

Luca's Inferno by Karima Sa'ad Usman Chapter 31

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Chapter 31

31 Burning Flames

Luca.

I thought I was living in hell until Emma left. I had never experienced so much pain in my life. I could not think straight anymore. I closed myself off from everyone. Barely saw my friends and couldn't stand company. I was a mess. Maybe I should have held on and damned the consequences. The pain I felt was worse than losing a loved one; there was a void in my heart that could never be filled up. I was dead from the inside out. My parents and Catalina had left my house because of my hostility. Usually, Emma was always there to calm me down, but she wasn't anymore, and everything around me was falling apart. I knew I was slowly becoming a monster, but there was nothing I could do. A huge part kept telling me that what I did was for the best. It had been a month, and there had been several attacks on my life. All of which I sustained minor injuries and survived. The attacks let me know I did the right thing by letting Emma go. Hopefully, she would find someone worthy of her and move on. Castelo had advised me to put someone to watch over her, but I didn't want to.

No one would go after her knowing I dumped her. It was simple logic. I must not value her to have abandoned her the way I did, so there was no point for my enemies to go after her because they would not be hurting me in the process. Aldo was seeing Heather, and I had warned him never to talk to me about whatever Heather told him about Emma. I knew how I was living was unhealthy for my heart and soul, but I would die just to ensure she was alright. I knew her family's business was moving well. They were still under my protection, so Marcelo and the small mob bosses of Celio would not extort them. I knew her brothers would care for her. After all, she had made everything possible. Her clothes were still in my closet. I would often sit there just to surround myself with her scent. I knew it would fade with time, but I was willing to take all I could. It hurt me that she did not go with the things I bought or the money I gave her. The woman was too stubborn for her own good. She was perfect for me, and I had let her go.

I saw my pain as punishment for the lives I had to take so that I could restore peace and place myself as the boss to maintain the peace. I had killed husbands and rendered some children orphans. I had wiped out families and broken homes. I had brought sorrow into people's homes and taken their joy without question or remorse. This was my punishment. A soul ripping pain that could never be healed. My parents did not talk about Teressa again; somehow, they had started liking Emma for me. I do not know how that happened because before we left for the resort, my mother hated the girl, but I guess she could see that my heart was already taken. Teressa had started visiting too often in the name of work, and I had warned her to only call, but she was stubborn. I knew she was trying to seduce me, but I was numb. Even if I was asleep, she wouldn't achieve anything, and I knew it frustrated her, which I believed served her right.

I looked at the clock; it was almost time for my meeting. I hated visiting people's houses, but this was one of those days. I rarely left my house and never looked forward to stepping out. I did not go to parties anymore because I wouldn't have Emma in my arms to get me through the event. It was a heart-wrenching experience. I got off my bed and dragged my feet to get dressed for the meeting. While I wore my shirt, images of Emma flooded my mind, and my eyes welled up with tears. Tears I would never let the world see. My room felt like a dungeon without her, and I was doing time. I remained indoors because I dared not break into public. Often I would hear a voice like hers or get a scent of Lavender and Honey and break down inside, hence why I flared up and excused myself. I wasn't allowed to show weakness; it was our culture, and it was killing me. I got ready for the meeting, got into my car and headed out the gate. I saw a commotion at my entrance. My men were holding a man down, and I wanted to know who it was.

"Please, I need to see Alpha Alessandro," he said. I knew who it was immediately. Only Emma and her family referred to me as Alpha instead of Don. Had something happened to her? I exited the car and went to see what was going on. They had pinned him down and bound his hand with a silver cuff; I was angry and reprimanded them for it. They were still my in-laws regardless and deserved some respect. I was yet to annul the marriage, and I did not think I ever would.

"Let him be," I ordered my men, and they released him. It was Tevin, Emma's eldest brother. He stood up and bowed his head with respect. The man respected me greatly; even though I hurt his sister, he still respected me. I did not deserve it.

"What is the issue, Tevin?" I asked him, and he looked at my men.

"It is okay; you can tell me whatever here. They are trustworthy." I assured him. I was in a hurry and could not return to the house. He hesitated but soon spoke.

"Please, Alpha. My sister isn't faring well at all. She locked herself up in her room for days when she came home. I had to break down the door. She talks to herself; she hardly eats. She is a mess. You are not helping her like this. Emma wants to be with you. She doesn't care about the danger; none of us do at this point. She would rather die by your side than live a long, painful life. Please. I do not know how you feel about her, but you showed her a huge amount of love and affection for her to be the way she is. If there is room for her in your heart anywhere, please take her back. I can't bear seeing my sister suffering like this. Please, Alpha," he said, and it was clear he was desperate. It must have taken a lot for him to come here and plead for his sister's sake. What he said broke my heart completely, but I rather she was alive and heartbroken than dead. Hearts always heal, but no one can raise the dead.

