

Chapter 71 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

“I don’t care for your opinion,” Axel’s angry voice pierces through my clouded brain. “I’m not leaving her here. She’s coming home with me.”

“Mister Silvermann,” Doctor Webber’s voice is patient. “It’s heartwarming that you care so much for her, but it’s not safe to transport her now. It’s in her best interest ...”

“Are you telling me I don’t have her interest at heart?” Axel bellows furiously. “I’m not going to dump her on the backseat of my car and take her to a shack. I have the means to transport her with Medivac to a hospital closer to home.”

“Axel,” I croak and instantly he stops arguing with the doctor.

“Hi,” he whispers as he stands next to me and gently strokes my hair. “How are you feeling?”

“Stop arguing with the doctor,” I grunt and close my eyes. “He’s only doing his job.”

“Welcome back,” Doctor Webber smiles at me. “Your procedure went smoothly and you’re going to be fine.”

“She’ll be even better when I take her home,” Axel glares at Webber.

“Doctor, can you give us a moment, please?” I ask politely.

He nods and smiles at me before he leaves the room.

“Axel,” I turn to him. “You’re not the alpha here. You can’t force your will onto people.”

“Please,” he snorts. “Humans might not understand wolves, but they understand money and I have plenty of it.”

“A hospital is a hospital, Axel,” I reason softly. “Let me stay here. Doctor Webber is kind and I trust him. I honestly don’t want to travel right now.”

“I’m not being stubborn or difficult,” he sighs and for the first time, it registers that he is worried. “I cannot protect you here, and this thing with Wilson isn’t resolved. We uncovered some disconcerting stuff about Wilson. Nina’s still under protection and you should be too.”

With a sigh, I close my eyes. When is this drama going to end? Just as I think we made progress another thing pops up. I was serious when I said that I am not up for travelling, but insisting to stay is going to complicate things for Axel and I do not want to do that to him.

“Okay,” I reluctantly agree. “But I’ll talk to Doctor Webber. You’re too mean.”

“I’m sorry,” he rests his forehead on mine. “I love you and I wouldn’t have insisted if I thought it isn’t necessary.”

“I know,” I try to smile. “Please call the doctor and make your arrangements.”

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Axel POV

I feel like a dog when we land on the hospital’s roof. Liana is whiter than the sheets in which she is wrapped. I wish I could have left her where she was, but I cannot risk it.

“Her room is ready,” Michelle shouts over the helicopter’s noise. “Let’s get her inside.”

I nod and silently follow Michelle and her personnel to Liana’s room. I stand in the corner and out of their way as Michelle examines her.

“She’ll be fine,” Michelle says after a small eternity. “Exhausted but fine.”

“And our arrangements are in place?” I ask sternly.

“Yes,” she nods. “Nobody in or out of this room except for pre-screened personnel.”

“Good,” I nod. “I’ll be here most of the time anyway.”

“I’m going home,” Michelle rubs over her eyes. “It’s one o’clock in the morning and judging by your complexion, you also need to rest.”

“Duly noted,” I grunt and wait until everyone is out before I walk to Liana’s bed.

I kiss her softly before I make myself comfortable on the recliner and close my eyes.

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The vibration of my phone wakes me and I quickly step out of the room before it wakes Liana.

“Hello, Angela,” I try to keep the irritation out of my voice. “Why are you calling so early?”

“It’s eight o’clock,” she laughs brightly. “Since when is that early for you?”

“Since I was up most of last night dealing with pack business,” I growl.

“Oh, yes, I heard,” she replies, and I frown. How the fuck does she know our pack’s business?

“Your father told my dad,” she says as if she read my mind. “Terrible stuff.”

“What do you want, Angela?” I ask exhausted. It is too early in the morning to deal with her.

“I miss you,” she sounds like a little girl and a shiver of disgust ripples through me. “I haven’t seen you in a month, and I cannot forget our last night together.”

“Now is not the time,” I cut her short. I do not want to be reminded about that.

“When is the time?” She asks irritated. “You always have an excuse not to see me.”

“When this is over,” I inhale deeply to calm myself. “I’m not even at home.”

“I know,” she replies. “Your mother told me.”

“Then you know I’m not lying,” I grind my teeth. My parents really should stay out of my business. I am only glad that I have not told Dad every detail. I told him just enough to keep him happy.

“Well, we should still talk,” she says adamantly. “We need to announce our engagement and make arrangements for the wedding and your inauguration. There are only three months left.”

“There’s no need for an engagement party,” I smirk. It feels good to say it. “You already announced it.”

“Only to Julia,” she protests. “That’s hardly an announcement.”

“And you think that juicy piece of information won’t travel like wildfire through my pack,” I yell angrily. “You brought this over yourself. No engagement party.”

“Axel, no,” she starts crying. “That’s not fair. How was I supposed to know Julia couldn’t keep a secret? You should fire her and not punish me.”

“What’s done is done,” I say mercilessly. “I’m also done talking about it. There will be no party. And if I even get so much as a whiff that you’re planning one, I’m cancelling the wedding.”

“You’re cruel,” she yells. “What has gotten into you?”

“I said what I wanted to,” I ignore her crying. “Goodbye, Angela.”

“Axel, wait ...”

But I do not wait. I disconnect the call and go back into the room. Liana is still sleeping and looking at her peaceful face calms me down a little.

At least one thing is going my way. Liana loves me. I cannot wait for her to wake up so that we can talk and plan our future together.

“It’s creepy to watch people sleep,” she groans, and I rush to her side. “And before you ask, I’m fine.”

“Good,” I laugh before I gently kiss her and take a seat on her bed. “Can I get you anything?”

“You can get off my IV,” she mumbles and sheepishly I scoot away.

“Anything else?” I chuckle.

“Coffee,” she sighs longingly.

“Nice try,” I take her hand into mine. “It’s clear juices for you until Michelle says otherwise.”

“Then I’m going back to sleep,” she grunts. “Wake me up when I can have caffeine.”

“Liana, we need to talk,” I say seriously.

“We’ll do plenty of talking,” she pulls a face. “The doctor said no sex for the next two weeks.”

“Really?” I ask disappointed. Not that sex is the alpha and omega, but she told me she loves me, dammit. I want to celebrate those words with actions.

“Really,” she confirms.

I sigh heavily as the true meaning registers. I will have to postpone the arrangements for my proposal. When I started planning, it slipped my mind that she will not heal as fast as a she-wolf. A picnic in the woods where I revealed my wolf to her, is not a strenuous activity but she might not be strong enough or in the mood for an outing.

“Okay, about Wilson,” I inhale deeply before I tell her everything Adele discovered. “Was Wyatt ever violent towards you? Or have you ever felt unsafe with him?”

“No,” she frowns. “Except for the time in the parking lot.”

“And his financial affairs?” I ask as I fight my anger. Remember the time he attacked her, and Nina infuriates me all over. “Have you ever wondered where he got the money from?”

“Of course not,” she scoffs. “He’s the Delta’s son. I always assumed Delta’s are paid a lot. Do you think he’s in charge?”

“These are routine questions,” I smile softly to ease her. “The other investors will be interrogated the same way. I only wanted more information before I confront Wyatt.”

“This is disturbing,” she sighs. “Remember what Wilson said to you in the park? He said Leon laughed at him when he picked out the gun. Do you think Leon knew Wilson planned on killing me?”

“No,” I say urgently. “I think Wilson was playing them. It might have started out as the three of them collecting from you, but I think it changed for Wilson when Nina turned out to be a match. For Leon and Wyatt, it was about the money. For Wilson, it was about the heart.”

“That’s strangely comforting,” her bottom lip quivers slightly. “Knowing that my brother didn’t participate in planning to kill me.”

“I’m sorry,” I lean over and kiss her. I would much rather pull her onto my lap and hold her, but I am afraid that I might hurt her. “It’s awful and I’m sorry.”

“That’s not the worst of it,” she cries softly. “My parents ...”

She stops abruptly and cries softly as she pulls her hand from mine and covers her face.

“Liana,” I lay down next to her and gently pull her closer. “Tell me what happened yesterday.”

Her words are soft and uneven as she struggles to tell me through the tears. And the more I hear, the angrier I get. For as long as I live, I will never be able to understand how parents can worship one child and grossly neglect the other. I might be an only child, but it simply makes no sense to me.

I stroke her hair and back while whispering comforting words as I try to contain my anger. As much as I despise her parents at this moment, so little can I do or say. It is her parents after all. But if it was up to me ... damn, I am going to need a cemetery.

Chapter 72_Wyatt's Version

Chapter 72 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

“You should get going,” I sniff after I cried myself empty. “You have work waiting.”

“I’m not leaving you like this,” Axel says adamantly and kisses me quickly.

“I know and that’s one of the reasons why I love you,” I smile as I caress his cheek. “But you’re an alpha and not a babysitter. I’m well cared for and safe here. Besides, I’m going to ask Michelle for those magic potions of hers that take away the pain and help me sleep.”

“I still think I should stay,” Axel frowns.

“And do what, exactly?” I roll my eyes. “You can’t help me, but you can help the pack. Please go. I’ll be right here when you’re done at work.”

“Okay,” he gives in after a moment and kisses me before he gets up.

I smile softly as I watch him leave and place my hand on my abdomen. I cannot wait to tell him I am pregnant. But now was not the right time. Not while I am all snot and tears and too sore to sit up straight. For goddess’ sake, I at least want to brush my hair and teeth before I tell him.

Maybe I should do one of those cute pregnancy reveals that is trending currently. Make it a special and memorable occasion.

“Good morning,” Michelle interrupts my thoughts as she enters my room. “How are you today?”

“I’d be ungrateful if I complain,” I smile as she examines my wounds. “Everyone is taking really good care of me.”

“Good to hear,” she smiles. “Have you had time to think about the pregnancy?”

“Oh, yes,” I laugh happily. “I want this baby without a doubt. I realized how I felt when I thought I could lose it.”

