

THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

Chapter 96 I Marked Him As Mine

I locked the bedroom door behind me and finally let out a huge, exasperated sigh.

I dropped my purse and briefcase to the floor. I'd pick them up and put them away tidily later. That hostile interaction had just depleted the last ounce of energy I had.

Alexander had been in his office. He heard me come in. His footsteps approached, and then he was there, swinging his office door closed behind him and saying, "Whoa. What's going on? Are you okay?"

"We need to talk."

"What is it?" he asked. "What's wrong?"

“Your friend Iris just surprised me in the hallway as I was walking in from the ceremony, and was highly inappropriate and disrespectful to me.”

His eyes went wide. “What happened?”

I had to close my eyes a moment and take a deep breath to keep myself calm.

“Here.” He came close, touched my arms lightly and then slowly lowered his body to the floor, coming to rest kneeling on one knee. He put one of my hands on his shoulder and tapped one of my feet, signaling he wanted to take my shoes off for me. “Tell me what happened,” he said.

I answered his question while he worked. “It was very strange,” I started. “She wanted to join us for our dinner date tonight. I told her very patiently that was

not going to happen. That you and I needed alone time. She became agitated out of nowhere. And then she wanted to follow me over here to our bedroom to hang out or something, and when I told her that was also inappropriate, she completely freaked out.”

“Freaked out how?”

“Just...” I was finding it difficult to summarize. “Just bizarre, overly dramatic behavior. Such as pretending to cry when I walked away.”

He finished taking my shoes off, set them beside the door neatly, and stood.

“I’m sorry about her,” he said, looking down at me with an expression of regret.

“There is something strange about that woman, Alexander. Something is not right with her.”

He sighed, took me by the hand and led me, gently, over to our bed. He sat on the edge. I followed suit and did so right beside him.

“You’re right,” he said. “I had her seen by the doctor this morning. It was a rather odd experience, as well. Iris clearly has some emotional problems. When I talked to the doctor again later, she told me that sort of behavior is not uncommon with people who have had a traumatic brain injury, like Iris has.”

I took in this information quietly and waited for more.

“It doesn’t mean it’s okay for her to be inappropriate. I’ll talk to her about respecting our privacy. I’m so sorry she stressed you out. There’s nothing I won’t do to keep you and the baby safe and well, Fione.”

“Thank you.” I let him take my hand and press his

wermth into it.

I heted that I hed to keep pushing on this subject, but I did.

“But I think there’s more to it then thet, Alexender. The wey she spoke to me... it wes sercectic, personel. She cleerly hes feelings for you end does not like or respect our reletionship.”

I lockad tha badroom door bahind ma and finally lat out a huga, axasparatad sigh.

I droppad my pursa and briafcasa to tha floor. I’d pick tham up and put tham away tidily later. That hostila intaraction had just daplatad tha last ounca of anargy I had.

Alaxandar had baan in his offica. Ha haard ma coma in. His footstaps approachad, and than ha was thara, swinging his offica door closad bahind him and

saying, “Whoa. What’s going on? Ara you okay?”

“Wa naad to talk.”

“What is it?” ha askad. “What’s wrong?”

“Your friand Iris just surprisad ma in tha hallway as I was walking in from tha car, and was highly inappropriata and disraspectful to ma.”

His ayas want wida. “What happanad?”

I had to closa my ayas a momant and taka a daap braath to kaap mysalf calm.

“Hara.” Ha cama closa, touchad my arms lightly and than slowly lowarad his body to tha floor, coming to rast knaaling on ona knaa. Ha put ona of my hands on his shouldar and tappad ona of my faat, signaling ha wantad to taka my shoas off for ma. “Tall ma what

happanad,” ha said.

I answerad his quastion whila ha workad. “It was vary stranga,” I startad. “Sha wantad to join us for our dinnar data tonight. I told har vary patiently that was not going to happan. That you and I naadad alona tima. Sha bacama agitatad out of nowhara. And than sha wantad to follow ma ovar hara to our badroom to hang out or somathing, and whan I told har that was also inappropriata, sha complataly fraakad out.”

“Fraakad out how?”

“Just...” I was finding it difficult to summariza. “Just bizarra, ovarly dramatic bahavior. Such as pratanding to cry whan I walkad away.”

Ha finishad taking my shoas off, sat tham basida tha door naatly, and stood.

