

The Female Alpha's Sanctuary by Sanctuary Chapter 221

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Chapter 221

The line I traced cutting into his flesh had blood gathering together in small clumps. It rolled down his skin slowly, almost excruciatingly slow.

It was sort of fascinating in a way.

Red painted his pale flesh. Bruises and marks scattered across his abdomen from the beating he took from the paddle. Stringing him up to the ceiling by his wrist as Isaac and Emerson took turns beating their fists into his sides with brass knuckles had weakened him more.

The already broken ribs breaking more.

Bone shattered.

He had slipped in and out of consciousness more times than I can count but we had him coming back each and every time.

It was a game.

A game of wills.

One I was sure he'd be losing.

Benicio hissed as soon as the metal touched him, squirming against the chains binding him to the chair. His wrist and ankles were bound to the arms of his seat and the legs.

There were no chances I was willing to take. Foolishness was not an option.

The last thing I needed was to tie his restraints loose enough for him to slip free.

Missing arm or not, it wasn't safe to let down your guard. Underestimation was deadly.

The process of restraining him had been a major issue. That was a given.

Having to force a full grown Beta into a chair was difficult, but we'd managed. There was a lot of thrashing, cussing, snarling and mid-shifting going on, but the sedatives Ivory had given him lulled his wolf enough to prevent a full shift.

That, and the fact he was still recovering from the missing limb.

The smell of burning flesh wafts into the air, but I don't flinch. I don't pull away when he starts to dig his feet into the ground. The way he grits down on his teeth and the ticking of his jaw was enough to let me know he was being stubborn. Then again, when was he never? It was his stubbornness that got him here in the first place.

“Tell me, what do you know about Xeneron? Why didn’t you help Duskfall? What is it that you’re hiding?”

I bend over, staring him straight in the eyes. In all my years I’ve been too small, too insignificant to him, and yet here I was finally at eye level. I was more than he ever was. More than he ever thought I was.

“How did you know about Lila?”

Benicio’s lip tugs up into a smirk, bloodied teeth on show as he shook his head. He’s tired and worn out, but he still had the audacity to smirk.

Sweat had drenched his hair and body. His putrid smell lingering in the air but slowly becoming stagnant the more my rage spilled over. My patience was wearing thin but I restrained myself.

Benicio chuckles- dry and broken.

“So strong yet so clueless.”

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The Famala Alnbaie Sanctuary

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Chapter 221

He continues to shake his head in amusement. Desperation pours off of him, but he’s holding onto his pride. He’s forsaking any chance of surviving for his reputation.

Or at least, the shambles of it.

“You disappoint me, Selene.”

His tone is mocking. His words meant to insult and condescend, but when you’ve lived through years of the same treatment, the same words being thrown at you time and time again, it means nothing in the end. It’s nothing but words. There’s no substance to it. Nothing to take from it.

“My love,”

I call out, never once taking my gaze away from the Beta.

“Get the gag.”

Benicio’s eyes flicker up to Raizel, clear panic and distrust in those blue eyes as Raizel walks over to the table across the room. I moved away from him and turned to the table where all the other equipment was laid across.

It was hard to pick what else to use.

Nothing seemed to work.

I had to commend him on that.

But maybe... maybe this time I should think a little less dry.

I had wanted to be left alone. To deal with my father as I wished with no interference but Meredith had protested. She'd shaken her head, telling me I wasn't conscious enough to make clear choices and that someone had to be with me. That I needed a support system.

A pillar.

Someone who would be enough to pull me back from bloodlust if I got too aggravated and intense without angering my wolf. Someone who was in the shape of my mate.

"What are you doing?"

Benicio's question goes unanswered when Raizel walks passed him and to me. His sleeves are drawn up, thick arms flexing as I take a minute to watch my mate walk to me. He leans down, kissing my forehead gently to which I relished the warmth and allowed myself a moment of peace. I close my eyes and breathe him in.

His scent was always enough to calm me. That inviting warmth that bubbles up in my chest whenever he touched me. His fingers graze across the line of my jaw, heat igniting the sparks rumbling from my stomach. He's silent but the gesture is loud enough for me to understand.

I'm not alone.

I open my eyes.

I stand away from Raizel and step directly into Benicio's view,

The Famala Minhate SameUSEU

Chapter 222

"I'll ask you again: What. Do. You. Know?"

