

The Billionaire Alpha's Contract Lover

Chapter 161

The moment I woke up from my dream, I felt ridiculous for having had such a dream in the first place.

I touched my heated face and tender lips.

They felt as if Griffon had really been here.

Shame filled me at the thought of fantasizing about Griffon, but my accidental brush of my lips across his cheek must have sparked something in my subconscious.

After all, I had been with him for five years. My body knew him so very intimately, had always responded to him so eagerly. I was used to his touch, and that moment at the Wilton pack manor was familiar.

But I would get over it, and I would go back to forcing the memories of his hands and lips on my body out of my mind.

While I was comforting myself, a call from Jackson came in.

Sighing and steeling myself for whatever he wanted, I answered. "What can I do for you, Alpha Sterling?"

I kept my tone businesslike.

"Ms. Palmer, Camille isn't here today. I need you to accompany me to the bidding."

How could Camille, always by Jackson's side, be absent today of all days?

I was more than a little confused, but I agreed. If I said no, I'm sure it would get back to Tara.

Plus, as soon as the bidding was over, Jackson would likely return to Wolverly Capital.

"Wait for me," I said almost excitedly.

After I spoke, I realized that Jackson might take my tone as being excited to see him.

Crap.

Sure enough, I could hear the smile in his voice when he responded.

"Don't worry. The bidding doesn't start until ten. It's still early."

I looked at the time. It was seven o'clock; I had woken up early for once instead of sleeping the day away. Had I been that affected by my Griffon dream?

I blushed again. I quickly replied with a "yes" and hung up the phone.

I'd fallen asleep last night before checking my WhatsApp. I quickly checked, worried I'd

missed a message from Harper. I'd been trying to respond to her quickly when she messaged so she

wasn't anxious about anything happening in Arcadia while she on her honeymoon.

She'd sent a few photos of the scenery and took a few short videos.

I looked through them and replied.

After replying, she subconsciously looked at the profile picture. of a message that had been pushed to the bottom.

The profile picture was blank, as mysterious as Greyson himself.

I clicked on the chat log.

Since my last message, Greyson had been silent.

He had called me hundreds of times that day, but then there was radio silence after my reply. It was confusing, and for some reason I couldn't figure out, it bothered me.

Nope. Not going there. I exited the app and put my phone down.

It was by far better if he didn't hara*s me. If I'd never met him.

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I struggled to pull myself together. After getting up and freshening up, I took my medicine on time for once. Since I hadn't slept the day away.

Then, I arranged for an express delivery and sent out the dresses, shoes, and everything else that Jackson had bought for me yesterday.

Sure, I could give it all to Jackson directly, but that would take a lot of time and effort to talk to him and explain why I was giving them back. It would be better to send them over by express, and that way he couldn't refuse them.

After sending the things out, I took my bag and went to the branch office of the Sterling pack where the bidding for the Weston City project was taking place.

The entire branch office was in a busy state, everyone bustling around to prepare their presentations. Most of the time, Alphas let their underlings take care of things like this, but Jackson was highly involved, walking his pack executives through the PowerPoint for the bidding.

Everyone wanted a job as huge as this.

Not only was it a lot of potential money, it was a partnership with the powerful Sterling pack.

Jackson and his team didn't come out of the main conference room until nine o'clock. The bidding would be held in the Knight pack's business headquarters on their pack lands. Driving into the Knight pack's headquarters was a bit like driving into the future. Many packs worked to stay connected to the land, to blend in with the environment around them. There was typically a sense of "nature" associated with most pack facilities.

Not so with the Knight pack.

High-rise buildings screamed of science and technology, with curated landscaping, and an unparalleled security system. Everyone who entered the premises had to go through facial recognition.

It was overwhelming to many shifters, but for the Knight pack, this was every day. There was a reason they were one of the most powerful packs in North America.

In fact, I had heard that the Knight pack had branches like this worldwide.

Their business covered a wide range, and real estate was only a tiny part.

The Knight pack was known for their aerospace research and had been working with NASA on space travel.

Other groups couldn't compete with them. Even though the

Knight pack had the ability to do the work on the Weston City project themselves, they were too busy and focused on their work with NASA.

I had never actually been to the Knight pack's headquarters, and after witnessing the magnificence of it with my own eyes, I realized how small and insignificant I was.

I had once fantasized that Griffon would mate me, but now I found that dream to be completely ludicrous.

How could such a powerful man make me his Luna?

It was not until this moment that I realized I was absolutely not a match for him.

