

The Alpha's Contract Luna - Chapter 1 - 5

Chapter 1 -Alexia- The howls were coming closer, making Alexia's heart drum against her ribcage. "Leave me alone! Please! Just let me be!" Alexia screamed, sensing the thundering paws of her father's warriors gaining in on her. She ran as fast as she could, navigating through the forest in her worn-out dress and a pair of old rubber shoes. The tree branches belt her arms and face, scratching her delicate and pearly white skin. Her long brown hair was falling from the messy bun she had made before sprinting into the woods. Alexia's honey-colored eyes widened in horror, noticing the trees swaying behind her. She knew they were catching up, and her hopes of escaping crumbled. She wished she could already shift into her wolf form so she could elude her wretched fate, but Alexia had not yet come of age. Most male wolves shift when they turn twenty while she-wolves shift at twenty-one. Alexia could only rely on the strength and speed of her alpha blood. "Come back here, Alexia! Don't you dare run away!" From a distance, she could hear her father's directives. "I order you! Stay put! Hear your alpha!" Her b*dy instantly recognized her father's alpha command, and her knees turned like noodles, weakening with her every step. Chapter 1 "No! Please!" Alexia begged. Tears welled in her eyes, admitting her plans had failed. She fell, rolling into the damp ground that went downhill. When her b*dy finally stopped sliding down, she frantically took her stand. Still, to her dismay, her father, Alpha Roland Reed, the leader of the Cross River Pack, was standing in front of her with her stepbrother and three other warriors. Alexia broke down in tears, kneeling before her father. She begged, "Please, father. Do not give me away. I'll work harder for the pack. I will do everything you tell me. Just... just don't give me away!" Wasn't it enough that her own family had taken her privileges and enslaved her? They turned her into a maid, cooking, cleaning, and running back and forth for whatever orders her father and stepfamily could think of. Now, her father did the worst thing by offering her to a ruthless alpha as a bride when she was only twenty years old! Her dreams of finding her true mate have been crushed altogether. "You don't understand, Alexia! Our pack will be in danger. This is the alpha king's order!" Her father revealed. "Do you want your family to suffer? Me? Your stepmother and your siblings? Your friends? What about their parents?" Roland huffed and reminded her, "We both know the king's demands are definite. There is no defying him!" With one loud snarl, her father summoned his men. "Take her!" Minutes later, she was thrown back to the attic of their home, which had become her room for the past three years. Her Chapter 1 stepbrother, Drake, had practically pushed her down on the floor like she was nothing but a rug. Instantly, she noticed him heaving. Lust emitted around Drake at the sight of her helpless

state, her long legs on display for him. Alexia's b*dy instantly jerked as a reaction, her eyes widening in fright. She taunted, "Go ahead! Take advantage of me so you will die!" It wasn't the first time her stepbrother tried to get his hands on her. The last time, Drake suddenly felt a pang in his chest, halting him from assaulting her. "What the fuck are you doing?! Haven't you learned your lesson?!" Her father arrived. Seeing the scene before him, he grabbed Drake by the throat and pushed him against the wall. Choking Drake with his bare hand, Roland added, "You know she is cursed! Stay away from her! She will be Alpha Kieran's bride, and we don't want to hurt her now!" After throwing Drake outside her room, Roland returned his attention to Alexia. He said, "Tomorrow, Alpha Kieran's Beta will be here to fetch you. You will marry Alpha Kieran whether you like it or not!" Alexia was in anguish. While she remained down on the floor, her tears fell uncontrollably. Memories of the past flashed before her; how her father k*ssed her forehead to sleep at night, how he taught her self-defense for the first time, how he used to call her his baby girl, and many more. She looked into her father's eyes and wondered where her father had gone to. 1/7 14.59 Chapter 1 Her hands reached for him, hoping a small part of him still existed. She asked, "Dad, please. Don't you not care for me at all? Have sympathy for me. You used to be the father that once loved me. What did I do to change that? What have I done?! How could my father treat me this way?!" Alexia gasped and added, "Since you turned cold towards me, how I longed to feel a father's love. Why, dad? Please make me understand! I am your daughter, your own flesh and blood! Yet, you treat my step-siblings better than me!" Her father stilled. His hands clenched into fists. He appeared to consider, but soon, he replied, "Because of you, your mother left me. Because of you, my best friend died. Yet,