Benicio simply glared at me, eyes darkening with such heated hatred that I began to wonder how any father could hate their child like he did. How any wolf could stand to direct such poor treatment. toward his young. But I guess that was a worthless thought. He was the lowest of low. There was nothing he wouldn't do for the sake of power and authority.

Benicio scoffs, turning away and deciding to remain mute. I could feel the itch to rip into him again. Maybe take his other arm or leg to set an example. Sighing, I clench my jaw.

Well, I tried.

Without a second more, I grabbed a fistful of his hair and pulled back sharp enough to make him wince. His scalp undoubtedly had begun to burn the tighter I held on. The more I dragged his head down the higher his tone of panic goes. Pain flickers on his expression but he quickly tries to hide it under a scowl.

"Hold his jaw open."

Raizel rumbles from across me,

"We can't have him biting his tongue when the water gets too much."

Blue eyes open wide as they slide over to Raizel when realization hits him.

I'd ordered the guards to strip him bare. To leave him in nothing but his undergarment.

Humiliation always makes one more vulnerable. It always makes one careless when too in deep of anger. And to dear ol' dad, his reputation and how he looked to others was always his biggest concern.

I gaze over his body, assessing any other weak points we needed to hit.

Healed scars and new gashes riddled his body. The noticeable scarring from his missing limb glaring back at me. The reds, pinks and utter destruction of his shoulder remind me of what I did. Of what I took from him.

I grin.

"You should've answered when I gave you the chance."

I use my other hand to hold his jaw open. Prying his mouth apart so he wouldn't go and try to off himself by biting his tongue, I forced myself to hold back on my strength. My grip is tight and unyielding and I have to admit the deep satisfaction settling in my bones when he starts to fumble under my hold. His sounds of panic and pain as Raizel nears to strap the gag around his mouth only serve to fuel my thirst.

It's a reality check

Raizel doesn't falter when he shoves the gag in Benicio's mouth. He tightens the straps until he's sure the Beta won't be able to get it off and steps back. He looks at me, eyes soft but observing. Then he dips forward, lips grazing over my ear as he whispers,

"He's all yours, doll."

Oh, I know.

Benicio glares down at me, eyes watching carefully when I look over to the cauldron at the corner of the room.

The cauldron filled with iced water.

Slowly, I bring my attention back to him. He catches my eye and freezes. I let my smile show and

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laid my hand on the back of his chair. The second he had an inkling on what was next, he fought harder to get loose. He tried to yank and pull his arm free. Legs tried to free themselves from the binds. All was futile though.

I don't care for the scrapping of the chair, the sound of his cries muffled by the gag go through deaf ears as I drag him toward the cauldron. The squeaks of the wood against stone bounce off the walls but neither Raizel or I say anything about it.

Abruptly, I stopped in front of the cauldron and stare into it.

My reflection looks back at me.

Then I forced his head in.

He struggled to breathe, moving around frantically as his muffled screams fall into the chaos of splashing water and rattling chairs. I hold him in hard, feel him stiffen in panic before yanking him

back out.

Benicio gasps out into the air, choking and coughing and forcing himself to breathe normally again. He's shaking so hard from the cold. His skin radiating the bitter bite of the chill from the ice. I know he wanted to yell at me.

To curse me.

To say anything he could possibly think of to hurt me.

But he struggled with the gag around his mouth so the only thing we really hear is the sputtering and choking around the ball.

His eyes meet mine and I'm struck with the need to dunk him in again.

So I did.

Except this time, I held him in longer. I held him until I felt his throat constricting from drowning.

Forcing him in and out of freezing water took some time. I spent roughly an hour and a half dunking his head in and pulling him out. The process getting harder and harder as he spent longer and longer in water than he did air.

When I peel off the gag at last, he's still choking.

He must've thought I would end there.

I headed over to the table, pulling out the tiny sharp silver hooks I had specially made. The sound of Benicio struggling to catch his breath fills in the silence of the room. But soon, it would be joined with his screams.

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Chapter 223

It wasn't easy.

But it worked.

Hooking his eyelids open, I made him watch.

One by one, I inserted thin silver poles into his skin..

I made him watch how his blood pooled around his only arm. I made him feel what it would be like to go paralyzed. Enough silver in his arm would be able to momentarily paralyze him.