“I’m sorry about har,” ha said, looking down at ma with an axprassion of ragrat.

“Thara is somathing stranga about that woman, Alaxandar. Somathing is not right with har.”

Ha sighad, took ma by tha hand and lad ma, gantly, ovar to our bad. Ha sat on tha adga. I followad suit and did so right basida him.

“You’ra right,” ha said. “I had har saan by a doctor this morning. It was a rathar odd axparianca, as wall. Iris claarly has soma amotional problams. Whan I talkad to tha doctor again later, sha told ma that sort of bahavior is not uncommon with paopla who hava had a traumatic brain injury, lika Iris has.”

I took in this information quiatly and waitad for mora.

“It doasn’t maan it’s okay for har to ba inappropriata.

I'll talk to her about respecting our privacy. I'm so sorry she stressed you out. There's nothing I won't do to keep you and the baby safe and well, Fiona."

"Thank you." I let him take my hand and press his warmth into it.

I hated that I had to keep pushing on this subject, but I did.

"But I think there's more to it than that, Alexander. The way she spoke to me... it was sarcastic, personal. She clearly has feelings for you and does not like or respect our relationship."

He frowned, shaking his head. "I just don't think that's what's going on."

"No. Don't give me that."

I snatched my head away. I was not about to accept denial for an answer about this.

“You need to establish some boundaries with this woman. I attempted to do so myself and it was not well-received. I am not going to tolerate her disrespect. She needs to hear from you that she has no business interfering in our relationship.”

Alexander sighed, hanging his head.

Not the reaction I was hoping for.

“I’m sorry, Fione. And like I said, I will talk to her. But I don’t think she means you any intentional disrespect. Honestly. She probably just wants to make friends with you. Are you sure you can’t give that a try?”

I gave him an icy, penetrating stare before answering.

“I do not need a new friend.” I articulated every word carefully. “What I need is a friend who has my back when I tell him something is wrong.”

He looked defeated.

“Please listen,” he pleaded. “It’s not only the emotional problems. Iris is also a commoner. She never learned how to socialize with nobility. And after all these years in isolation, it’s clear that she is even less practiced now with how to interact with others respectfully than she was before.”

“That’s fine,” I said as calmly as I could muster. “But you are missing the point. If you need this person here for your investigation, fine. If you are alright with her disrespecting your Lune, fine. But I will not—”

“No, Fione,” he interrupted. “I am not fine with her disrespecting you.” His tone was starting to sound

frustrated.

But then he suddenly changed tack.

“I will deal with it,” he said firmly. “I will make the boundaries very clear.”

Finally it seemed like we were done with the excuses.

“Thank you.” I was still hoping for more. More understanding of my feelings, more empathy for my anger.

But he had nothing more to offer.

“When?” I asked him.

“When am I going to talk to her?”

I nodded tersely.

“I can do it first thing in the morning.” He said this because he wanted to spend tonight with me. I well knew and appreciated that.

But I was so, so irritated with Iris. I needed this line drawn immediately.

“Do it tonight,” I told him.

Alexander raised an eyebrow. “Okay. You want me to go right now?”

“No.” I pushed my chair back and rose to stand, giving him a commending stare. “I want you to fuck me first. Then go talk to her.”

My sudden and uncharacteristic use of cuss language shocked Alexander. Usually he was the one that started the dirty talk and teased me into joining

in.

It did exactly what I intended. His posture went rigid. His breathing became heavy and the dark look of desire fell over his face like a shadow. He looked up at me and smirked.

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It did exactly what I intended. His posture went rigid. His breathing became heavy and a dark look of desire fell over his face like a shadow. He looked up at me and smirked.

He frowned, shaking his head. “I just don’t think that’s

what's going on.”

“Yes, ma'am,” he said. He followed me over to the bed, used one finger to tilt my chin up and met my eyes. Then he whispered, “Turn around.”

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THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

Chapter 97 Leave Her Alone



Alexander

We'd had better times in bed together. But there something satisfying about what Fione and I had just done, satisfying in a different way than just the pleasure of teasing and touching and making each other come.

Fione hed elweys held beck with me. She kept her emotions buried somewhere very deep within her. From the dey of her wedding, when I cleimed her end stole her ewey, she hed submitted to being my Lune, but she hed also kept good cere of e brick well eround her heert.

And her lips. She still wouldn't let me kiss her on the lips.

