

TWO ALPHAS, ONE SEX SLAVE

Chapter twenty two

Aria's POV.

The ride to the marketplace was silent. I watched the scenery pass by, my mind racing with thoughts and plans. The market would be bustling this time of day, and it was the perfect place to observe and gather information. We arrived at the marketplace, and I stepped out of the carriage first, followed by Erinne. The hustle and bustle of the market greeted us, merchants shouting their wares and the smells of fresh produce and baked goods filling the air. I turned to Erinne. "Stay close and do as I say," I ordered.

She nodded, her face set in a sullen expression. We began to walk through the market, the cobblestone streets crowded with people. As we strolled, I kept my eyes and ears open, hoping to catch any useful bits of information. Erinne trailed behind me, her demeanor subdued but still brimming with defiance. It was clear she wasn't happy about our little outing, but I didn't care. This was as much about asserting my authority as it was about gathering some news. As we passed by a fruit vendor, I noticed a group of women whispering and glancing in our direction. I slowed my pace, pretending to examine the apples on display while straining to hear their conversation. "I heard Alpha Denderick's men are still searching," one of the women said in a hushed tone.

"Do you think they'll find her?" another asked.

I stiffened, my heart racing. They had to be talking about me. I turned to Erinne, giving her a sharp look. "Stay here," I ordered, then approached the group of women.

"Excuse me," I called. "I couldn't help but overhear. Who are you talking about?"

The women exchanged nervous glances, clearly taken aback by my sudden intrusion. "Just some rumors," one of them muttered, her voice shaky. "About a woman Alpha Denderick is searching for." "Interesting," I replied, forcing a smile. "Do you know why he's looking for her?"

The woman shook her head. "Just that she's important to him. Probably some kind of troublemaker. She is pregnant as well, so I suppose she is carrying his child."

I nodded, pretending to be merely curious. "Thank you," I replied, then turned back to Erinne, who was watching me with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion.

We continued our stroll, my mind racing with the implications of what I'd just heard. Alpha Denderick's men were still looking for me, and it was only a matter of time before they got closer.

Then, I moved to another stall, pretending to browse through a selection of herbs and spices. As I listened to the chatter around me, a conversation between two women caught my attention. "Did you hear? Another pregnant woman has gone missing," one whispered, her voice trembling.

The other nodded, her face etched with worry. "Yes, it's terrifying. They keep going missing without any explanation. No one knows why."

My blood ran cold. Had Alpha Denderick resorted to abducting pregnant women to find me? The thought of those innocent women suffering because of me filled me with horror and guilt. How far would he go to get me back? I watched a third woman join the conversation. Her eyes were red and swollen, as though she had been crying for days on end. She sighed, picking up some garlic and handing it to the seller.

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"My sister was one of the women that disappeared of late." She murmured. "We have searched the entire pack looking for her."

For a fleeting moment, I considered stepping forward and revealing myself. Maybe if I surrendered, it would end the madness and spare those women. But then a darker thought emerged. Alpha Denderick wouldn't stop with just me. He was too vengeful, too ruthless. If I revealed myself, he might continue his spree, just to prove a point.

I felt paralyzed by the weight of the decision. I couldn't trust Alpha Denderick to stop the killings, even if he had me. He'd likely make me the final, gruesome example to instill fear in anyone else who might consider defying him. I felt helpless, caught between my desire to protect my unborn child and the need to stop the suffering of others.

I glanced at Erinne, who was standing nearby, her expression unreadable. She had noticed my sudden tension and was watching me closely.

"Let's move on," I mumbled.

We continued through the market as I tried to soak up any other piece of gossip, but my mind was elsewhere. The knowledge of Alpha Denderick's actions weighed heavily on me. The thought of those missing women haunted me. I needed a plan, something that could protect my child and stop Alpha Denderick's reign of terror. But what could I do?

"Lady Aria, it is already high afternoon." Erinne called out to me. "We must get back to the carriage now."

I was so surprised by the fact that she called me with so much respect, that it took me a while to process her words. Finally, I nodded. "Yes. Yes, of course."

We returned to the carriage, finding the rider sitting at his seat in wait. He was looking around nervously. His eyes darted back and forth, his hands twitching as he gripped the reins. Sweat glistened on his forehead despite the cool breeze, and his breath came in quick, shallow bursts.

I stepped forward, the bad feeling in my gut intensifying. "Is everything alright?" I asked.

The rider's terrified eyes met mine. "I heard some tales around the marketplace," he whispered, his voice trembling. "Pregnant women being captured and killed. We need to leave before something bad happens."

I felt a chill run down my spine- even my carriage rider had heard about it?

"Let's go," I said quickly, not wanting to waste any more time.

We climbed into the carriage, but the rider didn't start it immediately. I leaned forward, peering through the cubicle. "Why the delay?"

The rider hesitated, then said, "There's something I need to give you. A letter from someone. One of Alpha Denderick's guards delivered it before we left the pack."

My heart leaped in fright. "Give it... Give it to me," I stammered.

He reached into his pocket, pulling out a folded piece of parchment. As he handed it to me, I saw the name on the front: Alpha Denderick.

Fear surged through me. I opened the letter with trembling hands, only to find three chilling words:

"Come to me."