here, she'd be here by now?"

"What are you saying?" I asked, sweat breaking out on my back.

breaking out on my back,

"I'm saying she's home now. Her true home. My Alpha has returned, mate. Why would she want to come back here?"

"Where is she?" I demanded as I stomped over to him and grabbed him by the collar, the smirk plastered on his lips. "You can't be her -"

"Uncle?" he asked. "I'm her mother's brother. Anything else you want to know about me?"

"Where is she!"

"Home."

I released him then made my way back to the table. I put on a pair of leather gloves with silver spikes attached around the knuckles.

"Fine. Have it your way," I said as I tightened each on my fist.

He raised a brow at me. "You can't be -"

I cut him off with a kick to his head. "Tell me where she is, right now!"

He spat blood and chuckled. "Why don't you suck my dick and maybe I'll tell you?"

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Don't make me do this!

I raised my fist. I froze when deep blue eyes met mine. His wolf was in control.

"The Alpha is home," he said in a voice that didn't sound quite human. "If she wants to return, she will."

"She cannot be an Alpha! She is our Luna. Where have you taken her!"

"Home," he answered. "We will not tell you anymore. We cannot."

His chin dropped to his chest as his wolf retreated. He'd passed out.

"Mate," said my wolf.

"He's not our mate, Gil. He can't be."

Gil whimpered.

"He's under an Order. You let them hurt him," he said.

A link asked to connect. It was Lexy. Putting down my guard, I answered her.

"Gale, come back. We need you back here," she said urgently.

"What's wrong? Are you alright? What's

hat's wrong? Are you alright? What's happening?"

"It's the White Lake Pack," she said, sounding panicked. This wasn't like her. "Their Alpha is back."

"What Alpha? Flynn?" I asked, confused.

His father," she replied. But... his father's... dead.

## Ascension of a Gamma by C. C. Chapter 56

### Chapter 56 The Escapee

-Anna

I smiled at the children playing on the training grounds and they waved back to

1. me.

"I told them not to play around here," said Alpha Emery. "Children never listen."

"I find that adults are more hard headed," I replied, and he chuckled.

On a picnic blanket laid down on the soft grass, shaded by overlapped branches of trees, we watched them play catch. Back at the White Lake Pack, children of their age were already placed into training. In the Red Claw Pack, the children were given days to train and a rest day for playing. Here, the children weren't being trained. They were free to run around all day and play to their heart's content as if they were innocent of the dangers the world held for them. The next protectors of the pack – they should be training for it

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Why aren't they in training?" I asked,

Why aren't they in training?" I asked, unable to hold back the curiosity.

"Let them be children," he said simply.

"What about the pack?"

He frowned. After a while, he said, "We shouldn't put the burden of our disputes on the children."

"I began training when I was five. I was raised to protect the pack."

"And in the end, what did your pack do to you?" he asked.

I stayed silent. I didn't want to be reminded.

"All these pack wars and rogue attacks, alliances and betrayal, breeds more hatred among our kind. It is passed down to the children, then their children, then their grandchildren; generation after generation of endless killing and fear. I've seen deaths and suffering in this lifetime that could last me another."

"It's just the way it is. We can't do anything about it. Not all Alphas are good, and most of them want power," I replied. "Liam is one of the good ones. He

lies. "Liam is one of the good ones. He helps packs in need, packs whose Alpha abuses his power."

"If he is what you say he is, then why did you leave him?" he asked.

"You never asked about him before. Why

now?"

He turned to me with a small smile on his face. In the course of three months, he had exponentially grown older as his strength ebbed away. The lines on his face were more pronounced, and he had a full set of gray hair now, but his eyes held joy instead of the tiredness I first saw in them.

"Simple. You said his name just now." His smile grew wider.

My mouth fell into a small "o".

"Did he do something?"

I nodded then hugged my knees to my chest, resting my chin on my knees.

"He did something different from what he said, just like I did," I confessed. "I promised I'd never leave him, and I did. I didn't hear what he wanted to say. I knew

I didn't hear what he wanted to say. I knew if I did, even if he lied, I'd forgive him. So, I left before I changed my mind. Then I ended up here."

"Bella..."

The familiar pain in my chest returned, and so did the burning bite of anger. I stretched my legs out and leaned back.

"But what does it matter? I bet he's really happy now that I'm gone. He may not even be looking for me. I don't care. He has what he wants. I learned who I really am." I gave out a small laugh. "Who does he think he is, anyway? I'm an Alpha too!" I said, turning to face him. "I'm your daughter. I'm of Alpha blood. I'm next in line as Alpha. He's not the only one..."

