

The Billionaire Alpha's Contract Lover

Chapter 101

There were so many people with Jackson that a commercial car couldn't hold all of them. I had to arrange for another vehicle to shuttle some of them back to Arcadia.

The senior pack leaders took the other car while Jackson and his pack guards rode with me.

That wasn't what I'd been hoping for.

I didn't speak to Jackson the whole time. I focused on driving and getting to the five-star hotel where dinner was to take place.

In the luxurious private room, Tara and a few shifters from the Midwest Packs Corporation had arrived, but Griffon had not.

After Tara arranged the seats for Jackson and the others, she turned to me. "Did you send the address to Alpha Knight?"

I nodded. "Of course."

Although, I was unsure if he had seen my WhatsApp message since I'd re-blocked him. I'd delivered the message; whether he came or not had nothing to do with me.

"Ms. Thorin, I'll be leaving now."

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2/4

I'd done my duty and picked Jackson up from the airport and brought him here. I didn't want to stay a second longer than absolutely necessary. The "wolfiness" in here was already too much for me with so many powerful shifters in one room-plus the added stress of Jackson being thrown into the mix.

Once Griffon arrived, it would be unbearable.

I was about to leave, but Tara blocked me.

"Taya, don't be in such a hurry to leave. Book hotel rooms here for Alpha Sterling and his men."

"I—"

Just as I was about to refuse, Tara's eyes changed to that of her wolf's—a bright, dark amber color.

She opened her mouth to say something, but then paused and put on a pleading

expression instead. Her wolf receded from her eyes.

Ha. She'd been about to command me to do what she wanted. As a she-wolf from a powerful bloodline, she was able to do that with most people.

But then, she'd clearly remembered I wasn't a she-wolf, and her commands would have no effect on me.

"I know you want to resign, but before that's completed, this is still your job. Take good care of Alpha Sterling today, and I'll approve your resignation application when I get back, okay?"

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3/4

I was stuck. If they didn't approve my resignation, I wouldn't qualify for continued benefits. And...I kind of needed those until I died.

I didn't appreciate the almost threatening nature of Tara's words, but if doing this meant that she would immediately approve my resignation when she got back to the office, I'd su c k it up.

I asked Jackson's a*sistant for all of their information, then I sat outside the private dining room, took out my phone, and booked rooms. Doing it online was much easier and quicker than going into the lobby to see the receptionist.

After I booked the hotel rooms, I slid my phone back in my purse to go use the restroom.

When I stood up, a wave of dizziness overcame me, and I almost fell to the ground.

Fortunately, a large, strong hand wrapped around my waist just in time to support me before I could fall.

"Ms. Palmer, what's wrong?"

I leaned back against the man's chest and relaxed for a minute or two before looking up at the person helping me. At first, the dizziness made it hard to focus, but then his face came into view.

I quickly shoved Jackson away.

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"I'm fine. It's just low blood sugar."

Jackson frowned slightly when he saw my pale face, his eyes narrowing a bit as he a*sessed me.

“Are you sick?” he asked.

“No.” I shook my head.

4/4

Jackson looked as though he was going to take a step forward, so

I took a step back to maintain the distance between us.

He stopped, gave a terse nod, then turned and walked away.

I wanted to get to the bathroom, but I was even more dizzy now.

I could only hold on to the doorframe and sit down again.

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Fortunately, the dizziness came and went quickly, and I soon recovered.

When I was about to get up to go to the bathroom, I saw Griffon standing at the elevator doors.

He looked as gorgeous as he always did. The lights seem to shine on his muscular frame, giving the appearance of a halo around him—which was laughable to think of Alpha Knight as someone deserving of a halo.

He seemed to have been standing there for a while.

Nerves shot through me when I saw him. Sure, I’d known he was going to be there, but I’d thought I would be able to avoid him. I still could.

Just as I was looking around to make my exit strategy, he strode toward me, his long strides quickly eating up the space between us.

There was no way for me to avoid him. I could only hold my purse tightly and quickly turn my back to him.

It was as though his mere presence thickened the air surrounding us.

I was a little out of breath, and my grip on my purse strap

“Do you want me to open the door on my own?”

A terrifying growl of a voice sounded above my head.

2/2

I quickly looked to the floor, then turned around, not daring to risk looking in his eyes.

Except, I didn’t know the man behind me was close.

When I turned around, I slammed right in a hard, muscular chest.

The familiar fragrance of Griffon wrapped itself around me as I stared at the open collar of his white dress shirt.

Subconsciously, I looked at his collarbone. There was no tattoo.

It appeared that Griffon and Greyson truly weren't the same person. I lowered my eyelashes in disappointment.

Griffon grabbed my shoulder with one hand and pushed me to the side.

"You're really good at throwing yourself into other people's arms."

Ah. It would seem that he'd just seen me in Jackson's arms.

"I..."

I wanted to explain, but Griffon took out a handkerchief and wiped his fingers as if something dirty had touched him.

After wiping his hands, he threw the cloth at my face.

His eyes were dark and indifferent, his wolf not even bothering to show itself. His mouth was twisted in a slight grimace, as if he was looking at some lowly creature. He pushed past me and walked into the private room off the restaurant.

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2/3

The bastard had come off the elevator, seen Jackson and me, and then waited until the right moment to walk forward. He'd never needed me to open the door; he just wanted to humiliate me.

I threw the handkerchief into the trash can next to me, keeping my face schooled.

I calmed the anger in my chest, clenched my purse, and sat down again.