The little bit of hope I had of being with Griffon was utterly shattered by this shocking scene.

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"Ms. Palmer, come with me." Jackson lightly touched my arm.

Only then did I come back to my senses. I followed him into one of the buildings.

The security system of the Knight pack was strict. Non-pack personnel had to have their identities verified before they could enter, no exception.

We each submitted to the facial scan, and once we were admitted past security, Tara walked over.

She greeted Jackson and then looked at me as I followed behind Jackson.

“Alpha Sterling, do you mind if I have a few words with Taya?”

“Ms. Palmer is your employee. Why would I mind?”

Tara’s tone sounded polite, but there was a hint of sarcasm in it. And by the way Jackson had answered her, it seemed as though he had picked up on the sarcasm as well-and didn’t like it.

Jackson looked over at me. “I’ll wait for you inside.” Then, he led the members of the Sterling pack away.

As soon as he left, Tara smiled.

“You’ve treated Alpha Sterling quite well.” Tara looked at me with contempt. “Not everyone can attend the bidding event of the Knight pack, but Alpha Sterling brought you here, which means that he thinks highly of you.”

She deliberately dragged out the end of the sentence as if she were saying, “He doesn’t think highly of your work ability, but your bed skills.”

Hearing the sarcasm in her words, I didn’t think there was any point in talking to her, so I pursed my lips tightly and remained silent.

Tara didn’t like to be ignored. Her expression turned icy for a moment, and then she smiled gently and generously.

“You’ve done a good job. I’ll give you a raise later.”

Tara’s face flushed and her mouth twitched a little as she looked down at me.

“You know, hooking up with Alpha Sterling isn’t something you should be proud of.”

Tara turned and left. To everyone else, she appeared kind and generous, elegant even, but I knew better.

I walked quickly to the passage next door without batting an eyelid.

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Initially, Griffon didn’t see a need to attend the bidding and wasn’t going to, but he

arrived after everyone took their seats.

Held'd dressed to the nines today, making sure his appearance was meticulous, that every inch of his presence radiated the powerchche wanted to remind everyone he wielded.

Everyone elslse in the room paled in comparison to him.

He didn't takake anyone here seriously at all. With an arrog ant and indifferentlook, he walked in with twenty pack bodyguards.

After he entered.d.everyone present stood to welcome him.

Even the Alphas of the most influential packs present lowered their chins to nod in deleference to him.

Tara stepped forwardi, ociol Griffon's arm, and welcomed him with a charming sinilele.

"Griffon, I didn't think you wwere attending," she said.

His presence made Tara extremely excited. Now that Griffon was here, the other shifters wouldd definitely show her some respect.

Just as Tara was feeling happy, Griffon glanced at her hand.

"Let go."

Tara was stunned, and the smile froze on her face.

When she saw his cool eyes, she was so scared that she immediately let go of him.

Fortunately, the venue was so big that no one could hear him. Otherwise, she would have been completely humiliated.

After she let go, he went straight to the main seat.

The Sterling pack was located right behind the main seat.

The closer Griffon got to me, the more flustered I became.

I lowered my head and didn't even dare to look at him.

Fortunately, Griffon didn't notice me and just sat.

Right in front of me.

All I could see was the back of Griffon's head.

His thick black hair seemed to have grown a bit, and I longed to sink my fingers into it.

While I was still in a daze, imagining reaching out to touch him, Jackson patted my shoulder. I was so startled that I almost screamed.

Fortunately, I caught myself in time.

I whispered quietly, "Alpha Sterling, is something wrong?"

Jackson checked the time on his watch. "I need coffee before giving a speech. I need you to go get one for me."

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Initially, he wanted Beta Smith to present the Sterling pack bid, but now that Griffon was here, Jackson had no choice but to do

it himself.

Griffon had always been a strict wolf. Jackson might lose the bid. if his Beta made a mistake during the presentation.

While Beta Smith heaved a deep sigh of relief, Jackson had to sort out all his thoughts in an hour.

To concentrate, he needed a coffee to refresh himself.

Taya nodded and asked in a low voice, "Is there enough time?"

"We are the tenth in line to present. There is plenty of time."

I didn't ask any more questions. I bent down low, got up, and walked toward the back door.

I wasn't familiar with the building. When I came out, I only saw high-tech products, not even a single person.

I searched the whole building several times but couldn't find the break room.

It looked like I had to leave the building, but it seemed that I

would need to swipe a card to get in and out. Except, I didn't have a card.

I would have to find someone in the Knight pack to let me out and then back in.