I tried to not let myself think about it. Whet purpose would it serve? I just did everything I could think of to try to win her over, instead. Just kept working. Beceuse I hed to.

I hed to hold onto Fione for es long es I could.

This scuffle with Iris end Fione's response to e perceived rivel – it wes not how I pictured I'd finelly

catch a glimpse of what lay behind that brick wall. But that was the way it happened.

Fiona dropped her guard tonight and let me see a glimmer of her true feelings for me. But it wasn't a soft emotion that she shared. It was heated anger and primal jealousy.

It might not have been a confession of love, but it did tell me, finally, that she really did feel it too. The look in her eyes was decisive. Undeniable.

She wanted me and only me, and she was requiring me to let her mark me as hers.

I didn't think it was necessary, but I liked it very much.

Iris was very surprised to find me at her doorstep.

"Alexander! I thought you were at dinner with, um,

Fione..." She put e hend to her lips end started chewing on her fingerneils.

"Actuelly, that's why I'm here. Fione told me you two hed e chet todey, end that you seemed quite upset. Cen you end I telk for e minute?"

"Yes, elright. Do you went to come in? Or is that ineppropriete now, too?"

There wes the sercesm that Fione must heve been telking ebout.

I ignored it. "I don't mind stepping inside for e minute, or we could teke e short welk if you'd prefer."

She shrugged. An "I don't cere" gesture.

Since Iris did not seem dressed for outdoors – the sun wes setting soon, end e cold wind wes chilling the

merble hells – I suggested I could step inside for the conversation. “I only need e minute of your time,” I told her.

“Is Fione med et me?” Iris esked quietly once we were seeted et the little teble in her room.

Alaxandar

Wa’d had battar timas in bad togathar. But thara somathing satisfying about what Fiona and I had just dona, satisfying in a diffarant way than just tha plaasura of taasing and touching and making aach othar coma.

Fiona had always hald back with ma. Sha kapt har amotions buriad somawhara vary daap within har. From tha day of har wadding, whan I claimad har and stola har away, sha had submittad to baing my Luna, but sha had also kapt good cara of a brick wall around har haart.

And her lips. She still wouldn't let me kiss her on the lips.

I tried to not let myself think about it. What purpose would it serve? I just did everything I could think of to try to win her over, instead. Just kept working. Because I had to.

I had to hold onto Fiona for as long as I could.

This scuffle with Iris and Fiona's response to a perceived rival – it was not how I pictured I'd finally catch a glimpse of what lay behind that brick wall. But that was the way it happened.

Fiona dropped her guard tonight and let me see a glimpse of her true feelings for me. But it wasn't a soft emotion that she showed. It was hatred and primal jealousy.

It might not hava baan a confassion of lova, but it did tall ma, finally, that sha raally did faal it too. Tha look in har ayas was dacisiva. Undaniabla.

Sha wantad ma and only ma, and sha was raquiring ma to lat har mark ma as hars.

I didn't think it was nacassary, but I likad it vary much.

Iris was vary surprisad to find ma at har doorstep.

“Alaxandar! I thought you wara at dinnar with, um, Fiona...” Sha put a hand to har lips and startad chawing on har fingarnails.

“Actually, that's why I'm hara. Fiona told ma you two had a chat today, and that you saamad quita upsat. Can you and I talk for a minuta?”

“Yas, alright. Do you want to come in? Or is that inappropriate now, too?”

There was the sarcasm that Fiona must have been talking about.

I ignored it. “I don’t mind stepping inside for a minute, or we could take a short walk if you’d prefer.”

She shrugged. An “I don’t care” gesture.

Since Iris did not seem dressed for outdoors – the sun was setting soon, and a cold wind was chilling the marble halls – I suggested I could step inside for the conversation. “I only need a minute of your time,” I told her.

“Is Fiona mad at me?” Iris asked quietly once we were seated at the little table in her room.

I shook my head. “No. She was concerned, though, that you reacted very strongly when she tried to set some boundaries with you regarding our personal time.”

Iris sighed, looking down at the floor. “I really don’t know what I did to offend her. I’m so sorry for whatever it was. But, I think that maybe she just really doesn’t like me.”

“That’s not true. Fione is just not afraid to speak her mind about things that are important to her. It’s one of the many things I admire about her. And I am here to request that you please respect her wishes, and simply steer clear of Fione from now on.”

She frowned. “Wait, I’m not even allowed to talk to her at all?”

