

Kickass 391

Chapter 391

Abby

The mention of a 'special guest' from Karl catches me off guard, and I can't help but shoot him a perplexed look. "A special guest?" I echo, a hint of disbelief lacing my voice. "Who is it?"

Karl chuckles softly, a faint smile playing on his lips. "Abby, it's you. You're the special guest."

My brow furrows all on its own, and I decide that this conversation should take place in private. I grab Karl's arm gently and guide him into a separate room, away from the prying ears of the staff.

Once we're alone, I press him for answers in a hushed tone of voice. "Karl, what are you talking about? A special guest? Why would I be a special guest?"

Karl leans against a nearby table, his expression softening. "I just wanted to throw the Christmas party a bit early this year, this weekend to be exact," he begins, his gaze locked onto mine. "I thought... I thought it would give you a chance to attend before you potentially have to return to the city."

His words take a moment to sink in, and I'm momentarily taken aback by the thoughtfulness of his gesture. A part of me is touched, but another part immediately resists the idea.

"That's sweet of you, Karl, but you know I can't just show up at a party here," I say, feeling a bit bad as I see the disappointment of my rejection momentarily crossing his features. "People will talk, and they already think I might be the Luna again, so it's... tricky."

Karl nods in understanding, although his eyes show a flicker of sadness.

"I thought you might say that," he says quietly. "Look, it's your choice, Abby. If you'd rather stay in your room and not be seen, I understand completely. But the party will be happening this weekend and the option is there if you want to take me up on it."

I sigh, conflicted by the situation. I think about how much fun our old holiday parties used to be, the memories of laughter, warmth, and togetherness flooding back.

In a sudden flashback, I'm transported to a different time, a different version of us...

It was our first Christmas together as a married couple in this very house.

The air was filled with the scent of cinnamon and vanilla, and the sound of music wafted upstairs. We had gone all out with the decorations, catering, and music, determined to make it a night to remember.

Before the party, I stood in front of the mirror in our bedroom, admiring myself in the emerald green dress I had picked out for the occasion. It clung to my figure in all the right places, and the shimmering gold eyeshadow I had picked out seemed to bring out the sparkle in my eyes.

I couldn't help but feel pretty. It was during the days before Karl started getting picky about modesty, and the dress was sexy in an elegant and classy sort of way.

Karl walked into the room, looking handsome as ever in his tailored suit, and his eyes lit up as he saw me. "Wow, Abby," he breathed, stopping in the doorway. "You look... stunning."

I blushed at the compliment and turned to face him. "You're not too bad yourself."

"Which one?" he asked then, holding up two ties. One was gold to match my eyeshadow, and the other was green to match my dress.

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As we entered the beautifully decorated living room, it felt like stepping into a winter wonderland. The towering Christmas tree glistened with ornaments and lights, and garlands of evergreen adorned the grand staircase. Soft, festive music filled the air, and the room was aglow with the warm light of countless candles.

Our guests, a mix of friends, family, and colleagues, mingled around, sipping on champagne and enjoying the holiday cheer. I spotted Chloe chatting animatedly with Leah over by the bar. They both raised their glasses and waved at us as we entered.

Dinner was just as lavish as the party, with a feast of gourmet dishes served by our attentive staff; I had picked out the menu. The clinking of silverware and the murmur of conversation filled the room as we all enjoyed the delicious meal. Karl and I shared smiles and stolen glances throughout, our love for each other evident to anyone who cared to look.

But it was after dinner, during the festivities, that Karl made a memory I would never forget. He stood up from his seat and cleared his throat, capturing the attention of our guests.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he began, his voice filled with warmth and sincerity, “if I could have your attention for just a moment.”

The room fell silent as everyone turned to look at him, curiosity in their eyes. I felt my heart race in anticipation of what he was about to say.

Karl continued, “Tonight, I want to make a special toast to someone who means the world to me. Someone who has brought so much love and joy into my life. Abby, my beautiful wife, this one’s for you.”

He raised his champagne flute, and all eyes turned to me. I felt a blush creep up my cheeks as he spoke. “Abby, you are not only the most stunning woman in this room, but you are also the most loving, caring, and wonderful wife a man could ask for. I am truly the luckiest man alive to have you by my side.”

Tears welled up in my eyes as I listened to his heartfelt words. The room erupted in applause and cheers, and I felt a little bashful under their gazes.