Just as I was about to turn around and give up, I saw Preston coming in.

The moment the door was opened, I almost took advantage of the gap to get out, but fortunately, I hadn't lost my mind.

I mustered up my courage and stopped Preston.

"Mr. Knight, please wait..."

Preston didn't expect me to dare stop him, and his face suddenly darkened.

"Ms. Palmer, what are you trying to do?"

He looked astonished that I had called out for him.

"Mr. Knight, do you know where the coffee is?"

I wanted Preston to help open the door, but when I saw his face, I quickly changed my words. I could always find a way to come in as long as he told me where the coffee was.

No matter what, I was going to upset someone, and right now, the person I needed to upset the least was Jackson.

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Preston tilted his head slightly and looked behind me. "Isn't it here?"

I turned around and looked at the white wall in a daze.

Could it be that Preston was not of the same species as me, so he saw something different with his wolf eyes that my human eyes couldn't see?

Preston glanced at me as if he was looking at a fool. He stepped forward and knocked on the door, which opened automatically.

Then he pointed at the letters on the wall and scolded me as if he was teaching a lesson to a primary school student.

"Isn't it clear enough? Don't you know English?"

I suppressed my anger and replied, "Yes, I do."

I'd been so me blush, it seemed he couldn't help mocking me again. "Ms. Palmer, beauty alone is not enough. Knowledge is also vital. Otherwise, it won't be so easy to mate into the Sterling pack."

His sarcastic tone was exactly the same as Griffon's. They were indeed related.

Ignoring Preston, I walked into the break room, picked out son

coffee beans, and put them in the coffee machine to grind.

It appeared Preston wasn't in a hurry to leave. He leaned against the door and looked me up and down.

"You're pretty good-looking. No wonder Jackson likes you. But you're still a little lacking compared to my sister."

I'd seen Edith's photos online. She'd definitely inherited the best genes of the Knight pack, and I knew that I could never compare with her.

But there was no way I could say that. It didn't matter whether I was good-looking or not. In the end, I was just a handful of ashes. And that would be much sooner than later. Preston looked at me with a bored look on his face and raised an eyebrow. "Why don't you talk?"

I glanced at him and said, "Beta Knight, thank you for telling me where the break room door is."

"That's it?"

"Is there something else you want?"

I put down the coffee and stared at him without blinking.

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Preston's face stiffened slightly. He looked away and said, "Remember to close the door."

After he left, I picked up the coffee and walked back to Jackson.

The bidding had already begun. The lights in the venue had been turned off, and only the big screen was on.

It was similar to a small theater, and there were hundreds of steps up to the front from the back door.

Now that the lights were turned off, it was dark inside. I couldn't see the walkway clearly

and could only fumble my way down, holding the cup of coffee in one hand and the backs of the chairs with the other.

I managed to make it to Jackson without falling on my face or spilling any of the coffee.

Thank the goddess for small blessings.

I bent down and handed him the coffee.

Jackson nodded and took the coffee from me. He smiled and whispered, "Thank you."

Just as I was about to sit down, Griffon leaned his head back.

I held onto his seat and accidentally touched his thick black hair.

I was startled and quickly withdrew my hand, but the wolf turned around and glanced at me flatly, his wolf's eyes gleaming in the darkness.

Under the dim light, when I looked into his dark eyes, I felt as if his wolf had set its sights on me for dinner.

I whispered in a panic, "I'm... I'm sorry."

Griffon didn't say anything, looked away to focus on the big screen again.

I took a deep breath and fell into my seat.

As my heart pounded, Jackson whispered, "Darling, don't be afraid."

I looked at Jackson in disbelief. "What... did you just say?"

After Jackson finished speaking, his eyes widened in shock at his words.

When he heard Jackson, Griffon glanced at Taya and narrowed his eyes, looking between Taya and Jackson.

Why had he called her "darling"?

Jackson was surprised by his actions. It took him a long time to calm down before he pretended that nothing had happened and sipped coffee.

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After taking a sip of his coffee, Jackson asked, "How did you know I like this particular coffee?"

My attention from what he'd called me was diverted by his question, and I replied with a light shrug. "I just randomly picked one."

That was a lie.

I remembered from before the accident that he always liked to drink dark-roast coffee to perk him up when he needed to focus on something important.

Jackson looked at me thoughtfully, his eyebrows furrowing, and asked, "Have you been studying what I like?"

I quickly shook my head. "No. No, I haven't."

"Where's the vanilla creamer?"

I took out a couple single serving packages of Coffee Mate and handed them to him.