But he would still feel the pain.

He howled out, screaming as loud as he could when he felt another jab a sharp silver pierce through his back. I made sure to hit his spine this time. And another was put in. And another.

And another.

He was a mess.

He'd soiled his underwear. His stench filters around us. I wish I could say I felt pity. Some sort of sadness for someone who I wished had noticed me more, but there was only a hollow emptiness.

A disappointment, almost.

I couldn't really decide on what to do next. I had taken the time to pull out each of his fingernails and stuck two inch silver plates in its stead. He's screamed a lot, then. I'm sure by now he'd strained his vocal cords.

His voice turned rough and scratchy from overuse but he still screamed.

And screamed.

And screamed.

I'd taken his arm, taken his mate mark.

What else could I strip him of?

My eyes flared up with excitement.

"I wonder."

Benicio's groggily lifted his head, his eyes red and bleary and tired and defeated as the hooks continue to force his eyelids open. His breathing is hollow and I can't help but engrave this moment in my head,

"How would a wolf feel to lose his tail?"

Meredith blinks slowly, taking in Selene's mother for what she was worth. She couldn't see the

resemblance.

She really couldn't.

Yes, she had looked similar. Yes, she had the same facial structure. The same lips, the same hair color, the same skin tone and yet, they were completely and utterly different.

There was no fire.

No determination or self-respect that Selene had.

There was not a single trace of Selene inside that woman. She couldn't see it. And believe her, she.

tried to find it.

They'd all taken refuge at the Capital as they awaited the news of Beta Dixon's betrayal. All Wolves present remained. They wanted answers. Each and every wolf felt uneasy about how an Alpha like Landon allowed a traitor to have such high position in his pack. How foolish the young Alpha was.

The same young alpha who was detained at his cell.

"Disappointing."

Meredith sighs, tilting her head to the side as she looked Sophie up and down,

"I expected more."

Sophie doesn't have the time to respond because Hestia, the little pest, had stood up in anger, glaring at the ex-Alpha with intensity. Sophie's displeasure had spiked in the air, despite the fact she was chained with two guards beside her, keeping her posted.

Yet, she didn't say anything.

Like Meredith thought:

Different.

"Don't disrespect my mother, witch."

Oh?

Meredith grins, sardonic and mocking. The willowy blonde was trying to keep her reputation up? She was trying to salvage something non-existent at this point? With the way her eyes had been glancing over the wolves and other Alphas around them, it was clear as day Hestia was trying to gather at least some bit of respect. How pointless.

The only thing she was doing was making herself look that much more pathetic.

"Disrespect?"

Meredith echoes, standing to her full height and managing to bring forth her wolf just a little.

She did not take to challenges kindly.

Not when they came from a conniving, backstabbing bitch. Hestia stumbled back but held firm, trying her best not to cower or shake away. She was an ex-Alpha yes, but she was older.

Surely, Meredith wasn't going to be too strong for her. She'd lost face after Selene and her father's throw-down, but it wasn't too late.

No, it couldn't be.

"Disrespect would be to spit on your mother's face, grab her by the hair and throw her to the ground."

Meredith steps closer to the blonde, willing her wolf out just a bit more. Enough to overwhelm the naive female.

"Disrespect would be to call your mother out what she is publicly: spineless, a coward, self-absorbed, heartless, weak, disgraceful, unworthy of being a mother- an utter disappointment."

Meredith was merely a few inches from her. Her face directly in front of Hestia as that smile stayed unwavering,

“Disrespect would be to compare you and your sister, because frankly, I don’t see how any of you could be related to that girl.”

She finally pulls back, smiling sickeningly sweet at the way Hestia’s eyes watered with humiliation. Her hackles lowered, and Meredith sat down again,

“That would be disrespect, little Luna. But what I said? That was fact.”

He was cold.

His skin went dry and taut from the bitter chill circulating around his confines. Unable to move from the chains binding him down, he surrenders to staying still. Sitting in nothing but his undergarment, his head hangs low as his soaked blonde hair shields his face. He can smell himself.

Or well, he used to until a few hours... days(?) ago.

Chapter 224

Until he’d become so immune to his stench from sitting in his fil th.