Karl approached me, his eyes filled with love and adoration, and he gently brushed a strand of hair behind my ear. “I love you,” he whispered so only I could hear.

I smiled through my tears and whispered back, “I love you too, Karl.”

And then, as if on cue, someone called out, “Mistletoe!” and pointed to a green and red sprig hanging above us. The room filled with playful cheers and laughter as Karl leaned in and kissed me tenderly beneath the mistletoe.

When we pulled away, I was blushing furiously, and the room erupted into even more cheers and applause. I couldn't remember ever feeling happier or more loved than in that moment.

Karl's voice brings me back to the present. "Hello? Earth to Abby?"

My cheeks flush with warmth as I clear my throat. "Sorry," I murmur.

He chuckles. "Where'd you go just now?"

"I was just thinking," I reply, my tone slightly embarrassed. "That's all."

But no matter how hard I try to hide it, I can't get that memory completely out of my mind. Despite everything that happened after that, I've never forgotten that night. Our first Christmas together as a married couple, and it was as magical as I ever could have hoped for.

Chapter 393

Abby

Karl's raised eyebrow tells me that my suggestion has taken him by surprise.

"A masquerade party?" he asks, his voice filled with skepticism. "I don't know, Abby. That's a strange request, at least for a holiday party."

I sigh, running a hand through my hair. The memory of our first Christmas party together as a married couple is still floating through my mind, and it's filled my heart with a warmth that I'm not sure if I want to express for the sake of coming across as too much of a softie.

"I just figure it could be a way for me to go without raising too many eyebrows," I say with a shrug.

Karl looks at me for a few moments, and I can practically see the gears turning in his head.

“It’s just... with the election announcement coming up, I’m not so sure,” he says as he leans back against the long dining table behind him—it’s a beautiful mahogany, and all of the matching chairs have tufted seats made out of a classy golden-beige color that I picked out when we were married.

“What makes you think that it would hinder the election?” I ask, cocking my head to the side.

He shrugs. “I don’t know, Abby,” he admits. “I just won’t know if I want to create any waves right now. Maybe if Ethan and I weren’t fighting, but... I think I could use all of the good press I can get, and you know how people can be around here.”

I can understand his reservations. He’s got this tumultuous election against his brother coming up, and people in this area can be a bit... closed-minded.

If Karl throws a masquerade party for Christmas, I could see how it would make him worry that people might see it as odd or out of character.

But, at the same time, I can’t help but think it could possibly be a good idea.

“Look,” I say, taking a step closer, “you don’t have to do it. But think of it this way: it’ll generate buzz, people will be talking about it, and you could invite a lot of people from the pack. Maybe something exciting and out of the box would be good for your image; people will see you as an Alpha who’s changing. Evolving.”

Karl considers my words, his expression shifting from uncertainty to contemplation. He runs a hand through his hair, deep in thought. I can almost hear the wheels turning in his mind.

After a moment, he lets out a slow breath and nods. “You know what, Abby?” he says quietly. “You might just be onto something there, actually.”

“You think so?” I ask, my voice raising slightly with excitement.

Karl nods. "Yeah. It's actually not a bad idea at all. It could garner some positive attention, and besides..." He pauses for a moment, his gaze softening as he looks at me. "If it means that you can attend, I'll do anything to make it happen."

His words make me blush, and I quickly avert my gaze before he can see. "I didn't know that my attending this party was so important to you," I murmur.

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Karl laughs, his arms wrapping around me. "You had better be right, Abby," he murmurs into my hair. "Otherwise you'll be in for trouble afterwards."

His words make my heart skip a beat. I pull away ever so slightly, our lips almost touching as we look at each other. For a moment, it's like we're married again; and I'm reminded of our arrangement, the arrangement which neither of us has acted upon since I've been here.

And, for just a moment, I consider what the night of the party will be like: before, during, and... after.

Blushing a deep shade of crimson, I pull away and attempt to dispel the inappropriate thoughts from my mind. "I guess I'll need a dress and a mask then," I guess.

He looks at me with a mischievous glint in his eyes. "Do you have something in mind? Need me to take you shopping?"

I feel a bit uncertain, as the reality sinks in that he's already done so much. I'm reminded of the box of gifts that was waiting on my bed when I arrived. It feels like he's spoiling me, and despite our arrangement, we're still not technically together in that sense.