Jackson raised an eyebrow smugly.

"It seems you know what I like to add to my coffee."

Only then did I realize he was testing me, and I immediately

wanted to take back the creamer.

But Jackson gently grabbed my hand and said, "I need your help."

He was holding the cup of coffee and couldn't tear open the lids of the little containers with just one hand. He could only signal to me with his eyes to help him.

I took them from him, tore off the film, and slowly poured them into the coffee.

Jackson looked at Taya, who had her eyes lowered. She glowed with a different kind of beauty under these lights.

He couldn't help but be mesmerized, and his voice became softer. "Thank you."

Taya looked up at him and said, "Drink it before it cools."

Sitting in front of them, Griffon couldn't see their interaction but could hear it clearly.

His eyes darkened and his wolf clawed to get out.

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Jackson sipped on his coffee slowly. It wasn't until the host on the stage called out to the Sterling pack that he gulped it down.

Seeing that he was about to go on stage after handing me the coffee cup, I couldn't help but worry. "Have you finished reading the documents?"

Jackson hadn't even read any of the documents while he was waiting for his turn. How was he prepared for this?

Jackson tapped a finger lightly on his temple and said confidently, "Don't worry. I just needed to read them once."

I froze.

That's right. Jackson had a photographic memory. So...how could he lose his memory?

His words dispelled the last bit of kindness I had left for him.

He was putting on an act.

I had almost mistaken him for the previous Silas.

My stiff expression made him question me.

“What’s wrong with you?”

Frustrated, I shook my head. “I’m fine. Hurry up and go on stage.”

Once the bidding ended, I could part ways with Jackson and never see him again.

Jackson looked as if he was about to say something else, but after the host’s second urging, he had to get up on the stage.

As soon as Jackson left, I collapsed back into my chair and looked expressionlessly at the stage.

Jackson was indeed brilliant. He had memorized everything after just looking at them once, and he also expanded on a lot of things that Beta Smith had not mentioned.

It was no wonder that such a man would choose to abandon me. Him being a shifter and my never getting my wolf aside, there was no way I could compete with someone with his level of intellect.

Today had only served to showcase our vast differences.

I had a brief thought that if I could survive my heart failure, I would break free from all restrictions and work myself off to become influential like them. Somehow, some way.

Unfortunately, there were no ifs. I wouldn’t be able to hold on for much longer.

Death was coming for me. Soon.

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After Jackson finished with his presentation, Griffon asked him questions.
He hadn't asked anyone else any questions.
And Griffon's questions were tricky, as if he were deliberately trying to make things difficult for Jackson.
Seeing this, the members of the other packs breathed a sigh of relief. They couldn't imagine being questioned by Griffon and were thanking the goddess it hadn't happened to them.
But Jackson wasn't afraid of Griffon. As he calmly answered all of his questions, never fumbling.

Griffon asked a dozen tricky questions before letting him go.

The morning biddings were almost over. Then they would break for lunch and continue in the afternoon.

Although the Sterling pack's presentation was over, they had to wait for the bidding results.

The Knight pack was responsible for entertaining them. After leading them to the leisure area, they could do whatever they wanted.

After Jackson sat down in the lounge, Beta Smith and a

executives hurried in.

"Alpha Sterling, you were amazing just now. You must have stood out, given that Alpha Knight didn't have questions for anyone else."

The higher-ranking members of the Sterling pack had suffered losses at the hands of Griffon in other projects. When the packs competed for projects with other packs, the Knight pack always came out on top, and the Sterling pack was left without.

Somehow, Griffon was always able to outbid them and outwit them.

However, their Alpha was able to fight against Griffon, and Jackson hadn't even been their Alpha for very long.

Jackson waved his hand. After chatting with his pack for a while, he let them go to lunch.

Jackson looked up at Taya, who was standing respectfully beside him. "What would you like to eat?"

Taya shook her head. "I'm not hungry."

Jackson thought she did not want to eat with him, so he said, "Don't worry. You don't have to accompany me. You can go by yourself."

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"Truly, Alpha Sterling, I'm okay. I don't need anything. No need for you to worry about me," Taya said.

Jackson tried to persuade her. He didn't know what time everything would end and when they would have a chance to cat again. "You have to eat something. You need your energy to take care of me this afternoon."

Taya sighed through the phone. "Something light."

“How about a salad? Would you prefer chicken or salmon on it? What about some bread with it?”

“A salad with chicken is plenty for me. Thank you.”

“Okay. I’ll be right back.”