I had to endure keeping you in this pack all these years because it was my promise to your mother to keep you until she returned!" – Alpha Roland sighed annoyingly and resumed, "Your mother swore to come back, but she never did. She would have already returned if she loved you, but she never came. I hoped. Until last week, even as I remarried, a small part of me still hoped, but it would seem fate had another way of opening my eyes. You weren't meant to stay in this pack. And perhaps your mother never meant to come back for you." He clenched his jaws and snarled, "By the order of King Balthasar, you will marry Alpha Kieran, and that is your fate." Her father slammed the door shut behind her, leaving her in distress. Tomorrow, she would be taken into another pack, and in a week's time, she would be married

off to the most ruthless Alpha in the nation. Would she ever survive? Chapter 1 Alexia cried her heart out, feeling enraged and hopeless. The words of her father ran through her mind throughout the night. Her mother left her. It was true. She thought, 'Was it my fault that my mother left? Did she not really love me? Did she think I was also cursed?' Maybe it was true because eight years had passed since her mother disappeared, and she never came back for her. There was not a single word from her; not a letter, not even the feel of her spirit. Her mother had abandoned her, and that was reality. Knowing how her father blamed her for his best friend's death, her jaws clenched, and her heart felt like it was being squeezed by a hand. Ever since that happened, he never explained to her the reason he turned colder than the last. This was the first time her father finally spoke of that day, that terrible day that made her awful state turn into something far worse. Under her breath, she muttered, "Why would he put the blame on me? How was it my fault? I did not even know what had happened to Beta Edward! Did he never believe me?" Alexia did not know how long she cried that night, but when her tears ran dry, she forced herself up and rested in front of the window. She gazed up into the skies and asked the Moon Goddess, "Goddess, have you forsaken me? Why are you delivering me to a man who is said to be fearsome and cruel? Is this my fate?"

Chapter 2

-Alexia-

"Sister, are you ready?" Hazel, Alexia's stepsister, said, greeting her at the door. "Well, my dress looks good on you."

Alexia looked down at the hand-me-down dress and could not deny its elegance. She had never worn a dress so beautiful since her father remarried five years ago, yet it was something Hazel meant to throw away.

Hazel had that sly grin on her face when she described, "Congratulations, sister. I heard your husband-to-be is very ruthless, a man full of battle scars, a face so fearsome and ugly, you would piss in his presence. I heard he was enraged about this forced marriage. Maybe he'll blame you."

She laughed and concluded, "Maybe you'll end up dying pathetically in his hands. Not even your curse can save you."

Chills ran down Alexia's spine at hearing Hazel's suggestion. She wondered if her words were valid. 'Will this marriage be the end for me? That will surely be a wish come true for them.'

"Let's go!" Behind

Hazel, Drake called, clutching onto the bag containing the very little Alexia had as her belongings.

Alexia was not even given a chance to say goodbye to her friends. She was brought to the driveway and handed over to a tall, massive man with dirty blond hair. He had a claw mark on his left cheek, suggesting an enemy had struck him in the past.

This man was Beta Jaxon, Alpha Kieran's second in

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Chapter 2 command.

"Beta Jaxon, this is my daughter, Alexia Reed. Please tell Alpha Kieran that we entrust our daughter to him," Alpha Roland suggested. While his words were meant to show care, his tone remained cold, his eyes averting Alexia's gaze.

Alexia struggled to look Beta Jaxon in the eye, but sooner or later, she took the courage to ask, "Are – are you going to hurt me?"

She noticed how the beta was stunned. He leaned back, lifting his brow at her probing. He replied, "No, as long as you follow the rules."

"Get inside the car," he instructed.

Alexia looked at her father one last time. He had a poker face, and his eyes showed no love or concern for her.

"Goodbye, father," she said, but Alpha Roland merely nodded as an acknowledgment.

Next to her father was Matilda, her stepmother. She had a mocking grin on her face, and she waved her hand at Alexia. "Goodbye, Alexia. We will try to attend your wedding, but as you may know, resources are not good in the Cross River Pack lately."

She meant to say they won't be attending the wedding. Of course, Alexia knew this already. They would never make such an effort. They were happy to give her away, once and for all.

"Goodbye, my beloved sister!" Hazel added, smiling at Alexia.

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Inwardly, Alexia wanted to roll her eyes. She realized they were all faking a happy family before Beta Jaxon.

After Hazel, her eyes landed on Drake, and she noticed his frown. Perhaps his stepbrother was the only one who was upset about her leaving. However, to Alexia, she may be safer away from Drake.

Maybe.

'A big maybe.' Alexia thought.

