

The Alpha King's Claim

Chapter 127 A Brotherly Bond

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Aero

Choosing to cool myself first before going to Elijah's manor, I took a quick bath and changed my coat and pants into a lighter clothing of t-shirt and jeans. Tossing my old clothes into the laundry basket was me tossing away all my insecurities and sadness I had bundled up since a child. Now that I know Olivia isn't my mother, all my memories of her became nonexistent. She didn't matter to me anymore. She didn't occupy a space in my heart.

That vacant space remained a gaping hole. When I find my real mother and if I find her, that's the time I could decide if she belonged to this space. She was yet to prove her worth to me. She was yet to explain her side of the story.

If I had uncovered this truth before Serena arrived in my life—the past me who declared absolute hatred to all females—then I wouldn't be this open to accepting my real mother back.

I thought of Serena, of how she'd want us to reconcile. I thought of my children too, of how they would want a grandmother and how they would want to be spoiled by her. This was all for them.

Never mind my real mother's love and affection for me. I didn't need it. I have Serena with me.

An hour later, I arrived in Elijah's front garden.

'I'm here. Are you dressed?' I mind-linked him, making sure that the nude fiasco in his penthouse suit wouldn't happen again.

'Where are you, brother?' he answered.

'At your garden where you have the statue of the Greek Goddess of Love.'

I stared at Aphrodite in her half naked form. I remembered this one when Elijah and I visited our Greek island before our father died. He saw this statue at a local market and wanted to buy it that instant. I thought he'd place it in our vacation house, but no. He wanted it in his manor in Phanteon. Since he didn't want to damage it during his travel back to our realm, he had me carry and teleport it instead.

Of course, since I was a supportive older brother, I agreed without complaining.

We had a great relationship, Elijah and I, and if given a chance to start my childhood life all over again, despite Olivia's and her handmaidens' ghastly treatment toward me, I would still choose this life because Elijah was with me. We supported each other. We were true brothers as far as I'm concerned.

“Brother,” his voice behind me pulled me out from my musings. I turned around and faced him. He was already sporting a grin. “Are you here to pray to the Love God? Aren’t you already full of love because of Serena? Or did you two fight, hence the reason for your grumpy attitude earlier.”

He was teasing me again.

“Elijah, no, Serena and I would never fight, unless it’s in the bed,” I answered, adding humor in my words to equal his.

He chuckled and joined me in my spot.

“So what got you so stingy earlier?” His profile stared at the statue, his eyes twinkling with delight as he ogled it. Even when we’re alone, he still continues this happy-go-lucky facade of his. There were times when his acting cracks, and I get to see his serious side, but he easily regains control as if it didn’t happen.

This time, I wanted him to bare himself to me. I wanted that mischievous grin gone. I wanted to see the other side of him, the lonely Cedric Elijah, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Phanteon.

“I actually don’t know where to start,” I replied, and it was the truth.

I wanted to interrogate him. I wanted to bombard him with questions, but I also didn’t want him to feel threatened or examined. I wanted to approach him with caution. The matter of us not

brothers was a sensitive issue after all. But, fuck, I didn't know how to open the topic.

"You can start by giving me that book you're holding," he pointed out. "It seems to be the cause for your malady."

Oh, yes. Damn. In my state of confusion, I forgot that I brought my father's diary with me.

Without a second thought, I handed it to him and he took it. He gave me a lopsided smile, probably thinking I was acting weird.

"Ah, Elijah, be forewarned," I said before he could open it. "That's our..."—I cleared my throat—"my father's diary."

"Then this is going to be an interesting read." He strode toward the nearest marble bench and sat on it just as he opened the book.

My father's writings were lengthy. It started with him becoming the first alpha king and how he managed his first years as an absolute ruler. He mentioned about his ideals, his visions and goals—basically the same as mine minus the woman-hating—but I had a feeling he wrote these entries before he became drowned with his obsession with Olivia, because initially, he wrote of patriotism, of caring for his people and establishing an equal government to govern them.

Certainly, it contradicted to after he went insane. There was nothing equal about eradicating the

crescent moon marks, flipping the mating beliefs and killing or imprisoning his people just because of insubordination.

I think Olivia poisoned his mind and unfortunately, he allowed himself to get poisoned.

What a big fool.

Standing near the statue still, I watched as Elijah read on, finishing page by page until he finally reached the part where I inserted a bookmark. It was about Olivia, about my father's betrayal of her trust, about me, about her vices and promiscuity, her eventual pregnancy of Elijah, her continued promiscuity despite having a baby to take care of, and about her finally finding a true mate and refusing to reject him.

And lastly, about my father killing her.