“Have you told the father?” She asks softly.

“Actually, that’s what I was thinking about when you came in,” I smile. “I want to make it memorable. Any brilliant ideas?”

“Hmm, it depends on what he likes,” she frowns. “But I like the one where you give him a puzzle to build and then it spells, I’m pregnant.”

“Not bad,” I nod. “But I have plenty of time in this bed to think about it.”

“Not that much,” she smiles. “If nothing changes, I will discharge you tomorrow.”

“Really?” I ask eagerly. It would be great to be at home.

“Just to go home,” she raises her eyebrows. “I’m not clearing you for work for at least another week.”

“And no sex,” I roll my eyes.

“No sex,” Michelle laughs as she leaves the room and I make myself comfortable for a nap.

Axel POV

“Morning, Juliana,” I greet as I walk into the office and take out a box of chocolates. “This is for you.”

“Thank you,” she looks at me flabbergasted. “But why?”

“For keeping the fort in my absence,” I grin. “Without help, I should add.”

“Yeah, where is Liana?” Juliana looks at me curiously. “I haven’t seen or heard from her since she went home sick three days ago.”

“She’s in the hospital, but she’s doing fine,” I reply. “Appendicitis, she won’t return for the next week or so.”

“Poor thing,” Juliana pouts. “I should pay her a visit.”

“She would like that,” I nod as I walk to my office. “Any messages?”

“Yes,” she replies. “It’s on your desk.”

“Thank you and you can send in Adele when she arrives,” I say before I close the door behind me and walk to my desk.

I groan inwardly when I notice the message from Jack. He is getting impatient because I continue to postpone the signing of the contract. But he must wait a little bit longer. I am going to dump him and Angela simultaneously.

“Morning, sir,” Adele greets me as she enters my office and takes a seat. “I have everything you asked for.”

She places a file on my desk, and I pull it closer.

“I’m listening,” I lean back in my chair.

“You were right,” she clears her throat. “Everyone that still owed Wilson was given a choice to either pay immediately or have their debt scratched by participating in his plan. We also have the guys in custody that attacked and killed Leon. I have affidavits from people confessing to kidnapping Nina to transporting her to Rochester. There’s even a nurse who confessed that she was going to forge the paperwork for the transplant.”

“Thanks,” I sigh. “Get the paperwork to Nick. All of them will be arrested and serve time in prison.”

“Will there be any leniency because they cooperated?” Adele asks.

“No,” I say brusquely. “Every single one of them had the choice to come to me for help. And if they didn’t want to talk to me, they could’ve gone to my dad. If Liana didn’t come to me, Nina would’ve been dead by now. Nina might be a human but she’s part of our pack and under our laws and protection.”

“I understand,” Adele nods.

“I need you to investigate the investors,” I continue. “Everyone but Wyatt. I already have an appointment with him.”

“Yes, sir,” Adele gets up and leaves.

I am busy reading the affidavits when Wyatt arrives at my office. He looks uncertain and a little nervous as he takes a seat across from me.

“Do you know why you’re here?” I ask when he settles down.

“About my position as future Delta,” Wyatt replies.

“And why would you think that?” I ask amused as I lean back in my chair.

“Your inauguration is in a couple of months, and you must appoint your ranks,” he replies nonchalantly. “I’ve been pulling my weight and haven’t crossed any lines since ... since my mate rejected me.”

“You know the rules, Wyatt,” I smirk. “You cannot be a rank without your mate.”

“Except if she rejects me,” he grins. “I read up on our laws. If I reject her for any other reason than unfaithfulness on her part, I’m not eligible. But if she rejects me, I may be appointed as rank.”

“Imagine all the drama and chaos you could’ve avoided if you read that earlier,” I reply sarcastically.

“Rather late than never,” he shrugs.

“There’s only one problem, Wyatt,” I lean forward on my desk and intertwine my fingers. “You weren’t a model citizen since Liana rejected you.”

“What do you mean?” He frowns.

“Wilson,” I smirk, and Wyatt visibly pales. “I know about everything. Do you know that Leon’s dead?”

“No,” he gapes. “What about Liana? Where is she?”

“That’s none of your concern,” I growl. It agitates me that he is asking about my mate. He does not even have the right to say her name.

“But ...”

“You’re here to defend yourself,” I cut him off brusquely. “Your association with Wilson isn’t doing you any favours.”

“He owes me money,” Wyatt says nervously. “That’s it. He was supposed to repay me at the end of this week but then he shot himself. I’m out of twenty thousand dollars, I’m the victim here.”

“Wyatt, you should quit while you’re ahead,” I warn him. “None of that is news to me. And you basically confessed to illegal investments. If you want to clear your name, I need the full story.”

“Fine,” he sighs and bows his head. For a moment there is only silence around us before he looks up. “Leon needed money and I referred him to Wilson because Leon still owed me, and I was done with him. Leon nominated Liana as surety. The first time Leon convinced Liana to give him money.”

“Are you sure?” I frown. Liana never said anything and ... wait, that time I gave her parents ten thousand dollars. Liana was furious about it because they used it to pay Leon’s debt.

“Yes,” Wyatt replies. “At least, that’s what Wilson told me. Anyway, Leon borrowed money again and couldn’t pay. Liana cut him off, so Wilson came to me for help. I refused to get involved. Especially after you ordered me to pay Liana. I had enough of the Ericksons. That’s when Leon suggested to Wilson to pressure Liana by threatening her best friend.”

“Why did you pull your investment?” I ask.

“Gwen is pregnant, and we need a bigger house,” he replies bluntly.

I look stoically at Wyatt as I overthink his words. There are so many holes in his story, I could compare it to Swiss cheese. The only consistency is that the three of them were in cahoots, and the only people that can contradict him, are dead.

I doubt that Leon wanted Liana dead. She was his only source of income. And after what I learned about Stacey, Wilson only had his mate’s heart in mind. But Wyatt ... he has a motive.

“This must be convenient for you,” I look at him as I straighten my shoulders. “Wilson and Leon can’t speak for themselves. And you, well ... you must really hate Liana. She rejected you, spoiling your chance at becoming Delta and you must repay her fifty thousand dollars. Leon and Wilson didn’t come up with the plan to kidnap Nina, you did.”

“You have no proof,” Wyatt explodes red in the face. “I’m innocent. How is Leon’s death benefitting me? For fuck’s sake, I lost money because of this.”

“Your reaction tells me all I need to know,” I smile sarcastically. “And I bet it was your idea that Wilson kills Liana.”

“Liana’s dead?” Wyatt asks and fails to hide his pleasure.

“No, she’s not,” my voice is low and dark as I fight my anger. “But you’re the one that convinced Wilson to do it. That’s why you pulled your investment. You didn’t want to be associated with him if he gets caught.”

“That’s not true,” he bellows. “I didn’t ...”

“Enough,” I slam on my desk as I lose my temper. “I know everything. I spoke with Wilson, and we have his computer and cell phone which can prove everything.”

I know I am bluffing the last part, but I cannot stand his lies any longer.

“Liana costs me everything,” Wyatt jumps up and looks at me challenging. “And if that bitch Nina didn’t pump her head full of shit, I could’ve gotten her back before she rejected me. So yes, it was my idea to use Nina, but Wilson wasn’t going to kill Liana. He was going to bring her to me. She had to pay for the pain I had to endure for cheating and then rejecting me.”

“Thank you for your honesty,” I smile satisfied and walk around the desk to Wyatt. He looks at me cautiously. “How about I show my gratitude and tell you who she cheated with?”

“You know?” Wyatt gapes.

“Yes, I do,” I smile, and he relaxes a little. “Liana found her second chance mate that night.”

“Impossible,” he frowns. “She was still mated to me then.”

“Oh, thanks to you, she hasn’t the slightest clue,” I grin. “You did a great job keeping her in the dark about the mate bond.”

“So, who is it?” He asks eagerly.

“It’s me, motherfucker,” I growl and look at him with cold, hard anger.

Wyatt’s eyes widen and he opens his mouth in protest as I extend my claw and behead him.

Chapter 73_Confessions

Chapter 73 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Axel POV

I sigh heavily as I watch Wyatt's blood stain a perfectly good carpet. Dammit, I should have thought this through. Now I must replace the carpet. I should have done it outside in the woods or on the bathroom tiles.

Liana is going to be so mad at me, I exhale deeply. But I am not sorry and will do it again.

I pick up my phone and order a cleaning crew and a new carpet before I grab my jacket and leave the office.

"Juliana," I stand in front of her desk. "Nobody in or out my office, including you. Expect the cleaning crew that will arrive soon."

"Certainly, sir," she nods. "And I'll remind them to move the body through the back."

"That's why you're irreplaceable," I smile, and she slightly blushes.

My heart is light and free as I walk to the elevator. This mess is finally behind us. All that is left, is to kick Angela to the side and confess to Liana. The latter is going to be more complicated; I know.

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"Why are you out of bed?" I ask concerned when I walk into Liana's room.

"Doctor's orders," she smiles as she turns away from the window to face me. "I must start moving. Michelle said I can go home tomorrow."

"Aren't you still in pain?" I walk towards her.

"A little," she shrugs. "But I have awesome painkillers."

"But ..."

"I'm not running a marathon, Axel," she winches slightly before she walks back to bed. "But I want to go home, and she won't discharge me if I don't start moving."

"Okay," I wipe tiredly over my face. Who am I to argue with a doctor?

“You look terrible,” Liana’s voice is soft and soothing. “Is everything okay?”

“We should talk,” I sigh and sit next to her on the bed.

“This sounds ominous,” she laughs nervously but quickly stops and looks at me with fear. “My parents, are they okay? Did something happen to them?”

“No, no,” I say quickly as I take her hands into mine. “Nothing like that. It’s about Wilson.”

“Oh, good,” she sighs relieved. “What about him?”

