

Bad Love An Alpha's Regret by Elise Sinclair Chapter 7

Chapter 7

The door slams open a moment later.

Aaron's eyes take me in. On the bed. Adam sitting beside me and his hands holding mine.

He growls.

"Stop!" I yell. "This is my friend, Aaron. One of the only ones I have. And just where the hell do you get off acting jealous, when you've got Jessica trying to hump you everytime you turn down the hall?"

He scoffs.

Then he turns to Adam. "Your visit is over. Get out."

Aaron comes within inches of Adam and his nostrils flare. He's looking for evidence.

"I'm not lying! Will you stop already!"

Adam rocks back on his heels. His smile is confident, taunting. "It's been incredible seeing you, Leah. And I'll be sure to get

things ready for when you come home."

He means with my treatments.

Aaron snarls. "My wife isn't going anywhere."

Adam glances at me. "You need to tell him."

"Tell me what!" Aaron shouts.

2/5

I press my lips together.

Adam sighs.

He sidesteps Aaron and walks out. His men surround him.

"Your boy looks awful smug, but he won't be laughing for long," Aaron says.

"What does that mean?" I ask.

He shrugs. "Let's just say, big changes are coming. And they're coming soon..."

Leah is nervous. She's doing that thing with her hair and eyeing me like I'm a predator who hasn't eaten in a week.

Speaking of... she looks terrible.

Too skinny and weak.

Her scent is off too.

3/5

"What's wrong with you?" I ask.

She blanches. "Nothing."

"I've warned you about lying to me, princess."

She twists another curl. "I haven't eaten in days, Aaron. What the hell did you think would happen?"

Fair.

But I never expected her to hold out this long.

There were nights when I wanted to break down the door and force her to answer me.

But her will is strong. Too strong. And though I've done many things I'm not proud of, I've never beaten my wife.

But that's not to say I won't. Always, pack comes first.

Always.

4/5

If she is a threat to them, she'll find I won't be as patient as I have been.

I push the platter of food toward her. It's filled with meat and vegetables. "Eat," I command her.

She gradually picks up a roasted vegetable. But I don't think she does it to obey me, or even because she needs the sustenance, her whole demeanor is just bored.

While she was locked away these last days, I structured the plans to ensure our pack's safety. Her father's pack won't survive. It'll all come out at the Regional Council meeting.

Once the Collective sees what Alpha Roberts has done, they'll seize his lands, accounts, and corporations. The Council will order his execution.

It's a ruthless strategy, even for me.

"What have you done, Aaron?"

She knows me well, this woman.

"Aaron, answer me."

Now it's my turn to be smug. "No."

Besides, she'll see soon enough, and the fallout of what's

5/5

about to transpire will ripple through these packs for years to come.

12

"Please tell me you've thought about what I said, Leah?" Adam asks anxiously.

His voice is even and cultured, the practiced cadence of a doctor who, no doubt, has used this speech before.

"Nothing has changed," I say.

don't realize it until I hear the drip, drip of tears hitting the floor, that I'm crying. I touch my face and wipe them away.

Adam's sigh is loud through the phone.

I move from my chair to the chaise lounge near the window. The light is bright and I can hear birds singing outside. "You have a pack here, family."

"Yes," I agree. "And my father's pack has prospered amid the peace."

Peace brokered with my body and blood.

3/6

Arresen my former pack has thrived is also because

with which stocks to buy and trade a skill I learned in this very reading and stening as

Aaren brokered deals Na corporation Aaren even fought me how to forecast vestments and to monitor the market for when prices would

The read countless books on finance. I listen to podcasts. Take classes paling

The amassed my dad and my brother a fortune. That's good

gwen't

won't have to worry that they'll struggle or

a company will falter when I'm gone

A cookies over the years will ensure my pack's

www.yg after I'm gone

You actually love him Adam asks, dragging me back from my scored high

Move was that love that made me sick

wowatoros bad love"

There's several seconds of silence and then he says, "Go

Chapter 8

upstairs to your room and check the cabinet in the bathroom.”

Aaron hasn't tried to constrain me since the altercation where I fainted and Adam argued with him. I have the run of the mansion and grounds again. I've been instructed to stay in Aaron's room at night.

“Are you going?” Adam prompts.

I automatically stand and start moving through the mansion.

There aren't many wolves around this time of day. They're all out at their various jobs either here on the packlands or outside in the human world.

I take the stairs carefully. I'm still a little weak, but what's worse, it's hard to breathe. I'm winded by the time I reach the top floor which is alarming. I've been running up and down these stairs for a decade.

I head into my room and close the door.

should be thankful that Aaron bothered to have it repaired, I suppose. I didn't relish the thought of having no privacy.