Jackson hung up the phone with a smile, happy she’d given in and decided to eat something. He turned to grab food for them, and a snide voice came from behind him.

“Not only are you doing the work of your Beta and presenting your own bid, and you have to take care of your girlfriend on top of it?”

Jackson turned around and saw Griffon. He was casually leaning against a pillar, his arms crossed over his large chest, one of his eyebrows raised. The judgment practically rolled off him, on top of the Alpha power and strength that was always there, always oppressive.

Although Jackson’s physical build and appearance was on par with Griffon’s, something about Griffon made Jackson feel a bit small, though he would never admit that to anyone. Alphas didn’t admit any type of weakness, ever.

Jackson looked at Griffon and said lightly, “Alpha Knight, you must be joking. Why would I bring my girlfriend to the bidding?”

Griffon raised his eyebrow a bit higher. “If Ms. Palmer isn’t your girlfriend, what is she?”

Jackson didn’t like Griffon’s arrogant tone, but he didn’t dare reply with anything other than politeness. It wouldn’t do to risk pissing him off and jeopardizing the Sterling pack’s chances at winning the bid. “I don’t actually have anything to do with her, but…”

“But what?”

Griffon’s tone was a bit defensive, and it made Jackson curious.

“You seem very concerned about Ms. Palmer and me. Why is that?”

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Without batting an eyelid, Griffon said, “I just want to see how the Sterling Alpha is going to deal with Roman’s leftovers. Aren’t you afraid of being infected?”

Jackson’s face darkened. “I thought you were more of a gentleman than to slander a woman.”

Griffon pushed off the pillar and straightened his back. He walked up to Jackson and stared him in the eye. “And you’re the

judge of what is ‘gentlemanly’?”

Jackson didn’t reply. Instead, he looked at Griffon with a scrutinizing gaze.

“Alpha Knight, you seem to have been targeting me.”

Griffon had singled him out at the bidding, here in the dining room, and even the first time they met.

Jackson had never seen Griffon before, let alone done anything to offend him. Why was the Knight Alpha so focused on him? Perhaps...did he think Jackson was a threat?

Something flashed in Griffon’s eyes, but it was gone too quickly for Jackson to place it.

“I was just afraid that you would be fooled.”

”

Griffon didn’t reply, and his expression remained neutral.

Jackson knew he had asked the right question when Griffon didn’t have a response.

Just what was going on here? Was Griffon’s issue with Jackson...or with Taya?

“I’m afraid you’ve misunderstood. I’ve known Ms. Palmer for many years, and I know her well. She has no reason to lie to me.”

He emphasized the last sentence as if he was talking to himself.

In the past, when she knelt at the door of the Sterling pack manor and begged him to come out and meet her, he’d been annoyed at her and embarrassed for her.

Then, after he’d discovered information about her that made him think she was dishonest, he’d completely ignored her and pretended she didn’t exist.

But after these few days of spending time with her, he didn’t think Taya was the person he’d thought she was five years ago.

Jackson’s words made a trace of anger appear on Griffon’s face, and his eyes darkened this his wolf’s, his brows furrowing.

“You’ve known each other for many years?”

“I’ve known her since I was a child.”

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There was a sudden surge of hostility in Griffon’s eyes.

Griffon opened his mouth and was about to ask Jackson something when Tara walked in.

“Griffon, here you are!”

Jackson looked at Ms. Thorin, then turned to Griffon. “I’ll leave you to have lunch with

your girlfriend.”

Instead of schooling his tone, Jackson allowed the sarcasm out. After all, Griffon was the one who'd mocked him for bringing his girlfriend to the bidding.

At this point, it was more than clear Griffon held some sort of secret grudge against him, so nothing Jackson could say or do was going to affect the outcome of the bidding. Jackson turned his back to Griffon and resumed getting food for Taya and himself.

Just as Tara was about to ask if Griffon wanted to have lunch with her, he walked out of the restaurant without even a glance at her.

Damn the wolf. He was infuriating.

For a man who had pined after her while she'd been away, he acted as if he couldn't stand the sight of her now. What had happened?

When Jackson returned with lunch, Taya was sleeping on the single sofa.

Her fists were curled up under her chin, and her dark hair spread across the pillow. Long eyelashes rested on her cheeks, and her face looked serene, all of the worry lines that crossed over it while she was awake now erased.

Jackson didn't want to disturb her. However, he feared she would feel uncomfortable from the half-sitting posture. Surely, the position would put a kink in her neck. After thinking for a while, he picked her up to lay her on the larger sofa across the room.