“You were right,” I say softly as I look at her. “It was all Wyatt. He was angry because you rejected him and wanted revenge. He did invest in Wilson’s business and Leon did owe him money. But it was Wyatt’s idea to involve Nina. He blamed her for helping you. But he wasn’t part of Leon’s death. That was Wilson. Wilson had his own agenda and Leon was simply collateral damage.”

“Wow, okay,” she murmurs after a moment. “What’s going to happen now?”

“Well,” I take a deep breath. “Everybody that participated in Wilson’s plan will be arrested and sentenced to jail. Including the men that killed Leon.”

“Good,” she nods.

“Liana, Wyatt is dead,” I say softly and her head jerks up. “I’m sorry, I couldn’t stop myself after he confessed.”

“You ... you killed him?” Her voice is hoarse, and her hands start shaking.

“Yes,” I admit and do not move when she pulls her hands away from mine. “He confessed that he wanted to kidnap you and make you pay. His words, not mine.”

Liana does not say a word as she stands up and walks to the window. The silence is deafening as I watch her stare absentmindedly out of the window.

Liana POV

My ears are ringing, and my heart is racing as I process the information. I am not angry, sad or disappointed, I am stupefied.

I was going to marry that bastard! A cruel, evil and manipulative bastard. If I did not walk in on him and Gwen that night ... I shudder despite the warmth of the room. For fuck’s sake, I cried over him. Gwen did me a humongous favour when she took him from me.

“What about Gwen and their son?” I turn to Axel.

“They’re at home, I guess,” he replies stunned by my reaction and I do not blame him.

After the lecture I gave him about killing people he would have expected me to be mad. And three days ago, I might have been. But things have changed ... I have changed. I understand now what Axel meant when he said he would kill for me. Wyatt would not have stopped coming for me if Axel did not kill him.

“We should send them flowers,” I say as I sit down in the chair. “We should help them during their time of grieve, they’re still part of the pack.”

“You’re not mad?” Axel frowns as he walks to me.

“Of course, I’m mad,” I look up at him. “But not at you, at Wyatt. If I married him, I would’ve been a neglected and battered wife by now. Gwen saved me from the biggest mistake of my life. She needs our support.”

“Okay,” he kneels in front of me. “I will help them as much as I can.”

“Thank you,” I caress his cheek and he turns his head to plant a kiss on my palm.

“So, you’re not even a little upset that I killed him?” Axel asks cautiously as he stands up and pulls me to my feet.

“No,” I throw my arms around his neck. “It’s like you said, there’s mercy in death. Wyatt wasn’t going to show me mercy and his hate for me would’ve escalated over time. This could’ve been so much worse. You did what you had to.”

“You never cease to surprise me,” he chuckles before he leans over and gently kisses me.

“But there’s one more thing,” he murmurs when he pulls away and my stomach dives. Really? Is all this, not enough?

“I have a confession,” he clears his throat and looks nervous. “You’re my mate.”

“What?” I frown. “I don’t understand.”

“I didn’t know when we met in the bar,” he explains. “You were still mated to Wyatt then. But I knew you were my mate when I saw you in the parking lot.”

“And you didn’t say anything?” I gape at him flabbergasted. All this time he knew. Days, weeks and months were wasted because he did not tell me.

“I couldn’t,” he pushes his fingers through his hair. “You’re a human and don’t feel the mate bond like we do. You still had a broken heart after Wyatt, and I had to give you time to get over him. You said it yourself; you would’ve rejected me then.”

“I’m so angry at you right now,” I admit. “And I’m not allowed to be, because you’re right. I would’ve rejected you then. But I have been in love with you for months now. And to ask why you haven’t told me at a later stage would be redundant because how could you have known? But Axel, how long were you planning on keeping this to yourself? If I haven’t told you I love you, you wouldn’t have told me now.”

“I don’t know and I’m scared Liana,” he looks at me pleadingly. “After what Wyatt has done to you, I was afraid that you would reject me. Your opinions are so vastly different from mine. I didn’t want to risk losing you and played it safe. I’m sorry. I’m sorry for not telling you sooner and I’m sorry if you feel betrayed. And as I’m saying this, I’m scared shitless that you might reject me now.”

“Why on earth would I want to do that?” I ask confused. “You know I love you, why would I reject you?”

“Because accepting me as your mate, is a lifetime commitment,” he sighs and slumps down in a chair. “It’s bigger than I love you. It’s more than a feeling. If you accept me, there’s no amicable separation. It’s either death or excruciating pain. There’s no easy way out.”

Speechless I look at him and the anguish in his eyes breaks my heart. This really has been eating at him. Memories of conversations and happenings flush through my mind and I cringe inside. I have been crying and missing sleep because I was hopelessly in love, but Axel ... I marked him. A rejection for him would be much worse than a broken heart for me.

“Nina told me how to reject a wolf,” I say, and his eyes turn dark with agony.

“But how do I accept my mate?” I ask as I sit on his lap and wrap my arms around his neck. “Because I don’t want to mess it up.”

“You need to be sure,” he looks at me hesitantly. “There’s no turning back.”

“Are you trying to convince me to reject you?” I raise my eyebrows.

“No,” he says quickly as his arms go around my waist. “But you should know what you’re getting yourself into.”

“Okay,” I nod and inhale deeply. “Just one more thing, I’m a human and you’re the alpha. How’s that going to work? Aren’t there rules against it? Are you going to lose your position?”

“No, I won’t,” he chuckles. “Nothing changes. You’ll be part of the pack and will be treated like any other she-wolf. You won’t be the first human Luna and you won’t be the last.”

“I love you, Axel,” I kiss him softly. “And I want to accept you. Just tell me how to do it.”

“I’m going to mark you,” he gently touches my neck. “The same way you marked me.”

“Okay, I’m ready,” I announce and curve my neck sideways to allow him access.

“I’m not doing it now,” he laughs before he kisses me. “Not like this.”

“Why?” I pout. “Are you having second thoughts?”

“Not even close,” he kisses my neck and I shiver in delight.

“It’s a very arousing experience,” he murmurs against my skin. “And you’re out of commission. We can do it when you’re healed.”

“This sucks,” I complain.

“Only a little,” he chuckles and looks at me. “You know you’re my mate and I know you’re not going to reject me. It’s good enough for now and it gives us something to look forward to.”

I trace his face as I ponder if I should tell him about the baby. I want to tell him so badly. It is hell keeping it to myself. But the need to surprise him wins my urge to blurt it out.

“I love you,” I smile before I kiss him.

Chapter 74_Growing A Backbone

Chapter 74 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

I take a deep breath as I stroke the imaginary wrinkles out of my black jacket before I walk to the car. Today is Leon’s funeral and my nerves are shattered.

If not for Stanley, I would not have known the funeral is today. My parents are still ignoring my calls, and I have stopped trying. I know I am not welcome, but I am still going. He was my brother, after all.

Axel has been my rock. For hours, he listened to me whining, crying and complaining. He wiped my tears and encouraged me. He made me feel loved and wanted when my parents tossed me aside. In the days that passed, I opened up to him and shared all my insecurities and beliefs. Not once did he look at me like I am a moron or uneducated, even though we did not always agree.

Drew smiles kindly at me as he holds open the car door for me.

“Thanks, Drew,” I say as I get in and immediately snuggle closer to Axel.

“You smell nice,” Axel takes my hand.

“Thank you,” I squeeze his hand. “And you should like it, you bought it.”

“Man, I have the best taste,” he grins at me, and I laugh softly.

“I’ve been thinking a lot about what you said yesterday,” I turn to look at him. “And you’re right, I need a backbone.”

“That’s not what I’ve said,” he protests.

“You might as well,” I laugh. “I have allowed my family to walk over me for too long. Even when I told them no, I would give in eventually. I have no backbone.”

“You’ll grow one,” he smirks. “With time.”

“I would’ve done so many things differently if I had one,” I sigh. “For starters, I wouldn’t have been so indecisive and second-guessing everything.”

“And you would’ve confessed your love for me sooner,” he bats his eyes ridiculously at me.

“That’s supposed to be the man’s job,” I bump his shoulder.

“Please,” he rolls his eyes at me. “Your kind burned bras for the privilege to say it first.”

“Because your kind sucked at it,” I smirk.

“Oh, really,” he leans over and gently caress my neck with his lips. “We’ll have to revisit this conversation next week when you’re cleared for duty.”

“Duty?” I gasp pretentiously. “Keep it up, mister. I will develop a headache in a heartbeat.”

“You were so much easier to seduce before you started growing a backbone,” he growls theatrically.

**

Axel and I are standing silently next to each other while watching from a distance. No matter how much I fought it, insecurities and fear found their way into my heart. For more than two decades, I was moulded by my family and breaking the chains is harder than I thought it would be. It is easy to say I am going to do it, but the reality is much harder.

Today is going to be hard enough on my parents, I do not need to make it harder for them. And it has nothing to do with my feelings but out of respect for theirs. Leon was my blood, but we were never close. I am here – regardless of the distance – and that is enough.

Mother's cries echo around me as the coffin lowers and my nails dig into Axel's skin. Dad bows his head, and his shoulders are shaking as he sobs. I bite hard onto my quivering bottom lip. My biggest loss is my father. I would give anything to comfort him at this moment.

"We should go," I croak as I turn away.

"Okay," Axel drapes his arm around my shoulder and leads me back to the car.

**

Two weeks! The thought shoots through my mind and I jump out of bed. I do not have words to describe how much I have been looking forward to this moment.

Returning to work on a Friday is ridiculous, but I have been homebound long enough. To make things worse, Axel left for Dallas a day after the funeral.

But today everything will return to normal. Axel is coming home, and I am cleared for work and other activities.

It is the other activities that have my heart racing. I am sexually frustrated, there is no denying it. Axel has arranged a special night for us, and I cannot wait to be marked by him. Plus, I have finally finished Axel's surprise to announce my pregnancy.