Endure it, I told myself.

There was nothing, no person that could easily knock me down.

I'd been through worse than this.

And if my frail human body wasn't about to die, I'm sure I would endure worse the longer I lived as a human among wolves.

In the private dining room, as soon as Alpha Knight appeared, the members of the Sterling pack were all stunned.

They hadn't expected Griffon would be at the dinner.

After the shock wore off a bit, they soon understood the connection between Elder Thorin, the Midwest Packs Corporation, and the Knight pack.

Chapter 103

3/3

The Sterling pack had been targeting the MPC, and Griffon was here to support Tara-who was taking over the neutral pack business as the CEO.

Since Griffon had shown up, the Sterling pack would not make things difficult for Tara during the

meal. The Sterling pack was powerful, but they weren't a match for the Knight pack and their deep-rooted connections in Arcadia and the surrounding area.

Instead, they invited Griffon to the head of the table with smiles all around. They toasted to the Knight pack and tried to be as friendly as possible even though the scent and power of multiple Alphas in one room had everyone on edge.

Griffon's expression remained indifferent, his gaze fixed on a spot in front of him on the table..

It was not until Jackson came back into the dining room that Griffon's eyes shifted. Chapter 104 Jackson received a message from one of his men while he was in the bathroom, alerting him that Griffon Knight had arrived.

He'd expected that would happen.

Jackson didn't know much about what had happened between Tara and Griffon. What he did know was that the Knight pack and the Thorin pack were to be unified by a mating.

Since they were to be mated, Griffon would naturally come to support Tara. Otherwise, it would put him in an uneasy position as an Alpha. Without his support at one of her first business functions, especially as the Alpha of the pack whose project the MPC was managing, Tara would have looked as though her future mate didn't value her enough to show up.

When Griffon was sizing him up, Jackson raised his gla*s politely and toasted him.

Although Griffon responded and lifted his own gla*s, his attitude was a little arrogant and disdainful.

Jackson wasn't surprised by his demeanor.

He'd heard all about Alpha Knight.

What was interesting about the exchange was that Griffon had bothered to look at him at all.

Typically, the Alpha didn't

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acknowledge anyone.

Perhaps it had something to do with Tara being the host?

2/3

Tara would make a good Luna. She was adept at livening up the atmosphere, and a few words made the different packs more familiar and at ease with each other.

Then, she led everyone in a discussion about work, projects, bidding-and the recent incidents of the Sterling pack against the Midwest Packs Corporation.

Griffon didn't say anything during the whole process. He only occasionally looked at the door with a brooding look on his face.

When Tara saw Griffon looking in the direction of the door from time to time, she followed his gaze to see exactly what he was looking at.

She happened to see Tara's thin figure and frowned. "Griffon, what are you looking at?"

With an apathetic expression, he picked up his phone and shifted his gaze to the screen. "What time will this nonsense end? I have other pack business to attend to."

Tara felt a sliver of relief. He hadn't been looking at the other woman; he was looking through the door and out of the window beyond it to the sky outside. "Not too much longer."

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3/3

After saying that, she looked at Jackson and the pack members he'd brought with him.

"Alpha Sterling, Beta Smith, the Weston City project is nothing.

to be concerned about. MPC and Alpha Knight have always been fair and impartial. It is MPC's job to facilitate projects and manage the contract negotiations with discretion, honesty, and

without bias. You can rest assured that anything you have heard regarding possible favoritism toward the Knight pack is false. We must rely on our strengths rather than perceived weaknesses.”

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The Sterling pack had always been professional. Jackson didn’t have to worry about their strength-and weakness? Not an issue —so he simply nodded his agreement.

His concerns with MPC handling Knight pack projects couldn’t be resolved just by Tara saying things were fine. Jackson would have to see how everything was actually handled...not how they SAID they were going to handle it.

Seeing that his Alpha had relented, Beta Smith spoke. “Ms. Thorin, yes, the Sterling pack has worked to remove the Midwest Packs Corporation from handling Knight pack business. I’ve spoken to my team regarding this, and they have ceased their efforts.”

Of course, Tara didn’t believe what he said, but she wouldn’t embarrass the Sterling pack Beta in front of everyone here. Instead, she said, “In that case, let’s turn hostility into friendship. We can cooperate well and help each other in the future.”

After that, Tara picked up her glass and toasted Alpha Sterling and Beta Smith. After she finished it, she smiled, then stood. “I’ll see you all at the bidding.”

The main reason why Tara dared to end the meal prematurely

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was that Griffon was impatient.

2/5

Although the Sterling pack and the Knight pack were equally influential in the country, the Knight pack was one of the leading packs in the world. They had a long, remarkable bloodline and could trace their roots farther back than any other packs. It was even said that the Knight pack might have been THE original wolf shifter pack.

And just as she thought would happen, instead of rising when she did and being on their way, they all looked to Griffon.

They would not dare to get up before him.

Griffon nodded, stood, then grabbed Tara’s hand and walked out of the room with her.

Everyone was stunned when they saw that the Alpha rumored to be indifferent to women took the initiative to hold Tara’s hand.

The relationship between them seemed more intimate than they had imagined, instead of just being for show and power.

They didn’t know if the Weston City project would be managed fairly by the Midwest Packs Corporation because of this relationship. It was the duty of MPC to make sure that all of the different packs inter-pack business was handled to the letter of the pack law, regardless of how they personally felt about packs.

