

THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

Chapter 66 Going Crazy

Alexander

It was almost a quarter to midnight by the time Fiona got back to the palace.

She had kept me updated about needing to stay late at work and her expected arrival time home, just as I had requested. And I had plenty of work to do in my office while waiting up for her. But I simply could not focus on anything all evening. I kept absentmindedly glancing at my phone every few minutes, counting down to when I would get to see her again.

When Fiona left for work this morning, there was an uncomfortable tension lingering between the two of us, and I did not like leaving things like that with her.

I considered the possibility that I was overthinking things, imagining a slight where she had not intended one. It had certainly been an eventful couple of weeks in Fiona's life, and I knew she faced a great deal of pressure at work every day, even though an uninformed observer would never guess she experienced any stress at all underneath that careful façade of total composure that she portrayed to the world.

Maybe work finally was taking a toll on Fiona's mood. Maybe her coldness toward me was nothing personal. Maybe it had nothing to do with me at all.

My intuition told me that it did, though.

And I knew the second that Fiona crossed the threshold into our bedroom that something was still, undeniably, very wrong. Her facial expression was

calm and neutral, but I could sense her energy and it did not match her face.

“Hey,” I offered meekly. “Are you alright?”

She gave me a small, tired smile as she removed and hung up her jacket. “Yes, I’m alright. Long day, obviously.”

Her answer did not invite much response. I nodded, pressing my lips together, and watched patiently as she completed her highly organized coming-home routine.

“How are you?” she asked when she stepped back out of her dressing room, having put away her briefcase and earrings. “How was your day?”

“It was great,” I lied.

“Great,” she echoed quietly. Then she went into the bathroom and closed herself inside, leaving me looking at the back of the door with an unsettled feeling.

Sometimes our relationship felt like walking a tightrope. I wanted to show Fiona care and affection, but it did not always seem to be welcome. She was a private person, seldom ever speaking about anything personal. The times that she leaned into my touch, our connection felt so good and right, even comfortable and easy. But when she shut me out like this, it left me feeling hungry and rejected, whether or not I would ever admit such a thing aloud, to her or anyone. It was not a feeling I was comfortable with.

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I paced the room, dimming the lights, and Fiona emerged from the bathroom a few minutes later with her hair brushed out, clad in a silky black nightgown. She headed directly for bed, and I met her there.

Fiona rolled onto her side, facing away from me and fussing silently with her phone. I moved close to her to see how she would react, positioning my body right behind hers but not touching her yet. Waiting. And finally, she set her phone down on the nightstand and pulled a delicate chain on the bedside lamp to turn it off. Then, after only a moment's hesitation, she scooted her body backward in my direction until we

were touching. I took that as permission.

I removed my clothes and had one of her nightgown straps sliding down the length of her arm a second later.

Fiona reached back with one hand, sliding it across my neck and up into my hair, and started writhing the backside of her body against me in a way that made my body flash with energy and my mind blank out with desire. My hands went to her soft, round breasts. I grazed her sensitive nipples lightly with my fingertips and she let out a soft moan.

Suddenly impatient, Fiona started grinding her hips into my lap and reached down to guide me inside of her. She was dripping wet. A growl came from deep in my chest as I entered her, and Fiona whimpered, slacking her muscles and melting back against my chest.

I grabbed her inner thigh and tightened our bodies together, removing any tiny gaps of air that had separated my skin from hers, and bent my mouth and nose to her neck. She shivered as I inhaled deeply, relishing her scent, but when I pressed my lips to her skin, she tensed a little, which surprised me.

She clutched at my hip, then, and dug her fingernails in hard, inciting a small, sharp sting of pain that riled up my wolf and sent my body into overdrive. That must have been what she wanted, because her body started shaking as I dug deeper and harder into her. She tightened around me as she gasped and panted, moaning, and I came with her.

I slid out of her and started to lean back against the pillows, raised my hand and was about to start

stroking Fiona's soft skin. But then she moved her body away from mine, inching over to the edge of the bed. She reached it and stood, pulled the straps of her nightgown up into place and shimmied the length of it back down over her hips, then walked to the bathroom without a word, closing and locking the door behind her.

Again I found myself bewildered, staring at the back of that door.

I let my body collapse against the bed heavily and stared up at the ceiling once again. I heard the bathtub faucet turning on a few seconds later, and then the sounds of the tub filling up with water.

So apparently she was going to take a bath.