I stopped when my voice cracked, and I wiped the stupid tears away. He didn't deserve them. He didn't deserve my heart – why should I hurt because of him? I couldn't erase the image of them kissing. For months, I'd been seeing it in my dreams, and I hated it. I hated how I still missed him, everything about him – his scent, his arms around me – I missed

his arms around me – I missed how the world faded away whenever I was with him. It hurt that he did that, but it hurt more that I still loved him despite i

Is he looking for me? Is he worried about me?

A part of me hoped he was. A part of me was in spite of him if it was a yes. A part of me believed otherwise.

"We're not a perfect couple, your mother and me. We argued over the smallest things from the color of the sheets to the words I use to compliment her," he said as he soothingly ran a hand down my back.

"It wasn't always perfect, but would you rather go to sleep with a grudge, or swallow your pride and apologize, no matter who was right or wrong, because, at the end of the day, the truth is you love her and come next morning, the smile that graces her lips as she awakes is incomparable to worthless anger and pride and frustration?"

I thought about it. I'd been bitter about the whole matter for months now. It'd kill me if I kept living like this. What

me if I kept living like this. What would I ask him – to give me closure?

"What if he doesn't want to talk to me?" I whispered.

"Does he have to talk to you?"

I smiled.

No.

Someone cleared their throat behind us, interrupting our moment. Looking up, it was Beta David.

"I'm sorry to disturb, Bella, but I have to talk to your Father," he said sternly.

"Uh... sure," I said, getting up. "I'll just... take a walk."

Alpha Emery nodded at me and I left the two of them to talk. Must be about pack matters.

What should I say?

"I'm sorry I've been away?"

No, that wouldn't do.

"Hi! It's me. I know I've been gone for like a short time... well, not really a short time..."

I groaned. This was going to be harder than it seemed. Maybe I could get him a present? His birthday was in about four months. No, that wouldn't be right. 2

I bit my lower lip. What should I do? Knots tightened on my stomach the more I thought about seeing him again. Would he even want to see me now, after I left him just like that?

Stupid Anna.

I shouldn't have let Salina get into my head. She could've been lying – I was yet to hear Liam's side. Maybe it wasn't what it looked like? But... I know what I saw...

Sighing, I came to a stop. I should be getting back... but, where was I?

There were only trees around me, and I couldn't hear the children playing. I must've gotten carried away that I didn't notice where I was going. It should be alright – turn around and walk back.

I kept walking but the training grounds seemed so far it felt like I was walking in circles. I was officially lost within the pack territory. Should I scream for help? That'd be embarrassing. As I thought of

at'd be embarrassing. As I thought of whether I should change directions, a growl came from behind me.

A chill ran down my spine at the sound. Gathering the courage to face it, the first thought in my mind was to run and scream. It was a black wolf, huge like an Alpha, but there were cuffs on all its paws, a few links of metal chain still attached to each. It snarled at me, then just... stopped. Deep blue eyes watched me intently as if trying to recognize who I was, and I felt like I've seen those eyes before... somewhere.

It drew closer to me and I remained rooted on the spot. Where had I seen them?

Howls came from our left and he stopped. Giving me one last look, it sped away.

I released a breath I didn't know I was holding. I knew who he was... but it was impossible. 2

A couple of wolves came into view then disappeared as they chased after it – him. Another wolf showed itself, chocolate brown fur and dark blue eyes. He stopped and shifted into Beta David.

and shifted into Beta David.

"Bella! Are you alright?" he asked, jogging over to me.

"It-He..."

"Are you hurt?"

I shook my head.

"Bella, what are you doing here?" Alpha Emery asked. I didn't notice he was here as well.

"I... I was taking a walk and..."

I know who he is.

"Alpha, please take her back. We'll hunt the prisoner down," said Beta David before shifting back into his wolf.

"Come. You shouldn't be here," said Alpha Emery, holding my wrist and dragging me back with him. "You could've been hurt... or worse." He whispered the last part, but I still heard.

Why is he alive?

I didn't notice when we were back at the mansion until the doors closed.

"Go to your room," he said, but I just stared at him. "Bella?"

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It's impossible.

"Who is he?" I asked.

"An enemy," he said firmly. "He escaped from his cell and he could've done something to you if the guards weren't chasing him."

He cupped my face and kissed my forehead. "You're alright now. We'll keep you safe here."