Not all of the packs got along, but not all of the packs could handle everything on their own and needed to rely on each other. That’s where the MPC came in.

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3/5

Plus, pack law stated that if there was something that a pack could not do themselves and needed outside assistance for, they were required to use another pack if another pack could perform that task.

Human services and companies were a last resort.

If multiple packs were able to perform a service, a bidding date was set for packs to bid on the

project, with the MPC overseeing the bid awarding after reviewing all of the contracts to see whose bid was not just the lowest, but the fairest and most reasonable.

This was what the Sterling pack was most worried about. Otherwise, they would not have taken extreme measures to target the Midwest Packs Corporation and their involvement in Knight pack projects.

Griffon taking Tara's hand...they weren't sure how to view that.

For a multitude of reasons.

When the door opened, I immediately stood up.

Griffon held Tara's hand and walked out of the room.

Seeing their fingers clasped together, I blinked, then blinked again.

I wanted to pretend nothing had happened and look away.

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4/5

But when I lowered my eyes to avert them, I couldn't help but look at Griffon's large hand wrapped around Tara's tiny one.

It was like a beacon drawing my gaze to it.

Griffon held her so tightly.

So different than when I bumped into him and he was disgusted by it.

I'd fantasized countless times that Griffon would hold my hand like this one day, in public no less.

He couldn't hold my hand in public, though. This was the difference between me and Tara.

When the two of them passed by me, Tara stopped. "Taya, remember to take Alpha Sterling back to the hotel."

I forced myself to nod politely. "Okay."

Only then did Tara hold onto Griffon's arm with a smile and walk towards the elevator.

They turned their backs on me, and only then did I dare to look at them.

The two were a perfect match, and I was just a passing leaf in the wind.

I smiled weakly. This bit of pain was nothing.

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I would let go of Griffon, just as I had forgotten about Silas.

5/5

Jackson Sterling was leaving the private room, and I looked over at him.

"Alpha Sterling, I'll take you to your hotel. You'll be staying at a different one than this."

Thankfully, he didn't push back, simply followed me out to the car.

Once I had arrived and Jackson and his Beta were out of the car, I started to pull away. I wanted to get away from Jackson as soon as possible.

My heart had other plans. My chest convulsed in excruciating pain.

And my foot was still on the accelerator.

My body was twisting in pain, and my foot pressed down on the gas pedal.

The car shot forward and hit the pillar at the hotel entrance.

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Jackson startled when he heard a loud bang behind him.

He rushed over to the crashed car and saw Taya slumped against the steering wheel, her face white as a sheet.

His chest tightened subconsciously.

He yanked at the door handle to get her out, but the car was locked.

Knocking hard on the window, he said, "Ms. Palmer, open the door!"

Taya didn't move to unlock the doors.

Shit. She must be unconscious.

1/4

Jackson smashed the back window on the driver's side so that no glass would get on her, then reached through it to unlock the front door.

Thank the goddess he was a shifter, or else he wouldn't have had the strength to break the window so easily.

He opened Taya's door, then quickly and carefully pulled Taya out of the car.

She wasn't unconscious, but she was almost there. Taya grabbed

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his arm as if she were desperate. With difficulty, and after a couple of tries, she spat out the word "oxygen."

Jackson's mind went blank when he heard that word. Scenes flashed through his mind so quickly that he felt a headache coming on.

2/4

Rather than lay her on the ground, Jackson picked Taya up and carried her. He turned to his Bela. "Get someone from the hotel to bring me oxygen."

It would be too late for them to go to the hospital now.

Jackson hoped this hotel was equipped with more first-aid items than a lot of shifter hotels were.

Shifters didn't need much in the way of medical treatment unless it was a more serious wound, so many places didn't keep much of anything on hand.

They figured their guests could shift into their wolf form to heal, then shift back.

Fortunately, this hotel was owned by the Sterling pack. Since they were a pack who dealt with humans, they had made sure that the hotel was prepared for human first-aid needs.

The hotel manager quickly sent someone to get the small oxygen tank they kept on hand in case of extreme emergencies.

Jackson carried Taya into the presidential suite she had booked for him. Goddess, her face was so pale.

Suddenly, he was afraid she would die like this. He hurriedly

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3/4

contacted his good friend Eric Sinclair, who happened to be at a conference in Arcadia.

After waking up Eric—who had an extremely regimented schedule—Jackson gave him the address, told him to hurry, and then hung up the phone.

Eric frowned in confusion. He tossed his phone aside and rolled over to go back to sleep. After a couple of seconds, he opened his eyes again.

"Did I hear that right? Jackson asked me to save someone?"

Jackson was the most even-keeled person Eric knew, who had no real emotion attachments.

Who could make Jackson call him in the middle of the night?

Eric's OCD was telling him that he HAD to sleep right now. Part of managing his compulsions was keeping a rigid schedule that he didn't deviate from.

But he found he could not sleep. At all.

Apparently, tonight he would be breaking his self-imposed rules.

He got up, picked up his car keys, and headed to the address Jackson had given him.

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The oxygen tank was small, but it was enough to help me.

1/3

Slowly, the pain in my heart subsided with every breath I took, and I started to come around.

I opened my eyes and saw Jackson standing by the bed I was in,

a frown on his face. I was confused and a bit stunned.

Was it Jackson who had saved me? And where was I?

Had the person who'd once tried to kill me just saved me?

I pulled the oxygen mask away from my face and struggled to get up from the bed.

Jackson pressed me back down and said, "Don't move."

