

## THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

### Chapter 148 Told You So

“You’re really okay?” Alexander asked. “I know how much you love working.”

I sighed, looking at my reflection in the full-length mirror by the front door. I’d just finished getting ready for work for what I’d decided, this morning, would be my last day in the office for a while. “I really am. I love my job and feeling important there at the firm. But this will give me more time with you, anyway.”

Alexander walked up behind me, pulling on a white t-shirt.

“And time to prepare for the baby, too,” I added.

We’d arranged for a very brief visit with the palace doctor this morning, and by the end of the checkup, I’d made up my mind to begin my maternity leave

today.

The doctor visit did cut into the fun time that Alexander and I usually spent “snoozing” in the mornings. But we’d realized last night that my due date was approaching fast and figured squeezing in a baby checkup would be a good idea.

Everything looked fine, the doctor said after checking the baby’s heartbeat, but she looked rather serious after I answered some questions about my work schedule, and then, in short, recommended I start my leave ASAP.

I wanted to fight her on this at first. But when she told me that keeping up full-time hours this late into the pregnancy – I was due in less than two weeks – might induce early labor, I had a troubling vision of my water breaking in the middle of the eighty-ninth floor all-staff meeting and decided it was best to follow her orders.

“I’m looking forward to seeing more of you, that’s for sure.” Alexander nuzzled into my neck, inhaling my scent. Then his lips rose and drifted over to meet mine.

I couldn’t help but make a little “mmm” noise and start going woozy. His kiss was light but confident, somehow both aggressive and gentle. When he pulled away, I missed his mouth on mine immediately.

“Let me know when everything’s wrapped up at the office,” he said. “Maybe I can come pick you up again.”

I loved the sound of that, but also knew Alexander’s time was valuable. “You don’t have to. I know you have plenty of other things to do.”

“None as important as you.”

I gazed up at his perfect lips, wanting another kiss. He read my line of thought and bent to give me one.

My “time to go” alarm started going off. Before I could react to it, Alexander slyly reached into the pocket of my blazer and silenced it.

Alexander

“She says she only wants a small ceremony, but I still want to make it special.”

Kayden and I were on the return lap of our pre-dawn run, and I’d just finished catching him up on how things had gone over with Fiona.

“So... it’ll just be the four of us? Nina and I are your witnesses and only guests?” Kayden asked. He was smiling.

I rolled my eyes. “Yes.”

“Hm.” My Beta conspicuously avoided my eyes when I tried to meet them.

“Tell me you’re not starting that up again.”

“I’m not doing anything. We talked one time. And she just appeared in front of me while I was minding my own business—honest.”

We made it out of the forest and back to the courtyard, slowing our pace simultaneously to start cooling down. I changed the subject. “I’m thinking we could go tux shopping tomorrow. We need to get you cleaned up, too.”

Kayden snorted dismissively. Then gave me a funny look.

“What?”

“Nothing.” He lifted his shirt and used it to wipe sweat from his face. And hide a grin.

“What?”

“I tried, Alex. I’m really trying not to say it. I don’t want to be a dick, not when I’m genuinely happy for you about all this. But...”

“You want to tell me, ‘I told you so.’”

I remembered full well when Kayden told me, months ago, that he thought Fiona might change my mind about marriage.

“For the record, you said it,” he answered smugly.

“Not me.”

My father was supposed to have arranged a phone call this morning with the witnesses in the southern villages—the ones that had allegedly sighted the first vampires to set foot in the werewolf world since the end of the war. I was eager to interview these individuals.

I brought my map with me to the Alpha King’s study. By now, I’d marked up this map very thoroughly. Kayden and I had researched the geography of the area and pinpointed the most likely locations where the insurgents may have set up camp.

So I was very disappointed when my father greeted me with the news that he’d been unable to locate the witnesses, as promised.

“This is urgent,” I told him. “I need to talk to them.”

“I don’t know what to tell you. The mayors say they’re unable to find them.”

“So they have gone missing? Did it occur to you that they may have been killed?”

He threw his hands up and coughed out a sarcastic laugh, looking exasperated. I sniffed the air and caught a whiff of the sharp smell of alcohol. “How am I to know what’s happened? You’re the one who says we can’t go down there to see for ourselves.”

I bit my tongue.

Because it did not matter if I had right on my side. If I was the one behaving soberly, logically and in the interest of the kingdom.



Regardless of all that, if I offended my father, I could easily wind up in a dungeon on the receiving end of his whip again.

He still outranked me—it was simple as that.

The problem may have been simple, but the solution would not be.

Going through my father as middleman was no way to face this threat. He'd already failed to fight in one war, instead sending me out to lead the troops as his proxy the last time around. And now, with another war on the horizon, the Alpha King was even older and more out of touch than before.

It was my time to lead. I'd proved myself a thousand times over in the last decade, and my father knew that. He knew he was in over his head right now, too—that was why he was drinking.

But he was proud to a fault. I couldn't imagine him stepping aside and willingly conceding power to me, not now or ever. He'd surely always envisioned ruling as Alpha King for the remainder of his natural life.

He wanted to sit on that throne until the day he died, whether or not he was still fit to lead.

Fiona

I threw the fourth and final resume into the wastebin with a sigh.

The two applicants I met this morning had been just as disappointing as the others. I'd had high hopes for Harry, but he turned out to look a lot better on paper than in person. (I mean in terms of his qualifications; he was indeed as shockingly handsome live as in he was in his photo, but that was of course irrelevant.)

I'd restart my assistant search when I returned from leave; the timing would be better then, anyway. I was just irritated, feeling like these interviews had been a waste of time. And starting to feel anxious to get out of the office and begin my time off.

I didn't expect to be feeling that way. But now that things had changed with Alexander, being home with him felt more important than before. For months he'd been supporting me while I worked crazy hours, adjusting his own busy schedule around mine; now with time on my hands, perhaps I could find a way to return the favor.

As if I'd summoned him with that thought, suddenly I saw my fiancée strolling down the hallway. He was at the door of my office a moment later, leaning against the door frame with a self-satisfied smile on his lips.

I was on my feet in a flash. “What are you doing here? I was going to text you when I was ready to leave.”

“I couldn’t wait. Figured I’d surprise you. What are you up to?”

“I just finished a disappointing interview.” I reached the door and was relieved when Alexander immediately lowered his head to offer me a kiss hello. Ugh—it felt so nice, even if it was just a little peck on the lips.

“I’m sorry to hear that,” he said.

“It’s fine. You know, I could take off now, I think.”

Alexander arched an eyebrow. “Great. I thought I might need to hang out for a while, maybe spend some time bugging Conrad.”

I shrugged. “I talked to him earlier. He said I should head out whenever I was ready.”

I’d collected a few items to take home, my favorite coffee mug and some books; Alexander picked up the box and my briefcase, and we headed out.

“Thought I heard your voice!” Conrad popped out of his office and made a beeline for us before we’d made it halfway down the hall.

“Uncle. Good to see you.”

“Ah. I see you’ve come to take Fiona away. We’ll be missing her here, you know.”

“I’m sure you will.”

Both men beamed at me. The attention was unbearable. “Anything I could do for you before I go,

Conrad?”

“No. You go get some well-deserved rest. We’ll see you in a few weeks. Alexander—” He patted my fiancé’s arm, and for a moment I could have sworn that Conrad’s hands were shaking.

They exchanged a few words while I watched. Before now, I hadn’t had occasion to see these two interact. I had to wonder if Conrad was often nervous around his nephew. That didn’t seem likely.

Perhaps something was worrying Conrad today. Something that involved Alexander, or that he didn’t want Alexander to know about.

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