Several images flashed through his mind as he held her in his arms. It felt familiar, like he had done this many times before in the past.

Jackson looked down at the tranquil and beautiful face in front of

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But how could she have belonged to him when he didn't remember her?

Hell, he couldn't remember anything. And the more he thought about it, the more his head hurt.

The pain was gnawing, as if there were a thousand jackhammers all pounded at every crevice in his head.

He tried to grasp at the broken pieces of his memories, tried to flail out in his mind to

clutch just the smallest sliver of something he could remember. All it did was make his head hurt even more.

No doctor he'd been to could figure out his memory loss, and no wolf shifter medical book or history book shed any light on what had happened to him and why he couldn't regain his memory. Something like this was so rare for shifters, no one knew what to do. He was in so much pain that his face turned pale, and he broke out in a cold sweat. However, he held Taya tightly and was reluctant to let go.

It was as if he would lose her as soon as he let go of her, and a sense of dread, if impending doom flooded him.

It was not until there was a knock on the door that he came to

his senses. He quickly put Taya on the long sofa as if he had a guilty conscience.

"Come in," he said after he'd taken a second to straighten himself and re-focus his mind.

Beta Smith pushed the door open and entered.

"Alpha, the bidding has started early. We need to get back to the auditorium."

Jackson glanced at his watch. "Isn't it resuming two o'clock in the afternoon?"

"It was supposed to be two o'clock, but the Knight pack suddenly announced a change in plans."

Jackson frowned. This was ridiculous and unprofessional.

"We need to hurry. The Knight pack said that anyone to arrive late will be eliminated."

"Only they would do something so unreasonable," Jackson snorted.

He was about to leave when he looked back at Taya.

"Do you want to wake Ms. Palmer up?" his Beta asked.

"No need."

Jackson took off his suit jacket and covered her petite body with

it.

Only then did he turn around and follow Beta Smith to the venue, quietly closing the door behind him so as to not disturb her.

As soon as I fell asleep, I fell into a daze and couldn't wake up, no matter how hard I

tried.

It was like something was pulling me down, and I was stuck in a weird limbo between waking and dreaming.

It felt like someone was patting my face, but I couldn't tell if it was happening in real life or in my dreams. I managed to pry my eyes open in a daze.

My vision was blurred, and I blinked multiple times, trying to clear the foggiess. After focusing for a long time, I still could only vaguely see an outline of someone standing over me.

"Is that you, Alpha Sterling?"

As soon as I asked the question, I was picked up.

As the sky and the earth spun, a man's face grew closer and larger. I could make out strong features and an angular jaw.

"Take a good look at me!"

My stomach dropped to the floor as I realized who had picked

me up.

The person in front of me was not Jackson, but Griffon!

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My heart began to pound when I met Griffon's eyes.

The amber color of his wolf's eyes had taken over, and they swirled with anger and desire. A look I was very familiar with.

I subconsciously looked away, down at the ground, only to see his hand wrapped around my waist.

He must have grabbed my waist to lift me up from lying down on the sofa.

Now I was half-lying and half-sitting up, one of his hands around my waist and the other behind my back as he held me up. He was leaning over me, his huge body an almost suffocating presence even though he wasn't touching me other than where his hands held me.

I lifted one hand and tried to push him away, but as soon as my fingertips touched his chest, he growled, "Don't touch me!"

Frightened, I froze, and I dared not make more contact with him.

I obediently withdrew my hand, but I was also a little puzzled. I looked down at the hand

that was still holding my waist.

If he didn't want me to touch him, why was he holding me like this?

I didn't dare look at his face, look him in the eye. Not when his wolf was at the surface like it was. I could only keep my head down and ask in a low voice, "Alpha Knight, what can I do for you?"

My voice was slightly trembling, and I didn't know if it was because I was afraid of Griffon or if it was weakness from my advancing illness.

Abruptly, Griffon let me go and I fell back against the sofa. He jerked the men's jacket off of me and stood up, stalking to the other side of the room.

When I saw him throw it into the trash can, I furrowed my brow, even more confused.

"You came to me just to throw away Alpha Sterling's coat?"

I hadn't even realized that Jackson's coat had been placed over me, presumably by him before he left me to go back to the bidding auditorium.

Griffon had gone too far in throwing it away. There was no need for that, and I had no idea why he would even do such a thing.

He had to be crazy.

Why did he return to me if he didn't like me? Why did he continue to bully me like this?

I struggled to get up from the sofa and tried to walk out of the lounge, but Griffon's big hand wrapped around my arm, yanking me back.