In record time, I shower and dress before enjoying a huge breakfast. I managed to pick up some of the weight I have lost, and Michelle is satisfied with the baby's development. I have a standing appointment with her every week to check on the baby. I do not want to screw it up.

There is a bounce in my step as I grab my handbag and leave for the office.

**

By the time the elevator door pings, Juliana and I have caught up on gossip and enjoyed our morning break. I look up eagerly in anticipation to see Axel but my heart drops to my feet when Angela walks towards us.

"Of, for fuck's sake," I grunt as I lower my gaze and ignore her. Which god in what universe did I piss off that my perfect day must be spoiled by her?

"Good morning," Angela's voice is sweet and friendly, and I nearly choke. I have no idea how to handle a friendly Angela.

"How can I help?" Juliana rescues me and I could kiss her feet out of gratitude.

"I'm here to surprise my fiancé," Angela pouts as she holds her ring up high and I roll my eyes.

"He hasn't returned yet," Juliana informs her. "He's been in Dallas the whole week."

“I know,” Angela snaps fiercely. “He’s my fiancé.”

There she is, I grin inwardly. The real Angela and it only took her three minutes to surface.

“Anyway,” she pouts as she admires her ring. “I’ll just wait for him in his office. I’m wearing something special.”

“Would you like something to drink while you wait?” Juliana offers.

“Arsenic,” I mumble under my breath.

“Excuse me?” Her head jerks my way.

“Apple juice,” I smile. “We have fresh apple juice.”

“Urgh,” she rolls her eyes at me and turns back to Juliana. “As I was saying, I simply cannot forget our last night together. Being pinned to the wall while he pleased me. It was so hot.”

My fingers cramp around my pen as my ears start ringing. This cannot be true. She is lying. Axel assured me he had not slept with her, and I believed him. He is not a psycho like Angela, and I choose to believe him. But that does not make it easier to hear her say the words.

“I need apple juice,” I announce as I get up. The faster I get away from this conversation the better. I am fighting really hard to keep this day disaster-free.

At that moment Axel walks in and our eyes lock for a moment.

“Baby,” Angela squeals and splinters the moment she runs into his arms. “You’re home, I’ve missed you so much.”

“What are you doing here?” Axel scoffs as he pushes her away.

“Surprising you,” she pouts. “You’ve been so busy lately and we have a wedding to arrange.”

“Not now,” he brushes her off. “I have work to do.”

“I’ll wait,” she chirps and takes a seat on the couch by Juliana’s desk. “It’s the weekend, baby. Once you’re done here, you’re all mine.”

“Ladies, my office please,” Axel looks at me and Juliana before he turns to Angela. “Not you, you stay.”

Angela’s eyes harden but she only nods, and I can feel her eyes on me as we walk into Axel’s office.

“How long has she been here?” Axel asks as he closes the door and turns to us.

“About ten minutes, I guess,” Juliana replies and looks at me for confirmation.

“Long enough to brag about her orgasm against the wall,” I say dryly as I cross my arms in front of my chest, and I notice how Axel pales.

“Juliana,” Axel takes his wallet out. “I’ll give you ten thousand dollars right now if you get that woman off my back.”

“Ex ... excuse me?” She gapes at him.

“Here,” Axel takes out a platinum card and hands it over to her. “Take her shopping or whatever. Just keep her occupied long enough so I can get out of town, please.”

“You’re serious,” her fingers are slightly trembling as she takes the card.

“Yes,” Axel says adamantly. “I’ll transfer ten thousand into your account tonight. Use that card to entertain Angela.”

“Okay,” she beams and dashes out of the door.

“I can explain,” Axel looks at me pleadingly. “It’s not how it sounds like.”

“Please don’t,” I hold my hand up and close my eyes for a moment before I look at him. “I don’t think I’m ready to hear it, Axel. This day started so good; I don’t want to ruin it.”

“Liana, I didn’t sleep with her, I swear,” he continues, and I can hear the desperation in his voice.

“I believe you,” I plaster a smile on my face. “But I’m on the verge of losing my shit, Axel. I need a moment to calm down before you tell me your version of pinning her against the wall while you pleasure her. And it was so hot. Her words, not mine.”

“But what about us?” Axel calls as I walk to the door.

“What about us?” I frown as I turn around.

“We had plans,” he walks towards me. “I made reservations.”

“Axel, if you think that I’m going to allow that bitch to ruin my day, you should think again,” I say determinately. “She nearly killed me, and I had to lose everything to finally grow up and learn what’s important. You might not have marked me, but I’m committed to us.”

“So, you’re not mad?” He asks cautiously.

“I’m not mad,” I look him in the eyes. “I’m fucking furious. But I’m giving you the benefit of the doubt because you’re my mate and she’s certifiable. So, I’m going to walk out of here to the

coffee shop across the street. I'm going to order a delicious slice of cheesecake and I'm going to eat it with a spoon. Because if they give me a fork, I might stab Angela in the eye."

"I love you," Axel says softly.

"I love you too," I turn around and leave the office with long strides.

Chapter 75_He's My Cousin

Chapter 75 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

Adamantly I march to the coffee shop. I need to distance myself from the situation before I do or say something I regret later.

I meant it when I told Axel I believed him. He has proven himself to me over the months. But my blood is boiling, and my fingers are itching for Angela's throat. Taking it out on Axel would be unfair.

I pick out two slices of cheesecake – one for me and one for Wolfie. That is what I have decided to call our baby for now. One, because he is a wolf and two, it is because of him that I am hungry like a wolf. Constantly.

I close my eyes in ecstasy when the first sugary bite hits my tastebuds. Now, this is what I needed. At least I do not have to worry about my figure. Wolfie takes care of that.

"Nice meeting you here."

I open my eyes in surprise and look up at a grinning Luther.

"May I join you?" He asks politely.

"You may sit, but you're not touching this," I point to the cheesecake, and he bursts out laughing.

"I wouldn't dream of it," he sits down. "What are you doing here?"

"You mean besides the obvious?" I raise my eyebrows. "I work across the street, remember? I'm either taking a late tea break or an early lunch. What are you doing here?"

“I saw you cross the street and decided to follow you,” he admits sheepishly. “It feels like I haven’t seen you in years.”

“Oh, please,” I take another bite. “You saw me last night at class.”

“That’s not the same or what I meant, and you know it,” his voice is soft and smooth as he looks at me longingly. “If you weren’t responding to my texts, I would’ve thought you were ignoring me.”

“Not this again,” I groan and shift uncomfortably in my chair. I wish I could tell him Axel is my mate, but I cannot risk it. Axel and I agreed to keep it to ourselves until he could talk to Angela. “We’ve been over this, Luther, you’re wasting your time with me. I’m in love with another man.”

“But does he deserve you?” Luther hisses urgently. “If he appreciated and understood you, he’d rush you down the aisle.”

“He does love me,” I push my cheesecake aside. Luther has spoiled it for me. “Things are a little complicated but we’re working on it.”

“That’s the thing,” Luther insists. “With me, it won’t be complicated. I will propose to you here right now if you allow me.”

“Even if I’m pregnant with another man’s child?” I blurt out before I can stop myself.

“Are you?” He gapes at me before he pulls himself together. “Yes, Liana. Even then. Just say the word. I’ll be happy to be the father.”

“You’re sweet,” I smile and squeeze his hand. “But I’m not your mate, Luther. One day you’ll meet her and then everything will change for you.”

“Liana, I’m serious,” he clamps my hand tightly. “Marry me, please? Baby and all.”

“I’m not pregnant,” I pull my hand free and stand up. “I said it to discourage you from pursuing me. I’m sorry, Luther, but we cannot be friends any longer. Not if you feel like this. It would be unfair to both of us. As long as we’re friends, you’re going to hope, and I will be in this awkward position to shoot you down every time.”

“Liana, please give me a chance,” he begs as he gets up.

“Goodbye, Luther,” I say sadly and turn around.

“Liana,” he grabs my wrist and swings me around.

But before I can say anything, his lips are on mine. Warm, soft and urgent. It is so unexpected that I cannot move but the numbness subsides quickly, and I shove him away with all my might.

“If you ever touch me again, I will kill you,” I hiss as I swing around and head for the door.

“Liana, wait,” Luther calls desperately.

Axel POV

I watch the door close behind Liana and I slump down in the closest chair. My mind is trying to make sense of everything that just occurred.

Coming home to Liana was the highlight of my day and then I did not even get the chance to say hello. Let alone hold her. Why is Angela here? And why the fuck would she discuss her so-called sex life with my personnel?

I know I am at fault for not telling Liana about that night sooner. I deliberately avoided it because it is not something I want to remember. Honestly, there is never a good time to tell her about it. And it is not something you casually ease into a conversation. With everything Liana endured lately, I simply did not have the guts to tell her.

Liana has every right to break my neck for this and I am surprised she has not. I am not sure if this is the silence before the storm or if she genuinely believes me.

The past two weeks we talked endlessly. For hours I listened to her childhood, her fears, her pain. I understand her so much better. Her family depended on her and at the same time made her feel worthless. Wyatt’s infidelity only contributed to that. The fact that she told me she loves me, is a miracle.

I did not touch Angela because I wanted to. For me it was self-defence. But I was afraid if I told Liana about it, all her feelings of being worthless would resurface. It is still not an excuse for my silence.

As furious as I am at Angela, I must blame myself. I could have been ahead of this if I manned up and told her about it.

I need to get out of here, I decide as I stand up. I will give Liana all the time she needs but I sure as hell do not want to be here when Angela returns.

Hastily I walk to the coffee shop to tell Liana that I will be hiding out at the gym. That would be the last place Angela will come looking for me.

A sharp pain radiates through my chest as I step into the coffee shop. Frowning I grab my chest and take a deep breath. Am I having a heart attack? What the hell? I look up and stammer backwards when I watch in horror how a man kisses Liana.