Not that he's allowed me back into this room. He's insisted I sleep in his bed each night ever since I fainted.

I can remember a time when I would've been thrilled that he wanted me beside him.

Each night, he slings his big arm around my waist and holds me close.

wards off the chills, but it leaves me feeling bad each morning.

I can't seem to get past the years of pain and longing.

I'm probably just channeling all my resentment about my prognosis toward him. But so many years have been wasted, and now...

I sigh.

In the bathroom bottom drawer, I find several neatly labeled containers.

“How did you get these in here?” I ask.

“There’s a batch in this room. And that other room where they held you last time. I brought them when I first came, after Dr. Henley shared your prognosis.”

I stare at the pill bottles.

“Those are anti-cancer medicines and painkillers,” Adam says. “You’ll need to do a formal chemotherapy routine, but these can get you started. Leah, in a battle like this, every moment

matters. Please. I beg you. Take the pills.”

5/6

I inspect each one then rip the labels off, shred them up and then flush them down the toilet.

“Please don’t tell me you threw them out.”

“No. Just the packaging.”

He breathes heavily.

“He doesn’t know, and I don’t want him to know, Adam.”

Whether sick or not, I have my pride. I’ve swallowed enough of it these last few years. I won’t use my illness to gain sympathy, and Aaron wouldn’t even necessarily sympathize with me anyway.

“Don’t drink coffee. Or alcohol. Avoid sugary foods.

Remember to take the meds on time...”

Adam takes a deep breath and rattles off more instructions.

Foods to eat. What to avoid. As if the list of do’s and don’ts really matters.

“Leah, are you listening to me?”

I smile into the phone. “You have a nice voice.”

Adam is speechless. Then: “You’re not listening.” He’s angry

“Thank you,” I tell him. He’s the first person to care about me in a long time.

“You’re still so young...Please, don’t give up,” he mutters, his voice choking with emotion.

I feel his sorrow through the phone.

It’s comforting. Like someone in this world actually cares about me.

“Leah,” his tone is so grave I feel my stomach sink to my toes. “There’s more I have to tell you...”

Chapter 9

“Leah!”

The roar echoes through the house.

Aaron is home.

And he is in a bad mood.

“I have to go, Adam. I’ll call you soon.”

“Wait! There’s something-”

I click off the phone and shove it into the back pocket of my jeans.

Then I run down the stairs-it’s way easier going down than up-and follow his hollering to the study.

Aaron is at his computer. He motions for me to sit beside him.

I hold my breath.

Being alone with this man...does something to me.

But dicbalt stay on thisholtetractest of bfgghighs and lows.bdon’t want to spend what little timechoka vefteftating myself or him.

Why arent you workingrig yoyo officePoblask.

sitis dork eyes hold me captive/t’s bo offofficer princess. And I

core work anywhere it choose to fo.

@kdys it's going to be an argumentative today.

ds since when was anything oursire I've been a dead enemy and at
worsinkels enterkiniciraf of otiptiv

selostive.

Gded englugh fa fick but never to loveve.

elocet Adam po punishing me because i wouldn't give verim et answersers
beusplughts His harsh treatment refleme acurly liridius witwith gingen
dind/fevers jessica had taken evholmbnews wamamy pinpard's lolololdód from me.

eakingiog.of...

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make out the he tting of the packcarcetneyeity@he headstones look small fromm
sidistance: BuBadisa smsiththithatodbad see the reddishish

black stains.

From my blood, poured on top of each of them.

I'm dying and it's my blood being used to water the dead.

There is some irony in that, I'm sure.

I feel Aaron behind me before I hear him.

3/5

He crowds me which stirs my body to aching awareness. And even that feels like an insult. That I should crave this man, that I should want to mate and celebrate life, even as my body is eroding on the inside and edging toward death.

Or maybe it is my imminent death that has me clinging so hard.

“What’s wrong? Why are you so sad all the time? And where the hell did you go the other day?”

He had me locked up to the point of starvation and I wouldn’t tell him. I cast him a rueful smile. Whyever would he think I’d

tell him now?

Aaron growls. “You’re very frustrating, Leah.”

But at least he isn’t locking me away or resorting to some other awful tactic.

“Your dad called the main packhouse,” he tells me.

“I had a bunch of missed calls from him.” When I was imprisoned my phone died and I wasn’t able to charge it.

“Make sure you call him today.”

With that said, Aaron strides back to his computer. He has several spreadsheets up for stocks he’s been tracking and I go and sit near him so I can see. Because that’s why my father

called.

To demand that I send him \$500,000.00.