With a sigh, Alexia told herself, 'Be strong. You've always been strong. You are smart, and you can work your way around people'

That day and the days to come would probably be the most uncertain days of her life. The alpha king had ordered her to marry Alpha Kieran Stone, the most menacing alpha of all Taplean.

Why? She had no clue. Her father claimed he had no idea. Sadly, Alexia had no say in this, and as what her stepsister had told, neither did Alpha Kieran.

While each pack was led by their own alphas, the highest in the hierarchy was Alpha King Balthasar. He was the alpha of all alphas in Taplean. As what her father told her last night, there was no defying the king.

Still, it remained a mystery of why she was chosen. Alexia had an Alpha blood, but her pack was not one of the nation's biggest or strongest. She wasn't any special. In fact, her pack believed her as a bad omen.

Her pack would suffer. That was what her father said to her last night. Frankly, Alexia did not care for her stepmother

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and step—
siblings. They had been the source of her misery for five years, but it was different with her friends. She loved her friends and their families. Lastly, despite everything, she at least cared for the father Alpha Roland used to be.

“Yes, Alpha, we have her. We are leaving her pack now,” Alexia heard Beta Jaxon said on the phone, clearly reporting to his alpha. She understood mindlinking had limitations. The Stone Blood Pack’s main territory was too far from their location that Jaxon had to use a mobile.

Under normal circumstances, cellphones were useless to werewolves who could connect to any pack members within close range.

Alexia was riding in the car with Beta Jaxon, along with two other warriors who were seated up front. They were leaving the borders of the Crest River Pack.

Looking past the car window, she caught sight of her two best friends, Dean and Melissa. A tear fell down her cheek as she waved goodbye. She saw them running after the car, making her chest heave.

Turning to Beta Jaxon, she begged, “Can I please say goodbye?”

The car stopped, allowing her to speak to her friends. She bid them goodbye, hugging them one last time. However, she hoped she would still see them again soon.

“My mother said my father will try to speak to the king,” Dean suggested. “Maybe you can still get out of this.”

Alexia clenched her jaws. She gasped and answered, “I don’t know, Dean. I don’t want your parents to get into trouble.”

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Melissa suggested, “What if... what if we told them about your –”

“Shhh.” Alexia hushed Melissa right away. Whatever was wrong with her will have to be put aside. Besides, it was mere speculation. No one had actually proven that she was cursed.

Entering into a new pack, she did not know if it would only bring her trouble or not. Softly, she replied to her friend, “I’ll decide on that. I don’t want that look of disgust from people... especially in a new pack.”

Looking at Dean and Melissa one last time, tears stung her eyes. Alexia hugged them again, saying, “Take care of aunt Kate and uncle Alex. Take care of Louise and Jake.”

One by one, she said the names that mattered in her heart. They were family members of Dean and Melissa.

“We need to leave now, Alexia,” the stern voice of Beta Jaxon came through, as he stood next to the vehicle, forcing her to pull away from the only people from whom she had received love.

“I’ll miss you. Goodbye,” Alexia said at last.

Driving away from her pack, she turned to the car’s back window and studied her home one last time. Sure, she wanted to leave the pack, but not this way. Not in the most uncertain way.

After seeing that they had left her pack’s territory, and feeling the pack’s bond waning away, she huffed, peering at Beta Jaxon.

Silently, she pondered, ‘In the hands of Alpha Kieran Stone, what would my life be?’

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After two days of traveling, Alexia finally arrived at the biggest pack of Taplean, The Stone Blood Pack, a pack led by generations of the Stone clan. Compared to her previous home, the Stone Blood Pack's main territory appeared to be ten times bigger. At least, that was how it looked to her, judging by the distance they had covered since entering the pack's borders.

Alexia has heard many stories about this pack. They were a pack that trained the best warriors, the first in front of King Balthasar's wars. All the warriors were strong, massive, fearless, and emotionless, just like the man beside her, Beta Jaxon.

As for their Alpha? Yes, it wasn't the first time she heard about the great warrior and leader, Alpha Kieran Stone. He was already twenty-six years old, a man six years older than her.

Alpha Kieran became an Alpha at the young age of twenty. He had fought many battles and conquered many territories himself. He had taken many lives of their nation's enemies, including the packs who had betrayed the king's cause.

Because of the battles he fought, Alpha Kieran had many scars all over his body. They said Alpha Kieran's face was scarred. He was eerie-looking and cold-blooded inside.

They said he ruled his pack with an iron fist. There was no room for mistakes, and those who did were cast aside.