This is no heart attack, I realize, this is the mate bond. Instantly I am furious but before I can react, Liana shoves the man aside and a deadly calmness settles in me as the pain subsides. I am going to kill that bastard.

Liana walks towards the exit and she stops dead in her tracks as her eyes widen when she sees me. Our eyes lock and we stare at each other.

“Liana, wait,” the man calls, and I look at him.

Luther?

He notices me and frowns as he looks from me to Liana before he walks our way.

“That’s L.C?” my voice is deceitfully calm. “Luther Collins?”

“Y ... yes,” she stutters. “Do you know him?”

“I came here to tell you I’ll be at the gym until you’re ready to leave,” I say as I fight my anger and jealousy. I needed her to know that I was giving her the space she wanted and that I was not checking up on her.

“Hello, Axel,” Luther greets as he crosses his arms in front of his chest.

“You know each other?” Liana asks flabbergasted.

“Yes,” I grunt as I put my balled fists into my pockets before I punch him out.

“Is this him?” Luther asks Liana but he does not take his eyes off me. “The man that doesn’t want to marry you.”

“Watch yourself,” I warn Luther with a low growl.

“I never said that,” Liana protests indignantly.

“You might as well have,” Luther smirks. “Since he’s already engaged to Angela.”

I am on the verge of smacking that grin off Luther’s face when Liana rests her hand on my chest and looks up at me.

“Let’s go,” she says softly.

I look at Luther for a moment before I put my arm around Liana’s shoulders and together, we walk outside.

“Liana,” Luther yells as he runs after us.

Furiously I swing around and glare at him.

“Don’t push it, Luther,” I hiss. “Walk away.”

“Fuck you, Axel,” he sneers. “I’m not going to idly stand by and watch you use her while you’re engaged just because you’re the alpha. Unlike you, I love her.”

I completely lose my temper and my fist connects hard with his jaw. Luther stammers backwards but he regains control. He wipes the blood off the corner of his mouth as he looks at me.

“Nice,” he smirks. “Why don’t we take it somewhere safe? I don’t want Liana to see how I rip your head off.”

“You don’t need to invite me twice,” I glare at him.

“Enough,” Liana hisses. “People are watching. This is not happening, not here or anywhere else.”

“Not before you listen to what I have to say,” Luther looks at her. “You’re blinded by the almighty alpha, but ...”

“Stop it, Luther,” Liana walks towards him. “You’re not listening to me. I’ve told you no over and over. I love him.”

My heart swells with pride and joy when she announces her feelings so openly.

“You heard her,” I go stand next to Liana and pull her against my side. “She made her choice. Accept it like a man.”

“He’s going to break your heart,” Luther ignores me and looks at Liana with hurt in his eyes. “And when he does, I will be there for you. Don’t forget that.”

“I’m sorry,” Liana whispers and Luther nods before he turns around and walks away.

“Are you okay?” I ask softly as I turn her to face me.

“No,” she mumbles. “I feel terrible. He’s a good guy, and I didn’t want to hurt him.”

“I know,” I pull her into my embrace. “And he will understand once he learns you’re my mate.”

“How do you know Luther?” Liana looks curiously at me.

“He’s my cousin,” I sigh.

Chapter 76_What To Do About Angela

Chapter 76 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

It is silent in the car as we drive to our destination. Axel did not want to tell me where we were going because he wanted to surprise me. But after the altercation at the coffee shop, I simply do not care.

I feel terrible for hurting Luther, but I am also furious at him for kissing me and not accepting my decision. I will have to quit my studies. I was going to anyway because of my pregnancy but now I must do it sooner. To make things worse, he is Axel's cousin. That was a shocker. It means that we are bound to bump into each other from time to time. I do not want the awkwardness that comes with a mess like this.

"We should talk about Angela," I break the silence as the sun starts disappearing on the horizon.

"And Luther," Axel adds.

"There's not much more to say about him," I shrug. "Nothing happened between us. But he refuses to accept it. You were there."

"But he kissed you," Axel's fingers cramp around the steering wheel and I know he is fighting his anger.

"For the first and last time," I sigh. "Unless he locks you up in a freezer to die, there's nothing to talk about."

"I still want to kick his ass," Axel growls.

"I know the feeling, baby," I mockingly mimic Angela's voice and Axel groans in agony.

"Promise me one thing," he turns to look at me. "Promise me you'll never call me babe or baby."

"Oh, I'm going to enjoy this," I laugh, and he gives me a deathly glare.

"Joking aside," I swallow my laughter. "What are you going to do about her?"

"I'm going to tell her you're my mate and that the wedding is off," he replies nonchalantly. "Her father and I have a meeting and I will do it then. I don't need his business anymore and he can't use it to manipulate me any longer. Regarding her punishment for trying to kill you ... well, you should have a say in it, because I still want to kill her."

I do not respond as I keep my eyes on the road. What Angela did was despicable, but I cannot bring myself to be her executioner. I know it is their laws, but I have not fully adapted to their rules. Growing up with Leon, I am in the habit of letting things go. That is not something you change overnight. I am going to need more time to rewire myself and stand up for what is right.

“Where are we going?” I change the subject.

“I rented a house on a private beach,” he replies. “Nobody will find us there or disturb us.”

“I hope there’s food,” I sigh. “I’m starving.”

“There will be plenty,” he chuckles.

**

Curiously I look at the house as I get out of the car. From this angle, it is nothing but white walls but when Axel unlocks the door and stands aside so that I can walk inside, I change my mind.

“Now this I can call home,” I sigh dreamily as I walk to the ceiling-to-floor windows facing the ocean.

Axel does not say a word as he opens the sliding doors and I walk onto the deck as I inhale the salty air deeply. I turn towards the house and admire the open spaces and soft lighting. Big comfortable couches face a fireplace with an open-plan kitchen and dining room in the back. This place is to die for.

I want to come back here in a couple of years, I decide. I can already see myself preparing lunch while keeping an eye on Wolfie as he plays in the sand.

“This is perfect, Axel,” I drape my arms around his neck and kiss him.

“There’s more,” he takes my hand and leads me up the stairs to a huge bedroom. A huge bed in the centre of the room is facing the ocean. The balcony doors are open, and the light breeze playfully lifts the curtains.

“It’s so beautiful and serene,” I whisper in awe as I walk onto the balcony and admire the ocean.

“I’m glad you like it,” Axel’s arms go around my waist, and I turn to face him. “And it’s ours for the entire weekend.”

“Perfect,” I whisper before wrapping my arms around his neck. “We’re going to need every second to make up for the past two weeks.”

“Sounds promising,” he leans over, and I sigh contently as he kisses my neck. “But I recall that you said you’re hungry.”

“We can eat in bed,” I push closer to him. “Afterwards.”

I take his face between my hands and kiss him with every inch of bottled-up desire. Two weeks were long – too long – and I am burning for him. Everything else can wait.

He picks me up and I wrap my legs around his waist as he carries me to the king-size bed. The linen is soft and inviting against my back as he lays me down and positions himself next to me. Eagerly I reach down to undo his pants, but he grabs my hand and stops me.

“We should talk,” he kisses me deeply.

“Once our clothes are off, I’m not planning to get dressed again. So, as much as I want to continue with this,” he trails a finger down my neck to my cleavage and I shiver delightfully, “I need to explain what happened with Angela.”

“Dammit,” I groan and close my eyes. “You certainly know how to kill a mood.”

“I’m sorry, but ...”

“I know, I know,” I sigh as I push him off me and sit up. “And you’re right. But it’s so frustrating that she still has the power to spoil things even when she’s miles away.”

“I should’ve told you sooner,” he sighs.

“No,” I shake my head as I stand up and straddle his lap. “I wasn’t ready to hear it sooner. Sooner I was too insecure, and I would’ve freaked out.”

“And you’re not going to freak out now?” He raises his eyebrows.

“I don’t know,” I shrug as I run my fingers through his hair. “But I know I won’t run away and before that was an option.”

“Okay,” he takes a deep breath as he places his hands on my hips. “But you must know I never meant for it to happen or go so far.”

“I believe you,” I smile as I toy with his hair.

“It happened the night I asked her to marry me,” his voice is a soft monotone as he tells me. The more he talks the angrier I get.

“Liana,” he clears his throat after he confesses everything. “You’re pulling my hair.”

I inhale deeply as I loosen my grip and get off his lap.

“Are you okay?” he asks cautiously as I pace up and down in the room.

“I’m going to rip it out,” I hiss furiously as I turn to face him. “I’m going to rip out her clitoris. I don’t care that she tried to kill me, but this!”

I throw my hands up in the air and breathe deeply through my nose.

“Reverse the roles, Axel,” my voice is calmer, but my blood is still boiling. “If a man did that to a woman, it would be sexual assault. Rape is forced sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Technically she tried to rape you. I swear to the goddess, I’m going to rip it out.”

“Maybe we should get something to eat or drink,” Axel walks to me and takes my hand. “Give you a moment to calm down.”

“I don’t want to calm down!” I shout furiously. “I want her to pay.”

“So do I,” Axel replies. “For trying to kill you. When I picked up your cold body, I swore I would kill her.”

“Kill her?” I snort. “No way you’re killing her. She’ll be dead and I want her to feel. I want her to experience all this anger, resentment and pain I’m feeling. You taught me there’s mercy in death and she doesn’t deserve any.”

“Okay, that’s it,” Axel takes my hand and leads me out of the room. “I’m going to feed you now. We’re not making any decisions while you’re this angry.”

“Oh, but it’s fine for you to do it,” I protest as I follow him. I have no desire to calm down, but I am hungry.

“I said we,” he gently pushes me into a chair and opens the fridge. “We’re not making any decisions. I want to kill, and you want revenge. So, we need to agree on what to do with her.”

“Fine,” I sigh and squint my eyes as he takes out a packet of hotdogs. “Is that what you’re going to make?”