My head started to ache with a sharp, stabbing pain behind my eye sockets. I put both my hands against

my face, pressing my eyes with my fingertips.

I thought back over the brief sexual encounter we'd just had. And the other this morning. The way she was treating me after sex was starting to make me feel like I was just a big vibrator to her, an object she only needed for an orgasm. This was the second time she had done this and I could no longer lie to myself about it not being personal.

My mind raced, trying to figure out what had gone wrong between us over the past couple days. It just didn't make sense.

I felt like I was going crazy.

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THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

Chapter 67 | Owed Him Nothing

“Is everything alright, boss?” Kayden jogged up to me, sweaty and panting, squinting against the late morning sun.

I raised an eyebrow at him. “Why do you ask that?”

He shrugged, turning his body the same direction as mine. We stood shoulder to shoulder, watching our men sparring in pairs. “Just a feeling. You were pushing the guys pretty hard earlier.”

“Wish I didn’t have to.” I narrowed my eyes, watching the soldiers carefully. Some of them were slipping, their reaction times slow. Slower than was acceptable. Having not seen active combat in months, they were getting lazy and comfortable, forgetting that

we could be called back into battle at any time.

The pack was out of earshot, all of them groaning and grunting loudly with exertion as they attempted to out-fight each other into submission, but I lowered my voice and turned around anyway, leading Kayden a few paces off in the opposite direction.

“Think any of them can tell I’m distracted?” I asked my beta quietly.

“Doubt it.” He shook his head dismissively. “I just know you. What’s going on, Alex?”

I frowned, contemplating how to sum up the cause of my damaged mood. “Fiona.”

“Ah,” Kayden replied, as if he understood perfectly without needing a single detail. I appreciated that he did not ask follow-up questions, just waited, offering

an ear if I wanted to say more.

“Something’s wrong, but I can’t figure out what,” I elaborated vaguely. “I don’t know why but I just can’t stop thinking about it.”

My head was still aching intermittently. It struck me with another sudden blast of stabbing pain while we were talking. I closed my eyes for a couple seconds and pushed the sensation away. I can do that easily with physical pain.

The type of pain that Fiona was putting me through, though—that was something different. Something I had no practice with.

“Women are like that sometimes,” Kayden said. “I bet she’ll come around.”

The ambiguous attempt at reassurance was not

helpful, but I was ready to be done with the conversation. “And how is it that you know anything about what women are like?” I asked my friend with a sarcastic smile.

“Fair point.” He glared at me briefly with feigned offense, then laughed once and followed as I turned and began approaching the pack. “Anything I can do to help, just let me know.”

I nodded, having an idea. “Finish up here for me. I’m going to go talk to her right now. I won’t be able to focus on anything else until I do.”

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Fiona

I spent all morning talking on the phone, which meant I had very little time to eat. My catered breakfast was cold and untouched on the small table by the office window, and it was almost time for lunch to be delivered already.

Checking a list I'd scrawled in my planner, I crossed off the name of the company I'd just hung up with, and smiled. It had been the last one. I'd already made this same round of calls yesterday, but I liked to follow up my follow-ups.

I got up from my desk and went over to the table, removing the cloche from my neglected breakfast tray. The eggs were cold and unappealing, but my mouth watered at the sight of a flaky pastry stuffed with sugared berries. I was just reaching out to pick it up when my intercom buzzed.

I went back to my desk and pushed the button to

answer. “Yes?”

“Apologies for the interruption,” said the secretary who staffed our floor’s front desk. “But there is a... gentleman here to see you.”

“A gentleman?” I was certainly not expecting any visitors. “Who?”

“Yes... uh, Sir?” The secretary’s voice got quieter. She was turning away from the receiver to address my supposed visitor. “What was your name, Sir? Baron?” Her volume increased as she repeated, “Baron. Shall I send him to your office?”

A chill went down my spine.

Why was my faithless creep of an ex-fiancé here?
And how did he manage to get through building security and all the way up to the restricted top floor

without having legitimate business here? What could he possibly want from me anyway? These questions all flashed through my mind in a split second.

“Yes, send him in,” I answered quickly.

Baron was uncouth and unpredictable, and I did not want him causing any kind of a scene. Whatever it was that he wanted, I was going to try to handle him as discreetly as possible, out of sight of my colleagues and, most importantly, Conrad.

Baron was in my office a minute later, straightening out his shirt as he walked in. “Hey, Fiona.”

