

## Chapter 184 Time To Rise

Fiona

I was not surprised, but slightly amused, when after making love to me for at least an hour and then devouring a veritable ton of food, Alexander rested back on the couch in his study and promptly fell fast asleep.

I found a throw blanket and draped it over his lap. It was too small to cover much of his body, but I tucked it around him as best I could. Not like he needed the warmth; the fireplace was roaring, providing plenty of pleasant heat to overtake the morning chill seeping in from the big windows. I just wanted him to be comfortable.

I texted Nina to check in. She reported that the baby was still sleeping, having not roused since I left. That was good.

I watched Alex sleep for a minute. And found myself wishing I could snap my fingers and transport him into our bed. He looked very peaceful and I wanted to let him just keep resting. But I wanted to get back to Alexis, too.

I wandered over to the big mahogany desk that used to live in Alex’s former office, and rooted around for some paper and a pen.

I wrote out a note:

“Couldn’t bear to wake you, but want to get back to Lexi. I’ll be in our room. Come get some real rest in bed when you get up. I’m handling things with Brandon BTW. Love you. F.”

But when I went to deposit the note on the couch beside him, Alex woke up. Very suddenly, startling an awful lot at the muted sounds of my bare footsteps on the plush carpet.

“Hey. You okay? I’m sorry, I was trying not to wake you.”

“S okay.” His voice was gravelly. He cleared his throat, then made a face like he was tasting something sour.

I crumpled the note and put it in my pocket, and sat beside him.

“I was just about to head back to the room. Nina’s with Lexi. I feel bad about how much I’ve been having her do lately and want to go relieve her.”

Alex nodded. He’d been snoozing for probably less than ten minutes, and now was snapping right back to full wakefulness. He stretched his arms and rose, looking stiff as he did so. “Yeah. Let’s go.”

Alex made a beeline for the coffeemaker when we got back to our room.

I found Nina curled up in the nursery rocking chair, eyes closed, huddled under a soft blanket.

I saw right away that Alexis was actually awake now. But she was just lying in her crib silently, watching Nina sleep. I tried to approach the crib very quietly, but I woke Nina as I went.

I was not enjoying my role this morning of person who goes around waking everyone up from peaceful naps. But I was also glad I could send my friend away to her room, so that she could get some proper rest in a bed.

“Any update on Kayden?” was the first thing she said when she came to, rubbing her tired, puffy eyes. I noted with a wash of sadness that she had a lot of mascara smudged underneath them, telling me she had done some crying since I last saw her a few hours ago.

“Yeah. He’s here. Alex took him to his room. He mentioned they gave him pain meds that knocked him out. I imagine he’ll be sleeping for a while. At least several hours.”

Nina grumbled something indistinct. Maybe “okay.” Then groggily peeled herself out of her little nest and made for the door.

I looked down and saw that Lexi was trying to reach up for me. The little hands rose, straining, then fell. I hadn’t seen her do that yet. She was getting stronger. I picked her up and carried her to the bedroom, where Alex was already handing Nina a cup of coffee and sipping on one of his own.

“You two need sleep, not caffeine.” My tone came out a little more stern than I’d intended.

In response to this reprimand, Alex and Nina slowly lifted their mugs to their mouths and resumed drinking, in an act of accidentally synchronized rebellion.

It was either actually hilarious, or I was just tired to the point of giddiness. I started laughing so hard I snorted. Which made the two of them start laughing, too.

And Lexi as well. She laughed!

Oh, it was the cutest sound I have ever heard in my life! Just one quick little trilling giggle that left a tiny smile on her tiny lips. Her laughter was so wonderful. So full of joy. I think all three of us really needed to hear it. It lightened all our spirits.

And it got Alex to leave his coffee on the table and come over to snatch the baby away from me. He was hoping for more of the delightful laughter, but she only offered him more smiles and a little babbling and spit bubbles. He was happy enough with that, too.

Nina took off, taking her coffee with her. Alex took Lexi back to the nursery to get her changed and dressed. I stole his abandoned coffee and drank it myself.

Yes, I was trying to get him to lie down and get some rest. And yes, I was tired, too. But between the two of us, he was the one in greater need right now. It had been days since he’d slept for more than a few minutes. And he had fought a freaking battle last night.

I had also begun to feel energized with ambition. Now was my Alpha’s time to rise. It was time for him to do the job he was born to do and lead his country through a crisis. And my job as his Luna was to support him.

When I spoke with Brandon in the small hours of the morning, I got all the information that I needed. A time to check in with him this afternoon, a rough estimate of when Alex would need to be on camera in the evening to deliver an address to the public, and some notes about the main things he should cover in the speech.

I met my little family in the nursery. Alex had gotten Lexi dressed in a light blue onesie that matched her eyes, and he was holding her up and ever so carefully tossing her a few inches into the air before catching her. It was a very tiny toss, and he was well capable of performing the little trick safely. And also I could see that Lexi, with a big smile on her face, was absolutely loving it.

But I couldn’t resist pointing to the baby and saying, “Hey. That’s fragile.”

Alex just laughed.

“Gimme.” I reached out and he passed her over. I got hold of her and turned my eyes to my husband. “Alex, I really think you should go lie down and get some sleep now.”

He frowned, came over and kissed Lexi on the top of her tiny head, then looked down at me pleadingly. “I have to get some work done.”

“No. I have to get some work done. Brandon gave me everything I need to prepare for the press release you’re going to do in the evening. That is many hours from now – hours in which you need to get some rest. I, on the other hand, have a baby to feed and a speech to write. You, sir, only have some Z’s to catch.”

He was too tired to argue.

I thanked Lexi many times over for being quiet this morning so that her daddy could sleep. I strangely felt like she understood me.

I fed her breakfast, then held her on my lap while I ate something myself. Then I took her to the nursery and read to her for a bit. She tended to get sleepy after eating, and then I was able to get her back down.

I probably would have been more comfortable at my desk, but I felt like being close to Alex. He was dead asleep in bed. I reclined close to him with my leg resting against his, I suppose just to feel his warmth. And then I opened up my laptop and went to work.

I drafted a full speech. I don’t really know where the inspiration came from, but I just put my fingers on the keyboard and typed and typed. And when I read back the draft, I was pleased with myself and confident it was off to a good start. It needed a little polishing, but we still had time.

A few hours later, as my body was starting to ache from working in this nonergonomic position for so long, my husband stirred beside me. Before even opening his eyes all the way, he started sleepily pushing my laptop and notebook off my lap, replacing them with his roving hands.

I slithered down into a horizontal position, smiling at the pleasure of his soft, sleepy-clumsy touches. He opened his eyes and his lips drifted into a smile. Soon he was pulling me close to his body and nuzzling his face into my neck, breathing heavily and starting to give me chills.

Then, like clockwork, the baby woke back up and started crying.