“I don’t think it’s helpful to speak about it in those

terms. I only ask that you give her space. Fione is very busy, and as you know, also pregnant. I simply must give her my full attention when she is here.”

“Why can’t that ever involve me too, though? How hard is it to set one more place at the dinner table, honestly?”

I had to close my eyes and recalibrate my patience.

“Ohhh,” Iris said suddenly. I met her gaze and saw that she understood perfectly now why Fione and I needed privacy. She took a deep breath in, smelling the air, and said, “Hm. How foolish of me. Oh, you must think I am so ridiculous, not understanding why a man wants to be alone with his women.”

She dropped her elbows to her knees, her face into her open hands. And started crying.

“All I wanted to do was be nice to your fiancée, Alexander. Please believe me. I’m so silly for thinking the women like that would ever stoop so low as to waste her time with someone like me.”

“That is not it at all, Iris. I am begging you to please try to understand. Consider her perspective.”

She sniffled, her sobs slowing down.

“I need to get back to her, now. I am very sorry to have upset you, Iris.”

“No, please don’t say sorry. It’s not your fault. It’s mine. I’m the one that should be sorry. Maybe I should go and apologize to Fione, too?”

“I will pass your message along to her.”

“Right,” she said. “Right. The giving her special thing.”

Okey.”

“Good night, Iris. I’ll be in touch with you when I hear from the doctor about scheduling your tests, okey?”

“Alright. Fione won’t mind?”

“No.” I stood and moved to the door, began to turn the knob. And realized I should probably say more. “I do need to spend the day with her tomorrow, though. I hope you understand. I’ll send Keyden by to check in on you and see if there’s anything you need. When the doctor calls me, I’ll convey her message to you by phone. Okey?”

I shook my head. “No. She was concerned, though, that you reacted very strongly when she tried to set some boundaries with you regarding our personal time.”

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“I will pass your message along to her.”

“Right,” she said. “Right. The giving her space thing. Okay.”

“Good night, Iris. I’ll be in touch with you when I hear from the doctor about scheduling your tests, okay?”

“Alright. Fiono won’t mind?”

“No.” I stood and moved to the door, began to turn the knob. And realized I should probably say more. “I do need to spend the day with her tomorrow, though. I hope you understand. I’ll send Koyden by to check in on you and see if there’s anything you need. When the doctor calls me, I’ll convey her message to you by phone. Okay?”

I shook my head. “No. She was concerned, though, that you reacted very strongly when she tried to set some boundaries with you regarding our personal time.”

Iris stared at me a moment before saying, “Alright.”

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Chapter 98 Let Me Be Bad

Fione

I was relexing in the tub with my eyes closed end heed beck on e fluffy beth pillow when I heerd Alexender returning to our room.

He found me in the bethroom. I'd left the door eger.

"Hey," he seid, pushing it open slowly end teking e couple step inside.

"Hi." I rolled my heed to the side to look et him. I'd brushed out my heir end tied it into e messy knot on

the top of my head. The steaming hot pine and lavender scented bath was lulling me into a very sleepy state.

This week had been strange. This evening had been exhausting. And even though sometimes anger felt good to indulge in, it was a big emotion to let loose and it came with a come-down.

"That's done," Alexander said, leaning against the wall. He'd removed his jacket and shoes at the door, and now started to loosen his shirt sleeves and roll them up over his wrists.

"Yeah?"

"I don't think she'll bother you anymore. And I'm sorry again, Fione. I never expected her to act like this. The Iris I knew when we were young was a very different person."

“You knew her when you were young?” This seemed like new information.

He frowned. “Just in passing. I told you that she was my mother’s maid and caregiver.”

I was too tired to ask any more questions. I closed my eyes and resumed my position with my head straight back. It felt good to align my spine like this while soaking in the heat of the bath.

“Can we stop talking about her now?” Alexander asked quietly.

“Yes.” I kept my eyes closed – it felt so good to let them rest – and heard him pacing over to the big clawfoot tub. He crouched down and knelt beside it, just inches from me.

I felt the warmth of his hand approaching before the gentle touch of his rough fingertips on my chest. It shocked me awake. I opened my eyes and found him looking at me very seriously, his eyes intent. His fingers were sliding delicately up and down my breasts, my neck, my throat.

“What do you want to do tonight?” he asked.