I pushed his hand away. "I'm fine. Thank you for your help, Alpha Sterling."

Determined to get away from this dangerous shifter as quickly as possible, I forced myself to sit up and get out of the massive bed, holding onto the bedside table for support.

After taking a couple of seconds to get used to being upright, I stood.

Immediately, dizziness overtook me again.

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2/3

I swayed, trying to focus on the door across the hotel room. Staring at a fixed point usually helped.

Not this time.

Wave after wave of dizziness overtook me, and my knees buckled.

Jackson caught me by the arm and gently but forcefully pushed me back onto the bed.

"Don't push yourself too hard. You need to rest."

Taya wasn't Jackson's biggest fan, and that was putting it lightly. After he caught her and kept her from further injury, he took a step back to give her space.

He'd felt compelled to rush to her aid when he'd seen what happened, acting strictly on his wolf's impulse.

Right now, couldn't leave her alone. Eric should be on his way, should be here any minute. At the very least, he wanted to Eric to check Taya over before leaving or letting her leave.

For some reason, the scene right now felt familiar to him, but he didn't know why.

Nothing in his investigation gave an indication that they'd been in this type of situation before.

And his wolf wasn't a fan of the

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Jackson was keeping a distance from me, which made me feel slightly better. Rather than forcing myself to get up and flee the room, I lay down obediently and tried to ease the dizziness. The doctor had told me not to overwork myself.

Somehow, I didn't think being tortured by Greyson for two days and then going to work counted as taking it easy. Not to mention that the day I'd anticipated having at work had turned out to be nothing like that at all.

It was tiring for healthy people to travel back and forth to the airport, restaurants, and hotels, let

alone me.

Whenever I did too much, my condition worsened.

I had to get Tara to approve my resignation tomorrow.

The time had come for me to make peace with what was happened and lie at home and wait for death to come.

Had no one been there when I crashed the car today, had I not gotten oxygen so quickly, I likely would have died today. I would have been found quickly since I was in front of a hotel room, but once I was home and death took me... Who would find me?

I hated the idea of Harper finding me, but it wasn't like anyone else was going to come look for me. Once I resigned, no one

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would miss me from work...

2/3

While I was letting my imagination run wild, a man in a white suit walked in.

I don't think I'd ever seen someone who looked so perfect and clean. Let alone so pristine-looking while wearing white. He exuded a gentle and elegant temperament, and I couldn't tell if he was a wolf shifter or a human.

When he saw me lying on the bed, he smiled.

Two deep dimples immediately appeared on his cheeks.

"It's a woman," the man said, a note of wonderment in his tone.

He walked over with the black bag he'd brought with him and gave Jackson a look. "You've finally found a woman?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Eric," Jackson growled, his wolf thick in his voice. "I've seen her faint twice today."

The man-Eric-looked nonplussed at Jackson's Alpha voice, and I wondered if he was indeed human. He took out a stethoscope from the first-aid kit and moved in to listen to my heart.

I stopped him. "I have a heart issue. It was just a little episode because I overdid it today. It's not a big deal."

I told the truth—without the pesky details about heart failure and the fact I was dying. I knew I couldn't hide it from the

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doctor if he listened.

3/3

And if he actually gave me a full exam, he'd know just how NOT little my problem was.

I was afraid Jackson would be angry with me for lying to him about what was wrong, and I didn't want him to harm me again. His kicks to my chest before didn't kill me, but they sure as hell would now.

I hadn't said goodbye to Harper. I couldn't die like this, without seeing Harper one more time.

B

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Eric was a doctor. He could tell at a glance whether the patient was lying or not.

And this woman was lying.

He glanced at Taya's legs. They were swollen, and she'd said she had a heart issue...it was mostly likely a sign that she was in the end stages of heart failure.

More interesting was that she was human... Why did an Alpha like Jackson care to have a doctor rush over in the middle of the night to care for a dying human?

Since the patient didn't want him to treat her, he wouldn't force her. He put away the stethoscope.

Why was she glancing at Jackson and clearly afraid of him?

Eric gave Taya a slight nod and tried to convey to her that he knew what was going on.

"Jackson, she won't even let me check her. What on earth did you do to her?" Eric took a step back and grinned at Jackson. "Or do you mean to tell me that you've gone so Alpha on her that she can't bear to have another man touch her?"

He wouldn't expose Taya. It wasn't his place to do so.

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But she wouldn't be able to hide her condition for long.

Eric walked over to the gloomy-looking Jackson, covered his mouth, and whispered, "Who is she?"

"A friend," Jackson said in his growly voice that indicated he wasn't going to say anything more about the situation.

2/3

Eric didn't believe him. Jackson never had any females around him, human or she-wolf. And Jackson certainly didn't have any friends other than Eric. Jackson wasn't someone who was concerned with "making friends".

"There's nothing else for you to do here. You can leave," Jackson commanded with a dismissive wave of his hand.

"I see how it is." Eric picked up his medical bag. "Call me out of bed in the middle of the night, and then just dismiss me without a word of thanks. I forgot...you're the big Alpha and everyone only exists to serve you."

Shaking his head, he walked to the door. When he reached it, he looked back again.

Seeing Jackson standing before the bed with his hands in his pockets and looking at the woman on the bed with a worried expression, Eric quickly took a photo with his phone.

He sent the photo to his brothers' group chat and added, "Seems I found the reason Jackson's been MIA lately..."

