

## Luca's Inferno by Karima Sa'ad Usman Chapter 10

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#### 10 Transitioning

##### Emma.

I could not believe what had just happened. Declan's look-alike, Luca, was a mob boss, and he had just paid four million Leer for my sake. I was stunned. Ashley and I walked through the hallway. We tried the service elevator, and when it did not come, we took the stairs.

"What did you do to have that man go crazy?" Ashley asked me with a tinge of jealousy in her voice, and I could not answer because I, too, was in disbelief.

"A marriage, Emma. Do you know who that man is?" She said, and I was still tongue-tied.

"He is the Alpha of Alphas, the freaking boss of all bosses. What the hell?" She said, sounding angry and scornful but being careful not to piss me off; after all, I was going to be the wife of this very man she was talking about and seeing how he took me from Don Marcelo, it was clear I wasn't to be toyed with. I smiled inwardly, remembering he had said something similar to Declan. He had said, Lavender and Honey. A weird combination that could not be mentioned by coincidence. Maybe he was really my Declan and my true mate, but I couldn't get in over my head. It was a one-year contract that he promised to dissolve once it was complete. I was grateful to the goddess for sending Luca my way and making me find favour in his eyes. I was grateful.

"I know I have not been nice, Emma, but this place does things to you, and you can't help it but grow cold," Ashley said with sadness. I guess she was over being mad. Her mood swing was quite disturbing, but she was right about what the place did to people. I was lucky to have Tomas's protection and now Luca. If I had stayed there any longer, I would have lost myself completely.

Ashley stopped me in my tracks and looked at me. Her eyes were misty with tears.

"I do all I do so I can survive, Emma. I am not a bad person, but I have been here for eight years. I am twenty-three now, but it has been like an eternity. You are about to be the wife of the most powerful man in our world. Please do not forget the people you met and our condition. No one should pay for their parent's sins. Please, Emma. Promise you will help us." she said with tears falling from her eyes. I did not know what to say to her. It was just a one year contract, and it wasn't a real marriage. I could not tell her, so she won't go and tell Don Marcelo, and he would have a reason to deny Luca's request. I swallowed and nodded slightly, unsure of what to say. I knew I would regret making a promise that I knew I would not be able to keep. I prayed the goddess would forgive me for this. Ashley hugged me immediately, and I slowly wrapped my arms around her. I could feel her joy and pain at the same time.

"I wish I was as lucky as you are. Maybe fate would lead a knight in shiny armour my way too," she said, breaking the hug, and I smiled at her. We parted ways, and I went to the one-room apartment allocated to my family. My brothers, father and mother, were

there. They were looking confused, and the silver collars were off their necks. My mother walked to me and kissed me on the cheek “You did it, Emma, Tomas kept his promise,” she said, and I yanked myself from her out of anger and disgust.

“Who told you it was Tomas that did this?” I asked her, looking mad and angry. My anger was directed at my father. It was time to tell them what really happened. Kyle looked at me, worried, and I shook my head so he would know to calm down. “Tomas came to pay the dept two days ago and found out that our precious head of the family had gambled us into more debt. We were owing two million four hundred thousand Leer.” I said, and my mother gasped and looked at my father. “Eric, tell me she is lying,” she said with tears streaming down her cheeks. My father could not look at her. His head remained bowed, and he was speechless. “Yes, he had found the time to gamble some more,” I said, and Tevin walked up to our father, lifted him up on his feet and punched him hard until he drew blood. Tevin was about to send the next blow when Bruce, the second eldest, stopped him. They were all angry. “Tomas said he could not afford to pay, so he struck a deal with Don Marcelo to sell me to him for four hundred thousand Leer. I told him I wouldn’t leave my brothers here. They did not deserve to be here, and I knew I would not forgive myself if anything happened to my brothers. He told me to think about it, but I already knew my answer was no. We were doomed. Eventually, he would find out I did not want to accept the offer, and he would withdraw his assistance.” I said, and my mother looked at me, hurt. “So you would have left me here with this bastard to rot?” She asked, and I looked her in the eyes.

“Yes, mother, this is just as much your fault as his. You could have stopped him instead of following him to the casinos and getting drunk. You could have given him an ultimatum and pushed him to be better. You could have taken your advice and made your marriage work. Instead, you are trying to train me for Tomas. You are just as guilty as he is. Maybe not as stupid as father is because it is only a fool that would think gambling would end his financial problems, but you are just as guilty as he is.” I said, and she sat on the mattress and began to weep. My words had cut deep just how I wanted them to.

“So how?” Tevin finally asked me, and I bowed my head.