Thinking of this, Alexia shook her head. She pondered, 'Maybe, if I ask nicely, I could get away from this, or, at least, -I could just be a wife in front of the King. He could have

many mistresses as he wants. Maybe... just maybe, he would leave me alone',

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Moments later, they showed up at the packhouse. From the gates, Alexia marveled at the extensive front lawn, the pines that formed fences around the estate, and the four-story red-brick mansion ahead.

After getting off the car, Alexia was immediately brought to the Alpha's office. Inside, Alexia saw a man whose back was turned. He wore a white shirt, and his sleeves rolled up to his forearm. Tattoos covered his arm up to his wrist. The man was looking out the window of his office.

"Alpha, Alexia is here," Beta Jaxon revealed.

Bracing herself, Alexia shut her eyes and sucked in a heavy breath. She silently said, 'This is it.'

Finally, Alpha Kieran turned to her, and she immediately noticed the surrounding air thickened. Her skin crawled, and she felt his scalding gaze. She fluttered her eyes open, and at first sight of him, her heart raced, her cheeks turned a shade darker, and almost instantly, her mind went blank in shock.

'This is... Alpha Kieran Stone?'

Chapter 3 -Alexia- "This is... Alpha Kieran Stone?' Alexia asked herself quietly as their eyes met. As if time had stopped completely. Nothing else mattered but the man before her. Silence engulfed her, and only the beating of her heart became deafening. At that very moment, she could not fathom why her emotions were off the roof at the sight of him. For a fleeting moment, she swore she felt his eyes were soft on her. However, as soon as she acknowledged this, Alpha Kieran averted her gaze. When he returned his attention to her, his eyes were unfeeling toward her. "Leave us," Alpha Kieran instructed his Beta in his glacial tone. Alexia heard the doors shut behind her while she stood rooted to the floor, her eyes still glued to the man they said was hideous-looking. Sure, he carried around him an authoritative air. His cut was imposing and towered over her little frame. In her view, he was probably around six feet, while she was five feet and five inches tall. He had a long scar from his forehead, going through his right brow and extending out to the side

of his cheek. Other than that, Alexia thought, if he had other scars on his face, they were not so evident. Was she supposed to be scared of him? If anything, Alexia 1/G 14:54 Chapter 3 thought, his scar was a unique mark on him that made him appealing; dangerously handsome, to be exact. Alpha Kieran was moderately bearded around his chiseled jawlines, down to his chin. He had intense dark brown eyes, and he had jet-black hair. He had a long roman nose and tanned skin. Alexia speculated where the rumors about his ugly features. came from, but this man was far from it. In fact, up until that very moment, she could feel her ears burning at how attractive he was. Just when she was in a daze, appreciating the man before her, Alpha Kieran ordered, "Sit." Alexia sat in front of his table while he took the opposite chair across from her. Kieran growled, "I don't know what your father or anyone from your pack said to the king, but I loath this marriage! And I am supposed to fulfill my duty to the king and the nation this way?" In her defense, Alexia tried to explain, "I never wanted this –" "Did I say that you could speak?" Kieran interrupted, his eyes burning through her b*dy. "The king may have asked me to marry you, but there will be no real marriage between us!" He grabbed the document from his table and threw them at Alexia, demanding, "Read!" With her hands trembling, she fl*pped through the papers. As she went over the terms of the contract, Alpha Kieran pointed out, "We will display our so-called tranquil marriage in front of the King and in public. You shall be addressed as the Luna of the Stone Blood Pack. However, within the packhouse and without any guests present, I am under no 9/6 14:541 Chapter 3 obligation to treat you as my wife!" "I will never mark you, and you are not allowed to mark me as well!" He spitefully described. "You will not sit with me, eat with me, nor share the air I breathe." "You will not share my wealth. You will work for your own income, however, and whatever you can contribute to this pack!" He narrowed his eyes as he resumed, "I reserve the right to cancel and amend this contract- reject the marriage at any time I please!" The list continued, all indicating that Alexia had no say in the marriage. Each time she proceeded to the next part of the contract, she merely nodded in agreement. So far, she had seen nothing that would cause her harm. All she needed to do was stay away from him, which was precisely what she wanted. – "Lastly, I will never love you. I will never take you to bed. You will have your own room two floors down, across my wing, farthest away from me," the Alpha added as his voice intensified. 'I will never love you. Alexia could not understand why, but that stung her a little. Hearing how he would never take advantage of her, however, she sighed in relief, her hand resting on her chest as she closed her eyes. She could still save herself for her true mate if she ever gets away from this contract marriage. With this in mind, she unwittingly muttered, "Thank you, Moon Goddess." When she opened her eyes, she saw the angry glare