“What are you doing here?” He paused awkwardly just inside the door and looked, pointedly, at the chair opposite my desk, making it clear that he wanted me

to invite him to sit down before answering. I shook my head tightly to say no.

“Listen,” he said, “I’m real sorry to show up uninvited, but I had to talk to you.”

“Why not call me on the phone?” I stared him down, demanding an honest answer.

“Would you have picked up?” Baron gave me a pleading look, apparently thinking that he could manipulate my emotions by acting pathetic. But I knew this man, and any performance of pitiable humility he could affect, I saw right through it. “Can we please just talk, Fiona? Just for a minute, then I’ll leave you alone.”

I glanced through the tinted windows that lined the hall-facing side of my office. No sight of coworkers milling about, for now. But the lunch cart would be

coming through soon, stirring everyone up from their desks.

“Fine. You have one minute to say what you came to say,” I said firmly. “Go.”

Baron looked me up and down with wide eyes. Something about me seemed foreign to him, I could tell, though I didn't know what.

Finally he told me his sob story, the pace rushed to meet my one-minute deadline. It turned out that after Alexander swept me away from Baron's and my wedding, Baron lost his status as an heir. He was no longer regarded as a viable pack leader when he insisted on pursuing a relationship with Lily, his low-class “true love.” Then, Lily dumped him. (Hearing this, I had to work very hard not to smile.) And Baron's cousin, who he hated, was taking his place as Alpha of the Blue Moon Pack.

I glanced at my watch. I had not actually been timing Baron's speech, but I acted as though I had, since it seemed to give him some anxiety. "And what am I supposed to do about any of this?" I asked impatiently.

"Please, talk to Alpha Alexander for me. He can help me set everything right. He can get me my rightful place back, leading my pack."

My mouth fell open, letting a single, breathy laugh tumble out. I could not believe Baron's nerve.

When we were engaged, I tolerated a lot from him. But I owed this man nothing, now.

I was finally free to give him a piece of my mind.

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THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

Chapter 68 Seeing Red



I looked Baron square in the eye and shook my head slowly from side to side, no longer able to contain my feelings of annoyance, disgust, and disapproval.

“You are a piece of work, Baron,” I began, clenching my fists at my sides. “All of these things that have happened were no one’s fault but your own. You have no right to come here and ask me for any favor, let alone something so ridiculously undeserved.”

Baron’s jaw dropped. Apparently he hadn’t been expecting a negative response to this unwelcome visit and unmerited favor, which did not make a lick of

sense to me. Did he really think I would be happy to do this for him? Lobby on his behalf to my current fiancé, who might hate him even more than I do?

“Come on, Fiona,” Baron pleaded. “Please. You and I have history. We have known each other since we were children. Doesn’t that count for something?”

“Wow,” I breathed. “Did that history count for anything when you cheated on me the night before our wedding? Did it count for anything when you told me that I disgust you?”

He lowered his eyes to the floor. “I’m so sorry about all that, Fiona. But it’s in the past. Please, you can’t let hurt feelings keep you from setting things right for me, just because I said something stupid. My whole life is falling apart here.”

Another cheerless chuckle came spilling out of my

lips. "I can't believe you're able to say these things with a straight face. Let me be very clear. My answer to your request is no. And your minute is well past up. It's time for you to leave."

I approached Baron where he stood near the door, attempting to usher him out, and held the edge of the door with one hand, ready to push it closed behind him. But Baron did not move an inch.

"Please, Fiona," he continued, his voice growing whiny. "I am hardly asking you for anything. Please do this for me, for old times' sake. We did have some good times together, you and me, remember? Can't you just do this one little thing for me? It'd be so easy for you. All you have to do is ask him one little question."

"My refusal is based on concerns other than the level of difficulty required to ask a question." I glared at

Baron, daring him to say something like that again, to speak to me like I was an idiot. He'd regret it.

He was dumbfounded.

He was dumbfounded.

I began moving the door as if to close it, making very clear my desire for him to exit my office immediately. "You told me you would leave me alone after I allowed you to say what you wanted to say," I said plainly, my voice still confident and even. "I held up my end of that bargain. Now it is time for you to leave. Goodbye, Baron. Do not ever come back here again."

Catching sight of movement in the hall in my peripheral vision, I worried lunchtime had my colleagues up and about already, and grimaced as I anticipated the questions I'd be hearing from any nosy

coworkers that might spy my ex as he departed the office. Baron took the opportunity of my brief distraction to clasp my free hand in his.