You're not telling the whole truth.

"Who is he, Father?" I asked, raising my voice.

He gripped my arm. "Go to your room!"

"No! Why is he alive? Why is he here?" I shouted.

He let go of my arm and sighed.

"Bella, go to your room," he said coldly. "Please."

"You kept him here," I said as I backed away from him. "Why?"

Anger flashed in his eyes and his lips tightened into a straight line.

He is my enemy, Bella. He took your Mother away from me. He took you away from me. I lost everything because of him. Everything!"

I shook my head slowly as I retreated from him. "You have to understand. This was necessary."

"You... kept this from me..."

"He lied to you, Bella! Have you forgotten? He knew you were mine and he never told you. Look what his pack did to you! For two years, I searched for you, but I

never saw even a shadow of you. I convinced myself it wasn't true – that it wasn't you that day. But I was wrong... I sent spies to look for you, but it was as if you never existed. I thought they banished you, or worse. Two years, Bella!"

His eyes flickered from deep brown to black. "What was I supposed to do? Free the man who took my world from me?"

He reached for me, but I stepped away from his touch. It hurt him, but I was hurting, too.

"Bella..."

**Bella...**

"It's Anna," I replied, then raced up the stairs to the hallway to my room. I closed the doors with a bang then slid down onto the floor.

Alpha Fraser was alive. He knew I wasn't Father's. They kept it from me. Why? Why would Mother... Why would ...

I don't know what to think of anymore...

A knock came from the other side.

"Bella," he said

It felt like *déjà vu*. I was pushing him away like I pushed everyone away. I did the same to Father when I didn't shift, I did the same to Liam, and now I was doing it again to Father.

"Your mother went with them willingly that night. Our allies attacked all of a sudden and I tried to get her to a safer place, but she fought me. This scar... she gave it to me. The attack killed half of the pack. I don't know why she did what she did, but the look in her eyes when she stabbed me... someone forced her to do it. Your mother, Anabella... they used her. News of the broken alliance spread, and we suffered attack after attack from rogues

uffered attack after attack from rogues and packs. Then, one day, I felt the bond break."

"Alpha Fraser would never do that," I said, opening the door. "He took care of me. Father raised me to take over him. He loved me like I was his!"

"I'm sorry," he whispered, tears rolling down his cheeks. "But what can I do? He took everything from me."

"You took everything from me, too," I said then closed the door in his face.



# Ascension of a Gamma by C. C. Chapter 57

## Chapter 57 Deserved Regrets

– Flynn

My throat felt dry as I stood outside the door. I put up a wall to get some quiet in my head for the pack wouldn't stop talking about him. I understood their confusion, concern, and anger, but I needed to think for myself.

"How is he?" I asked as the pack healer

went out.

She smiled softly then replied, "He needs to rest, Alpha. Wherever he was, he wasn't treated kindly." Her smile dropped into a frown. She looked like she wanted to ask something but hesitated.

"Thank you," I said before she could ask me a question, I didn't know the answer. I felt the bond break then and so did the rest of the pack.

"Is he awake?"

"He's asleep. It's good to have him back, Alpha," she said then walked away.

His room was kept clean after his death. Now he laid there, in the dark, as if he

had always been. There was so much I wanted to tell him after he died, so much pain that had never truly left, but now that he was here, I didn't know where to start. 1

Turning the lamp on, I stood beside the bed looking down at him. He had lost so much weight that his cheekbones

protruded, his arms almost meat and bones. Scars and fresh wounds laced around his arms. He had become too weak that he wasn't healing as he should.

I used to look up to him. It was my dream to surpass him. He had always been strong and in my eyes, insurmountable, but now he was nothing but meat and bones. My hands balled into fists.

"Who did this to you?" I whispered.

We dismissed the attack as rogues. It was difficult to believe that rogues could take down the Alpha and Head Gamma, so we blamed Anna. We made ourselves believe that she was a distraction, and they couldn't fight because they had to

protect her. It was injustice, but she carried everyone's anger, frustration, and grief on her shoulders, alone.

Everyone but Carson. He believed she was innocent. His father went rogue which drove his mother mentally unstable. One day, news of his father's death reached the pack, and his mother soon died, heartbroken. But he never blamed it on her.

I didn't deserve my Beta as much as I didn't deserve her. When Carson said he was bringing her back for a visit, it was my chance to ask her to take me back, not a mate, but as her friend – the shoulder she used to cry on, depend on, trust on.