"I'll go shopping on my own," I blurt out. "I'd like to use my own money, and it seems like you're busy here. I don't want to be a burden."

Karl raises an eyebrow, a hint of amusement in his eyes. "Abby," he says gently as he tucks a strand of hair behind my ear, "you're never a burden. Besides, it's my pleasure to do this for you. Consider it my way of making up for lost time."

I sigh, shaking my head. “Karl, really. I’d like to buy it myself.”

He nods, and although I can see a slight flicker of disappointment flash through his eyes, I know that he’s not going to argue. “Alright,” he says. “Whatever makes you happy, Abby.”

“Hey, is that shopping center in the town over still open?” I ask, taking another step back. “Maybe I’ll head there now to look for something. I don’t have anything else going on.”

“Yeah, it is.” Karl reaches into his pocket and pulls out his car keys, holding them out to me. “Here, take my car. The roads might get snowy later, so be careful, okay?”

I take the keys from him, but roll my eyes teasingly. “Alright, alright,” I say with a laugh. “I’ll be careful.”

With a final smile, I turn and grab my jacket and surgical mask off of the hook by the door, then head out to the car. The leather is cool and familiar as I slide into the driver’s seat, and for a moment, it feels as though nothing has changed.

But as I drive away from the house, I can’t help but feel a mix of emotions. Maybe I shouldn’t be feeling like nothing has changed.

Chapter 395

Abby

I arrive at the shopping center in the neighboring town, and the excitement bubbling inside me is almost palpable.

The dress at the Alpha gathering reminded me just how much I used to love getting dressed up for fancy occasions. After Karl and I got divorced, the most I would really ever get dressed up for was the club or going out to a nice restaurant; which is to say, not all that dressed up at all.

Growing up in a well-to-do family, I was always attending some event or another. My parents kept their wealth on the low-key side, but we still always had holiday parting and business events to attend. However, with our relationship distancing further and further over the years, especially since I moved to the city, that option slowly dwindled.

But now, things have changed—or so it seems. Now, for the second time in just a couple of months, I find myself going out to buy a dress for a fancy occasion. And although I can't help but feel a little guilty as my mind whirls with thoughts of whether I'm taking this too far with Karl, I can't deny my excitement.

Heading into the formal gown store, I'm almost immediately greeted by a lovely sales attendant who seems genuinely excited to help me.

"Good afternoon, Miss," she says with a smile as I approach. "How can I help you today?"

"I'm looking for something very specific," I say as my eyes scan the racks of increasingly fabulous—and expensive—gowns. "A dress for a masquerade."

Her eyes light up at the mention of a masquerade. "Oh, how exciting!" she exclaims. "That sounds like fun. Right this way; I've just gotten some new stock in that I'm certain would go well with your complexion."

She guides me through the racks of gowns, offering suggestions and pulling out dresses for me to consider.

As I browse through the elegant fabrics and styles, I can't help but feel like a kid in a candy store. It's been so long since I've shopped quite like this that it feels like I'm in an entirely different world.

She helps me pick out several gowns to try on, each more beautiful than the last.

The process is both thrilling and maybe a little overwhelming as I step into different styles and colors. The sales attendant offers her expert opinion, and we share laughter and small talk throughout the fitting.

But it's when I slip into a breathtaking ball gown that I finally feel like a princess.

The gown is a dark shade of midnight blue, its fabric flowing gracefully around me. The bodice is adorned with an intricate layer of lace, and the full skirt billows out in layers of tulle. I turn to admire myself in the mirror, the fabric shimmering a little in the light.

As I'm lost in the enchantment of the dress, however, I suddenly remember the need for a mask. I turn to the sales attendant, a hint of urgency in my voice.

"Do you know if there are any shops around here where I could find a mask?" I ask, my eyes searching hers.

She smirks, a mischievous glint in her eyes. "Actually, we have a selection of masks right here in the store. I'll be right back with some options for you."

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I have savings, of course, but not enough to last forever. And with my restaurant being closed lately, I've been dipping into those savings. Buying a luxury gown and Venetian mask isn't the wisest decision right now, but I just try to have faith that my restaurant will reopen soon and everything will be okay.

I swipe my card, trying to push away the worry about finances. It's a small price to pay for the opportunity of what feels like a lifetime.