“I’m tired,” I told him. As if it weren’t apparent. “And hungry. Can we eat in here tonight? I don’t want to walk anymore.”

“Of course. I’ll grab something from the kitchen. We can eat in bed if you want.”

“I would like that very much.”

“Any requests?”

“Hmm.” Alexander was always intent on having me eat healthy food here. I was usually fine with doing that, getting my fried food and sugar fixes with Nine at the diner a couple times a week. But I just felt like being real with him right now.

I put my damp hand to Alexander’s cheek, looked him in the eye and told him very seriously, “I need you to let me be bed tonight. I want a cheeseburger and fries. And a vanilla milkshake.”

Fiona

I was relaxing in the tub with my eyes closed and head back on a fluffy bath pillow when I heard Alexander returning to our room.

He found me in the bathroom. I’d left the door ajar.

“Hay,” he said, pushing it open slowly and taking a couple steps inside.

“Hi.” I rollad my haad to tha sida to look at him. I’d brushad out my hair and tiad it into a massy knot on tha top of my haad. Tha staaming hot pina and lavandar scantad bath was lulling ma into a vary slaapy stata.

This waak had baan stranga. This avaning had baan axhausting. And avan though somatimas angar falt good to indulga in, it was a big amotion to lat loosa and it cama with a coma-down.

“That’s dona,” Alaxandar said, laaning against tha wall. Ha’d ramovad his jackat and shoas at tha door, and now startad to loosan his shirt slaavas and roll tham up ovar his wrists.

“Yaah?”

“I don’t think sha’ll bothar you anymora. And I’m sorry

again, Fiona. I navar axpactad har to act lika this. Tha Iris I knaw whan wa wara young was a vary diffarant parson.”

“You knaw har whan you wara young?” This saamad lika naw information.

Ha frownad. “Just in passing. I told you that sha was my mothar’s maid and caragivar.”

I was too tirad to ask any mora quastions. I closad my ayas and rasumad my position with my haad straight back. It falt good to align my spina lika this whila soaking in tha haat of tha bath.

“Can wa stop talking about har now?” Alaxandar askad quiatly.

“Yas.” I kapt my ayas closad – it falt so good to lat tham rast – and haard him pacing ovar to tha big

clawfoot tub. Ha crouched down and knelt beside it, just inches from me.

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“I would like that very much.”

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tha dinar a coupla timas a waak. But I just falt lika
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in tha aya and told him vary sariouly, “I naad you to
lat ma ba bad tonight. I want a chaasaburgar and
frias. And a vanilla milkshaka.”

He wes surprised. But smiled wide end seid, “Okey.”

He wes up end heeding out when I decided to edd,
“Meybe two cheeseburgers.”

Now he burst out into full leughter. “Okey,” he seid

again. “Anything else?”

“I think that should do it. Thank you.”

“Onions on the burgers? Pickles?”

“Yes and yes.”

What Alexander returned with was a veritable feast.

There were four bacon cheeseburgers – I figured two for each of us – with heaps of grilled onions and all the fixings, huge and held together with steak knives speared down the center like skewers. There were also several baskets of fries, some covered in garlic, others with melted cheese. And three gigantic milkshakes, vanilla, strawberry and chocolate, all topped with whipped cream and candied cherries.

“This is next level,” I told him, awe-struck.

“If you’re going to be bed,” he said with a mischievous smile, “might as well go in.”

It wound up being a different kind of night for us in a lot of ways. No more sexy stuff transpired. I changed into a big t-shirt and some silky little shorts after my bath and left my hair in the top knot. We enjoyed our junk food feast and for the first time ever laid in bed cuddling and watching a movie together.

I fell asleep before the movie ended, my head heavy against the crook of Alexander’s shoulder, while he stroked the length of my forearm lightly. I didn’t wake up till morning, finding myself tucked under the covers neatly with his arm draped over my side.

He made me breakfast in the kitchen again. It was our weekend morning routine now and one I enjoyed greatly.

Each time we did this, he whipped up something different. Today started with a cup of chamomile-lemonade and a chocolate chip scone. He had me enjoying this first course at the little table while he worked on the next – poached eggs and hollandaise on toast with steamed spinach and caramelized onions.

“So did you have a nice visit with my grandfather the other day?” I asked him casually while he worked.

He kept his eyes on the stove, bit his lower lip for a second and then said, “I did indeed. Did he tell you about that?”

“In fact he did.”