Elijah's smile disappeared and was replaced with an expression close to remorse and sadness.

He closed the book. I neared him. He said nothing, so I broke the tense silence.

"Cedric." This time, I used his second name. He was sensitive to be called this way. As far as I know, he had permitted no one to use it except just recently when Rhea appeared in his life. She was allowed this privilege since, as it turned out, she's his true mate.

Elijah remained silent. He refused to look at me and just continued to hang his head low.

“Cedric, do you know any of thi—”

“You know what is funny?” he interrupted and looked up at me with eyes close to spilling tears—

this was a first and seeing this on him clenched my insides—“I always thought I would get hurt

when I discover the truth, but somehow, right now, I don’t feel a thing. Maybe because I moved

on? Maybe because Rhea is with me? Maybe because the truth didn’t matter to me anymore?”

This time, it was I who refused to meet his gaze.

“I’m sorry, Cedric. Here I assumed you knew about the truth.”

“I didn’t, but I had my suspicions,” was his reply. “But even if I knew the truth, I would never betray you or your trust in me, Aero.”

He placed the book on the bench and leaned forward, touching his elbow to his knees while he clasped his hands as if he was in prayer.

“I never coveted the throne. All I want is to serve you. Be your younger brother. I am content with our bond.”

That felt good to hear. I always trusted Elijah and knowing the truth about our family tree didn’t change it one bit.

“You said you had suspicions. How?” I questioned. It was to satisfy my curiosity and because I wanted to understand him better.

“A random man—one of my mother’s whore—approached me when I first shifted at fourteen,” he began. “He was an omega of the Jaxis Pack. He said he could feel our bond and said he was my father. I didn’t believe him that time. He kept on visiting the castle under the pretense of business, but I refused to see him. Months later, his visits stopped. I didn’t mind that time. I was confident he was just trying to con me.”

“You felt the bond too?”

He hissed. “I refused not to recognize it, but I was vigilant ever since.”

I could see the look of regret in his eyes now. It must have been painful for him to confirm now that that omega was his true father. I wanted to console him, but decided not to. He needed to process the revelation all by himself. Needed to adjust to this change the way I did with my real mother and Olivia.

“Is this the reason why you pushed me into marrying Serena that time?” I changed the subject instead. “Because you want me to hold on to the alpha king position?”

“Yes,” was his simple reply. No pretense. Nothing at all. I understood his actions without needing further explanation.

“Aero, you are the best alpha king this kingdom has,” he reasoned anyway. “I can’t possibly equal

you in skills or experience, much less my bloodline. I don't deserve to become king and like I said, I don't desire the crown."

Elijah contributed the most in my life with Serena. He played a major part in our wedding, in our relationship, and in my choices while I was still blind with hatred. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be enjoying a blissful life with my wife right now. He needed to give himself more credit, and I was here to make him see he is worth to me than the kingdom, and that the kingdom would be equally blessed to have him.

"The burden of being that woman's son is great," he continued, still sulking. "Sometimes I get so paranoid that all I see in people's eyes is condemnation and hatred. I feel ashamed to be her blood.

I hide my true feelings with a smile and with a carefree attitude. It has worked well for me all these centuries. It was my wall of safety. Plus, I didn't want you to worry about me. You had enough in your list already."

He leaned back and met my unprejudiced gaze. His eyes this time brightened, as if he just found redemption.

"But Rhea...she saw through my ruse and accepted me as me. She gave me hope for a brighter future."

“I couldn’t agree more,” was my reply. “There’s always a brighter future ahead, Cedric.”

He picked up the diary, stood up and neared me.

“This diary of King Gideon confirms it. I am no crown prince of Phanteon,” he said with peaceful resignation. “I am not your blood, Aero. I am not your stepbrother.”

“To me, you are my brother,” I grounded, “and you will always be until the end of time, Cedric.

Elijah.”

Snatching the book away from his grasp, I threw it in the air and it landed conveniently in the fishing pond meters away from us. Good riddance.

I pulled him for a brotherly embrace thereafter—a first for us as adults and he, in response, didn’t squirm. He embraced me back.

“You don’t need to wear your mask anymore. Our people will accept you like how they accepted me and my flaws.” I pulled back, patted his shoulder, and continued. “Brother, let’s live on. Fuck the past. Fuck our fucking mothers and fathers. Let’s focus on the present and what’s ahead of us now: our precious wives and our many children.”

His gloomy face lightened, and he released a soft chuckle.

“How could I refuse if you put it like that, brother.” There. My younger brother is back.

“Good that you’re with me,” I grinned. “Because I can’t possibly run this kingdom without you.”

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