I dimmed my eyes and looked at him expressionlessly.

"The contract has been terminated, and now it is over. Why is she being so clingy? I said I wanted a clean break. I really do not have time for this. Tell your sister to move on with her life and don't come here again." I said, and I watched the colour drain from his face. He was in disbelief. My tone and utterances annoyed him, but he was careful because of who I was. I hated being the arsehole, but I knew that was what I was in his eyes.

"Omegas aren't just for submission and pleasure, Alpha. It is easy to use us and discard us as trash. But we are people like you. We have hearts and souls, and we feel. Every time someone hurts us, there is damage to our hearts and soul. I hope you can live with

the fact of knowing you have damaged her, Alpha. Thank you for the help and hospitality. I am sorry for the disturbance, and I will respect your wishes and never come to your house again," he said, and just then, Teresa drove in, alighted from her car and walked up to me. Tevin looked at her and summed it up in his mind. I wanted to reprimand her, but she had done nothing wrong. But in Kevin's eyes, I had moved on. "Four weeks, and you replaced her. I see now; Goodbye," he said and walked back to his car. I

was too broken in those moments to go for my meeting. He was surely going to tell Emma that I had moved on, and I knew exactly how she would feel. I did not bother walking back into the car. I walked back towards the house, ignoring everyone present. What I had said to Tevin was unfair. I saw his respect and adoration for me drain from his eyes, I understood his pain. If anyone hurts Catalina, I will do worse. I returned to my room and sat deep in thoughts. How was I going to survive living like this? If Roberto was alive, I would have willingly handed him the position and retired with Emma. Even though there was no getting out, I would have found a way. What was I going to do now? I could not even set a goal because I did not know where to start. Deigo Gallo was still at large. The other people attacking me and trying to kill me were still unknown. The Romanos were wiped out two weeks ago, and all the families had a huge mistrust. Castelo and Aldo were the only people I trusted, and they trusted me in return. I could not drag Emma into this life. Yes, my house was presumed impenetrable, but they could use a bomb or other means. I can't keep Emma couped up somewhere. She deserved to be free. She deserved to move about freely without a care in the world. Being by my side would rob her of that. I knew it.

This was really hell for me. The tattoo on my back was a joke, just like Emma had said that day while getting into the tub with her. She asked me to come in and cool the fire so we could ignite a different type of flame. We had ignited a new flame, and this one burned painfully.

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32 Let's Go To Ashfield

EMMA

TWO YEARS AND SIX MONTHS LATER.

It wasn't easy living without Luca, but my heart had somehow healed itself. My family was a tremendous support, and I did not know how I would have survived without them. They supported me through it all. I was heartbroken throughout my pregnancy, and there was a time that I was tempted to go to Ashfield and confront Luca Still, I would hold back whenever I remembered what Tevin told me about him moving on. It was a contract, and I wasn't supposed to get my heart tangled in a mess, yet I did. I had come out badly bruised and injured. I was still picking up the piece of what was left of my broken heart, and I thanked the goddess for helping me through it. There were times that I sit up in bed thinking about Luca, but they were fewer now than in the past.

I moved out of my father's house when Katya, my daughter, turned one. We needed our space, and thanks to my bakery business, I could afford a small place. It had two rooms, a living room with the kitchen and a toilet and bath to share. Katya and I slept in the same room, but her room was separate from mine. I loved my daughter. She had her father's features which made her look like Catalina but also had my dark hair and moonlight-grey eyes. She was adorable. Sometimes I would wonder why I was sad I was pregnant. She was great company and also represented the love Luca and I shared, however brief.

I learned he had turned into a monster, and people feared him. I wondered why. He was always sweet and thoughtful, but if anything was inevitable, it was 'change'. Everything was subject to change. Even the sweet, caring Luca that once stole my heart away. I would often send blessings his way and pray he finds true happiness one day.

Tomas finally took over as Alpha after Alpha Gibson was found dead in his backyard. Some said he had a running with the mob. No one had been able to figure out who did it. After Alpha Gibson died, Tomas took over and alienated himself from Veronica. She was a terrible drunk and still blamed me for her predicament. I did not care; blaming people for her problems made her feel better and blinded her from her flaws. She shouldn't have married Tomas. He didn't want her, but she wanted him by all means, and she had gotten him. Although I had no reason not to be with him, I did not feel anything for him. Luca had occupied the better part of my heart, and there was nothing I could do. He would often come to take Katya and me out on a friendly outing, and we had shared a kiss or two, but the sparks weren't there, and I could not force it.