from Alpha Kieran. It made her wonder what upset him, but then again, she realized the marriage had long angered him. 3/6 14:540 Chapter 3 His lips twitched before he remarked, "You sure are happy to be married to me. You had to thank the Goddess in front of me!" "No. No, it wasn't –" He got up and commanded, "Sign it! Remember, no one except for my Beta and my trusted people can know about this agreement!" Alexia nodded repeatedly and hastily signed the contract. "Get out," Kieran instructed. "Someone will take you to your room. The marriage ceremony will be held next week. Be ready, for the king and queen will be here to make sure the nuptials happen." "This way," the red-haired lady urged as she walked ahead of Alexia. When Alexia entered the room, she instantly appreciated the vastness of the chamber and the wood furniture. Her eyes gleamed at the sight of the bed. When she counted four pillows she could use for her sleep, Alexia could not help but smile, saying, "Thank you." "For what?" The lady said curtly. "You must be pleased, getting married to our Alpha." A frown formed on her face before Alexia rebutted, "I never wanted this. I wanted my true mate. I am a year away from feeling my mate bond. Why would I want this?" "Please don't hate me. I had no say in this. If Alpha Kieran could not defy the king, how much more for a person like me? I am below the Alpha." 4/6 14:54 Chapter 3 Knowing her place, Alexia bowed her frame in front of the lady, continuing, "Please. I have been given away by my father. I have nothing with me –

no money, no friends or family. All I have is my heart, believing I can survive this." "Please don't hate me." While she had her head down, Alexia heard the woman huffed. The lady with red hair replied, "Rae. My name is Rae. I am Beta Jaxon's mate. I know what it feels like to wait for one's true mate. Hearing you, I will give you a chance. I hope you are worthy of it." Alexia lifted her face. She forced a smile, and in her soft voice, she replied, "Rae. Thank you for hearing me out. Alpha Kieran did not listen to my side. I am happy that you at least heard me." "You have to understand. Our alpha's troubles are also ours to bear," Rae added. "Alpha Kieran never wanted a mate. He never wanted to marry. Now, all this was forced on him." "I understand. It's the same with me. Maybe... someday, the King will change his mind –" "We are working on making the King change his decision. After he wins the war, he will ask for a divorce, but for now, he is adamant about having Alpha Kieran marry you." After gathering air into her lungs, Rae added, "I guess we will all bear this for now." "Breakfast is at six in the morning. Tomorrow, we can talk about the wedding preparations," Rae said. "Understood," Alexia nodded. Rae was

about to leave, but she halted her steps. She 5/6 14:54 Chapter 3 remarked, "I'm sorry about the room. It's not our finest, but Alpha is still upset -" "The room is lovely," Alexia complimented. "Back home. My room is the attic." Rae frowned. She gulped and asked, "But aren't you Alpha Roland's daughter?" "I am, but my father lost his love for me a long time ago," Alexia said, her head bowing, ashamed to admit it. Immediately, there was an awkward silence in the room. Rae appeared to be struggling to answer. Soon, she reacted, "I'm - I'm sorry to hear that. I thought since you were the Alpha's daughter -" "Not everything is what it seems to be," Alexia replied. She smiled and added, "To tell you the truth, between you and my family, you have treated me better than any of them." Alexia noticed how Rae was stunned by her revelation. She could tell how Rae was weighing things. Eventually, Rae spoke in a soft tone. "It's - it's the same with Alpha Kieran. Not everything is what it seems to be." "Be patient."

