

The Alpha King Call Boy

Chapter 209 Sleeping Beauty

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Alexander

The soft sound of Fiona's steady breathing brought me a feeling of calm and comfort. Rhythmic and easy, it was the sound of peaceful sleep. And that was something that she needed.

She'd lain down for what she claimed would be "a late nap" as soon as we returned from our evening bath and dinner date, but she'd been out cold ever since.

I probably would benefit from a long night of deep sleep, too, but that wasn't something I was going to get anytime soon. My wolf was in a wartime state of hyperawareness right now, and he would not let me become too vulnerable until the enemy had been eviscerated. If the way I lived through the last war was any indication, I would not be sleeping for more than a few minutes or hours at a time until this conflict was over. Hopefully, this time my adrenaline-fueled long-term insomnia would be a temporary routine. Hopefully we'd wipe out Caius's nest within the next week. Hopefully this time I wouldn't be awake at night with my guard up, ready for a strike at any moment, for years... decades... this time around.

My insomnia did have a useful secondary application at this time in my life. Baby care. Lexi seemed to be a night owl, usually getting her longest periods of sleep in during the daytime and resting only fitfully and intermittently overnight. Tonight, my sweet little daughter was wide awake, so we kept each other company in soft lighting and relative quiet while Fiona got her much-needed rest.

I ran my fingers along the spines of the books on the top shelf of Fiona's bedroom library. It dawned on me, as I paced around the quiet room with Lexi, that I perhaps I could use my sleeplessness for something productive and join my wife in her project of reading some of these parenting books...

I selected one of the books – a large hardbound one that I'd be able to set down flat, since I only had one hand – and brought it over to Fi's desk. I sat there, angling Lexi into the crook of my elbow. Admiring the tidy workspace, I tugged a gold chain to turn on the dim, caned glass desktop lamp.

The book was, according to the cover, about raising gifted children. I noticed right away that there were several different spots bookmarked with small, lilac-colored sticky notes.

Thumbing through to see what the bookmarks were for, I found that Fiona's tiny, tidy handwriting adorned the margins of scattered pages all throughout the book. Some passages in the printed text were also outlined or underlined. These lines had been drawn precisely, no doubt using the little metal ruler I saw in a pencil cup on the desk. Fi's notes were all about Alexis and how the text in the book related to her specifically.

Curious, I returned to the bookshelf and pulled out another book.

It was also heavily annotated.

I pulled a third—same thing.

I cast my eyes over to my sleeping wife, shaking my head in wonder. When did she have time to do all of this reading and writing?

Fiona did always have a book on her bedside table, I realized. I suppose she was sneaking in a rather extensive self-education about parenting in the small gaps of downtime she managed to find within her busy days. I was impressed.

I kissed my sleeping beauty awake in the morning, just as cerulean blue was starting to tint the cloudless sky beyond the window to portend a clear sunrise.

I hated to disturb Fiona, but in my defense she had been sleeping for over eight hours and I

figured she'd be waking naturally pretty soon anyway. I heard her breathing change the instant I pulled my lips away from hers. She could be a heavy sleeper, but Fiona was a quick riser. As soon as she was up, she was up.

"Sorry to wake you, Fi. Just wanted to let you know I'm going to my study to start working. You can go back to sleep if you want. The baby's down and the monitor's on."

"Is something bothering you?" Fiona asked groggily, before she even opened her eyes.

I guess something was bothering me, yes. I'd been actively trying to put it out of my mind for the past half hour while I showered and dressed, trying to shift my focus back to work. "You're awfully sharp, even when just waking up."

"Mm." She rubbed her eyes and blinked them open in stages, cleared her throat, rolled onto her side and squinted at me. "What's going on?"

"Nothing urgent, baby. Let me get you a cup of coffee if you want to get up and chat before I head out."

She sat up, nodding, then leaned across the bed and kissed me again. "Thank you. I'd love a cup. Give me just a minute." She combed her fingernails through my three-days' beard and gave me one more peck on the lips before hopping out of bed and making for the bathroom, apparently

feeling well-rested and bright-eyed as I'd hoped she would be today. I smiled as I watched her, pleased with the results of the work I put in last night to properly satisfy and tire out my Luna.

She met me at the table, wrapped in a warm bathrobe and carrying with her a pair of thick socks that she started pulling on as soon as she sat down.

"So what's up?" she asked. "What's on your mind?"

I pointed at her home office with my eyes. "I was perusing your library last night."

"Oh?" Her eyes followed mine. A small smile flickered on her lips. "And you came across something that... has you concerned?"

"First of all, let me say: I am impressed with all the notes you have taken in those books. When have you even had the time to read them all?"

Fiona looked down at her feet. "I have not read them all."

"Well, you have read many of them, from what I could see." Under the table, I reached out for Fiona's foot with my own and playfully slid off one of the socks that she'd just finished putting on. I succeeded in getting her to smile and look up at me again. She snatched her foot up into her lap and fixed her sock. "Anyway, all the stuff you wrote in the books, and in your journal about

the milestones, it just got me thinking more about what you told me the other night about Alexis.”

She nodded, understanding.

“I’m sure you have already thought about this yourself. But I have to ask, Fi. I have seen how your gift can impact you. It takes a toll on you every time you use let your guard down and lean in to using your ability. What if there are other triggers that can do that to an empath? You are a strong woman, Fiona. But our baby daughter... how are we going to protect her from her own abilities? There’s a lot of information in those books... but not about this.”

My stoic wife continued to bob her head up and down smally. “These are good questions. I have been asking them, too. But like you said earlier...”

An ironic smile tugged at one side of her mouth while she threw a glance over at our bed. “It is not urgent that we discover the answers right away. For now, all Alexis needs is love, nourishment and comfort, like any child. The rest, we will figure out in time.”