"Thank you so much," I say to the sales attendant as she wraps up my purchases. "You've been incredibly helpful."

She smiles warmly and hands me my bag over the counter. "It was my pleasure, Miss. You're going to look absolutely stunning at the masquerade."

Leaving the store with my bags in hand, I head back to the car, excitement still coursing through me. The anticipation of the masquerade party fills my thoughts, and I can't help but smile as I drive home.

To distract myself on the journey home, I decide to crank up the radio and listen to some music. Before I know it, I'm dancing and singing along to some old pop song that I used to love, and everything feels okay. I feel free, alive, and happy in that moment, like nothing can bring me down.

I know I shouldn't be feeling this good. It feels as though I'm going against everything I said I would, slipping all too easily back into my old lifestyle. And yet, at the same time, I can't help but wonder if it's really all that similar after all this time. After all, Karl has changed immensely, and so have I. Is it really so wrong to feel like a Luna when I'm around him?

Do I really need to be lying to my friends about what's blossoming between us? Or is it problematic on my part that I'm hiding it rather than just being open and happy that maybe, just maybe, we're moving onto a new chapter in our lives—one filled with forgiveness, stolen kisses, and masquerades?

But then, as I'm driving, the first few snowflakes start to fall, gentle and innocent at first. It pulls me out of my reverie, and I glance up at the sky, hoping it's just a passing flurry. But the snowfall intensifies more quickly than I could have predicted, and soon, the road ahead becomes a hazy white blur.

I grip the steering wheel, my heart starting to race. The car's tires skid on the slippery road, and panic begins to bubble up inside of me as I focus on keeping myself on the road.

But in what feels like a matter of seconds, the snowstorm turns into a full-blown blizzard, and visibility drops to almost nothing. I can barely see the road in front of me, and my heart pounds in my chest even harder than before.

I try to keep calm, reminding myself to drive slowly and carefully.

"Breathe, Abby, breathe," I murmur, my knuckles turning white around the steering wheel.

It seems, however, as though the snow-covered road has other plans. The car starts to slide, and I struggle to regain control. I've hit black ice hidden beneath the snow.

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Abby

For a few long moments, I just sit there, my eyes wide with shock. My hands are so tightly wrapped around the steering wheel that my knuckles are pure white, and it takes almost all of my strength and willpower to peel my fingers back and release my grip on the wheel.

“Okay,” I whisper with a trembling breath. “Think, Abby. Think.”

I let out a soft sigh, clutching my hair as I think and collect my bearings.

I’m uninjured, so that’s good. The car is still running and there’s no smoke coming out anywhere—also good. The blizzard is still raging on all around me, which is very much not good; but I figure that maybe if I just get out and assess the situation first, it won’t be as bad as it seems.

I step out of the car, and immediately, the cold bites into me, seeping through my coat and sending shivers down my spine.

God, I think to myself; it wasn’t nearly this cold when I left. I only grabbed a light jacket, thinking that it would be enough to get me to the shopping center and back. I should have brought something heavier.

I pull my coat tighter around my shoulders and walk around to the front of the car, and the sight that greets me is disheartening—the car is lodged deep in the snowy ditch, and I can tell just from looking at it that there’s no way in hell I’m getting it out all on my own.

“Shit,” I mutter, my voice lost in the sound of the wind whistling all around me. Panic starts to well up inside of me as I realize that I’m stranded in the middle of nowhere with no one to turn to.

Another cold wind blows through and whips my hair all around me. Shuddering, I scurry through the snow and ice, nearly falling along the way, and climb back into my warm car to reassess and think again.

“Okay,” I whisper again, feeling as though I’ve just started over from square one. “I’ll call Karl. That’s what I’ll do.”

I know I can’t be that far from the mansion; it’s only another twenty or twenty-five minute drive. Even if Karl can’t get to me right this minute through the snowstorm, then at least he’ll know where I am. And if push comes to shove, I’ll call the police.

I pull my phone out of my bag and try to make a call, but feel my heart sink as I look down and see that the screen is proudly displaying the two words that I’ve been dreading the most.

“No service.”

Frustration bubbles inside of me, and I attempt again, hoping for some sort of miraculous signal breakthrough. I dial Karl’s number, but am just met with the same notification as before.