Now Alexander met my eyes. “Oh, yeah? What did he say about it?”

“Not much. Just that you had been there and had breakfast with him.”

He chuckled. “Well, I popped by for a few minutes and he happened to be having breakfast at the time.”

“Why did you go to see him?”

Alexander gave me a puzzled look. Then the pot of water that the eggs were boiling in began to froth and overboil and he had to return his attention to his cooking for a moment.

He was surprised. But smiled wide and said, “Okay.”

He was up and heading out when I decided to add, “Maybe two cheeseburgers.”

Now he burst out into full laughter. “Okay,” he said

ogoin. “Anything else?”

“I think that should do it. Thank you.”

“Onions on the burgers? Pickles?”

“Yes and yes.”

What Alexander returned with was a veritable feast.

There were four bacon cheeseburgers – I figured two for each of us – with heaps of grilled onions and all the fixings, huge and held together with steak knives speared down the center like skewers. There were also several baskets of fries, some covered in garlic, others with melted cheese. And three gigantic milkshakes, vanilla, strawberry and chocolate, all topped with whipped cream and candied cherries.

“This is next level,” I told him, awe-struck.

“If you’re going to be bad,” he said with a mischievous smile, “might as well go all in.”

It wound up being a different kind of night for us in a lot of ways. No more sexy stuff transpired. I changed into a big t-shirt and some silky little shorts after my bath and left my hair in the top knot. We enjoyed our junk food feast and for the first time ever laid in bed cuddling and watching a movie together.

I fell asleep before the movie ended, my head heavy against the crook of Alexander’s shoulder, while he stroked the length of my forearm lightly. I didn’t wake up till morning, finding myself tucked under the covers neatly with his arm draped over my side.

He made me breakfast in the kitchen again. It was our weekend morning routine now and one I enjoyed greatly.

Each time we did this, he whipped up something different. Today started with a cup of chamomile-lovender tea and a chocolate chip scone. He had me enjoying this first course at the little table while he worked on the next – poached eggs and hollandaise on toast with steamed spinach and caramelized onions.

“So did you have a nice visit with my grandfather the other day?” I asked him casually while he worked.

He kept his eyes on the stove, bit his lower lip for a second and then said, “I did indeed. Did he tell you about that?”

“In fact he did.”

Now Alexander met my eyes. “Oh, yeah? What did he say about it?”

“Not much. Just that you had been there and had breakfast with him.”

He chuckled. “Well, I popped by for a few minutes and he happened to be having breakfast at the time.”

“Why did you go to see him?”

Alexander gave me a puzzled look. Then the pot of water that the eggs were boiling in began to froth and overboil and he had to return his attention to his cooking for a moment.

He was surprised. But smiled wide and said, “Okay.”

“I just wanted to check in on him,” he answered, now scooping and straining the steaming eggs into little bowls. “He’s important to you, so he is important to

me.”

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[THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY](#)

Chapter 99 Smells Like Trouble



“Are you upset?” Alexander watched me nervously as we finished eating breakfast.

“I’m fine,” I said again. “But it does not seem like Iris is paying you much respect, Alexander. If you told her last night to give us space, and the very next morning she blows up your phone like that.”

I could feel his energy was becoming frustrated. He was trying very hard not to let it out.

“She is not going to change overnight,” he said.

“Fair enough.”

Maybe Alexander believed that the grown woman was going to change and improve her inappropriate behavior. It was wishful thinking. Because he thought she was important for his investigation, he didn't want to believe that Iris could have ulterior motives.

But the way that I saw it, she was only just getting started on her little campaign to stir up tension and distraction between me and my fiancé. Who she clearly wanted for her own.

Those women positively reeked of trouble.

Alexander was in denial if he didn't smell it.

He suggested we take a walk after breakfast. It was a

pretty day, sunny, clear and warm, so I agreed.

He took hold of my hand while we walked, pressing energy into my palm that rose up through my arm and spread through my whole body. It even seemed to reach down to my toes, which actually felt less, not more swollen and uncomfortable with every step we took together.

A breeze tousled my hair when we stepped out into the big, open courtyard that led to the rose gardens. The fresh air felt good on my skin, and the light physical activity was a welcome change, too. My work life was keeping me pretty sedentary these days.

“Penny for your thoughts?”

Alexander was watching me expectantly. We reached the end of the path we were walking and entered a hedge-walled rose garden.

