

Luca's Inferno by Karima Sa'ad Usman Chapter 3

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Emma.

I got home in tears. I could not believe what had just happened. The words Tomas used were heartless and cruel. I knew my father was the reason for all our predicaments, but Tomas had no right to use his shortcomings like that. His words and behaviour were wicked. Not breaking up with me wasn't cowardice on his part, as I had implied. He did not feel I was relevant. He did not see me as a person. I was a werewolf just like him. I couldn't fight and kickass, but I was educated and had prospects if given an opportunity. The only difference was that I had a father that made poor decisions that landed us in the hole. While he came from a lineage of rich people with strong connections, my family had nothing. No money, no contacts and no power. Our breeds were worlds apart, but he wasn't better than me.

Tomas had hurt me in the worst way possible. I could not believe he was the same man that used to spend time with me. He used to tell me he loved me and did not care what the world said. He used to tell me he wanted to spend the rest of his long life with me. There were times he promised me we would run away together so we could be in peace and the whole class and breed thing would not matter. I believed him and believed him so much that I gave him everything. I was mad at myself for allowing him to trick me like that. His love was too good to be real, but I foolishly fell into his trap. He had set me free, but my heart was still tangled in a mess.

I returned home and found my father on the chair in deep thought. From the look on his face, he had sunk himself into more debts. This was the time to work, earn some money and leave Celio.

"Where did you go?" my father asked me. I hoped he would not sense me come in, but I guess he wasn't in deep thought as I thought.

"Sort out personal issues," I replied, trying to sound as if nothing was the matter.

"Did you go to that interview?" He asked, and I wondered how that was his business. It wasn't my fault that we were broke.

"No," I said, and he looked at me with disappointment. He had no right to be disappointed, but I held my peace.

"We need the money, Emma. If all of us aren't working, we cannot pay off the bills," He yelled at me, and I was mad.

"No one asked you to gamble our life away, daddy!" I yelled back, and he was in shock. I had never spoken to him in this tone before, but somehow he was at the root of my problems, and I had just been humiliated. My heart wasn't in a good place. I did not need his shit at the moment.

"Yes, daddy! You heard me right. I didn't do this to us. Why should I work to pay your debts? We were fine. Yes, we are Omegas, but we were fine. You had to bring us down. We are a laughing stock because of that. Tomas refused to settle down with me because of you, father. Mother is always drunk because she can't deal with reality. Your debts are not mine to pay, father; they are yours. Once I get a job, I will save up and leave Celio. Another pack will appreciate me; my pedigree will not be an issue then. I promise you. I will be out of your hair before you know it." I said and stormed into my bedroom.

I shut the door, locked it, and slid down with my back against it. I sat on the floor and hugged my knees. Soon I began to weep. I did not know where I got the strength to face Tomas from. He could have done anything to me and gotten away with it. He could have locked me up and disciplined me for insulting my betters, but he let me go. He owed that to me, at least after what he did.

I wept because I knew it would end like this, but I ignored my guts. I was pissed at myself. Tomas had made me the laughing stock of the town, and my father had made us easy prey. I was mad at the goddess for all that was happening. I needed some goodness in my life.

I reached for the journal where I wrote about Declan and tried to read it. I wished I could control the dreams; I would have found a way to induce permanent sleep so I could remain with Declan until my physical body withered away. In my dreams. I was a queen. I was showered with love and care. I was a person, not a breed. I was me. Why couldn't I have that in reality? Unable to read, I put down the journal and went to shower. I scrubbed my body with the sponge, trying to get Tomas's scent off me. Every time he fucked me played in my mind, and I hated myself for allowing him to touch me. I scrubbed until my skin was raw, and it began to hurt. I finally exited the bathroom and stared at myself naked in the mirror. If looks could get a woman anywhere, I should be at the top right now, but here I was, stuck at the bottom with no way out.

My phone rang, and I did not want to answer it. Looking at the phone, I knew it was a luxury I would have to let go of now. Tomas was the one that paid the bills, and now that it was over, I would have to settle for the pay phone. I checked and saw that it was my best friend, Heather Leeson. I contemplated answering it, but I knew she wouldn't stop calling. I tried to compose myself and answered it.