“God dammit,” I hiss, throwing my phone onto the passenger seat. “Why now? Why like this?”

Another string of curses escapes my mouth as I peer out the window into the freak blizzard. This was so unexpected; it just hit out of nowhere. Maybe I shouldn’t have rolled my eyes at Karl earlier when he tried to warn me, I guess. After all, I guess I’ve forgotten how quickly the weather can change like this out here in the countryside.

Reluctantly, I turn off the car engine, not wanting to risk draining the battery. My breath fogs up the windows as I huddle inside, my body trembling from the cold.

My mind races, considering my options. I could wait and hope for another car to pass by, but there’s no guarantee, and the storm is worsening by the minute.

Minutes turn into what feels like hours. I stare out into the white abyss, my heart pounding with each passing moment. The fear of being trapped here, alone and helpless, gnaws at me.

Then, like a beacon of hope, I spot distant headlights approaching through the heavy snowfall. My heart leaps with excitement, and I quickly turn on my headlights, hoping to catch the attention of the oncoming driver.

I flash my lights repeatedly, desperation fueling my actions. “Come on, come on,” I murmur under my breath, hoping they’ll stop and give me some help.

But to my dismay, the approaching car doesn’t seem to notice me through the thick snow. I feel a surge of frustration as they drive past me, the snow obscuring their view. I can’t help myself; I jump out of the car and start waving my arms wildly, hoping they’ll see me.

But the driver just keeps going, completely oblivious to my distress. My heart sinks, and I trudge back to my car, defeated. The relentless snow continues to fall, erasing any traces of the car that had just passed within a minute.

I'm stuck here, and it feels like a nightmare. Panic threatens to overwhelm me, but I take a deep breath and remind myself to stay calm. I can't let fear consume me; I need to think of a way out of this predicament.

I check my phone again once I'm back in the car, but there's still no signal. I can't even call the police all the way out here, thanks to this damn storm.

With each passing moment, the reality of my situation sinks in deeper. I'm alone in a snowstorm, with no way to call for help. Karl is miles away, unaware of my plight. I can't call the police. The tears well up in my eyes, but I blink them away, determined not to give in to despair.

I reach for the car's emergency kit, hoping to find something that might help. As I rummage through the contents, I come across a thermal blanket. It's not much, but it's better than nothing. I wrap it around myself, trying to conserve as much warmth as possible.

"Why me?" I mutter as I sink down further into the driver's seat. The paper bag containing my new dress and mask stares back at me through the rearview mirror, almost mocking me. If it weren't for this stupid party, I wouldn't be here right now. If it weren't for my constant fickle nature, none of this would have happened.

Chapter 398

Karl

I sit in my office, the plans for the party shifting from a regular holiday gathering to a masquerade. The change feels refreshing, and much to my surprise, I find myself smiling as I work.

The party is this weekend, which is only a few days away; I feel bad making it on such short notice, but I know that people will come. And besides, I'm more concerned about Abby being able to make it—not to mention the effect this will have on the upcoming election.

I sigh as I finalize some details for the party. I'm just finishing up a request for a string quartet online. Originally, I was just going to hire a violinist and a pianist, but I decided to make the switch to a string quartet for the masquerade's sake.

After all, I want this to be big.

I just hope that Abby will be right about the positive effect this will have on the election. With the announcement coming up just next week, I want people to feel like I'm not only a dedicated Alpha, but a fun and exciting one as well.

As much as it pains me to fight against my brother throughout this election, I know that this is my chance to get this edge over him before the election ultimately begins. Sure, he's got the bloodline and the charisma, but I've been filling in as an ideal Alpha for years since he was in his coma.

I need to make sure that people remember that.

"Marcus, make sure to send out the updated party invitations by the end of the night," I say into the earpiece I've got in my ear. "I don't want this to be too last-minute."

"Of course, Karl," Marcus replies.

The ear pieces we started using between me, Marcus, and Sarah since the election plans began have been a godsend in this huge house. With so much going on, I can't afford to be spending time running back and forth across the mansion just to relay a single command to my Beta.

I lean back in my chair, thinking about the masquerade. "This was a good idea, Abby," I say to myself with a soft chuckle as I look down at the computer screen in front of me.