“What?” He gives me a pained look. “I’m the alpha, I can’t cook.”

“Tragically, I must agree,” I snort as I stand up and walk to the fridge. “I’ll do it.”

“But ...”

“I’m not being mean,” I pick a packet of pork sausages, potatoes, and peas. “I appreciate your effort but a nice place like this deserves more than hotdogs.”

“I should’ve arranged a chef,” Axel mumbles sheepishly.

“You can start peeling these,” I hand him the potatoes. “I’ll start with the peas.”

I bite hard onto my bottom lip to keep myself from smiling as Axel peels the potatoes with tremendous concentration. He is so darn cute to me at this moment, and I am overjoyed that he is my mate. Which infuriates me more because Angela dared touch what is mine.

“We shouldn’t kill her,” I say softly as I take the peeled potatoes and cut them into cubes.

“Liana,” Axel sighs pleadingly.

“I’m not saying it out of anger,” I say hastily. “Don’t get me wrong, I’m still angry but that’s not why I’m saying it. But she’s not a pack member and killing her wouldn’t be as straightforward. You’ll have her parents to deal with and without concrete proof, they can retaliate and accuse you of murder. I don’t want to lose you, and neither do I want us to go through worrying about her family’s accusations. Killing her is going to ruin us and she’s not worth it.”

“But Angela would want revenge,” Axel sounds worried. “When I break the engagement, she will come after you and I refuse to lose you.”

“Not if you do it right and play the mate card,” I turn and smile at him. “Call a meeting with her and her parents. Apologize for breaking the engagement because you found your mate. It’s your law, they have no choice but to respect it, even if they hate it. And if Angela acts out after that, her parents cannot blame you.”

“You’re wise for a human,” Axel grins as he puts his arms around my waist.

“And it would do you good to remember that,” I wrap my arms around his neck and pull his lips to mine.

Chapter 77_The Proposal

Chapter 77 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Axel POV

“Something’s burning,” I murmur against her lips.

“Oh, crap,” she quickly lets go of me and turns to the stove. “The mash is ruined.”

“I’ll get rid of it,” I take the pot off the stove and place it in the sink. “And I’ll start peeling again.”

“We should’ve stuck with your hotdogs,” Liana sighs as she looks at the peas and sausages.

“Are those burned as well?” I ask as I peek over her shoulder.

“No, it’s fine,” she replies but I can tell she is upset. “But by the time the second attempt of the mash is done, these will be cold. And it’s not going to be the same if we reheat it.”

“Hey, there’s no need to be upset,” I place my hands on her shoulders and turn her to face me. “It’s okay. We have all the time in the world. Besides, I’m not here for the food.”

“I’m not upset, I’m disappointed,” she sighs as she fills two plates with sausages and peas. “Today was going to be my perfect day and so far the universe has done its best to ruin it. Angela, Luther and now burned mash.”

“I think it’s perfect,” I give her a big smile before taking a bite of the sausage and she glares at me. “It’s way less pressure on me.”

“What are you talking about?” she rolls her eyes.

“Think about it,” I grin. “If the day was perfect, I had to step up my game tonight. Now I don’t have to worry about bringing my A-game. It’s an easy win for me.”

“Is that so?” she pouts and raises her eyebrows. “And now I must settle for mediocre sex?”

I am about to defend myself when I notice the twitch at the corner of her mouth, and I relax. Liana is on the verge of smiling and I am glad she is not upset anymore. I have seen her angry before but never like today. Honestly, it scared me a little. I was afraid she might have a stroke or something.

I do not know what happened or when it happened but there is a change in Liana. Not that I am complaining. I love the new fight she has in her, but her anger is startling. Two weeks ago, she was lecturing me on the value of life and now she wants to mutilate Angela. I am no psychiatrist, but my money is on her childhood. She carried a lot of anger and resentment towards her family and now that the ties are cut, all of it is bubbling out of her. The only reason I am not worried is because she does not act on it. Once she calmed down, she was reasonable, which is an excellent trade for Luna. However, the heavens must help the creature that crosses her.

“I’ll clean up,” I offer when she places her knife and fork down. “That’s the rule, right? You cook, I clean.”

“Thank you,” she pecks me on the cheek. “In all fairness, I should clean because I burnt and did not cook, but I’m selfishly going to take advantage of your good heart and go take a shower.”

“We’ll let it slide this time because you had a rough day,” I snort and smile as she walks towards the stairs.

**

I look down on my wet shirt. My upbringing as an alpha is evident. You are not supposed to be wet after doing the dishes.

I pull my shirt over my head and walk towards the bedroom. I hope Liana is still in the shower, then I can join her.

But I stop dead in my tracks when I reach the bedroom door. Liana is standing on the balcony, her hair shimmering in the moonlight as she stares at the ocean. She is wearing a white negligee. A very short, soft, seductive and see-through negligee and my erection is growing painfully hard.

I have never seen so much beauty and perfection. The best part is, she is mine. My shirt drops out of my numb fingers as I walk towards her.

She looks up smiling at me when I stand next to her and my heart stops.

“Is something wrong?” she asks when I do not say a word and only stare in awe like an imbecile.

“I had so many ideas,” my voice is a mere whisper as I place my hand against her cheek. “But nothing compares to this moment. This moment is perfect, you’re perfect.”

“I’m hardly perfect,” she looks down self-consciously and intertwines her fingers.

“To me, you are,” I whisper as I place my finger underneath her chin to raise her face. “Even your flaws are perfect to me. I love everything about you, even when we fight. I will happily eat burned mashed potatoes for the rest of my life if it means I spend it with you.”

“I love you,” she smiles emotionally as she places her hand over mine.

“I want to be more than your mate,” I take her hands into mine as I kneel in front of her. “I want to be your husband. Please marry me?”

Liana POV

I look at Axel as his words create havoc inside me. I did not expect this. Sure, one day but not today. I have been sleeping with him for months but technically we are only a couple for two weeks.

Not that it matters, I already committed to him as my mate. But I am human, and a proposal means the world to me.

“I would love that,” I clear my throat from the annoying tears as my emotions overwhelm me. “More than anything in the world. Or wait, I love you more than anything, but this is ...”

I do not get any further than that because Axel jumps up and smothers my words. My arms go around his neck, and I cling to him for dear life as he hungrily kisses me.

With ease, he picks me up and carries me to the deck chair. The wood is cold and hard against my skin as he puts me down and takes off his pants. His erection is hard and ready as he kneels in front of me.

“I love you,” he whispers as he kisses me on my knee.

“Every inch of you,” he reaches underneath my negligee and slowly pulls down my thong.

“And now you gave me the pleasure of a lifetime to prove it to you,” he removes my negligee. He leans forward and creates a hot trail of heat as he kisses me from my knee, over my stomach up to my breasts.

“Ah, yes,” I moan when he takes my nipple into his mouth.

“More,” I beg as I take his hand and place it on my other breast. My breasts are painfully sensitive because of the pregnancy and his touch is overwhelmingly satisfying. The sensation of the cool night air following his warm kisses on my skin is mind-blowing and it is getting harder and harder to keep my composure.

“I cannot wait to mark you,” he murmurs against my breasts. “I want the entire world to know that you’re mine.”

“Then do it,” I pant. “I want you to.”

Axel pulls me to my feet when he stands up and I moan in delight when the warmth of his chest pushes against my breasts. His lips come crashing down on mine with such force that I must cling to his arms to keep my balance.

I have never yearned for him as much as I do at this very moment. He gathers me in his arms, and I sigh content as his body heat engulfs me. I wrap my arms around his neck and kiss him passionately. Effortlessly he picks me up and goes sit on the deckchair with me on his lap.

“What are you doing?” I pant as he turns me around so that my back rests against his chest.

In answer, he gently bundles my hair in his fist and moves it sideways for his lips to caress my neck. A shock wave jolts through me when his teeth graze the spot where he will mark me. Sensually he glides his hand over my breasts, down my stomach to my center and starts pleasing me. I moan softly in delight as I lay back against his chest and move my hand along his arm downwards. He groans as I start stroking him. Desire tightens my muscles, and my breathing gets heavier until I cannot hold it any longer. I lift my hips and lean forward slightly before I lower myself onto him.

“Oh, dear goddess,” I sigh in delight as he fills me. Gently I rock back and forth as I appreciate every inch of him.

His hand covers my breast as the other one folds around my throat, and he pulls me closer to his chest. His breath is warm in my neck and my entire body is in sensory overload. His lips are caressing my neck and I bite my bottom lip to not make a sound. I am so close to release.

“Liana,” he nibbles on my ear as he keeps his pace thrusting into me. “This is going to hurt a little.”

I want to reply, but my need for him is too great. The noise from the ocean starts to fade away as I near sweet release. Just as I am about to climax, he sinks his teeth into my neck and marks me.

The exquisite mixture of pain and pleasure is so overwhelming that I cannot help myself from crying out, and Axel stops thrusting into me.

My breathing is hard and irregular by the time I come from my high.

“Are you okay?” Axel murmurs and licks my brand-new mark.

“More than,” I sigh content as I get off his lap and turn around to face him. I straddle him and kiss him passionately as I lower myself once more onto him. “But I want more.”

“Nothing would please me more,” he grunts as he grabs my hips and increases his speed. He gasps for air when I suck on his mark. I can feel his body tense more and more with every thrust.

To my own surprise, my climax is building fast and rapidly. I close my eyes and my head falls backwards as my orgasm builds up. He groans hard and his body starts jerking just as I climax. His arms are steel clamps as he pulls me impossibly close to his chest.

“I love you so much,” he mumbles in my neck.

“I know the feeling,” I sigh as I pull back to cup his face and tenderly kiss him.

Chapter 78_Pregnancy Reveal

Chapter 78 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

I take only a second to admire my sleeping mate and fiancé before I quietly sneak out of bed. I pull a robe over my naked body before I walk to the kitchen to make breakfast.