Aaron's busy texting and answering emails from his phone. When it rings a few minutes later, he strolls out of the study.

I have savings and a decent portfolio that I've managed to grow over the years, but that's still a lot of cash to ask from one's child.

In all the texts and missed calls that I see on my phone from my dad, not one inquires about me. They are all about money.

Leah, I need cash.

Leah, send it now.

And on they went for days. His last ones are threatening and just reading them makes my chest ache and my stomach pitch painfully.

I transfer the entirety of my savings, so he'll have access to several million.

The money is gone.

I wait several seconds.

I don't get a thank you or even a phone call.

Just a single text: received.

I hate that he never asked about me or in my lack of replies thought to worry or come here to check on me.

"Your father's a piece of shit," Aaron tells me.

12

Chapter 10

“I thought you left.”

He stands by the door, watching me as I’ve been working from my phone, where I’ve been alternating between reading the financial reports he left queued on his computer, and

transferring the money.

“I hope you didn’t do something you’ll regret,” he says.

Like handing over millions of dollars that my husband likely considers ‘ours’ to my father-his enemy?

“No. Of course not,” I say easily.

He snorts.

I point to two companies whose shares we’ve both been following for a while. “You marked these to offload. Is there something wrong with the financial projections?”

He nods. “Both companies are about to go belly up.”

Oh no. I bought ten thousand shares of each on behalf of my father’s pack last month. I don’t exactly hide that I make those investments, but technically it’s all managed by my father, I

just pass along information from my research or that Aaron

shares with me.

He smirks. Then he comes back into the room, tilts up my chin with his big hand and kisses me. “I’m sorry,” he whispers.

I’m pretty sure my mouth is still hanging open as he leaves.

Those two words...

To hear him say them, to apologize.

Aaron doesn't 'do' apologies.

And just moments ago he was smirking. What exactly is he apologizing for, I wonder. Not that it matters. It's enough that he gave me the words. Finally.

I sink back into the chair. Shocked. Elated.

Feeling those broken bits of my heart coming back together again.

You see... it's these moments. The tender ones.

The heated embraces and possessive glances. The way he holds me at night, or does something unexpectedly sweet. The

way this man with a single look, with one kiss, can claim every part of my body.

I touch my mouth.

Aaron is cold and controlled and closed off.

But these glimpses of warmth...

They are what give me hope.

That maybe there is more to our relationship.

And hope... hope is really dangerous for a dying girl like n

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AARON

I wait in the hallway and listen.

I can hear Leah's shuttered breaths.

I've confused her, as I've intended.

The way to break her is not with force.

She is too strong for that.

But her heart is big and open and her trusting nature...now that is a prime thing for me to exploit.

Because I have every intention of keeping her where she belongs.

4/7

Here.

Though walls and distance surround us, I swear I can feel her joy, like some force of positive energy radiating from her to

1.

My phone blinks and I see that funds have been transferred. I've never micromanaged her finances before, because I didn't have a reason to. She doesn't spend a lot of money. She

isn't into fancy clothes or expensive jewelry. She sends money

back home but the funds she had from her dowry were hers,

and I allowed her to manage them as she chose to.

Her father gave her a pittance of money when she was pledged to me. We've grown that amount a hundred times.

over.

I never touched a dime of my wife's. But from the moment she went 'missing' last week, that all ended.

I track her whereabouts with her cell and I now get an update

of any changes to her accounts. From coins for a game on her iphone to Amazon orders she has sent to the mansion.

Most of the charges are subscriptions for regular,

pack-related items and necessities. But that account transfer

to her dad...

I'll say it again: He's a piece of shit.

What kind of man takes from his child? What kind of parent lets a kid work or suffer to support him?

We dressed it up as an "arranged marriage for peace" but Robert had been intent on selling his daughter, even when she'd been barely a teen. He didn't know what kind of man I

was. He could've been handing her over to a beast.

And seriously, he had to assume the worst, given the hatred and long-standing feuds between our packs.

After what he did to my sister...

Why would he think I'd be anything less than brutal to his offspring?

And still... he sent a girl to war.

He sent that girl to me.

I never touched her. The thought never even crossed my mind. After we were married, it was a few years before we crossed that line because despite my hatred for her father and her pack, I would not take advantage of an innocent.

And that's what Leah is.

An innocent woman caught up in her pack's machinations and forced to pay their blood debt to me.

Leah never wants to see that truth for what it is.

That her father is a vile monster, capable of anything.

But that will change.

Very soon.

I watch as the text she's sending to her father and brother about which stocks to unload goes through.

Excellent.

The messages are sent and received.

That's another new bit of intel, having her phone

automatically sync its texts to mine. I'll see every one and by