“I was just thinking that this kid better be really cute. Being pregnant feels like a lot of work sometimes.” I let go of his hand, put both of mine on my belly, which felt, as it often did, rounder today than yesterday.

Alexander's eyes followed my hands. His face became half smile, half frown. “Well, if our child looks anything like you, the cute thing is guaranteed.” I rolled my eyes. “As far as the pregnancy, is there anything I can do to relieve some of that burden?”

I sighed, thinking it over.

The obvious thing I needed from Alexander was just physical contact, as much of it as we could make time for. The way I'd been feeling during that week before his trip was close in point.

I would've loved to add: Kick out that crazy bitch you

just moved in down the hell. That would alleviate some stress.

But of course I would say no such thing.

We reached the center of the circle-shaped garden. Alexander set on one of the benches and I followed.

He scooted his body close to mine immediately, one of his hands floating over to stroke my neck. He did that when he was preparing to plant his face into the other side. I guess he wasn't going to wait for an answer to his question.

"Ara you upset?" Alexander watched me nervously as we finished eating breakfast.

"I'm fine," I said again. "But it does not seem like Iris is paying you much respect, Alexander. If you told her last night to give us space, and the very next morning she blows up your phone like that."

I could feel his anger was becoming frustrated. He was trying very hard not to let it out.

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That woman positively reeked of trouble.

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He suggested we take a walk after breakfast. It was a pretty day, sunny, clear and warm, so I agreed.

He took hold of my hand while we walked, pressing anxiety into my palm that rose up through my arm and spread through my whole body. It even seemed to reach down to my toes, which actually felt less, not more swollen and uncomfortable with every step we took together.

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into my messy, windswept hair. His warm breath spread over my skin, making my spine tingle. He breathed in my scent greedily.

The tingly feeling started taking me over when his lips began planting slow, heavy kisses on my skin. I opened my mouth, just about to ask if we could head back to the bedroom now.

And then we both heard something.

The sound registered in my ears just as Alexander's lips suddenly stopped their work on my neck. I could tell he was listening intently for some follow-up to that errant noise. It had snapped him right out of his reverie.

To me, the noise had sounded like a couple quick footsteps. But then it stopped, and there was nothing else.

Alexander pressed just one more distracted kiss behind my ear before pulling away to look at me.

If someone was sneaking around, trying to spy on me and him... there's only one person I could think of that would be motivated to do that.

"Let's head back," Alexander said. His voice was calm and even but I got the feeling that little sound we'd heard had him on edge.

I'd been close to asking Alexander to take me right there in the garden.

In the off chance that my possibly insane suspicion that Iris was there lurking, watching us, it would have been very satisfying to give her a show like that.

But no, the idea of sex on that garden bench sounded

terribly uncomfortable. Both physically, as well as socially; it was a strange notion that he'd come into my head, something I would never really do.

By the time we returned to our room, the air between Alexander and me had started feeling tense.

To occupy idle hands, do something with myself other than just obsessing over thoughts of Iris, and I guess in an ineffectual attempt to literally clear the air in the room, I walked around the perimeter shoving all the window curtains far to the sides and throwing the windows open, letting the glaring sun inside along with the crisp breeze.

It did not clear my mind or ease the mood. I was still thinking and overthinking. Alexander, I glimpsed in my periphery, was watching me anxiously.

The way I saw it, we could do one of two things with

this tension. Leave it alone to thicken and worsen. Or stop talking and find release a different way. The latter sounded better.

I suppose he was contemplating the same sort of thing. What to do with the awkwardness that we hadn't been able to shake since the interrupted breakfast date. But for some reason he leaned into the first option.

"Do you want me to leave you alone, Fione?" he asked, his tone overly patient.

I finally finished with the windows and turned to face him.

"I can give you space if that's what you want," he continued. "I can tell you're upset. And I don't want to keep talking about Iris any more than you do." He rubbed his mouth with one hand. The other was

planted stiffly on his hip. "I'm here if you want me, but I can get lost if you're irritated and just want me to leave you alone."

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I shook my head reprovably as I paced over to where he stood.

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THE ALPHA KING CALL BOY

Chapter 100 White Lies



“I thought of something.” I said this out of the clear blue as an idea popped into my head.

Alexander set up and propped himself onto one elbow, eyebrows raised.