The group chat immediately burst into an uproar, just like a

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but much of gossip she went down,

It didn't take long for the news to spread to Preston.

Chapter 110

When Preston saw that the woman on the bed was Taya, he was shocked.

Looks like he'd been wrong about her.

As soon as Roman fell from grace, Taya had hurried to attach herself to someone else with power.

She worked fast.

Preston hated being wrong about people. And the fact that she was human somehow made it worse. How was this nothing of a human woman able to wrap men around her finger so quickly?

After thinking about it for a while, he texted the picture to Griffon.

Someone needed to teach Taya a lesson, but Preston didn't feel like it was his place to do so.

After all, Griffon was the one who'd been involved with her, so Preston would leave it to him.

As Griffon returned home and saw the photo, darkness filled him and his wolf started to rise to the surface, itching to get out and...punish.

"When did you see this?" he texted to Preston.

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Preston replied, "Just now. One of the guys sent it to me."

Griffon didn't respond.

2/3

His fingers tightened around his phone, his claws growing until they punctured the gla*s screen. But he didn't care.

Jackson looked at Taya lying in his hotel room bed. She looked... unconscious. And that made him feel a bit uneasy.

At his wolf's urging, he reached out and nudged her arm. When she shifted and he realized she was just asleep, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Frowning, Jackson stood there, his bulky arms crossed over his chest, and looked at her for a while. Then, he tucked her in and turned off the lights before leaving.

After walking out of the presidential suite, he indifferently asked the a*sistant waiting at the door, "Do I really not have a past with her?"

Camille, his a*sistant, replied calmly, "Yes, didn't old Alpha Sterling take you to the orphanage a few years ago to verify it with the director?"

After Jackson came home from the hospital, Taya came to see

Chapter 110

him.

3/3

He had just lost his memory then, so everything was strange and unknown. Talking about the past was painful for him because he couldn't remember anything. It was like an open wound. But Taya didn't care how much she hurt him. She came to bother him every day. He couldn't drive her away, no matter how hard he tried.

She went on and on, explaining herself to him, telling him about how she had to sell her body to save him. Telling him they were supposed to be mated...even though she could never be a Luna.

She swore up and down that everything she said was true, and she'd cried impa*sioned tears that affected his wolf.

He had no choice but to ask the Sterling pack leaders to take him back to the orphanage for an investigation.

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The orphanage director told Jackson that Taya had wanted to climb up the social ladder since she was a child. When she hadn't gotten her wolf at puberty, she wanted it even more. Likely, she wanted a guaranteed protector.

When Taya saw that he had become the new Alpha of the Sterling pack. She tried to take advantage of his amnesia to lie to him, to convince him that they were in love and he had promised to mate her.

Everyone Jackson had talked to that he and Taya were not familiar with each other at all and had no past.

All of this was just a lie Taya made up.

1/3

Jackson even went to the hospital to verify it with others. Aside from Harper, who insisted he

was unfaithful, everyone's statements were consistent with what the orphanage director had told him.

Harper being the only one to say any different made sense. Harper and Taya were best friends-considered each other sisters, even-and had spent their whole lives together in the orphanage. Of course, Harper would lie for her friend to ensure Taya was accepted by a pack and have a mate to protect her.

Jackson's doubt gradually dissipated, but...

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2/3

He looked back at Taya, sleeping soundly on the bed, and grimaced again. "Why do I always feel that something must have happened between her and me? Why would I be so upset to hear that she had a heart issue...?"

Camille glanced at him and frowned. "She's probably doing this to attract your attention again. She didn't succeed before, and now that she has a chance to get close to you again, she can try again."

Camille paused, then reminded him, "Alpha Sterling, you should be careful. Women are conniving and brilliant."

Jackson remembered that five years ago, to help him regain his memory, Taya had deliberately pretended to be sick in front of him. Camille's words seemed more credible.

If Taya wasn't pretending, why would she have stopped Eric from examining her?

Jackson's temples throbbed, and it felt like his wolf was pacing around inside of him, angry and restless. Think about Taya gave him a headache, and he was desperate to shift and run as fast as he could, until he was completely drained of all thoughts, emotions, and energy.

It had been a long time since he had felt this way.

He didn't want to think about any of this anymore and make his headache worse, and with everything going on with the Weston City project he didn't have time to indulge in weakness.

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He waved a hand and said to Camille, "Go get me another room."

Chapter 112

I woke up to unfamiliar surroundings.

1/3

After blinking a few times and remembering what happened last night, I realized I had fallen asleep in Jackson's presidential suite. Luckily, Jackson seemed to be gone. The only other place he could be in here was the bathroom, but the door was open and no light was on in there.

I touched my chest, pressing lightly between my breasts and letting out a sigh of relief. There were no signs of being kicked.

It had been so long ago, but I'd feared Jackson would kick me. It had been horrible when he did it before, and the trauma from it came rushing back last night.

But it was no wonder that I was afraid. After he'd kicked me in the chest years ago, Jackson left me on the side of the road to die.

And I would have died if someone driving by hadn't seen me and saved me in time.

I'd never understood why Silas, who had always been nice to me, always been my protector, would be so cruel, would leave me there to die.

It'd been a long time, and I'd let go of it and moved on, but I could never forget it. I'd

just...pushed it aside so I could survive,

Chapter 112

try to live while I could. It would never NOT be there, and sometimes it weighed on me.

Now that I'd seen Jackson again, it was fresh.

2/3

I shook my head and forced Jackson out of my mind. I sat up in the bed and picked up my phone.