I can't help it; there's a smile playing on my lips as I imagine Abby by my side in a ballgown, her eyes hidden behind an elegant mask. I wonder what she picked out. I hope it's at least nearly as beautiful as the white dress she wore to the Alpha gathering.

Oh, who am I kidding? She'd look stunning in a burlap sack.

The thought of her at the masquerade party makes my heart race. I can't help but think that maybe after this weekend, I'll finally be able to convince her to be with me completely, to make our relationship official.

The prospect of having her by my side, not just as a casual partner, but as my Luna once more, fills me with a sense of longing and anticipation.

Hell, maybe I can convince her to finally come home. She can let go of that restaurant in the city; if she wants, I'll fund a new restaurant for her here. She won't need to scrape by anymore to make ends meet. She won't need to work so much.

She can just delegate and work in the kitchen once in a while.

I glance at the picture of Abby and me on my desk, memories of our marriage flooding back. The warmth of her smile, the way she used to look at me with those eyes that held a universe of emotions.

The picture is a reminder of what we once had and what I hope we can have again, and I'm determined to make that happen.

But as I sit here, my wolf stirs inside of me. "That's not what she wants and you know it," he hisses, annoyed by my arrogance.

I heave a sigh, my thoughts torn between my desires and the reality of Abby's own dreams and ambitions. "I could show her that she has all she needs here, where she belongs," I murmur out loud. "That city isn't good for her."

My wolf growls. "You don't know what's good for her. You don't know what she'd want."

A frown flickers across my lips as I consider the options. I don't want to move to that city; I mean, I can't. Not with my Alpha duties here. And besides, I like it here. If our relationship becomes official again, one of us would have to concede.

And it's not going to be me.

My gaze lingers on the picture then, and it makes me wonder if I'm getting ahead of myself.

After all, there's still the matter of the upcoming election. I need to focus on that first, and who knows if I'll even win?

If I don't win, then maybe the decision will be made for me. Maybe I'll need to cower, to hide in the city from my shame. And as much as I dislike the city, I guess I could grow to like it so long as I'm with Abby.

But before any of these plans can take shape, I'm brought back to the present by a nagging worry. Abby was supposed to return half an hour ago, and she's still not back.

I glance at my watch, anxiety creeping in as I see the time. It's almost seven, and the sky has long since gone dark. Maybe she's home already and I just didn't notice.

I make my way downstairs to see that the party preparations have died down. The house is decorated with vibrant reds and greens, fragrant garlands and velvet ribbons. The tall Christmas tree stands tall in the middle of the living room, decorated lovingly with sparkling ornaments.

It just needs the star on top, but I always save that for the party.

"Hey, Alice," I say, spotting the middle-aged housekeeper scurrying into the kitchen with an apron on. "Have you seen Abby?"

Alice furrows her brow as she bends down to remove a glistening roast chicken for dinner out of the oven. "No, Alpha," she says. "I haven't."

Chapter 399

Abby

I had just turned eighteen, and I wasn't expecting the words that my father had uttered.

“Abby,” he had said, “we found your fated mate. You’ll be marrying him in the spring.”

The emotions that had passed through my mind at that time had ranged from excitement to fury. Finding my fated mate was one thing, but being married so soon? And why?

“He’s from a good family,” my father had said. “You’ll be happy, I promise. He’s going to be an Alpha someday, I’m sure of it.”

But I was having none of it. When I met Karl, despite his handsome appearance and charming demeanor, I was furious. Our parents left us alone in the garden to get to know each other, but I just folded my arms and refused to even look his way.

Until he spoke, that is.

“Hey,” he said, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial tone. “Wanna go for a run?”

I hesitated, finally meeting his gaze. “What?”

“I said,” he repeated, “wanna go for a run?” As he spoke, he jerked his head toward the tree line, where the forest began.

“In our wolf forms?” I asked, furrowing my brow. Karl nodded.

I hesitated for a moment, unsure if it was a good idea. But when I glanced over and saw that our parents had long since disappeared, I knew we could get away with it; and I couldn’t deny the safety and warmth I felt beneath Karl’s brown-eyed gaze.

“Okay,” I replied, a hint of excitement and nervousness in my voice.

We made our way to the tree line, and once we were out of sight, we shifted.

My fur was a beautiful, pristine white, while Karl's was a vibrant shade of red. We stood there for a moment, taking in the sight of each other in our wolf forms. The connection between us felt electric, as if our souls were speaking a language only we could understand.