He’s not really sure any more. The concept of time is lost to the never ending darkness of both the cell he’s kept in and of his mind. The silence is unnerving. A mock almost, to be stuck with nothing but his muddled thoughts. They taunt him. Mock him for his failures. He can hear his father hiss at him for failing him. For being the failure he always knew him to be.

You will never be anything, just like that mate of yours. Fil thy.

The musky odor that covers his body smells of death- sour with vomit and feces. He can hardly feel his body. He’s slipping in and out of sleep irregularly but he’s vaguely aware of the quivering of his lips, the trembling of his hunched back and the spasm of his legs.

It hurts.

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Though in his human form, he still feels it. The sharp, intense ache from the loss of his tail blooms at his tailbone.

Its excruciating..

It’s agonizing.

It’s severe.

There’s the tremendous pressure he feels both physically and spiritually. He felt part of himself tear away with the ripping of his tail. The minute he felt his appendage stretch to the point he began to feel it split apart, he had hadn’t stopped screaming. From losing his mark to losing his tail, they’d stripped him of his identity as a wolf.

Benicio chuckles to himself: croaky, broken, dry, sardonic and it all but echoes back to him.

Who would have thought it would come to this?

“Oh my, she really did a number on you, didn’t she?”

Benicio drew in a sharp breath, but doesn’t lift his head. No, he thinks. It’s not real. It’s just my playing tricks on me again.

“It’s almost pitiful.”

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This time, he’s certain it isn’t in his head because he recognizes the voice. He doesn’t look up. He doesn’t need to. The sugary sweet pitch of her tone hiding the taunt in false concern pinpoints the intruder.

He’s cold.

But he’s angry.

“Hm, surprised she didn’t castrate you if I’m honest. It’s probably in the list though. There’s protocol for things like this. I’m sure you know. Being Beta and all.”

Feet appear in his field of vision -though blurry and slightly disoriented. At this, he looks up. The witch's beautiful face is smiling at him, as if he wasn't sitting there on the verge of malnourishment. Selene wasn't going to kill him so quickly, he knows as much. That doesn't mean she won't make him feel like he is slowly dying each and every minute.

Ivory hums, vivid orange eyes glowing bright even in the dim light. Her green hair had been tied up, the thick ink around her neck nearly hidden in the mix of the blue on her skin.

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Chapter 224

Benicio rumbles,

"You're a fucking liar...this is all your fault."

He spits. Ivory raises a brow at him, tilting her head to the side as she considers his words. She doesn't respond, and so the onslaught of his accusations begins. She can see it, the final strand of his sanity thinning out. Like a rubber band being pulled at the ends too much, he was always bound to

snap.

Benicio feels himself growing agitated. Regardless of the frost he feels prickling his skin, his blood roars scorching hot in his ears. Blinded by his rage, he directs a glare at her,

"You told me... you told me my daughter was gifted. You told me Hestia was destined for greatness. You said she was chosen."

Benicio bites out the last word, hatred and venom dripping from his tone as spittles flew from his mouth. His arm flexed under the thick bindings, no doubt itching to choke her with it. He's vibrating with anger.

"You lying piece of shit, it's your fault I'm in this mess."

"Is it?"

Ivory asks. She laughs under her breath, red cloak dragging behind her as she approached him.

"When you visited the council with your two baby girls, you asked me of the Goddess' favor. If one was chosen, as you said. If one was blessed. I didn't lie. I told you, your daughter was special. I never said which one."

She smiles almost tenderly in thought,

"Oh, but I knew what you were like before. Even when you smiled so charmingly, acted as if you were benevolent in front of all those Alphas including yours... I knew what you were really like."

Ivory leans in closer,

"I can see a snake from a mile away. It takes more than pretty words to fool me, I'm afraid."

Benicio grinds down on his teeth. Heat burns deep in his chest as humiliation rains down on him,

"Hestia showed promise."

he defended, shaking his head as if it would convince her. As if to justify his actions.

"She had all the right attributes to being Luna-"

"And still, that wasn't enough, was it?"

There's a slight frown on her face. Blue eyelids cast down as she stares at the floor, tracing over the lines of stone under her feet. She doesn't comment how blood had bled into the crevices.