I am jittery all over as I fry the bacon. I cannot wait any longer, I am dying to tell him about the pregnancy. I might spontaneously combust if I do not share the news with him.

Last night ... I sigh dreamily as I touch my mark. Well, the day might not have lived up to my expectations, but it ended splendidly.

My life is perfect, I smile as I arrange the plate and juice on the tray. Axel has marked me, and no one will ever come between us again.

I never knew I could be this happy, I grin as I pick up the tray and walk to the room.

Axel POV

I wake up in an empty bed and instantly I am worried. What if last night was too overwhelming for her? Michelle might have cleared her but what if she was not ready?

I am about to jump out of bed when Liana enters the room.

“Oh, no,” she pouts and puts the tray on my lap. “I wanted to surprise you.”

“Believe me, this is a surprise,” I grin and pat next to me. “Join me.”

“Obviously,” she rolls her eyes and sits down next to me. “You’ll get fat if you eat all of that by yourself.”

“But you’ll still love me,” I laugh as I bite into a piece of bacon.

“Yes, I will,” she replies while eating a slice of toast. “But I’m going to miss your six-pack.”

“Miss Erickson,” I pretentiously gasp for air. “Are you using me for my body?”

“Among other things,” she wiggles her eyebrows and I laugh joyously as I lean over and kiss her.

“I have something for you,” she announces as she takes away the empty tray and puts it down on the dresser.

“So do I,” I jump out of bed and walk to my bag.

“Okay, you first,” she sits down on the bed and clings to a wrapped gift.

“I was supposed to give it to you last night, but I got ahead of myself,” I grin sheepishly as I sit next to her and open the ring box.

“Wow,” her eyes widen as she carefully takes out the ring. “This is gorgeous.”

“You sound surprised,” I take the ring and place it on her finger.

“Can you blame me?” She lifts her hand and admires the ring. “After the hideous monstrosity you gave Angela?”

“The ring should match the woman,” I smile deviously as I push her back on the bed and claim her delicious lips.

“Smooth, mister Silvermann,” she whispers hoarsely as I undo her gown and push it aside to expose her breasts.

Her moan is deep and content when I take her nipple into my mouth. I take my time kissing on sucking on her breasts before I slowly descend. She spreads her legs allowing me access and my erection grows harder when I get the first taste of her.

“Yes,” she pants as I lick and suck on her clitoris.

I continue with my onslaught until she is on the brink, and she groans in complaint when I stop. Her blue eyes are clouded with arousal when I centre myself and slowly enter her. She reaches for me and wraps her arms around my neck before she feverishly kisses me.

My lips trail down her jaw to her mark and she moves her hips to increase our rhythm. Gladly, I oblige and moments later she screams out her orgasm and I shortly follow.

Breathlessly I lay down next to her and pull her into my embrace.

“Now your turn,” my breathing is erratic.

“No fair,” she complains. “How am I supposed to compete with that?”

“It’s not a competition,” I raise and support myself on my elbow to look at her. “Besides, I’ll be the judge.”

“You’re impossible,” she pushes me over and sits up to reach for the gift.

“It’s just one of the many reasons why you love me,” I grin.

“You’re really pushing it,” she rolls her eyes as she hands me the gift.

“It’s a book,” I announce victoriously before I start unwrapping it.

“Yes,” she smirks. “It’s a guide on how to be less arrogant.”

“I stand corrected,” I say as I stare at it in awe. “It’s a comic book about me. Did you draw this?”

“Yes,” she admits sheepishly as she looks down at her fumbling fingers.

“This is amazing, Liana,” I mumble as I take my time to page through it. Every image is like a photograph. “It’s the highlights of our story. At the bar, the backseat of my car. The time I showed you my wolf in the woods. This is so amazing, thank you.”

I lean forward and kiss her softly.

“You should continue to the end,” she says nervously.

Curiously I look at her, but I cannot tell why she is so anxious. I continue reading our story up to the end where she confesses her love for me. I turn to the last page. There is only one picture, and it is of me and her sitting next to each other. She is looking forward, smiling brightly while I am looking down at a bundle in my arms. A tiny finger is wrapped around my pinkie and a wolf's tail is hanging out of the blanket.

I take a moment to comprehend what I am looking at. I am holding a baby. Our baby.

"Liana," I look up at her in awe. "Is this your way of telling me you want children?"

"No," she inhales deeply. "This is my way of telling you we're having a baby."

"What?" I gape at her like an idiot.

"I'm pregnant," she mumbles and avoids eye contact. "Sorry."

"Sorry?" I frown. "Why are you sorry?"

"This wasn't part of your plan," she wipes the silent tears off her face. "I hoped it would be good news."

"This isn't good news," I put the book down and pull her onto my lap. "This is excellent news."

"Really?" She looks at me with uncertainty.

"It's unexpected," I admit as I hold her closer. "But I'm happy about it. When did you find out?"

"When you came back from Dallas and you called Michell because I was sick," she confesses. "But Michelle confirmed it with a blood test the day I went to see my parents after Leon's death."

For a moment we sit like that in silence as I process the information. Suddenly things are starting to make sense. Her mood swings and her increase in appetite. I always planned on being a father, but I had all my days to make her mate. I had no time to think about our future children. This weekend was for us to bond and to mark her. I did not bargain on going home with a mate and a baby.

"I'm going to be a father," I burst out laughing and she looks at me with surprise.

"Do you know what this means?" I ask joyously. "We're having a baby. We're going to be a family."

"Are you in shock?" She looks concerned as she wiggles out of my hold.

"I'm overjoyed," I pull her back into my arms and kiss her until she fights for air.

“Thank you,” I sigh against her lips.

“It was an accident,” she winches. “At one point I wasn’t sure if I should keep it. I don’t deserve the gratitude.”

“Of course, you would’ve had those thoughts,” I push her back into the pillows as I kiss her again. I am not at the slightest fazed by her confession. A lot was going on and she and I were fighting most of the time. “But you kept my baby. Thank you for that.”

“I kept our baby,” she smirks as she pushes her fingers through my hair.

“Our baby,” I sigh as I shift down and tenderly kiss her stomach. Underneath a thin layer of skin and muscle, our baby is growing and the magnitude of it all hits me. The love and happiness I am feeling are so consuming and it feels that my body is not big enough to contain it all.

“Axel, why are you crying?” Liana asks softly when my tears drop on her stomach.

“I’m so happy,” I sniff, not at the least ashamed that I am crying. “So incredibly happy.”

I kiss her belly once more before I pull her into my arms and lie down.

“Your gift is so much better than mine,” I mumble and kiss her.

“It’s not a competition, remember?” She grins as she pushes me onto my back and lays on top of me. “But I won.”

“We won,” I laugh happily and kiss her. “It’s our baby.”

“I call him Wolfie,” Liana places her hands on my chest and rests her chin on them as she looks at me.

“It’s a boy?” I ask surprised.

“I don’t know,” she shrugs. “It’s too early to tell, but it feels right.”

“Wolfie it is,” I chuckle.

“Michelle says we’d be able to tell the gender in about four weeks,” she smiles.

“Do you want to know?” I look at her hopefully. I get that couples want to be surprised but I want to know everything.

“I do,” she looks at me with her gorgeous blue eyes and my heart melts. “How else would we know which name to paint on the nursery walls?”

“We can always stick with Wolfie,” I tease.

“Your daughter will hate that,” she lifts her hand to look at her ring. “But your son might love it.”

“I hope it’s a boy,” I roll her over onto her back. “Because I will kill every boy in town if they want to do to her what I’m about to do to you.”

“No, you won’t,” she smiles wickedly. “I won’t let you.”

“So, you’ll be fine if a man does this to her?” I slip my hand between her legs and gently rub her clitoris.

“Yes,” she moans. “As long as he treats her like her daddy treats me because it feels fucking good.”

I capture her lips as I continue pleasing her and it is not long before she trembles and goes weak.

“Liana,” I murmur against her lips. “You do know wolf babies aren’t born with tails?”

“Yes,” she snorts indignantly and shoves me against the shoulder. “The tail represents you as the father.”

“I know, I’m only teasing,” I say as she gets out of bed. “Please don’t be upset. I love my book.”

“I’m not upset,” she laughs happily. “I’m hungry and am going to the kitchen.”

“We just ate,” I gape at her. “Are you seriously hungry?”

“Wolfie is always hungry,” she sighs theatrically.

“Yup,” I get out of bed. “Definitely a boy.”

Chapter 79_Back To Reality

Chapter 79 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

“I’m going to miss this place,” I sigh longingly as I close the balcony doors. The weekend has come to an end, and I am not ready to go home. I want to stay in our love bubble.

“We’ll definitely come again,” Axel smiles as he picks up our bags. “This place has plenty of good memories.”

“That was my first thought when we arrived,” I follow him to the car. “That we should come back. Wolfie will love building sandcastles.”

“We’ll return,” Axel looks at me as I put on my seatbelt. “That’s a promise.”

Darkness descends into my heart as we leave the beach house behind. The weekend was idyllic but now we must return and face reality. And it is scary.

“Everything will be fine,” Axel says as if he is reading my mind and reaches over to give my hand an encouraging squeeze. “It’s going to be rocky, but we’ll get through it.”

“There are just so many things,” I sigh. “Angela, your parents, the wedding. And I’m sure there’s a couple of things of which I haven’t even thought.”

“You concentrate on growing our baby,” he smiles. “I’ll take care of the rest.”

“Do you want a big wedding?” I ask nervously as I admire my ring. I cannot financially contribute to a big affair, and I do not want his parents to think that I expect their family to pay for everything.

“What we want is irrelevant,” he sighs. “I’m the alpha, Liana. The wedding is going to be enormous. And I hate to drop this on you, but the wedding will be in two months.”

“Are you serious?” I gape at him. That is going to be impossible. Guests, food, flowers and a dress. It is simply too much.