Tomas hated Luca and claimed Luca had damaged me for him, but we both knew he could never say it to Luca's face. He still offered to claim me as his since he was trying to divorce Veronica, but she would always be his mate because even though he could divorce her, he could not unclaim her. I did not want to come between them, and I often urged him to try with Veronica. I hoped he would one day move on from me and find the peace he deserves.

Katya was a blessing to me. She was sweet and smart for her age. I couldn't wait for her to be able to have meaningful sentences. She would be an amazing company, more amazing than she is now. I looked at her where she sat on the floor playing with toys, and she looked beautiful. My heart soared just by looking at her, and just for her sake, I wouldn't change anything that happened in my life. She was an excellent reward for all the pain and heartache I

felt. I blessed the goddess for her. She was my gift and a priceless gem that brought sunshine into my dark world. Heather and Aldo were going strong and soon about to be married. Aldo never discussed Luca with Heather, so I did not know what was going on in his life or if he had children with Teressa. I am sure they will be lovely because she was a stunning woman. I sat by the window and stared at my lawn. It was a beautiful day, and I was glad to be experiencing it. I saw Heather park her car in front of my house. I envied her greatly. She and Aldo were still going strong, and he made sure he protected her. Aldo was lucky that no one attempted to kill him. He wasn't that important to be taken out. The goddess had smiled at Heather, and I was happy for her.

I got up and went to open the door. Heather's brown hair was in a ponytail. She wore sunglasses and a yellow cotton dress with white polka dots. She looked stunning. Aldo

spent a lot on her, and she was the envy of our pack. I wished Luca held on to me like that, but our love and story were now history. She smiled at me and took off her glasses.

Walking into my home, she went to pick Katya up, where she was playing with her toys. "Little princess," she said, kissing Katya, and my daughter giggled. I had begged Heather not to tell Aldo about the baby. My brother feared Luca would force me to abort it because of Teressa. So we all kept it a secret, but with Heather's wedding approaching, I knew my secret would be out. I wasn't a timid girl who could not face pain. Life had dealt me a huge amount of pain, and now my tolerance was high. Seeing Luca at the wedding with Teressa would not faze me. In fact, I will mind my business and not go near them. If he speaks to me, I will be polite and formal. It was the least I could do, but I was done hiding. Heather sat on the couch, looking exhausted.

"I have been shopping all morning, Emma; Aldo wants me to come to Ashfield tonight. His driver is coming to get me." She said, and I was excited for her. She looked at me from head to toe, and I saw an idea pop in her head, and I got worried. "Leana is helping you with your shop, isn't she?" She asked me, and I nodded. "Great, we will be going to Ashfield together," and my heart began to beat fast. I did not want to run into Luca yet. The wedding was fine but not at Aldo's house.

"Luca won't be there, Emma. You need to go out and have some fun. It has been two years and six months. Katya is a year eight months old. Come on, Emma. Please. I will be there for a week. You know how these men are and how busy they are. It will be great to have you and Katya around to keep me company. I already told Aldo you would be coming. He doesn't know about Katya yet, but I am sure he will not protest. Please, Emma. I will do this for you if the tables are turned around. Please, Emma. Who knows, you might meet someone you like." She said, and I shook my head immediately.

"I am closed off from the love department, Heather. No more. I am quitting now while I still can." I said, and she stood up and hugged me. "I know, and I am sorry I said that, but I am desperate that you come with me. See it as a break, especially from Alpha Tomas, who can't stop bothering you. The guy is a psycho. I promise you won't regret it. My wedding is in two months, Emma. We just have two months to spend together, after which I will move to Ashfield to live with my husband. Let us make it count. Your business won't suffer with Leana and your mother running it for you. What do you say?" She said, and I knew her heart would be broken if I said no. So I reluctantly nodded my head, and she squealed with joy.

"Come on, let me help you pack," she said, lifting Katya up and leading us to my bedroom to pack my things. Something told me I would regret this trip. As much as I wanted to say no, I knew I could not chicken out now.

Heather helped me pack for the trip. I locked up my house and followed her to her place to wait for Aldo's driver to pick us up. He sent a limo which reminded me of Luca, but I held my tears. Katya seemed excited, but I wasn't. Although it would just be a week, I did not know what life had in store for me in Ashfield, but I prayed that I didn't run in Luca. I wasn't ready.