“Please,” he whimpered yet again. “Please Fiona, be reasonable. Just talk to Alexander for me. I am begging you. Have some sympathy.”

The feeling of Baron’s touch was revolting. I tried to pull my hand away, but he held onto it tightly.

I clenched my teeth, suddenly so angry that I could not even make my mouth form the words to tell him to get his hands off me. I took my other hand off the door and started to pry the captive one free from his desperate grip.

Alexander

I hated to interrupt Fiona while she was working, but I

did know she took a lunch break midday and thought I might be able to catch her at a rare free moment.

I just had to ask her what was going on. I needed to know what I had done to upset her. Otherwise, I was going to be gritting my teeth all afternoon and evening, distracted, waiting and wondering how things were going to turn out when she got home from work, which might be very late once again.

It was a long ride up to the top floor of Crescent Ventures headquarters, almost ninety stories. My anxiety rose right along with the elevator. I stretched my jaw and swallowed hard to pop my ears as the elevator finally slowed to the last stop, and took a deep breath before the doors rolled open.

I gave a small, casual wave to the secretary at the reception desk that faced the elevator straight-on. She was of course familiar with me from my frequent, albeit not recent, visits with my uncle. She lit up when she recognized me, flashing me a bright smile and blushing before then averting her eyes in a hurry.

Heading to the opposite end of the eighty-ninth floor, I probably looked like I was on my way to Conrad's big corner office. Fiona's office was right across from the CEO's, though. That was my destination. I expected I would find my workaholic fiancée inside, toiling away on her important project.

What I did not expect to find was a man standing inside Fiona's office with her, holding one of her hands in both of his own.

I glimpsed the sight dimly through the tinted office

windows first, and it stopped me dead in my tracks. From the angle where I stood, I could not see Fiona's face. But I did see the man's, and I recognized him. It was Baron, Fiona's low-rent ex-fiancé.

Wishful disbelief had me questioning, for a second, whether I was really seeing what I thought I was seeing. I rubbed my eyes. Wondered if I might be dreaming, even. Because witnessing another man touching Fiona was feeling like a scene out of a nightmare.

Baron was leaning in close to Fiona and saying something to her very passionately. I could not quite make out the words from my distance, but I heard urgency in his whisper. And I also heard my own name, which did not sit well with me. My skin was crawling and my blood was starting to run hot.

When I reached the doorway, I got a clear, plain view

of the full nightmare scenario before the two of them noticed me. Fiona now had both her hands on Baron's.

That's when I started seeing red.

Fiona noticed me first, her eyes going big when they locked on mine. Then Baron wheeled around next, dropping Fiona's hands when he saw me. He looked shocked and guilty as hell, staring into my eyes with a look of terror that told me he could accurately read the level of anger in mine.

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[THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY](#)

Chapter 69 Careful What You Wish For





Fiona

Everything happened so fast after Alexander suddenly appeared, looking positively homicidal.

I had only seen this look in his eyes once before. It was when he was beating his half-brother Lucas into a bloody pulp, after the younger man made the mistake of disrespecting Alexander in public and then throwing a single, sloppy punch at his jaw.

My mind reeled. It made no sense that either Alexander or Baron was at my office at all. And yet here they were, the both of them at once, out of nowhere. And things got ugly fast.

Baron had been clasping my hands in a vice grip, like hanging onto them was somehow going to convince me to perform the absurd favor he was asking for.

Then, just as I was beginning to think some very unkind things about my ex, revolving around a theme of hoping for his ill fortune, the Angel of Death took shape behind him in the form of my powerful and possessive fiancé. As if we were living inside an old fable written to warn, Be careful what you wish for.

Alexander witnessed Baron's grip on me from a half-blind angle. When I saw the dark, stone cold look in his eyes, I understood immediately that Alexander misread the dynamic at play in the situation he had just stumbled upon. He thought something was going on between me and Baron.

Upon sight of Alexander, Baron finally released his hold on me, to my relief. But the damage had already been done.

Baron had just enough time to pronounce a single syllable, saying, "Al—" before his body was up in the

air and his voice turned into a scream.

For whatever reason, my brain found the time, amidst the chaos, to pointlessly wonder whether the word was going to be “Alpha” or “Alexander.”