Chapter 4 -Kieran- Rae returned to the office. When she settled down in her seat, she asked, "Well? How was it, Alpha?" "She signed the contract without hesitation. I did not feel any objection from her, not in the slightest way," Kieran replied in his deep voice. Somehow, he was disappointed. He assumed Alexia was another one of those bed-climbers or power-hungry alpha daughters. However, the fact that she accepted the terms of the contract willingly, made him think that she did not care for his rank, not his money, and she did not seem interested in sleeping with him? Earlier, when he saw how relieved she was about having her own room, it made him feel somewhat... undesirable. He directed his gaze to Jaxon and asked, "How was it being with her for two days?" Beta Jaxon shrugged and replied, "She was... nice, obedient and mostly, I saw hurt in her expression after being taken away. She seemed distant with her family, even her father, like she did not belong. She was more affectionate towards her friends. What struck me the most was how she asked me if I would hurt her like she knew it was coming." "As you have instructed, I brought her to the least refurbished room," Rae described. "She was happy about the room. Apparently, she had been living in the attic of her former home." Chapter 4 Dead air fell upon them before Rae suggested, "I don't know, Alpha, but maybe... our assumptions of her were wrong. Maybe she really did not know about this marriage." "Then." Kieran groaned. He raked his fingers through his hair and wondered, "Why did the king want me to marry her? How did he come up with this decision? And why now, when the war with Eswen is still proceeding?" "Could Queen Helen be involved in this decision?" Beta Jaxon asked. "I don't know," Kieran replied. "But let us look at all angles." It frustrated Alpha Kieran. His king gave him no clear reason for the first time since he had served the nation as an Alpha.

King Balthasar merely gave him Alexia's file and suggested that The Stone Blood Pack needed a luna. It wasn't the first time the king suggested he take a mate, but with Alexia Reed, he was unyielding that it had to be her. Kieran immediately assumed Alexia or her family had something to gain, that they had personally requested this of the king. Kieran studied at the file of Alexia, the same which the king gave him. Among the truths was the fact that she came from an Alpha bloodline. Her looks and physical attributes were precise, as shown in the file. However, after hearing his Beta's and Rae's feedback, he wondered if she was the spoiled Alpha daughter the King claimed her to be. Turning to his Beta, he instructed, "Send someone to spy on the Cross River Pack. Find out everything I need to know about Alexia." "Yes, Alpha," Jaxon replied.

2/7 4 14:3 Chapter 4 -Alexia- The sky's booming thunder made Alexia flinch in her sleep, her hands clenched against the sheets, and her breathing became labored. "No." Her head snapped in the other direction while her eyes remained shut. "Don't come near me." "No! How could you?" "Stop!" "I beg you! Stop!" Beads of sweat formed on her forehead while tears unknowingly flowed down her cheek. She shrieked loudly, "Stop!" The sound of the doors banging jerked Alexia awake. Her eyes rounded as she scanned the surrounding space. Kieran's tall frame came into her view, and she gulped. She wasn't sure if she should be relieved or not. When she recognized she had another nightmare, she abruptly bowed to him. "I'm sorry, Alpha. Did I wake you? I had a nightmare. Please forgive me," Alexia pleaded. If there was one thing she learned over the past few years, begging for mercy helped reduce any of her punishments. It did not always work, but her family was scared to hurt her severely. At worst, she would get a slap or two, or be locked up without food for a day or two, or spite her with words. Alexia was prepared for another berating, but to her surprise, Kieran asked, "Why are you on the floor?"

3/7 14:5 Chapter 4 She gradually gazed at him before answering, "I couldn't sleep. I – I was used to sleeping without a bed for three years straight." Kieran's brows met. He panned to the left, where the bed was, and looked back down on the hard floor. He ordered, "You had a nightmare because you are sleeping uncomfortably. Get back on the bed now!" Hastily, Alexia climbed to the bed, returning her sheets and pillows. As she did, she did not miss the man's intense gaze on her, and she quickly covered her exposed legs. When she settled, she wrapped her hands around her arms. Rae and Jaxon ultimately came to check on her. They were surprised to find their alpha inside the room, and it was clear by how their mouths dropped. "Alpha," Jaxon called, quickly masking his earlier reaction. "We heard Alexia scream." Rae, on the other hand, redirected her attention to Alexia. She asked, "What happened? Why were you screaming?" "I – I had a nightmare," Alexia weakly replied. "What was it about?" Rae asked. Alexia's eyes

fluttered, reluctant to reply. She found herself looking at Kieran and then back to Rae. Eventually, she responded, "It – it had something to do with what happened to me three years ago." She looked out the window and said, "It happened on a stormy night, too. And the trees were swaying harshly against the window. Sometimes it triggers, but I'm fine. It was just a dream." Chapter 4 "Do you want to talk about it?" Rae asked. "No." Alexia shook her head. "I have gotten over it. I promise. Sometimes, it only visits me in a dream." "Get her some water here," Kieran commanded, and Jaxon rushed down to fetch an entire pitcher of water and a glass. After Alexia had some water, everyone urged her to rest. Still, before leaving her quarters completely, Kieran ordered, "Sleep on the bed. If I find you sleeping on the floor again, and you end up having another nightmare, I will tie you to the bed myself!" Alexia repeatedly nodded before acting to lie on the soft sheets. Behind her doors, she could hear them whispering as if in a serious discussion. She wanted to listen to them, but the voices soon faded away. For the rest of the night, Alexia tried her hardest to sleep. She counted sheeps and even exhausted herself, doing pushups against the floor.