Chapter 176

I was forcibly pulled back into Griffon's arms, and my body hitting his chest felt like I had hit a wall. I was in so much pain from his rough manhandling that I was about to cry.

Already, I was no match for his strength, and what he deemed "normal" in terms of handling was far too much for any human, let alone a dying one.

Tears blurred my eyes as I looked at the man who had locked me in his arms.

"What are you trying to do?"

Anger still shined in his amber wolf eyes, and the hint of fangs poked out from under his lip.

"Why did you lie to me?"

After he asked this question, his eyes gradually turned scarlet around the edges as he

looked at me, a snarl on his face.

I was more than confused. "What am I lying to you about?"

Griffon fisted my hair in his hand and grabbed the back of my head roughly, yanking my head backward so I was forced to look up at him.

He pulled my body tightly to him, lowered his head, and stared into my eyes, his gaze searing practically to my very soul.

"You've known Jackson for many years but said you've just met him."

I clenched my jaw. "You've lied to me repeatedly. Is it fun being lied to?"

His eyes were burning with rage, and I could tell he was furious.

A furious Griffon was a dangerous Griffon.

I was terrified of him when he was like this, and I wanted to say something to calm him down, but I didn't know how to explain the whole Jackson thing to him.

I'd lied and said that I had just met Jackson because I was afraid of revealing the past between Jackson and me.

I never expected Griffon to find out the truth so quickly, nor did I expect him to question me. I thought he wouldn't pay too much attention to anything related to me since he didn't care about me anymore. He didn't want to see me or have anything to do with me, so why would he have looked into anything pertaining to my history with Jackson?

However, I'd underestimated Griffon. He'd been able to uncover whether Roman Starke and I had slept together or not, so

naturally, this matter could not be concealed from him.

Meanwhile, if Jackson discovered that I had leaked our past, he wouldn't let me off so quickly.

I was in a lose-lose situation.

Compared to Jackson's vicious methods, it was better to be misunderstood, suspected, and questioned by Griffon.

At least Griffon wouldn't kick me in my chest and try to kill me again.

Chapter 177

"Say something."

Griffon lowered his head and moved his face closer, his lips brushing against my cheek as he spoke.

I desperately wanted to dip my head down and away from his mouth, but he clasped the back of my head and stopped me from moving.

"I'll only give you one chance to explain," he growled out, low and menacing.

There was no denying the Alpha when he was like this-if one were a wolf shifter.

Lucky for me, I was not. And his words had no power to compel me to do his bidding, to make me speak and tell the truth.

I remained silent for a long time. Just as Griffon was about to lose patience, she replied.

"I have nothing to explain. It has nothing to do with you."

The muscles in Griffon's jaw ticked, and his fangs dropped a bit more.

"It has nothing to do with me..."

After repeating my words flatly, he moved his head and fisted

my hair tighter. His hand that was wrapped around my waist got tighter, too, his clawed fingertips starting to bite into my skin.

The moment his mouth hovered over mine, my heart skipped a beat.

It seemed as though he would kiss me at any moment, and I felt his breath caress my lips.

I didn't know what he was going to do. I was scared and guilty... and turned on.

Just as I clenched my fist, torn between trying to push him away and grabbing onto him for dear life, Griffon suddenly spoke up.

"You lied to me because he's Silas Johnson. You lied because you didn't want me to know your past. Am I right?"

His words shocked me.

Taya couldn't play any tricks on Griffon, couldn't hide anything from him.

The Alpha's intelligence and instincts weren't something others could compete with-especially someone who didn't have enhanced shifter genes.

As expected, Taya's actions confirmed his guess.

As far as he knew, the “secret” of the Sterling pack was that Jackson, who had been lost for many years, was found five years ago...

Taya sold herself five years ago, and Jackson was found five years ago.

What a coincidence.

There was only one possibility: Jackson was the man named Silas she had yearned for, had called out for in her sleep.

1

Chapter 178

Griffon thought she had slept with Jackson in less than a day because she wanted to take this opportunity to attach herself to the Alpha.

He hadn't imagined that they'd been lovers before now.

No wonder they'd fallen into bed so easily. They were making up for lost time, it turned out.

Realizing this, Griffon's body became rigid...

“Taya Palmer, was that the first time you sold yourself?”

He rarely called me by my full name.

I didn't dare to lie to him, so I quickly nodded and said, “Yes.”

If he thought I wasn't a virgin when I'd sold myself to him, I didn't know what he would do. Alphas didn't share well, and they were very possessive.

