

THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

Chapter 158 Blood Feud

I held what I hoped looked like a warm smile on my face when I saw Iris the next morning for breakfast. Internally, though, I reeled with shock.

She looked unbelievably different. Her energy was different, too.

Iris wore a crisp beige blouse and a floral print skirt, apparently having gone shopping by now, and had her hair pulled back into a tidy ponytail. She still gave me an eerie feeling; there was something very off about her. But that wild, menacing energy I had gotten from her in the past was gone.

She avoided my eyes as much as possible when we first sat down. Until I told her outright that I would like it if we could have a fresh start between us and forget about the past. Then she looked incredibly relieved,

and was finally able to eat her meal.

Alexander squeezed my hand under the table, grateful.

I waited until our bedroom door was closed and locked behind us before I allowed myself to say, “Alex, she is so strange.”

He scrubbed a hand down his face and blew out a heavy breath. “Oh, I know. But believe it or not, she is doing a lot better now than before.”

“I do believe that. I remember how she was when she first got here. Today she was clearly trying to be on her best behavior. And honestly, I feel bad for her. Her life has been so messed up.”

“Well. Now you see my problem. And this is a woman who took care of my mother, you know... I feel like I

have to help her when she clearly needs help.”

“Yes. I understand.”

I went to my bookshelf, which Nina had organized for me the other day while I rested. My friend had done a good job putting the library together, organizing the books by subject, with like topics together on each shelf just as I'd requested.

I had also ordered several journals and notebooks for note-taking. These were stacked in a tidy pile on the top shelf.

I selected a black suede journal and took it to bed, where I eased myself into a comfortable position. It was crazy how little activity it required, this week, to make me desperate to get my feet elevated.

“Okay,” I said, flipping open to the journal's first page

and compulsively writing today's date in the upper right corner. "I'm making notes about questions to ask her, before she and I meet back up to talk about the case. Come and help me."

Alexander finished putting his jacket away in his closet and walked over to his side of the bed, unbuttoning and rolling up his shirtsleeves as he went. While I waited for him to join me I penned a tidy header at the center of the page, along the top line: Murder Investigation. I underlined it twice.

When I told Iris I was helping Alexander with his mother's case, and hoped I could use my new free time to chat with her about the investigation, she reacted by first looking very excited, and then nervously attempting to hide that excitement. She said she was available any time and looking forward to it.

“Can I see your book again?” I asked Alexander, just as he was about to sit down on the bed. “Sorry. I just thought of that.”

“No problem.” He went to his office and returned quickly, holding the heavily dogeared and bookmarked notebook that he showed me briefly the prior week. His own murder investigation journal.

I flipped through it, scanning the more recent pages. Remembering what he already told me about his one successful interview with Iris, in which she recounted in graphic detail the final moments of Alexandra’s life.

“What I really, really need to know,” he was saying to me now, “is what happened before and after that. She hasn’t been able to tell me that. Who brought my mother the food or drink or whatever it was that poisoned her. And what happened to Iris afterward... who shot her.”

I took notes while he discussed these priorities, writing in my own personal shorthand to keep up with the pace of his speech.

“That other thing you and I discussed before...” I looked up and saw Alexander was shifting his posture to face me squarely. I knew what he was referring to. “You sure you’re okay about that?”

“It was not news to me, Alex. Like I told you.”

He went very still, studying my face.

He had mentioned it when first briefing me on the case. That he believed my father was involved in his mother’s murder, though he did not know how.

His heart had been racing when he told me—I could hear it. But I told him I knew this already, that I picked

up on it a long time ago and had already come to terms with it.

The tension between my husband and my father had been evident the first moment that I had seen them interact. The vitriol in Alexander's eyes, the anger with which he menaced my father—I knew it was about something deeper than just the fiasco of my unexpected pregnancy.

Then, later, Alexander had blurted out that he wanted to kill my father. And when I finally learned that his mother's death had been unnatural, a murder – then I understood. That the scoundrel who raised me had been involved in that crime, had gotten himself into a blood feud with my Alpha long before he and I ever met.

“I just want to know what happened,” Alexander said dreamily, like he was deep in a memory. “He once all

but admitted he knew about the plot, but we just don't know his role in it. If he was here the day of the murder... or if he only supported, in some other way, what I now believe was Scarlet's scheme..."

I attempted to reassure him for a second time.

"Alexander, I am your Luna. My loyalty has been with you for a long time."

He nodded gravely, then gave me a little kiss.

"Alex."

"Yeah?" He pulled back.

"Who is 'we'? You said, 'we' don't know his role."

"Oh." He blinked at me, trying to remember something. "Conrad. I... haven't told you he and I have been doing this investigation together, all

along?”

“No.”

“Oh, shit. I’m sorry, Fiona. I wasn’t trying to keep that from you. I... I honestly thought I must have mentioned it earlier, when I started showing you my notes.”

“It’s okay. I didn’t realize... but it makes sense. Can you, um, do you want to tell me anything else about his part in the investigation? Anything I should know, that could help with what I’m doing?”

Suddenly my heartbeat was picking up speed.

My brain was putting two and two together. Conrad had left town the same week that my father disappeared. That’s when he had me cover for him at work.

“Hm.” Alexander looked away. “I mean, recently, his role in this has been rather passive... I talk everything over with him, any new development I find. We strategize together.”

“Does he know that you’ve told me about any of this? Or that I am helping you?”

Alexander pressed his lips together. “No. Not yet. He admires you, Fiona, that’s for sure, but to be honest, I don’t know if he would be comfortable knowing I have let anyone at all into the loop. I will find a way to tell him. When we need to.”

I nodded.

I wanted to ask another question, but I was afraid. For several long seconds, while Alexander and I sat side by side in silence, two opposite impulses went to war

in my mind. I wanted badly to know. And I also was afraid of knowing.

Finally, one impulse won out over the other, and the words just leapt out of my throat.

“Alex, do you know where my father is now?”

He went silent, staring forward into space. That told me an awful lot.

Then he shook his head side to side in slow motion.

“No. I heard a story, but I’m not sure that I believe it.”

Another brick fell down into my stomach.

Alexander took hold of my hand. The heat of his touch was shocking. My hands were ice cold.

Finally he met my eyes again and said, “I will find

out.”

Alexander

There was, of course, more that I knew about Fiona’s father that I was not telling her. But somehow I got the feeling that she actually did not want to know all the details.

She only wanted to know where he was. And I answered her question about this honestly.

We both jumped when my phone rang, suddenly punctuating the tense silence in the room.

“It’s Brandon,” I told her after a glance at the screen.

She nodded, telling me I should pick up. I did, and put it on speaker.

Witness testimonies had been finished today, Brandon reported. Court would be back in session next morning for a final day of closing arguments and deliberation in the embezzlement case.

“We should go,” Fiona said after I hung up. “Your father should see us there. And so should she.”

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