Eventually, after two hours, she dozed off in the comfortable bed. Outside, the rain continued to pour. The skies roared with thunders, and the same trees outside the room created familiar noises. Alexia flinched at the recognizable melodies, the same that brought her back to the day when it all turned worst for her. However, something changed that comforted her. She found herself dreaming of Kieran Stone. In her sleep, Kieran stroked her hair and caressed her cheek, his intense brown eyes looking down at her with tenderness. How the scene soothed her was baffling to Alexia. Kieran was supposed to be the man she feared, but why was his face. Chapter 4 helping her to sleep in the middle of the storm? The next day, after having breakfast with the kitchen staff, Rae came up to Alexia. She said, "Alexia, we have a lot on our itinerary, including finding your wedding gown, but before that, I'll move you to another room." "Another room?" Alexia asked, bemused. "Yes. If you follow me, I will show you to your new room," Rae confirmed. As they walked back to her room, Rae explained, "Your new room will have less noise since it's far from the trees. It will also have a good view of the entire pack, located at the topmost level." "Alpha Kieran has considered giving you a more relaxing room," Rae added. "Oh, dear. I hope I did not upset him last night." She groaned, angry with herself. Alexia did not have much to pack. She and Rae were out of her room in less than an hour. They made it two floors up,

opposite to the wing of her original room was located. She noticed that part of the packhouse was more lavish, including the furniture that decorated the hallways. Alexia could not help but ask, "So, where will I be staying?" Finally, they arrived at the designated room. Rae smiled at her as she held the handle to the door. She replied, "Here." She then pointed to the room and revealed, "Right next to Alpha Kieran's room." Alexia's jaws dropped, her hand covering her mouth. She 6/7 14:55 Chapter & wondered, 'Did I just... get myself into trouble? Why do I have a room next to the alpha?'

-Alexia- Chapter 5 "Here is the list of the guests who will attend the wedding. Be familiar with the names. I have included some of their profile. While Kieran has been forced into this marriage, he does not want to be humiliated. So, it is his instruction that you will have a decent ceremony," Rae described. Alexia nodded as she settled the list on her bedside table. She returned her attention to Rae and questioned, "So, what are we going to do today?" "Let's start by giving you a tour of the packhouse. We'll look for your wedding gown in the afternoon and decide on the arrangements. Of course, I'll take you around town as well – get to know some of the pack members," Rae revealed. Their first itinerary was the Stone family living area. It was located on the same floor as her room. In it were portraits of the previous Stone family that led the pack. "This is Kevin Stone, Kieran's father. He was the longest Alpha who ruled our pack," Rae described. She smiled, saying, "He saved my family, you know. He brought us from the neighboring pack who had been suffering from poverty." "That's nice," Alexia remarked. "He must be a kind alpha. Did the apple fall far from the tree?" Realizing her words, Alexia pursed her lips. She said, "I'm sorry. I don't mean by it." Rae chuckled. She answered, "I can't blame him. Alpha Kieran has been through a lot." Chapter 5 "His parents died when he was just ten years old. His uncle temporarily took over the pack until he was ready to rule. Only to find out that his uncle was the same person who orchestrated the death of the former alpha and Luna, and he never meant to hand over his rule to Kieran. His uncle died in his own hands," Rae revealed. "The amount of betrayal he had experienced turned his heart into stone, literally." "But remember what I said last night?" Rae asked. Alexia nodded and replied, "Yes, that he isn't what it seems to be? So he isn't a stone after all? Doesn't look that way to me." Rae sighed before putting up a smile. She replied, "He doesn't easily trust anyone with his true self. Again, be patient. You are new, someone who has become a wildcard to his plans. Try your best not to defy him, and you will have a harmonious life here." With a frown, Rae added, "Even as a contract wife." For the rest of the day, Rae took Alexia around town. Alexia met many of the pack's people and was surprised by how welcoming they were. Each time she was introduced, Alexia greeted