Alexander had taken Baron by his shirt collar, pulled him out of my office and thrown him down the hall. He shot me a hard look before pacing calmly after his victim, who had rolled onto his side and was now attempting to get up onto his feet. Baron held a supplicating hand up toward Alexander as the much larger, much stronger man approached him slowly. “It’s not what you think,” he said, just as Alexander reached him where he lay. “Please, just listen,” he started.

But Alexander just kicked Baron in the shoulder, knocking him back to the ground. Baron grunted, landing flat on his back. He tried again to roll onto his

side, his legs scrambling frantically on the polished hardwood floor as he attempted to crawl away, but Alexander paced another couple steps forward, his affect still chillingly calm, and kicked Baron again, this time in the stomach, and with a lot more force, eliciting a dog-like yelp from the downed man.

With my eyes glued to the two Alphas, I had not observed the arrivals of all my colleagues, but as Baron cried out in pain, clutching at the center of his body, I noticed the flurry of activity coming closer. Everyone was here, watching the drama unfold.

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Alexander stood tall in the center of everything,

glaring down at Baron, apparently unfazed by the gawking crowd that now encircled them. Turning on his heel, he swiveled around and shifted his full attention to me.

Not a soul moved to offer aid to the man on the ground. They knew who Alexander was, and dared not interfere.

I had not made it very far out of my office, only stepped just outside of it into the hallway. Alexander locked eyes with me and began walking back in my direction, just as casually as before. His eyes were still dark and stony, looking almost black and deeper set than usual.

It was not exactly fear that I felt as he approached me. There was a little bit of dread that came along with the uncertainty about what was going to happen next.

But for the most part, I was just deeply, desperately aroused.

I was still mad at Alexander for his grand deception. But I was not thinking about that at the moment. I was also still in estrus, after all, and after bearing witness to this display of his strength and intensity, my body wanted Alexander now more than ever.

Alexander

“Come with me.” I grabbed Fiona’s hand and led her down the hall toward the conference rooms. The first one we came to was empty. I pulled her inside and closed the door behind us.

Fiona looked up at me, blushing. I could smell that she was turned on.

I was furious, still seeing red. My wolf wanted to take me over, pressing underneath my skin. It was all I could do to keep myself from shifting.

Next thing I knew, I was pushing Fiona up against a wall and pulling up the skirt of her dress frantically, wanting her badly. Wanting to prove that she was mine. She moved her legs apart as I reached between them. I started stroking lightly over her panties, and she circled her cold hands around my neck passively, licking her lips.

“Do you like that?” I asked her tauntingly, my lips close to her ear.

She breathed hard and whispered, “Yes.”

I shoved her panties to the side, then, and slid one

finger up inside her. Her back arched reflexively.

“How about that? Does that feel good?”

She bit her bottom lip and moaned, “Mm-hmm.”

I pressed a second finger inside her slowly. The way she gasped in reaction set me on fire. I pulsed my fingers in and out of her fast then, feeling her begin to shiver as I got her going.

“You love it, huh?” I heard myself saying. My voice sounded thick and unfamiliar. I was looking Fiona in the eye, but I didn’t see her. All I saw was the image of her and Baron together in her office, holding hands. And a horrid, vivid fantasy of the two of them naked in bed together. “Did that guy ever fuck you as good I do?” I asked without thinking, in a deep growl that seemed to come from somewhere far away. “I bet you’d sleep with any living man, though. What difference does it make, huh? As long as you can get

off, that's all you need, right?"

Fiona slapped me hard across the face.

Then before I could process what had just happened, she shoved my chest hard with both hands, sending me staggering backward.

"How could you say that to me?" she snapped. "What the fuck?"

My blood was still boiling, but it was starting, slowly, to cool.

I looked up and saw, for the first time, my usually cold and indifferent fiancée looking at me like she'd been wounded.

Fiona started pressing her clothes back into place. I noticed that her hands were trembling.

“I am worthy of respect, Alexander,” she said, looking at me and shaking her head. Her eyes were red and glassy. “And I am not a whore.”

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[THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY](#)

Chapter 70 She Hated Me



Alexander

I scrubbed a hand down my face, suddenly feeling like I was sobering up.

What I had just said to Fiona was terrible. In my head and in my heart, I believed none of it to be true.

I didn't know where that voice had come from. I could only think to blame the blinding red rage that took me over sometimes. My Alpha wolf's rage. It was a rare kind of strength that I actually prized, the thing that made me unstoppable on the battlefield and saved my life a thousand times over in the face of mortal danger.

