

Chapter 235 Fairies / Godmother

Fiona

I was standing in the nursery, watching Lexi sleep, when I heard Alex walking up behind me. He'd just gotten out of the shower a few minutes ago and was still fragrant, piney-fresh, and emanating wet heat. His hair was damp, and he was dressed in only a white undershirt and a pair of black boxer-briefs.

“What are you thinking about?” he whispered into my ear before planting a kiss just underneath it. He wrapped his arms around me and for a moment I let my weight fall back against the comforting heat of his massive body.

Then I turned around, looking from his eyes to the door and back. Meaning, of course, “let’s go talk elsewhere.”

We made our way back to our room quietly. I sat at the table while Alex poured two cups of his special, spiced coffee, which he'd been brewing while I was checking on the baby.

“So?” he asked once he was seated opposite me.

“I’m sorry if this topic is an unpleasant one,” I began. “But I’m sure you can understand why it’s been on my mind recently, as we prepare for you to take this journey. We, uh…” I took another sip of coffee. “We need to elect a guardian for Lexi, Alex. In the event that you and I should both…”

To my surprise, an old superstition caught hold of my tongue. It wasn’t that I was too sensitive to speak about the subject of death; it was simply that when I was a very small child, I believed a silly thing my mother told me and thusly trained myself never to do so.

She’d said it was dangerous to speak aloud about one’s own death, especially in the woods, where fairies hidden in the trees could overhear. Fairies, my mother warned, are werewolf-hating tricksters who would be unable to resist the temptation to jinx you if they heard you speaking about such things. They’d jinx you to meet your death, and too soon—perhaps even before that day was nigh…

Caught up in this unexpected memory, I could all but hear my mother’s soft voice in my head, clear as a bell, admonishing me quietly after I’d made an idle comment about where I might like to be buried someday, when I was dead…

“Fi?” Alex was squinting at me.

“Sorry. What did you just say?”

“You want to designate a guardian for Alexis,” he said. “A godparent, I guess?”

“Yes.” That guess was correct, based upon the well-established fact that neither my husband nor I had a single living, healthy and trustworthy family member to whom the task of raising our baby could fall, should – gods forbid – Alex and I both perish before she was grown.

I certainly had not forgotten the unpleasant tension that arose between us recently during that almost-fight about my mother and the Conrad situation. And it seemed Alex hadn’t, either. He was being quiet now, I think hoping I’d make the next move in the conversation.

But I was going to wait him out.

I had one person in mind, of course. But it felt important that the individual next in line to raise our precious child should be someone Alex trusted as much as I did, and not because I convinced him into it.

So then we endured some awkward silence together, in a kind of standoff.

I sipped my coffee till it was gone, living in the silence and thinking about our families…

Alexander’s mother was deceased, assassinated by my own father. My father had been killed and chopped to bits (or who knows what else?) by Alex’s sociopathic uncle. Alex’s father, violent and abusive when well, was currently in a coma. My grandfather could hardly keep his own self alive at this point, let alone care for another. And my mother was likely living as a captive to who-knows-what kind of stranger…

“Well,” Alex said, giving in first. “How about… Nina?”

I smiled. “Yes, I would trust Nina to do it. I did not want to push the idea on you, though. I hope you have had a chance to see, recently, what a wonderful person Nina is. What a truly good person she is.”

Alex looked genuinely confused, a reaction that reassured me.

Nina made an honest living doing something she loved, and was always working to better her life, unafraid to take risks and endure hardship in order to live on her own terms. But there are many people ready to look upon her unconventional lifestyle with undue judgement, I know this. Alex told me outright once he didn’t judge Nina for her work, but he also always got cagey whenever the subject came up, so I couldn’t be completely sure where he stood with it.

“I adore Nina,” Alex said, giving me a look like he thought I was being silly. “She’s always been there for you as long as I’ve known you. It’s rare to find a friend like that. And yes, as I’ve gotten to know her more recently, I have also seen how incredibly giving and caring she is. And she’s great with the baby, and I know she loves her. There’s no one else that makes sense at all, Fi. Nina is a perfect choice. I trust her completely.”

“Wonderful. So, we’ll ask Nina, then. If she would agree to be Lexi’s godmother.”

Alex nodded, smiling. “Good. Another thing about Nina, though,” he added. “I’ve been thinking that perhaps Alexis is old enough now that we could hire some additional help for her care? I love knowing that the baby is with someone we trust like family, but I don’t want to burn Nina out. You know?”

I nodded reluctantly. I didn’t like the idea of leaving Lexi with a stranger—I did not like that at all. But the same thought had occurred to me more than once already. It really was a lot to ask, relying upon my friend to babysit for us so frequently. I appreciated her willingness to do it while Lexi was so very young and tiny and vulnerable, but Alex was right. At some point I did need to start training someone else to help with childcare, at the very least to have a backup in place.

“I’m sure you can find someone we can trust,” Alex reminded me, smiling. “You have always been a very discerning recruiter, even before you developed your talent for lie detection.”

I liked this compliment coming from my former boss. It did an unexpected number on my ego and forced me to smile. “Thank you. For trusting Nina to be Lexi’s godparent, and for looking out for her, too.”

“Of course. That’s what you do for family.”

Alex got on the phone with Brandon and asked him to send over some paperwork, while I texted Nina.

It was still early. I asked if my friend wanted to join us for a nice breakfast in the dining room in an hour or so, thinking it unlikely she’d refuse an invitation to a good meal. Nina replied quickly.

Nina: I’m a little busy atm actually. Waiting for Kayden to come over… told him I wanted to talk…

I unintentionally let out a low whistle of disbelief.

Alex looked over at me with a raised eyebrow. I shook my head at him before returning my attention to the phone.

Me: I see. Good luck, Nina. I’m sure it’ll be fine! Lmk when you’re done, maybe we can do lunch instead.