Chapter 165 How Could You?

Fiona

I could tell Alexander wanted to talk about something. The way he was being really quiet, and giving me wary, meaningful looks, while I sipped my coffee.

“What is it?” I placed a hand to the center of his chest, and felt his heart beating fast. “What else has happened? You can tell me.”

“Let’s sit down, sweetheart.” He took my hand from his chest, kissed it. And then pulled me gently over to the table and made a fuss of helping me into one of the chairs.

I started getting nervous.

What now?

What could be worse than what was happening already? Was there another vampire attack last night, after I’d fallen asleep? Was the war starting already? Or perhaps the Alpha King, after living through the crash, had died overnight in the hospital…?

“Is it your father?” I asked.

“No. It’s about yours.”

I put my cup down on the table.

“I told you I would find out what happened to him, and I did. I… I’m so sorry about this, Fiona—”

“He’s dead, isn’t he?” The words just escaped my lips. I hadn’t meant to interrupt him.

Alexander frowned. “Yes.”

Yes.

My father was dead. Gone forever. No more doubt about it.

And here came yet another brick to swallow. I choked it down. It landed on top of the others in the pit of my stomach.

I felt sick. Like I might vomit.

And I wanted to cry.

The depth of this sudden sadness surprised me. It seemed to just keep going and going. And why? We were speaking about a man who had hurt me many, many times. Who I had never planned to see again in my life.

But he was my father. He may have done bad things, but he was still my flesh and blood. He gave me life. He taught me how to tie my shoes, how to write my name. How to fight. How to be brave.

He was also a monster to me at times. But apparently, grief knows no logic. The tears just came.

I tried to deny them, hold them in. Not blinking, staring at the wall helped.

“It was Conrad, wasn’t it? He killed him.”

I pulled my eyes back to Alexander’s.

“Yes,” he said stoically.

“My god, Alex. Why?”

“Fiona.” He reached over and took hold of my shaking hands. “I’m so sorry.”

I snapped my hands back. I didn’t like that he didn’t answer me. “Why, Alex? He just… murdered my father out of nowhere? What happened?”

“Okay,” he said quietly. His eyes went up and down my face. Looking me over warily.

Had he really not expected me to be upset about this?

“Conrad… He says that it was an accident. He was trying to get information from your father. They argued, and he lost his temper.”

“… ‘Trying to get information’? You mean torture. He was torturing him… he tortured him to death? Oh, my god…”

“Fiona, if I had known that Conrad was going to do any of this, I would have stopped him. I’m so sorry.”

I had to stand up. I started pacing the room. Alexander jumped up behind me and started following me around.

“Fiona, please.”

“Please what?” I wheeled around to face him.

He exhaled so heavily it sent a breeze floating through the room. “Can we please go sit back down? I’ll tell you everything that he told me.”

I stared him down. I didn’t like the look in Alexander’s eyes. He seemed to just be wishing that I were not reacting this way.

“Why did Conrad do this now, Alex? I want to know. What happened? What triggered this?”

Finally, Alexander seemed to resign himself to the fact that he wasn’t going to be able to make me sit.

He went over to the edge of the bed, a short distance from me, and sat down himself though.

“A few weeks ago, Conrad became aware that your father was leaving town, and he took it upon himself to follow him to find out why. He thought it had something to do with our case.”

“When he was on his ‘leave’ from work?”

“Yes.”

“Did you know? Back then, did you know he was doing that—following my father?”

“I did. But he told me he was just surveilling him. I had told Conrad explicitly not to harm him. To leave him alone. Not to torture him for information. I didn’t think he would ever disobey me.”

I coughed out a disbelieving laugh. “You… explicitly told Conrad not to torture my father. So you knew that he wanted to? And you knew that he was following him. And you let it happen. And you didn’t tell me. You just let me be worried sick for weeks instead, wondering what had become of him. My god, Alex…”

“Fiona, it’s not like that. You’re making it sound like I planned this, and I didn’t—”

“What it sounds like to me is my husband had my father killed. And used me to cover it up.”

“No—”

“Without telling me about any of it. After you promised—you fucking promised me, Alexander—you promised you wouldn’t keep things from me anymore. Things that affect me. Things that matter. This matters.”

“Fiona, please. I did not know this would happen.”

“You. Know. Conrad.” My voice acquired a sharp edge. I could not remember the last time I had ever been this mad. “You know your uncle. Even when Conrad is happy, he’s only a hair-trigger away from snapping. You should have known better.”

Alexander covered his face with his hands and groaned.

“And you know what else? I have been studying that notebook of yours for the past few days. And there is hardly anything in there about my father at all. I… I don’t get it. You just couldn’t find any other leads, so you fixated on this one thing, pinned all the blame on my family based on nothing but suspicion, and then…”

When my husband caught my eye again, I could no longer read his expression at all. I suddenly felt like I didn’t know this man. Not the way I thought I did, at least.

My sadness started melting into something worse. Heart-wrenching disappointment.

The pieces were all falling into place.

“You got Conrad obsessed with my father,” I said quietly. “You knew that he was stalking him and you didn’t stop it. You let him use me to cover up his crime. You gave your uncle motive, means and opportunity, Alexander. At the very least, you are complicit. Conrad will be caught. And you will be implicated.”

“That’s not going to happen.”

“You don’t understand. People are looking for him already. Very, very motivated werewolves determined to find out what’s become of their pack leader. They’ll find him and they’ll figure out what happened. This will be bad for all of us. Don’t you see? What will your pack think if they find out their King would kill his own father-in-law for personal revenge?”

“No one will find him,” Alexander said gravely. “Conrad destroyed the remains.”

“Destroyed?” The word came out sounding hollow. A ghost of a whisper.

I moved to the bed before my knees could buckle underneath me.

“Alex…”

He took hold of my hand.

“… you are telling me… that you let me cover for Conrad at work… working myself to the bone, working all that overtime… so that he could have time off to torture and kill my father, and desecrate his corpse? You have implicated me in my father’s own murder, Alex. How could you—”

Before I could finish my question, a sudden, stabbing pain struck me in my abdomen, and I screamed.

And then, my water broke.