But Griffon didn't seem to believe me. “I can't tell whether you're telling the truth.”

I was almost stunned. Surely he could tell, could smell it on me if I lied. Human pheromones were very strong to wolves. Plus...

“I... You saw it that first time. The bedsheets...”

There had been blood on the white sheets, but she was too embarrassed to say that.

The first time he'd made love to me was relatively fierce, and my cheeks would still redden every time I recalled it.

When I lowered my head with a blush, he snarled at me, “Who knows. You might have had surgery, since you were so desperate to sell yourself to me.”

My face turned pale. I looked up at Griffon in disbelief.

His eyes flashed with anger, and I wasn't sure there was anything I could say to make him believe me.

How could I prove to him that I'd been a virgin when he took me that first time? That Jackson...Silas...had never touched me in that way?

At the same time, I was furious.

One of the reasons Griffon had been so fierce in his lovemaking was because it had taken a lot of effort to break through my hymen. How could he think I had undergone surgery to create that scenario, that I WANTED to endure that pain?

Chapter 179

Seeing that Taya remained silent, Griffon's anger gradually shifted into disappointment. This woman was really something.

He felt ridiculous and stupid thinking of what he had done. He'd searched for her, thought of her, orchestrated reasons to see her...for what?

As if he had suddenly woken up, he let go of her.

She stumbled backward, trying to regain her balance after he shoved her away.

"From now on, I won't come to you again."

After saying that, he left.

I was so shocked, I couldn't move. I just stood there and watched Griffon's back as he walked to the door.

Something deep inside, some sort of divine intuition from the goddess told me after he closed the door behind him, there was no going back, that he would keep his vow.

I don't know where my courage came from, but I rushed

forward and stopped him.

My words were practically incoherent as I begged him. "I'm- I'm sorry. I didn't mean to lie to you before. Silas and me-no, Jackson. We, we—"

"It has nothing to do with me," Griffon interrupted me. "I only came to you because I can't stand being deceived. Now that I know the reason, it doesn't matter anymore."

His words made me feel terrible, as though the ground had been ripped out from under my feet and I was left flailing my arms.

Nothing I could say in this moment would make a difference. I knew him well enough to know that. He'd made up his mind, and once the Alpha's mind was made up, that was that.

So I made my face as bland as I could and pretended that nothing had happened. I nodded and said quietly, resolutely, "Okay then, Alpha Knight. Take care."

As soon as I finished speaking, tears welled up in my eyes. Quickly, I turned around, not letting him see me, see how devastated I was.

The sound of the door opening and closing came from behind me.

Chapter 180

Once I heard the door close, I turned around to look at it. My heart seemed to have been cut open, was more empty and painful than ever before.

Even my body was weak, from more than just my illness. I couldn't support myself anymore. I braced my hands against the wall and moved over to lay down on the sofa again.

I stared up at the white ceiling, tears streaming out from the corners of my eyes.

This time, it appeared Griffon and me were truly over.

After Griffon left the lounge, he gruffly ordered Andre, who had been guarding the door, "Clear the surveillance cameras."

"Yes, Alpha Knight," Andre respectfully replied.

"Also, look into Taya and Jackson's past together. I want all the information by the end of the day tomorrow."

He had never checked on Taya after he bought her.

And never had he investigated Silas, whom she had called out for in her sleep.

He had always trusted her because she was well-behaved, quiet, beautiful-and human. Never in a million years had he thought that a human girl would be so deceitful, so willing to lie to a shifter so much more powerful than them.

If he discovered that Taya had been with another man before him, he'd make her life hell, would never let her go.

Andre was slightly taken aback.

Was there something going on between Ms. Palmer and Alpha Sterling?

Although he was confused, but he dared not ask any questions. He replied with a “yes” and quickly left.

In less than half a day, Andre had gone through everything he could find regarding Taya and Jackson.

He went to the Alpha’s office with a stack of documents.

“Alpha, I’ve learned about the past between Ms. Palmer and Alpha Sterling.”

After placing the documents on the desk, he relayed the information to Griffon.

“Before Jackson was found by the Sterling pack, he was an orphan at Bright Orphanage. He used the name of Silas Johnson.”

“Five years ago, when Jackson’s eldest brother found him, he brought Jackson back from the orphanage. To help Jackson take over the pack business and hide the fact that he hadn’t been raised a Sterling, to prevent people from saying he wasn’t fit as the Sterling Alpha, Jackson’s eldest brother erased his past.”