“Today, the goddess smiled on me. I was fortunate to have met a stranger to whom I rendered assistance a few months ago. Little did I know he was the Mafia Boss that Alpha Gibson reached out to for help to keep our town under control. Today Don Marcelo was having a meeting with him, and I was asked to join Ashley and serve them. He recognised me and decided to help me.” I said to my brother, and he frowned at me.

“Just like that? There has to be a catch.” He said.

“No, there isn’t. He proposed that I be his wife for a year in return because apparently, he cannot pay our debt if we are not related to him. It is an underground law. Don Marcelo used it as an opportunity to extort him. He charged him four million Leer for our freedom and my hand, claiming the extra is bride price because I am his property.” I said, and everyone exclaimed. I looked at my father to give him sound advice. “Don’t think that this will help you, father. If you gamble your freedom away again, you will end up in this hell alone this time because I am moving away from Celio once my contract with Alpha Luca has ended.” I told him, and he did not say a word. I did not want any promises from him because he wasn’t capable of keeping them. He was a worthless fool.

Someone came and took off my collar, and I wore something less revealing and nice as Luca had instructed.

We were transported to our house in a limo. Most people on our street were shocked to see that we were back. And the fact that we returned in style took away the shame that leaving in silver chains brought us.

People came to greet us the moment the limo left, and my mother was being her usual self claiming that I was getting married to a big man who had bailed us. Some women did not believe her, and one of them actually accused her of lying and that I was supposed to be Alpha Tomas's mistress. Apparently, the entire pack knew about Tomas's wishes. "My daughter isn't mistress material. She is to be married to.." She said, and I shut her up immediately. No ceremony was going to take place. So there was no need for the announcement.

"Enough, mother. They do not need to know who I am marrying." I said and thanked the neighbours for visiting us and wishing us well. They were disappointed I did not let my mother complete the sentence, but I knew they would find out eventually. That was why I could not return home when the contract ended because I would be a laughing stock. I went to my room to rest and pack my belongings. I had some nice clothes and accessories Tomas bought for me and some nice regular clothes bought by my brothers. Tevin entered thirty minutes after I had finished. I could not sleep a wink. It was late in the night, but sleep had eluded me. I knew I would be spending the next night in Luca's home; I did not know where it was and the state I would be in the place. It was awful.

"Hey," Tevin said, and I smiled at him. He sat with me at the side of the bed and looked very worried.

"How are you feeling?" He said, and I did not know. I was not sad, but I wasn't happy either. Anything was better than working for Don Marcelo for the rest of my long life. "I do not know, big brother," I said, and he hugged me.

"I am sorry you had to make this sacrifice. I know you liked Tomas. I am thanking you for staying for our sake, but don't put yourself in danger for our sake again." He said, and I shook my head. "I really don't like Tomas anymore, Tevin. I only agreed because we needed help. I do not know this man, but this is a better option. It will be a year, and I am free to go and be with anyone." I said, and he looked at me. "Will he claim you?" he asked, and I shook my head. "He said he would not even touch me," I said, and he frowned.

"So why help you?" He asked, and I did not know. I doubt anyone would pay four million Leer for pussy. Somewhere deep down, I believed my Declan was in there. It was crazy, but I felt it, especially after he said, Lavender and honey. I could not get it out of my mind. I also could not explain what I thought to Tevin because that would mean something was terribly wrong with me. I kept my suspicions to myself.

"Please be careful. Once you get there, try and call me on mobile every day, Emma. I will pay my subscription for your sake. If he doesn't give you a phone, get one. We will pay the monthly subscription for you. I do not know the kind of life you will have there, but you must be strong, Little sister. I will find a way to be close to you and make sure you are safe," he said,

and I frowned at him because I did not know how he intended to do that. He brushed my

cheeks gently with his fist, and we both giggled. I knew I would miss them. It would be a year, but it would feel like an eternity. I did not know what was in store for me in Luca's house, but I braced myself for the unknown. Morning came, and the house was quiet. I had dressed and packed up my things. Would he come to get me or send his goons to get me? I did not know what would happen. Heather heard the news and came. She cried when she arrived until I told her about his link to Declan. and she became excited. "What are the odds, Emma? He might be your true mate," she said, and I shook my head. True mates were a myth in my world. It never happened to anyone, but some claimed there was a time people easily found their true mates. I hoped it was true, and we would live happily ever after, but I wasn't a little girl reading fairytales anymore. I was a grown woman and knew life's ugly side.

"I doubt it is him, but I will just wait and see," I told her, and she squealed at me.

"Once you get there, call me Emma. I will come and visit you if he would allow it." She said, and I nodded. I also decided that I would ask him.

Near noon, a couple of cars were parked at the front. I did not need magic to know who it was. Luca had either come himself or sent someone.