Oh, no. I'd slept until 5:00 p.m.! My phone screen showed countless missed calls, but I'd been so exhausted and slept so hard that I hadn't heard a single one.

I unlocked the phone to see who had called, and my eyes grew as big as saucers.

There were hundreds of missed calls from Greyson.

Not only had he called over and over, he'd also sent countless WhatsApp messages.

I wasn't going to call him back. Instead, I opened WhatsApp to read his messages.

At first, he'd said, "Send me your location."

Then, "Are you with another man?"

Then, "If you fu ck another man, I'll ki ll you."

Dear goddess, he was crazy. No way in he ll was I answering him back.

Chapter 112

3/3

I exited out of Greyson's messages, then saw that Lila had also messaged asking me to come into the office and hand over my work.

Quickly, I got up, freshened up, grabbed my bag, and left the presidential suite.

As soon as I got to the elevator, Jackson came out.

Chapter 113

"Ms. Palmer. I see you're awake."

Jackson quickly walked over to Taya and looked her up and down.

1/3

He'd returned to the suite earlier today to check on her, but she was sound asleep and he didn't want to wake her.

Instead, he'd quickly left the room-even though he was pretty sure that a herd of wild horses couldn't wake her. He'd gone into the the Sterling pack's Arcadia offices for a few meetings and then went back to check on her.

To find that she was still sleeping.

Part of him had wanted to wake her the second time to make sure she was okay, but the other part of him was irritated that he even cared, that his wolf was driving at him to keep checking on her.

Now, he'd returned for a third time. Seeing that she had finally woken up, he couldn't help but feel relief. He had never seen someone who could sleep so soundly.

Wolf shifters didn't do that. They were too attuned to their surroundings, their hearing too keen, their sense of self-preservation too deep.

Chapter 113

2/3

Jackson stood there staring at Taya, his wolf a bit on edge as he examined her for anything amiss. He narrowed his eyes on her.

She looked pale and tired, too thin, but otherwise fine.

Taya swallowed and nodded, and Jackson saw the muscle in her jaw tick. She was annoyed with him, wanted to get away. He could sense that she was antsy.

"Thank you for letting me stay here for the night. I'm sorry to have disturbed you."

She started to walk toward the elevator and escape him when Jackson remembered what Eric had done. He reached a hand out to grab her elbow and stopped her.

Taya's eyes widened and she looked down at his hand. He quickly let go of her, not meaning to frighten her.

"Before you rush off, I have something to tell you," he said.

"Yes?" she said tentatively.

"You haven't eaten yet, have you? We can talk while eating. My treat."

Taya's expression hardened, and Jackson couldn't read her eyes. Damn it, he wished she were a wolf.

He'd be able to command her to have dinner with him.

"There's no need, Alpha Sterling. We can talk right here."

Chapter 113

3/3

Jackson pinched the bridge of his nose and let out a low, frustrated growl before he took out his phone. He showed Taya the photo Eric had taken.

"Eric...the doctor who came last night. He took a picture of us and sent it to a few people.

Unfortunately, someone in the group took it upon themselves to share it with others, and now it's everywhere on social media."

Chapter 114

I glanced at the photo.

Jackson was standing next to the bed and looking at me. It didn't look like a big deal to me at all. I was fully clothed, and so was he.

"I'm sure you're able to have it dealt with," I said with a slight shrug.

For an Alpha of his power and wealth, I'm sure it wouldn't be difficult for him to have something like this removed from whatever social media sites it was on. And even any blogs or gossip sites it might have reached.

"I've already dealt with it. No one else will spread it."

"That's good."

I turned to leave, but Jackson stopped me again.

"Let me take you to dinner. Consider it my apology for Eric's disrespect."

I shook my head. "No, thank you. I need to go to the office."

"I've already taken care of that. When I saw that you weren't awake this morning, I called Ms. Thorin and let her know you wouldn't be in today."

Chapter 114

2/3

I was stunned for a moment. I didn't know whether to be angry at his overreach and pleasantly surprised by his thoughtfulness. Lila must have messaged before Jackson had called her.

Narrowing my eyes, I stared at him. He'd been very clear five years ago that he didn't want to see me again. After all, what could be more clear than trying to kill someone?

So why was he helping me now?

He'd now asked more than once for me to have dinner with him. And if he was still anything like the man I remembered from years ago, he wouldn't give up until I said yes. His stubborn streak

was a mile wide-which probably made him a good Alpha in some ways, when it came to standing up for his pack.

Letting out a sigh, I nodded.

At this point, I was too curious to not go.

As soon as we exited the elevator in the lobby, we bumped into Griffon.

He wore a black suit, which matched the look on his face.

The moment he saw us, his dark glower turned into indifference.

When my eyes met his, I felt the blood drain out of my face.

I immediately lowered my head and looked at the ground, panicked. I dared not raise my head to look at him again.

Chapter 114

3/3

Subconsciously, I hid behind Jackson's body, which was much larger than mine.

Please, please, please don't let either of them say anything, I prayed to the goddess.

Jackson stretched out his hand. "Alpha Knight."

Chapter 115

Cr ap.

Looked like the goddess wasn't on my side right now.

I peeked around Jackson. To anyone else, Griffon looked flat and emotionless, ever the stoic Alpha.

But I knew better.

His eyes had that steely glint they got when he was trying to hide his wolf. That hint of silver.