respectfully and put on her best smile. "Is this our future, Luna? The King chose well. She is as beautiful as a flower!" "It's nice to meet you, our future Luna." "She is a daughter of an Alpha, right? No wonder she is so well-mannered." When children approached her, she offered her embrace. It made Alexia recall Dean and Melissa's younger siblings that she felt helplessly emotional upon encountering the young Chapter 5 pups. "Hi, I am Cindy. You are so beautiful!" A young girl said. "I want to be as beautiful as you!" The words of the pup made Alexia smile. She kneeled to the little one and said, "You are equally beautiful. I love your braids." "Thanks! My mother made this!" The girl said, pointing to her mother. Cindy's mother happened to be the town's well-known midwife. Her name was Mara. Bowing her head to greet the future Luna, Mara suggested, "When you are pregnant with the Alpha's child, I will personally take care of you." It made Alexia blush. Next to her, Rae could not help but chuckle. However, she knew that would never happen. She was just a contract wife, and Kieran will never take her to bed. Moreover, she wanted it that way. Alexia hoped to still give herself only to her true mate. Faking a smile, she replied, "That would be nice, Mara. It was lovely meeting you. You all made me feel at home today. Better than home." After a long day of going around town, Alexia only wished to retire early for that night. When Rae excused herself to proceed to Kieran's office, Alexia rushed to her room. Just as she was up the stairs, she could hear a man's speedy steps behind her. She did not have to turn around to identify "who it was. The air around her felt heavy, and it was as if the man's Chapter 3 powerful aura engulfed her, and she was confident it could. only be Alpha Kieran. Alexia's heart raced. She ordered herself, 'Faster, Alexia! Faster!' When she arrived at her room, she quickly held the doorknob, ready to hide. However, she heard Kieran speak, "Stop! Acknowledge your Alpha!" Alexia sucked in a breath and turned to Kieran, saying, "Alpha Kieran. My apologies. I have yet to be familiar with your scent. I did not realize it was you." Bowing her head, she added, "Good evening." "What's good about the evening?" In his usually icy tone, Kieran asked. Alexia's eyes wandered from left to right, trying to find the right words. Eventually, she answered, "I've had the most wonderful day meeting your people, Alpha. Your pack is full of kind members. It is truly an honor to be here." "Is that why you forced yourself into this marriage?" He asked firmly. "I promise you, Alpha. This was not my request. All I wanted was to turn twenty-one and be with my mate one day," she revealed. Alexia did not know why, but it seemed as though the air turned glacial, and the negative energy seemed to have come from the alpha. He purred, and Alexia could feel his eyes burning through her frame. "Just because I moved you to the room next to me, you are one step closer to gaining my affection." He reminded as he Chapter 8 stepped closer. "Don't think for a moment that you are truly

welcome here in this pack, for my people did not know how you were named as my Luna!" Alexia wound up retreating her steps to the confines of her room as Kieran continued to talk, his feet also taking him inside. "Remember our agreement.

You are only a contract wife. That's all you will ever be." Kieran huffed and resumed, "Tonight, I don't want to hear you screaming in the middle of the night. Sleep on the bed, and don't dare sleep on the floor. Don't make me come to you and tie you to the bed." "Remember, you are to keep your distance from me and avoid the same air that I breathe!" He added. Alexia felt chills down her spine, following his reminder. She ended up holding her breath, following through with his latest command. "Leave!" He ordered. Bemused, Alexia asked, "To where? Should I return to the previous room?" Kieran frowned. And just like that, he left her in her new room. He walked back to the hallways and down the stairs. Alexia was utterly bewildered. She wondered, 'Did he come up just to tell me that?' Alexia settled the comforter down on the floor. It had been two hours since she had tried to put herself to sleep, but it was of no use. She figured she should try to sleep on the floor again. Chapter 5 Before doing so, she locked her door, including the adjoining door between her and Alpha Kieran. She told herself, "There is no way he would find out I slept on the floor. Besides, what is it to him?" She looked out the window, and after confirming that it would not be a rainy night, she settled in and closed her eyes to sleep. That night, she dreamed of Kieran again, his affectionate caresses, and she swore the surrounding air smelled woodsy with a hint of spice. After dreaming of Kieran, she dreamt of a winter-grey wolf, its coat gleaming against the moonlight. The glistening wolf said, "I'm coming for you. I'm coming for you." Alexia woke up, feeling goosebumps all over her b*dy. The words of the wintery-grey wolf kept echoing in her head, 'I'm coming for you.' "What did that mean?" She asked herself, but before she could dwell on her dream, her eyes widened, realizing that she was sleeping in the bed and not on the floor! She gasped, and her eyes landed on the adjoining door between her and Alpha Kieran. "No, it can't be."