Karl approached me with a playful nudge, and I reciprocated. We circled each other, getting closer and closer until our noses met. Our scents filled the air, sweet and intoxicating, and it filled us both with exhilaration.

With a shared glance, we took off, our powerful legs carrying us effortlessly through the forest. Snow sprayed up around us as we raced through the trees, weaving and dodging with grace and precision.

The sheer exhilaration of it all made my heart race, and I couldn't help but let out joyous yips of excitement.

Eventually, we came upon a breathtaking sight—a frozen creek that glistened in the winter sunlight. The ice sparkled like diamonds, creating a mesmerizing glow.

Karl and I shifted back into our human forms, our bodies tingling with residual energy from our run. I couldn't tear my eyes away from the enchanting scene in front of us. It was like something out of a fairy tale.

But before I could say anything, I felt a hand under my chin. I turned to see Karl staring down at me, his fingers brushing my cheek.

Our eyes locked, and in that moment, time seemed to stand still. The world around us faded away, leaving only the two of us, our souls laid bare.

And then, he leaned in, his lips meeting mine in a soft, sweet kiss.

It was our first kiss, and it was more magical than I could have ever imagined. Our lips moved together with a tender urgency, and I felt our souls intertwine in a way that words could never express.

When we finally pulled away, we were both breathless, our breaths creating white mist in the air. We gazed into each other's eyes, and at that moment, I knew.

Karl and I were truly fated.

Chapter 400

But my screams receive no response. I'm completely alone, alone with nothing but the snow and this stupid dress to keep my company.

I huddle in the car, my teeth chattering as I try to conserve whatever warmth I have left. The sky is pitch black, and the howling wind outside only adds to the desolation.

My mind races with thoughts of Karl, of the party, and of my own foolishness for getting caught in this situation. Once again, I try to call him, but it's no use. I still have no service and I need to be careful about saving my phone battery.

I wish I could shift into my wolf form to keep warm, but my wolf has still been mostly dormant, only appearing sporadically when Karl is close with me, which just makes me even angrier.

It's as if she's abandoned me when I need her the most. I call out to her, my voice filled with desperation.

"Why now? Why won't you help me?" I mutter. "It's not fair. You can't just show up when you want and disappear when I need you."

But my wolf remains unresponsive, and I'm left to face this dire situation alone. Fear creeps in, and I wrap myself tighter in my coat, hoping to ward off the cold that threatens to consume me.

As I sit in the darkness, my heart skips a beat when I see what appears to be headlights in the distance. My breath catches, and I peer through the snow-covered windshield, squinting to get a better look.

Is it another car? Is someone coming to help me?

I desperately reach for the car's keys, trying to turn the ignition despite knowing that the battery is dead. In my frantic state of mind I keep thinking that by some miracle, the car will come back to life.

But it's in vain, and the engine remains silent..

In the distance, the headlights grow brighter, and I can make out the shape of a vehicle approaching. My hands clutch the steering wheel, and I prepare to do anything to get their attention. I flash my car's headlights, hoping that the other driver will see the signal.

"Come on, please see me," I whisper to myself, my voice trembling with anticipation.

But as the other car comes closer, it becomes clear that the heavy snowfall is obscuring their view.

My heart sinks as they pass by me, their headlights fading into the distance. They didn't see me. It's too dark, too snowy.

Desperation takes hold, and I can't stay in the car any longer. I need to do something to get their attention. With trembling hands, I open the car door and step out into the freezing cold. The snow crunches under my boots as I wave my arms wildly, trying to make myself visible through their rearview mirror.

"Hey! Stop!" I shout into the storm, my voice barely audible over the wind.

But the other car continues on its way, seemingly oblivious to my distress. Panic surges within me as I watch them disappear into the whiteout.

"No, no, no," I mutter, tears stinging my eyes as I realize that I'm still alone and trapped in this frozen nightmare.

I retreat back into the car, defeated and shivering. The hope that had briefly filled me has turned into a heavy sense of isolation and despair. I wrap my arms around myself, trying to preserve what little warmth I have left.

The minutes drag on, and it feels like I'm running out of time. The snow keeps piling up around the car, and the temperature inside drops with every passing moment. I reach for my phone once more, hoping for a signal, but it's still no use. Why even bother at this point?