

Chapter 174 Glitter, Grime, Liquor & Blood

Fiona

Alexis was having a difficult night. She was tired but too fussy to sleep, and cried every single time I tried to put her down. I suspected that my own anxious energy was affecting her and did my best to keep myself as calm as possible for her sake.

But I was worried sick about Nina. I knew her involvement in tonight’s undercover operation gave Alexander his best shot at working this lead, which very well could help him locate Lucas and Scarlet. But my best friend was not a soldier or a spy. She was smart, savvy and strong, but she was still just a civilian.

It was almost four a.m. by the time Alexander finally heard from his men.

Caldwell texted him to confirm that he and one of the other Gammas had their target – the drug dealer, not Lucas, who apparently had been a no-show – and were awaiting the others in the getaway vehicle.

Every minute that passed after that, though, felt like a minute too long.

Alexander called to check in after ten minutes elapsed. Caldwell had no update. They were still waiting for Nina, Kayden, and two other soldiers who remained inside the nightclub but were supposed to be on their way out as quickly as possible.

I had not planned to reach out to Nina tonight. I did not want to interrupt or distract her. But I opened our text thread and stared at it hopefully, willing a text to come in from her confirming she was okay.

After another ten minutes passed, I could not wait anymore; I texted Nina.

Me: Getting worried. Let us know you’re okay please.

Then a few more agonizing minutes went by with still no response.

And then, finally Alex got a call from Kayden.

He put it on speaker so that I could hear. His Beta reported the mission was complete and the six of them were safely in the car and on their way back to the palace. I heard Nina’s voice in the background and finally my heart was able to climb down out of my throat.

Nina replied to my text a little after that.

Nina: Sorry to worry you babe. Met some drama at the last minute. We’re all good though. See u soon.

Alexander left to meet the Gammas and their prisoner at the front of the palace. He was going to take the man to a holding cell and keep him there for some hours. We’d interrogate him later, after we were sure he was not intoxicated.

Nina texted to tell me she and Kayden were here in the West Wing.

Maybe because I’d finally relaxed, Alexis finally settled down. I got her into her crib and tip-toed out of the nursery. I took the baby monitor with me and went out into the hall to wait for our friends.

And then there they came from around the corner. Nina and Kayden. My jaw practically hit the floor at the sight of them.

Nina was in her stripper heels and a leather bondage getup. Kayden’s outfit was coordinated to hers. And he had blood spattered and smeared all over him. Nina had a little blood on her, too.

“What the hell happened to you two?! Are you guys okay?”

“Ryker,” Nina answered. “We’re good, though. Kayden only hurt his hand a bit.”

I hugged my friend, but I soon wished I hadn’t done that because Nina had remnants of a gruesome party all over her and now they were all over me, too: glitter, grime, spilt liquor, and someone’s blood.

I came to understand it must have all been Ryker’s blood. Because though he was drenched in red, Kayden did appear uninjured. Except for the knuckles of his right hand, which were hugely swollen.

Nina was wild-eyed, trying to bite back a smile and unable to keep her hands off Kayden. I’d felt her energy when we hugged and knew she was riding an adrenaline high. And feeling some strong feelings for Alexander’s Beta. Now that I knew they were okay, I was good with giving the two of them some space.

All three of us turned our heads when we heard the sound of Alexander’s distinctive footsteps approaching. When he turned the corner and spotted Nina and Kayden, his eyes went round as saucers.

“I’m good, boss,” Kayden called out to him. “It’s not my blood. We’re uninjured.”

“What happened?” Alex rushed his pace and joined our group quickly.

Kayden and Nina exchanged a glance.

“Met some trouble trying to get out of the club,” Kayden answered. “Nothing I couldn’t handle.”

“You were attacked.”

“It was my fault,” Nina started, but Kayden shook his head at her.

“Not her fault,” he said, his eyes still focused on Nina’s. “Some asshole stalker came after her. Had to be dealt with.”

“I want to know who this man is.” Alex cracked his knuckles, beginning to seethe with anger.

“Alex…” Nina peeled her eyes away from her bloodied knight in shining armor, dragging them to meet my husband’s hard gaze. “It’s okay. I don’t think he’s going to be bothering us again. He’s not going to be bothering anyone, for a while…”

I got a few hours of rest before the sun came up. Alexander was in bed with me when I woke, but he was wide awake. When I roused, he pulled me in close to his chest and cradled me against him, sniffing and kissing the top of my head.

“Did you sleep at all?”

“No. Too much to think about.”

I sighed. Now that I was awake, my brain was jumping right back into the game, too. Remembering and replaying the events of the night prior, and then thinking about the tasks that we had lined up for today.

I repositioned myself so I could meet Alex’s face with my own, and kissed him.

The longer our lips continued playing together, the more intensely I felt his energy. He wanted me. Badly.

Knowing that had me feeling wide awake in an instant. Because I wanted him, too. Needed him was more like it. I was exhausted, yes, but I’d been aching for my Alpha ever since that moment in the interrogation room yesterday. This kiss alone was enough to start getting me wet.

It gained intensity quickly, too. Alex pulled me up on top of him. Our mouths remained glued together while I straddled and settled down against his warm body. I pulled back an inch to catch my breath and he took the opportunity to kiss my neck and throat, giving me a fresh jolt of pleasure.

Alex’s hands found my hips and pushed them down into his pelvis. The delicious feeling of his hardening manhood stirring against my wetness was enough to force a moan from my parted lips.

And then the baby was awake.

She started in on that rhythmic “wah-wah-wah-wah” that told us she needed to be held, needed feeding and probably changing too. And the moment Alex and I had been close to enjoying was over.

Before Nina and Kayden had parted ways with me and Alex this morning, heading off together to her bedroom at the end of the hall, we’d briefly discussed a plan for our afternoon and evening. Nina committed to babysitting again while Alex and I were going to work together on more interviews.

I wondered if she would be feeling up for it, though. I hadn’t even gone on the mission, just stayed up worrying about it while tending to a fussy baby, and I was wiped out. And so, so grateful I could drink caffeinated coffee again, now that I was no longer pregnant.

But when she showed up at our door hours later, Nina appeared bright-eyed and full of energy.

She was positively glowing with satisfaction, too. I got the feeling she’d spent a pleasant morning with Kayden. Licking his wounds and showing her gratitude for his heroism.