Griffon glanced down at Jackson's hand and didn't make a move to extend his own, instead just raising an eyebrow and looking down to Jackson's hand and then back up to Jackson's face.

He didn't say a word.

Jackson took it in stride and simply shrugged and lowered his hand. I'm guessing he'd heard plenty about Griffon's coldness. Frankly, I was surprised Jackson had even attempted to shake his hand, given Griffon's arrogant reputation.

Griffon looked beyond Jackson-to me.

"Ms. Palmer."

Once Griffon addressed me, I couldn't continue to hide behind

Chapter 115

2/3

Jackson. Especially since I'd noticed that other pack leaders were milling about the lobby.

I greeted Griffon respectfully. "Hello, Alpha Knight."

Griffon turned his body slightly toward me and looked me up and down.

"You're really something, aren't you?"

He pushed past me and walked into the elevator.

Clearly, he'd misunderstood what he thought he was seeing. But I didn't need to explain myself.

We were over, and Griffon didn't want me anymore. Nothing I did was his business.

Jackson raised an eyebrow and looked down at me, seeing as he was over a foot taller than me.

"Well, Alpha Knight doesn't seem very friendly to you. You and him..." He didn't finish his thought, but I knew what he meant, and I wasn't going to sugarcoat my answer.

"Everyone in this circle knows that I'm a prostitute."

Jackson didn't expect Taya to be so straightforward, and he was a little shocked by her answer. However, after the photo of Taya and him made the rounds, several higher-level wolves from different packs in Arcadia sent

Chapter 115

3/3

him messages saying that she was Roman's woman.

Even in Wolverly Capital, Jackson had heard of Roman's antics. He knew Roman was ruthless with women-human and she-wolf alike. Any woman who was willing to be involved with him were doing it for his money.

And since Taya had been tied to Roman...

It seemed that the orphanage director hadn't lied. She really did just want to marry into a wealthy family.

No wonder she disappeared five years ago when she hadn't been able to fool him, deciding to move on to her next target.

But he'd never expected Taya to actually admit to what she was doing.

He hadn't met a woman who was so brazen about her actions.

Chapter 116

Jackson's expression changed, and I knew what he was thinking.

I plastered an indifferent look on my face.

"So, Alpha Sterling, do you still want to treat me-a woman who sells herself-to a meal?"

Surely, Jackson wouldn't hesitate to get out of being seen with

No such luck.

"Of course," Jackson said firmly, his voice a bit rough with his wolf.

He turned and walked toward the hotel restaurant across the lobby.

Open-mouthed, I looked at his back as he strode away, his large Alpha form towering over everyone else.

Why did most Alphas have to be so...so big?

After hesitating for a moment, I followed him.

When the restaurant manager saw Jackson, he hurried to greet him personally, instead of letting the host seat us.

“Alpha Sterling, this way, please.”

The manager led us to a quiet table in the corner. He pulled out our chairs and then handed us menus.

Jackson took a menu and looked over it. “What would you like to eat?”

“I’m not hungry, actually. Please go ahead without me.”

My appetite had been steadily declining, as was normal for people in the end stages of heart failure.

Thankfully, Jackson didn’t say anything or try to force me to eat. He just casually ordered a few things.

After the manager took our menus and left, Jackson picked up the water next to him and poured a glass for me.

Even with our horrible past and the current situation, he was still the epitome of perfect manners, even the gracious host. He hadn’t changed at all. He had always been different from the other children in the orphanage.

Silent, quiet, and polite. His responses were always measured, as if he was always thinking about all possible outcomes before speaking. Always the best grades, and always the biggest and strongest. He didn’t encourage any conflicts, but he never shied away from them.

It came as no surprise that he was an Alpha. He’d always been one, even before he or anyone else knew who he really was.

Chapter 117

Jackson frowned when he saw the light in Taya’s eyes turn dark.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked.

"Just something I saw online."

Jackson raised an eyebrow and waited for her to share.

Taya said in a low voice, "The Man Who Dumped His Girlfriend When He Found Success."

"Ms. Palmer, you're not talking about me, are you?"

Taya didn't reply, just picked up her gla*s and took a sip of water.

Jackson was starting to feel a little suspicious that what he had investigated was wrong, but...he really couldn't remember her.

However, when he'd seen her slumped against the steering wheel last night, when he'd looked at her lying in his bed, so frail and weak... His wolf had pawed at him, and his heart had cracked.

Whatever he was feeling was authentic. It made him uncomfortable, but it was there nonetheless. Was what Taya said before true?

Chapter 117

He stared right in her eyes. "Were you really my girlfriend before?"

2/3

"No, I'm lying to you." Taya denied it quickly and looked away.

Something that felt a lot like disappointment settled over him. "Why did you lie?"

"I want to marry into a rich and powerful family."

I shrugged and met Jackson's gaze again.

He'd asked the question to test if I remembered my warning.

He would probably kick me again if I answered or explained as truthfully as before.

When we'd seen Griffon, I'd panicked, not wanting Jackson to know how I really knew Griffon.

I figured my answer earlier would suffice for both Alphas and their needs regarding my past with them.

Something crossed Jackson's face right now as I lied about our past and what I'd wanted from him.

"Do you still want to attach yourself to me now?" he growled out lowly.

"I'm not worthy of you," I replied unemotionally.

Chapter 117 I'd had enough.

He was testing me.

Chapter 118

1/3

Jackson curled his lip in a snarl, shoving his wolf's ire down at Taya's response.