But my rage had never taken me over by surprise like that before. I'd been able to control it since I was a teenager. Able to wait for the right time to let it out, only unlocking the box that held it inside when I had a deserving victim in front of me. Like a vampire that needed killing anyway, or an enemy that needed to be put in place.

Not Fiona.

She crossed the room and sat down in a chair at the

conference table, put her shaking hands to her face and began crying quietly.

I had gone too far. Let the darkest part of me spill out unbidden, let it hurt someone who didn't deserve it. I'd never cared for someone the way I cared for Fiona. I would never want to hurt her. Not when I was in my right mind.

I knew better than to try to touch her. I just took a handkerchief out of a jacket pocket and placed it on the table in front of her. She flinched as I did so, making me feel like I'd just swallowed a stone, full of shame and sick to my stomach. I walked to the other side of the room and sat down on the floor with my back against the wall, averting my eyes to offer Fiona some privacy, at least, to mop up her tears and compose herself.

I had never seen my perfect, tightly controlled Luna

looking so broken. But after only about a minute I heard her breathing becoming more even, and then the sniffing stopped abruptly. I dared a glance in her direction and saw that she was straightening her spine and blinking carefully, tapping the handkerchief against her heavy eyelashes from underneath to pat them dry.

The apology was just behind my lips, but I struggled to let it out, not knowing where to even begin. I had no words that felt sufficient.

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I wanted to assure Fiona I had come back to my senses. I wanted to promise her I would never say anything like that to her again. Tell her that I didn't mean it. That I had only lost control.

But I had already promised Fiona that I would take care of her. That I would protect her, make sure that she was safe and healthy. And in the span of less than ten minutes, I had betrayed that promise severely, becoming a person who had hurt her. Who was I to make more promises now?

Fiona huffed out a heavy exhale and pushed her chair back, starting to stand up slowly.

I met her eyes and found that the expression on her face had returned back to its default state, appearing neutral and indifferent.

She spoke again before I could.

“You have no right to interfere with my private life.” Her voice was flat now, devoid of emotion, and she stared down at me coldly, her blue eyes as shiny and

clear as ice. “In case you have forgotten, our engagement is not a love relationship. You only ever planned to marry me for the health of our child, and then you are going to divorce me after it is born, remember?”

I was lost for words. Fiona’s facial features appeared as unaffected as if she were holding a perfectly normal conversation on a perfectly normal day. She spoke as if she were simply stating plain facts. But I hated what she was saying and was absolutely stunned to hear it, especially after seeing the terrible pain my angry words had seemed to inflict upon her just minutes ago.

What she was saying was all true, of course. She was only repeating back to me now the precise words that I had spoken to her on the day that I stole her away from her wedding to Baron. I had publicly claimed her and her child as my own, but in private, made my

pragmatic intentions quite clear to Fiona. At the time, I had been certain I would divorce the girl as soon as I had the chance. I have never wanted marriage, and only offered it to her because I'd accidentally gotten her pregnant. It would have been dishonorable to neglect her, let her wither and die with my cub in her womb, starved of the strength they needed from me to survive.

I recalled a conversation I had with Kayden back then. He'd been telling me that Fiona was something special, a highly desired Luna that could find another mate in a heartbeat if I let her get away. He joked that once I got to know her, I might change my mind about divorce.

Fiona crossed the room slowly, pausing before she reached the door. "I never ask you about your

personal life,” she continued, still in the chilly tone of voice. “I don’t ask you where you go, what you do, or who you do it with, because it is not my place. And I don’t think it is too much to ask, to request that you afford me the same consideration.”

I rose to stand in a split second and took a step in Fiona’s direction. I opened my mouth to speak, but I was in total disbelief and struggled once again to find the words to say.

“Don’t,” she snapped before I could take another step closer to her, putting her hand up like a stop sign. I froze in place, feeling like a schoolboy being chided by a strict teacher. No one ever spoke to me like this. “Now if you don’t mind,” she said, “this episode has taken enough of my time already, and I need to get back to work. You should know better than anyone that I have a lot of work piling up on my desk, Boss.”

She flashed a tight, forced smile at me as my jaw dropped.

Then she pulled the door open and walked away, leaving it ajar behind her. I watched as she returned to her office, ignoring the stares and whispers of all the other workers on the floor, who were still milling about in the front desk area. I noted that Baron was gone.

So Fiona knew that I owned the company.

And she hated me.

After what I'd just done, I couldn't blame her.

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