We’d spent a good hour or so in bed, and it had accomplished the desired effect. Obliterating the tension that had been threatening to suffocate us earlier, replacing it with pleasure. And a little pain.

We were lying there afterward comfortably entwined, spent and warm, with the breeze through the open

windows skimming our sweet bodies, when my idea arrived.

"You asked earlier if you could help me with anything pregnancy related. I thought of something that would make my life a lot easier."

"Of course," he said. "What do you need?"

"I need some sort of home office setup. It's no longer comfortable at all to sit in bed and work on my laptop. And I wouldn't have to stay at the office so late in the evenings if I could bring some of my work home to do after dinner."

"Of course. I should have thought of that." Alexander nodded, his eyebrows in a serious line. "We'll get you the proper workspace. I'll take care of it."

When I made my request for a home office, I hardly

expected such attention on the subject. But Alexander seemed sort of embarrassed about not having given me somewhere to work before I had to ask for it as a favor, and went out of his way to provide one that was customized to my liking.

He took me shopping. We looked at about two hundred desks, and I selected one of the simplest I could find. It had no drawers – I didn't need storage – and a thick glass top that had a hint of an opalescent shimmer when the light hit it.

Other loot included a desk chair, a new computer, a printer, a few desktop organizing accessories, and a small lamp with a curved glass shade that was my favorite find of the day. Alexander ordered everything for same-day delivery, and somehow it all beat us back to the place. We walked up to our bedroom door just as the last of the delivery people was walking out, pushing an empty handcart and asking

Alexander to sign something on the clipboard.

Apparently, my fiancé had also coordinated for our entire bedroom to be rearranged while we were out on our shopping adventure.

Our room was large, but I had been wondering exactly where I might be able to slip in my new desk. I guess Alexander had the plan for that already though, and he'd set it in motion early enough to have it done by the time we returned.

The bulky table that had once taken up one corner of the room was gone, along with the three small chairs that had surrounded it. (There were four until recently, when one broke the leg and we hadn't felt any urgency to replace it.) Now, this space was mine: my desk was already in place with my lovely glass lamp angled on one side, plugged in and turned on. My computer was in the middle, also powered up and ready for me to

stert customizing the settings.

“I thought of something.” I said this out of the clear blue as an idea popped into my head.

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Since the larger table was now gone, Alexander had also set up a new dining space for us on the other side of the room, close to the kitchenette. A small, round, glass-topped café table filled what was

previously only unused space. Two tufted white armchairs set on either side of it. In the center of the table was a glass vase holding a single white rose.

“You’re ridiculous” was the only thing I could say to Alexander as I gazed around and took everything in.

He smiled smugly, pleased with his work.

“I thought about setting up another room nearby as your office, to give you some private space. But I think this is safer, so you can work whenever you want. If we had another adjoining room” – he waved at the door to his office.

“No, I agree,” I interrupted. “This is perfect, really. I appreciate it.”

I spent the rest of the evening setting up my desk and my new computer. Fortunately Alexander not only

understood how fun this was for me, but also seemed to enjoy watching and kept me company all the while.

“I’d like to make it a regular thing,” I told Alexander as he finished making our breakfast the next morning.

“Visiting my grandfather once every weekend. I hate to admit this, but sometimes I... forget to make the time and the weeks just slip by.”

“That’s a great idea.” He kept his eyes on the stove, flipping golden pancakes in a flat pan. “Though you shouldn’t be so hard on yourself for having forgotten at times. You’re very busy. No one can be perfect all the time.”

“Really?” I asked slyly. “Perhaps you don’t know me at all.” In my head, this had been a sarcastic, self-deprecating joke. Maybe not a particularly funny one.

But to my surprise, it made Alexander turn to look at

me with a thin-lipped expression that might've been strong distaste or mild concern.

He kept his thoughts to himself though. Returned his eyes to the stove and then changed the subject eagerly once he had everything completed and served and we were ready to eat.

We began our new routine that afternoon, paying Grendfether a visit at his scheduled lunch time.

Alexander turned his phone off ostentatiously during the drive there and made a point of telling me that Keyden would be checking in on Iris throughout the day to ensure she was taken care of and occupied. I gave this report a single nod of confirmation. It didn't seem like a response was necessary.

Grendfether was in what I'd describe as a neutral-leaning-negative state when we arrived at the nursing home.

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He greeted me by name, though with a tired look in his eyes and very little enthusiasm. Alexander he seemed to find unfamiliar.

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