He didn't even know why he'd asked her the question in the first place. It had just...popped out. Apparently, it was time to have Eric make an appointment to have his head checked. Because he'd lost it.

He was saved by the waiter arriving with his food.

Jackson continued as if nothing had happened. He picked up his knife and fork, cutting into his steak. Right now, it was the last thing he wanted. He craved the hunt, tearing into something with his teeth rather than silverware.

After cutting the steak, he put half on Taya's plate, followed by a helping of brussels sprouts. The Taya of five years ago was curvy. This Taya was so thin Jackson worried she would become transparent.

"You're too thin," he said gruffly.

I had zero appetite at all. I picked up a brussels sprout, twirled my fork around a bit, and then put my fork back down on my

Chapter 118 plate.

I didn't even touch the steak that Jackson had served me.

2/3

The menacing glower on Jackson's face was intimidating, and I know he thought I didn't want to cat because of him. And that was fine. He could think that; it was better than the truth.

After dinner, Jackson wanted to take me home, but I refused. The less time spent with him, the better.

I had no idea why he was being so attentive, and it threw me off-kilter. Why did he care now? Why didn't he care when I'd come to him five years ago? I'd been "tainted" back then, and today I'd told him I was a prostitute, which was even worse than what I'd told him five years ago.

He had refused me before, when I was at my lowest point. No matter what, I would never return to him. I wanted to stay as far from him as possible.

After rejecting Jackson's offer to take me home, I went to the hotel garage and took the car keys out of my bag. I would drive the car I had driven yesterday, and then return it to the MPC offices tomorrow.

As I was digging for the keys, I felt my phone vibrating.

I looked down at the screen.

Greyson calling. Again.

3/3

Chapter 118

He'd been calling nonstop, and I'm sure he wanted to see me.

But my body couldn't stand any more torture.

B

Chapter 119

1/2

I pondered for a minute about how to handle the situation with Greyson, and then replied to him

on WhatsApp. The last thing I was going to do was return his phone call. [I'm exhausted. I'm going to rest, and we can talk in a few days, okay?]

I had to be careful with Greyson, had to make sure not to upset him in any way. If he told anyone about my plan to kill Roman at the hotel that night, I was screwed.

Sure, Roman wasn't an issue at the moment, what with being in the hospital still, but I didn't want to take any unnecessary chances.

If Greyson was unhappy and decided to expose me, Roman would find a way to deal with me. And Roman "dealing with me" wasn't how I wanted to die.

I didn't plan on seeing Greyson again, but I still needed to mollify him to make sure he kept quiet.

After sending the message, I turned off my phone, took out my car keys, and opened the car door.

Just as I was about to get into the car, a Bugatti stopped in front of me.

The car window slowly rolled down, revealing the side of a man's face in the dim light.

Chapter 119

2/2

When I saw who it was, my heart skipped a beat. Why was he stopping here? He'd told me he never wanted to see me again, yet he was everywhere.

Not wanting to make Griffon mad at the sight of me, I turned around and hurried to open my car door to get inside and out of his view, my nerves causing me to fumble with the door handle.

A low, growling voice came from behind me. "Get in the car."

I froze.

Why would he want me to get in his car?

Surely, he meant for me to get in MY car, right?

Chapter 120

I stared at the man in the car, while he only glanced at me.

"I said, get in the car."

Power and anger radiated off of him. If I were a wolf, it would have had a much larger effect on me, but somehow, I still managed to feel his wrath coming at me in waves.

It was as if he would strangle me to death if I didn't obey him.

He definitely meant for me to get in HIS car, not mine.

I struggled for a moment before walking toward the Bugatti.

I wanted to sit in the back seat, but the door was locked, and I couldn't open it. Only the door of the passenger seat was unlocked.

Just. Great.

I was afraid to be so close to him, but I didn't dare to defy him. Even a human like me could tell that his wolf was in dangerous territory right now.

Gritting my teeth, I opened the front passenger door and got in.

After I fastened my seat belt, he drove out of the parking garage.

Chapter 120

2/3

It was the first time I'd ever been in his car. Before, he'd always had one of his people pick me up, or he'd had me follow behind him in my own car. I'd never been in his personal car.

He'll, most of my memories of us were when we were in bed, and we didn't say much during those times.

Our "relationship" had been me coming to him when he wanted me, him using me, and then him

sending me on my way. And definitely not being seen together by anyone, ever.

If it didn't make me so sad, I'd find the whole thing funny. Now that he'd ended our contract and told me he never wanted to see me again...here he was. Looking for me.

I didn't know where he was taking me, and I didn't dare ask, didn't dare speak without an indication that he wanted me to. I didn't want to poke the bear. Er, wolf.

Griffon drove to the lake.

The car stopped at a dark intersection. There wasn't even a single streetlamp anywhere near us.

The lake was vast, endlessly stretching out to the horizon. If you didn't know better, you'd think it was the ocean. The only thing missing was the scent of saltwater.

Griffon didn't get out of the car, didn't say anything. He just rolled down the window and let the breeze in.

He lowered his eyes and played with his lighter.

Chapter 120

The whole thing was strange, and I couldn't help but stare at him.

3/3

At first glance, I saw that the corners of his eyes were scarlet as if he was trying his best to hold back something, and his eyes were the amber color of his wolf's.

My stomach twisted. Something was wrong with him.

I grabbed the seat belt tightly, gathered up all the courage I could manage, and asked in a whispered voice, "Alpha Knight, what's wrong?"

B