Chapter 225

"It still wasn't enough to keep that young Alpha, Landon Walker. Still wasn't enough to get the Alpha position yourself. The Alpha position you always wanted... what you could've had if your mate hadn't been Sophie. It's a shame isn't it?"

When she sees surprise flicker in his gaze, her smile gets sweeter. Her face twists into one of pure joy,

“You thought I didn’t know? That your father was the Alpha of Reddusk and you were the result of a tryst? From a human, nonetheless? The hidden disgrace of the family... You must’ve been so driven for power. So desperate to prove everyone wrong. Oh, you must’ve been so pleased when you found Sophie. So glad you had a mate. Finally, you’d be qualified to take over from your father with a mate. Until you found out Sophie came from a tainted bloodline. It’s what made your father turn you away, right? Why he gave it your brother instead. Traditional Alphas like that don’t like sullied blood.”

Ivory sighs, her hand coming to touch her cheek,

“I do pity Walker. Doesn’t even know his own father-in-law was trying to get him evicted, and in turn, promote you. The poor sod didn’t know you were still after the Alpha seat. Granted, not Reddusks... but you planned on getting that too, right? Losing Selene to the rogue attack was slowly taking its toll on Walker, wasn’t it? You knew better than anyone your Alpha wasn’t faring well. I suspect if it went on that way, he would’ve lost his mind. And of course your Luna can’t run a pack by herself. You know better than to believe she’s fit to be Luna after watching her with the title for years. A pregnant, vulnerable Luna, especially. I bet you were so glad when Hestia claimed Raizel Locksworth was her mate. The Alpha of Alphas. What a prize, right? An upgrade from Walker. But then Selene came back and your plans went down the drain.”

Benicio says nothing. He stares at her, trying to focus his bleary gaze on her expression. The anger doesn’t subside, it’s just barely being contained. He stays mute as she continues to study him.

“Is there a point to this?”

He asks gruffly, giving in to end the silence. He was trying to gauge out her intentions. If she read so far into him, he questions why she hadn’t said or done anything yet. Was she really so devout and faithful to the Goddess’ plans that she stayed silent over everything? That she turned a blind eye to all that occurred? He didn’t need to ask.

The answer was yes.

The way she smiled was enough of an answer.

“Well,”

She says quietly,

“It’s about to start soon. All the skeletons have to come out at some point. Your mate is out there squealing like a pig as a final attempt to save you.”

Benicio feels his chest tighten at her words. Sophie was telling them everything. He narrows his eyes at her, trying to spy any indication she was lying to rile him up. But there was none. There was only genuinity in those orange, blazing eyes.

She looks at the wall, eyes clouded over as she thought for a moment.

“Xeneron won’t stay silent either. I’m sure he’s lingering close.”

13:12

The Female Alpha’s Sanctuary

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Chapter 225

It’s those words that makes Benicio laugh. He’s grinning, bloodied teeth showcasing for her to see. A

spark of amusement runs deep in his veins. The Realization sinks in as he thinks of the rogue. The rogue that could change everything.

“If what you say... about Selene being gifted is true, then he’s coming for her, isn’t he?”

Benicio cackles, dry lips splitting as he leaned back and dropped his head against the wooden chair.

“He was never coming for Hestia.”

He mumbled, shutting his eyes.

“No,”

Ivory agrees,

“He was coming for Selene.”

“Daddy issues gives birth to daddy issues.”

Noah frowns,

“I should’ve known.”

I roll my eyes at him, folding my arms across my chest as Sophie tearfully looks around. I knew Benicio had to be from f ucked up backgrounds to be the cause of everything, I

just didn't think it would be like that. From one tragedy to another, our family line sure was cursed. An endless trail of bad luck, I suppose.

For someone whose been said to be a blessing, I lived a life worth calling a tragedy.

Whether or not what she said was true, it's almost comical someone could consider this life of mine a gift. It felt anything but that.

To hear that both Sophie and Benicio had tried to see if either Hestia and I were gifted with the Goddess' favor rubbed me the wrong way. It suddenly makes sense why they always dotted on Hestia. She was gifted, therefore, she was better.

Sophie breathes in raggedly, sitting on her knees as she tries to recollect herself. She had sobbed the story away, each time sounding more and more pitiful until the self hatred became apparent. She clearly felt like her blood was at fault. As if what happened with Romanov was Luna's fault.

To hate the person who was betrayed.