"Hello," I managed, and I heard her sigh at the other end.

"Thank goddess you are fine, Emma. I am on my way to you now. I will be staying over too," She said, and before I could protest, she hung up. Heather was still better off than I was. Her family fared better than us. They had some money and were not in debt.

I wore a t-shirt and waited for her in my room.

Soon she arrived with a bowl of ice cream and came to hug me. There was no point in being a strong woman where Heather was concerned. I let my tears fall and cried my eyes out while she comforted me.

"It is okay to cry, darling, it is okay," She said, and I let myself go.

Heather was a true friend. She understood me and never betrayed me. We were friends before my father gambled our lives away, and we were still friends after. She did not ask me questions. She held me, knowing that was all I needed in those moments.

"I think you should travel so you can miss the wedding," Heather said, and I pulled away from her.

"I would have loved to, but I do not have money. I was going to walk to my interview today before we got the invite." I said, and she felt sorry for me.

"Have you tried establishments outside our pack?" She asked, and I shook my head.

"Do you think the Alpha will be okay with me working outside his pack?" I asked, and she shrugged her shoulders. Initially, I wanted to get a job outside our pack because I was with Tomas. Being with Tomas meant I could get away with certain things. But things had changed now that we had ended it, and I was just an Omega. The job interview I wanted to go to before all this was definitely a no-no because it was outside our pack.

"I do not know what to do, Heather. Is there space for me at the diner you work?" I asked her, and she did not know what to tell me. I knew there was something wrong, so I pushed.

"Please, Heather, tell me. My heart is too broken to handle the suspense." I said, and from the look on her face, I knew I would not like what she was about to tell me.

"When Audrey left, I tried to convince the manager to hire you, and he simply refused. He said your father's issues with the mob would be a problem for the diner. The whole town knows your father is in trouble with the mob. I learned he isn't just owing the Salvatore family. He owes three other families. I fear for all your lives. I know he is your father, Emma, but I hate him. I learned he is still gambling, thinking he could win enough to get his family out of the bind. Why can't he work? Why can't he get a job and pay off his debts?" She asked me angrily, and the feeling was mutual. Although I could not compete with an Alpha's daughter, my father was at the root of my problems. Everyone

did not want to have anything to do with us because they were afraid of the mob. Celio was the only town not run by the mob, but they had Casinos in our town. Our Alpha had been trying to keep their activities under control by not allowing any of the top families to have any dealings with them. I could understand why Tomas would not want me, because marrying me meant he would have dealings with them through my stupid father. As things were, I was worried my father would get us killed soon.

Heather and I remained indoors and ate some ice cream. When night fell, we decided we would go to the pack's forest to run around in wolf form. I needed the freedom being in wolf form brings. I took her up on it, and we went to the forest. It was a long walk from my house, but we were determined. While we walked, people gossiped, and I knew they were talking about me. Some people laughed outrightly while others teased me. They believed I was trying to climb up the pedigree ladder fast by snagging myself a beta. They believed my plan had backfired and failed. Honestly, I never thought of my relationship with Tomas that way, but looking from the outside, it seemed like it. Whereas I thought I was in love, he was just having fun, waiting for the time he would finally be joined with Veronica. I was the fool, and he couldn't have said it any better.

I did not let the people's gossips get to me. I continued to laugh and talk to Heather until we got to the forest. We took off our joggers and hid them in a tree. We were the only ones who knew the tree's hole was big enough to hold stuff in it. We tucked our clothes deep in the spot so no one could see and steal them. People often played such pranks on others, and they would have to wait until it was very dark to go home in human form, naked. Hence why we often saw streakers at night. Some get arrested by the human police and the alpha has to send someone to bail them. We were omegas so we were likely going to get reprimanded for streaking and getting caught.

We shifted and pushed through the forest. I felt free as my pores pounded the earth, and the breeze passed through my fur. Free from my heartache and all my troubles. If it were possible to remain in wolf form, I would.