Father groaned softly, snapping me out of my thoughts. His eyes fluttered open; those same blue eyes that I took after stared back at me.

"Flynn," he said, his voice hoarse.

I poured him a glass of water as he sat up, visibly uncomfortable with the IV drip. I gripped my right wrist with my left hand to keep it steady, but it kept shaking that a bit of water spilled.

"He-here," I said, handing it to him.

His fingers touched mine as he reached for the glass, calloused and bony but

warm. Then his hand fell. Shakily, I helped him drink a quarter.

"You've grown," he said after a short silence.

He watched me like he was studying my face and I tried to look at anything but him. I couldn't. I failed him. I wasn't like him. I made a member of my pack suffer, I shunned out the love of my life – he'd hate me for these. And I deserved it.

As I thought about all my mistakes, a weight was placed on my shoulder. I raised my eyes to see his hand on it, and looking at him, he had a beaming look on his face – the same look he gave me when he was proud of me. I didn't deserve it.

Why are you looking at me like that?

"You're the Alpha now," he said as he cupped my face and smiled. "It must've been tough."

I nodded. It was. Losing him, I couldn't keep myself together for months afterward. It was with Carson's help that I found the courage to get out of my room. That very same day, I saw Anna,

and my blood boiled, but upon closer inspection, I saw that she was crying. She was folding laundry and her tears kept

falling down her cheeks, then to the clothes.

I heard the Omegas. I heard the warriors. I heard what the entire pack had to say about her. And I knew within myself that they were wrong. It wasn't her fault. It wasn't right to blame her. I had the power to change things, but I didn't, because it was easier to have someone to blame for it instead of blaming myself. If only I hadn't doubted myself that night she didn't shift. If only I defended her then... 1

The guilt I felt that day I saw her because of my cowardness, remained buried in my heart and mind – an emotion that let itself known over and over, but I continued to ignore it, even when I rejected her. Only after I did have it blown. I couldn't take it anymore. I was too late. I realized it when I lost her to someone else.

"I'm not... an Alpha, Father," I replied, looking him right in the eye. "Not like you. I did things... to Anna, I"

"Anna," he exclaimed, eyes going wide. His hands gripped my shoulders. "We have to get her back! She-she->

As if possessed, he threw the sheets aside and tugged on the tube. I caught his arms as I questioned him. "What do you mean she's in danger?"

Does he know where she is?

"How? Why-"

"Listen to me," he said firmly as he grabbed me by the collar and brought his face too close. "We have to get her back before she learns the truth. It might even be too late! She's in danger around him. He's sick." He pushed me away then scrambled to his feet. 1

"He can't protect her. The rogues and that backstabbing son of a"

He swayed on his feet and I caught him before he fell. He was too light. I helped him sit back down on the bed.

"Father calm down. I don't understand what you're saying!"

I was starting to get worried... about her, about him. I had too many questions in my mind.

"We're running out of time," he said grimly.

An hour and a half later, I was stomping my way to my office while trying to wrap my head around what he just told me. I'd asked for Alpha Liam and his Beta and Head Gamma to meet me there. We had a plan and fast. It'd only be a matter of time. They might be under attack right now and I was still here, safe in my mansion, while she was fighting for her life!

The office door was open when I got there. Alpha Liam and his Beta were already inside. His sister was there too.

"Where is she?" Liam asked, restraining anger. His eyes flickered from brown to black – everyone had been losing patience each day.

I sighed. "Calm yourself, Alpha. This plan highly depends on you. If you fail, we won't be able to get her back."

He took a step towards me, but his sister

held out her arm to stop him.

"Where's your Head Gamma?" I asked. After proudly introducing himself as her knight" like we were in the Medieval Era, he should at least be here at this crucial time.

"He has matters to attend to," answered his Beta, Gale. Always speaks and acts politely, but I doubt that was his real nature. I shrugged it off. It wasn't any of my business.

We formed a truce with one objective – find her and get her back. I didn't fully trust any of them, maybe except his sister who had been looking after Carson all this time. There was no doubt the feeling was mutual.

"You think I can't get her out?" Liam challenged

This overprotective bullshit of his was getting to my nerves. If he wasn't Anna's mate, I would've kicked his ass out the door. I needed Anna back, and so did he. As much as I hate to admit it, right now, he was our best bet on getting her out. Mates did share a connection and marked ones, even stronger.

"If you can convince her to leave this pack, surely, you can do it again," I replied.

His Beta and his sister looked at each other in confusion.

"Have a seat. This is going to be a long night."