

Chapter 197 Worth The Wait

Fiona

“Really? Okay. Fi and I will be right there.” Alex hung up the phone and smirked at me curiously.

“What?”

“That was Kayden. Jacob’s been down in the dungeon talking to Roland for the past few hours, and apparently... he says that he is ready to talk.”

“Oh. Wow. My idea worked?”

Alex shrugged, wide-eyed. “I guess we’ll see.”

It had occurred to me, while thinking over our problem all afternoon, that Alexander and I were simply not going to be able to force this already broken man to tell us his deep, dark secrets. And I was certain that if I tried to invade his mind again, I would find he’d rebuilt his mental wall since our last interaction, and maybe built it back up even taller and stronger than before.

Roland was a deeply troubled man. But he was also incredibly strong, in terms of his ability to keep his inner world a secret from those around him.

At some point I wanted to try to explain this to my husband. Though he did not seem to want to talk about it, I knew that Alex felt guilty about the traitor. Maybe for not finding him sooner, or perhaps for bringing him into the pack in the first place. But it was not his fault. This was not an ordinary man. He had a talent. He was capable of keeping the darkest parts of himself buried deep and hidden well.

But he was still a person. And there was someone other than himself that he was concerned about. There was something good inside him, something loving and selfless. That good thing was charred over with trauma and violence, a sense of betrayal and guilt shrouding it all, but it was a good thing at its center. That was all I knew, all I had been able to find out.

I’d been chattering about all this to the baby when it dawned on me. Our soldier-turned-traitor couldn’t be forced to talk, but perhaps he could be convinced.

Not by me, though. By someone he trusted.

The man across the table from me hardly resembled the young pack warrior I first met days ago. Roland was looking thin and pale, exhausted and depleted, and like he’d aged exponentially. And today there was a different look in his eyes, too, that told me something else had changed, too.

Yes, he was looking me in the eye intermittently. Without having to be told to do so.

Alex only asked one question to start the interview. Then Roland began to talk. He talked for over an hour and told us everything.

He had been working with Scarlet the whole time. She recruited him to enlist in Alexander’s pack and owned him from the very beginning. He told us where they used to exchange information. He told us the types of information she wanted. He told us what he told her.

A pack warrior at his level was not privy to anything confidential. But he was trained in many basic military strategies. Every single day for over a year, this young man had been participating in drills and learning about how the King Pack defended against vampire attacks by night as well as how they sniffed out and invaded their nests by day. And he had described these drills and strategies to Scarlet in great detail.

That was the bit that upset Alexander the most. I felt his anger like the heat of fire as he took in Roland’s words. Alex felt suddenly violent, a hair-trigger away from leaping into action.

I mindlinked my husband and told him to wait; there was more to hear.

He didn’t reply but I felt his anger instantly begin to cool.

Finally, the traitor brought his tale to a conclusion. He apologized meekly and quickly, surely knowing how distasteful it would be to sound as though he were justifying his prolific and heinous crimes.

He only said, “I am sorry, Alpha Alexander. I would not have done it if she had not threatened my brother. But I made my choice. I made myself a traitor to my kind. I tried to sever ties with the queen months ago, when my guilt became more than I could bear, but it doesn’t matter. The damage was already done. And I am finally ready to accept my fate.”

I met Alexander’s eyes and confirmed. “He is telling the truth.”

“Where are we going?”

Though he didn’t reply, I quickly ascertained the answer when I realized Alexander was leading me upstairs from our bedroom.

I had caught a glimmer in his eye when we left the interview room. He was interested in getting me alone, that much I knew. And now he was guiding me by the hand back toward that room that Nina had filled with roses and candles the other day.

He produced a key from his pocket, unlocked the door and held it open for me ceremoniously, bowing as I passed him. Then he followed me inside, closed the door, grabbed my hand and spun me around, pulled me close and bent to kiss my lips.

I chuckled quietly at the tickling sensation of his short beard when he moved his open mouth down to my neck. He ran his hands through my hair sloppily while rubbing his nose and mouth into the space behind my ear, his energy pulsing into my body and filling it with warm, red desire.

It was a reflex by now to try to keep myself quiet when my husband was kissing and teasing me and stealing my breath away. It was hard to fully relax like that. When I remembered that we were in a place where I was free again to make noise, I went limp in my Alpha’s arms and moaned under the pleasure of his frantic touches. He answered with a low, hungry growl of his own.

“You are so wise,” he whispered into my ear, surprising me.

“Wise?” That was not what I expected him to be thinking about right now. His hands were roving my backside greedily.

He took my earlobe into his mouth and sucked it lightly, making me gasp. Then he kept his lips close and resumed whispering, his hot breath hitting my saliva-soaked skin and making me shiver harder with every word. “Yes. Wise. Smart. Insightful. Fucking brilliant. I’d be lost without you, Fiona.” He punctuated his praise by kissing my temple, then my cheek, then my lips again.

“You are sweet,” I mumbled. Bad habits had me wanting to add something self-critical along the lines of, ‘You give me too much credit,’ but I stopped myself and said “thank you” instead.

He pulled away and looked down at me with an amused expression on his face. “You’re welcome.” A half-smile curled his lips. He paced backward and dimmed the lights, then took my hand again and pulled me over to the bed.

I climbed up into it, lounged down against the pillows and stretched, arching my back and reaching my arms high over my head. My body was feeling warm, my heartbeat steadily picking up its pace in anticipation of receiving more of my Alpha’s touch. He stood beside the bed and pulled off his jacket and tie slowly, looking down at me like he was taking in a sight he didn’t want to forget.

“You know, there was a moment, some time ago... the moment when I realized that I had to tell you that I loved you...” He unbuttoned his shirt at a steady pace.

I turned onto my side and looked into Alexander’s eyes. Something fluttered painfully in my chest as I listened to his words, wondering where he was going with this.

“You gave me some wise advice,” he continued. “You made me feel heard and understood. All I wanted to do in that moment was kiss you. That was before you would let me. I hated that. I hated loving you and not telling you. I don’t know why I let things go on like that for so long. I fucking love you, Fiona.”

My mouth fell slightly ajar. I managed to utter, “I love you too,” but it felt like an insufficient response.

He took his shoes, shirt and belt off, but left his pants on and sat down at my feet. “I can’t go back in time and treat you right from the beginning, like I should have. But I can worship you now, and that’s what I’m going to do. Like the brilliant, sexy goddess that you are.”

“Shit, Alex.” I was rendered increasingly speechless and senseless as he started moving over me and pulling my clothes off with slow, steady confidence.

He kissed me while his hands worked on removing my dress. The kiss was deep, deliberate and dominant. It had a soul full of hunger and longing. “I wanted this so bad for so long,” he growled, his lips brushing against mine as he spoke. “And it was worth the wait.”