“It’s my inauguration,” he smiles. “And you’re going to be my Luna. It sort of goes hand in hand.”

“Oh, shit,” I mumble as the blood drains from my face. “I forgot about the Luna part. Do I have to? I hardly know your laws and I’m going to screw up.”

“Liana,” he looks at me seriously. “I would not have marked you if I didn’t have faith in you. I’m not going to throw you into the deep end. You’ll have help and plenty of it. And I’ll be there every step of the way.”

“Your parents are going to hate me,” I whimper. “I’m a human and they picked out Angela.”

“I’m not going to lie,” Axel inhales deeply. “They’re not going to be thrilled, but they’ll get over it once they get to know you. Just be patient and give it time. Besides, the second they hold their grandchild, nothing else will matter.”

“And I thought Angela was my biggest problem,” I swallow hard on the nerves. “Now it seems she’s the only problem I can handle.”

“If you can handle her, the rest will be a breeze,” Axel laughs. “You’re resilient, Liana, you can do this. And don’t forget you survived your parents. You’ll survive mine.”

I do not reply and toy with my ring as I process his words. He makes it sound so easy, but he does have a point. Not only have I survived my family, but I have also survived Brad, Angela and Wyatt and they all wanted me dead. At least Axel’s parents will not try to kill me – I hope. I had my share of struggles; this is merely the last hurdle before happiness.

“Okay,” I take a deep breath. “I can do this. I’ll concentrate on one thing at a time.”

“That’s my Luna,” he smiles brightly. “And you can start with your dress and bridesmaids. My mother has been planning my wedding since my birth. She practically just needs the bride’s name.”

My heart jumps into my throat. My guests are normal people. What if we embarrass the alpha family? Worse, I do not have a mother anymore. No family in my corner. And it is a lonely and depressing thought. It might be better not to invite anyone I know. I close my eyes and lean back against the seat, I would give anything right now to be back at the beach house.

**

Axel POV

“I’ll be back in an hour or two,” I say as I carry our bags into Liana’s cottage. “I have business to discuss with Adele.”

“Sure,” she smiles. “I’ll start dinner in the meantime.”

Gently I place my hand on her stomach as I kiss her long and tenderly before I walk to my car.

Coming back to reality has hit me hard. Liana is worked up enough as it is about the wedding, I do not want to add to it. She needs to be calm if she wants to carry our baby to term. Especially since she is carrying an Alpha’s child. The strain on her body is going to be tremendous.

I arrive at Adele’s house in record time and knock on her door.

“Sir?” Her eyes are wide, and her face is flustered as she tries to fix her hair. “Is something wrong?”

“Relax, Adele, and invite me in, please?” I smile.

“Oh, sorry,” she quickly opens the door for me. “Please excuse the mess, I wasn’t expecting company and ...”

“Adele,” I cut her short and she immediately goes quiet. “Do you have a mate?”

“N ... no, sir,” she stutters flabbergasted.

“Then you wouldn’t mind moving into the mansion if I appoint you to Gamma?” I ask.

“What?” Her jaw drops and she blinks a few times before she regains her composure. “Yes, of course, anything you need, sir.”

“Your position as Gamma will be permanent,” I continue. “But your stay in the mansion will only be for a year.”

“Yes, sir, thank you, sir,” she beams. “This is such an honour.”

“You deserve this,” I smile. “You worked hard, and I can trust you. You’re moving in tomorrow.”

“Sir,” she calls me back when I reach the door and she runs over to me. “May I ask what’s the purpose of my stay in the mansion?”

“I’ll brief you extensively tomorrow,” I reply. “But you’re going to protect my mate and your future Luna.”

For the second time, Adele’s jaw drops, and I laugh inwardly as I walk to my car. I like Adele and she is perfect for the job, but she should really work on her poker face.

**

I take a deep breath before I walk to the door and knock. Seconds later, the door opens.

“What do you want?” Luther asks brusquely.

“We need to talk,” I reply patiently.

“I’d rather fight it out than talk,” Luther barks as he crosses his arms in front of his chest.

“Luther, we’ve been best friends since we were born,” I sigh. “And you’re wrong about me and Liana.”

“No, I’m not,” he explodes. “Go fuck up Angela’s life, she deserves it. Liana doesn’t.”

“Liana’s my mate, Luther,” I say angrily. I am trying to be civil, but I will only tolerate so much. “My engagement to Angela is a ruse to keep Liana safe and before you ask, yes. Liana knows everything.”

“Fuck me,” he gapes at me. “Why didn’t she tell me?”

“Long story,” I sigh as I push my fingers through my hair. “Look, you’re my best friend and cousin. Our friendship is important to me. I’m sorry for the misunderstanding. You’ve been telling me about this girl for months and I never realized it was Liana. If I knew, I would’ve told you. And you can’t blame her, she didn’t know we were mates until two weeks ago.”

“Why did you keep it from her?” Luther growls. “That’s no way to treat your mate.”

“Dude, it’s a long and complicated story,” I grunt frustrated. “And I will tell you every dirty detail once I know we’re okay.”

“Sure, man,” he shrugs. “I mean, I still have the hots for your mate, but I’ll respect the bond. I’m sorry I kissed her. I would never have done that if I knew.”

“Thanks,” I smile. “It would’ve sucked if this got between us.”

“So,” Luther grins. “Am I still your best man like we agreed as kids?”

“You know it,” I smirk before I turn around and go home to my mate.

**

My mood is much better when I park at Liana’s cottage. I have Adele to protect Liana when I am not around, and the air is cleared with Luther. I am fully aware that it is going to take him time to get over his crush, but I know and trust him. He will never cross the boundary again now that he knows the truth.

I am surprised to hear laughter when I walk into the cottage and follow the noises to the kitchen. Carol, Drew and Liana are gathered around the counter, laughing at one of Drew’s stories.

“You’re back,” Liana shrieks happily as she rushes over to me.

“Can I tell them, please?” She looks pleadingly at me with her big, blue eyes and secretly I pray that our child will not inherit those blues. I simply cannot resist them.

“Sure,” I smile.

“We’re engaged!” She announces loudly and proudly takes out her ring from her pocket.

“About time,” Drew exclaims and comes over to congratulate us.

“I’m lost,” Carol frowns. “Everybody knows about Angela.”

“I’ll turn on the kettle,” Liana looks at me. “You start talking.”

Defeated I shake my head and take a seat next to Carol as I tell her everything. I do not leave anything out. I trust these two more than I trust my parents.

“Dear goddess,” Carol mumbles. “This is a lot. I mean, I know there was something between you two, but this? A baby?”

“And you!” She turns to Drew. “You didn’t say anything.”

“It’s not my place,” Drew shrugs nonchalantly.

I look at the three of them as they babble nonstop. Since Drew became my driver, I could always count on him. And they share a bond with Liana that she never had with her parents.

Without a word, I take her hand and pull her closer to whisper in her ear.

“May I really?” She looks at me with bright eyes and I nod.

“Drew and Carol,” Liana clears her throat, and she nestles closely to me for support as she looks at them. “You have been here for me from the very beginning. Taking care of me, and I was wondering ... Drew, will you walk me down the aisle? And Carol, I’m going to need a mother’s advice and support.”

“Oh, child,” Carol wipes her tears as she rushes over to Liana and hugs her tightly. “It will be such an honour.”

“Well, look at that,” Drew grins with misty eyes. “The driver will be seated with the alphas.”

“Let’s talk dresses,” Carol says eagerly.

“No way,” I say sternly. “Liana needs to eat.”

“Of course,” Carol rushes towards the stove. Liana looks happily at me, and I wink at her. “Dinner is ready, we’ve been waiting for you.”

Chapter 80_Breaking The Engagement

Chapter 80 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

“Good morning,” Axel whispers in my neck as he wakes me with butterfly kisses. “It’s time to get up.”

“Nights with you simply aren’t long enough,” I moan sleepily as I push my back closer to his chest to absorb more of his body heat. “Especially when I must sacrifice cuddle time to discuss Luna’s duties.”

“You’re going to be a great Luna,” he murmurs.

“On the bright side, I will be legally allowed to rip out Angela’s reproductive organs if she doesn’t behave,” I snort.

“Any new symptoms this morning?” He asks gently as his hand moves to my stomach.

“You mean besides being constantly hungry?” I yawn.

“Besides that, yes,” he chuckles as he turns me on my back to kiss my stomach.

“I don’t know if it’s a symptom,” I tangle my fingers in his hair. “But I do have a slight headache.”

“Oh, no,” he looks up at me with wide eyes. “We’re not even married and you’re already looking for excuses to not have sex with me.”

“You’re ridiculous,” I laugh as I pull his face to mine and kiss him. “I will only resort to such drastic measures to win a fight.”

“Diabolical, Miss Erickson,” he captures my lips and rolls onto his back, pulling me on top of him.

His tongue plunders my mouth, and I can feel his erection pushing against my thigh. I groan when he pinches a sensitive nipple and the world with its problems disappears. It is just me and him and nothing else matters. I straddle his lap and slowly I lower myself onto him as he looks at me with lustful eyes. I do not move; I simply savour the exquisite feeling of him inside me.

“Are you okay?” His voice is hoarse with desire. “We don’t have to do this if you don’t feel well.”

“Are you kidding me?” I lean forward and kiss him deeply.

“When you’re with me,” I murmur as I leave kisses down his jaw. “And inside me, I’m whole. You’re my sanctuary.”

I graze my teeth over his mark, and he groans deeply. Eagerly, he reaches down and plants his hands on my ass as he starts thrusting hard and deep into me. I sit up and dig my nails into his shoulders as my eyes fall close in sheer pleasure.

Our breathing and moans of ecstasy are the only sounds as my orgasm builds. Axel places a hand behind my neck and pulls me closer. He kisses me feverishly before he moves to my mark.

“Oh, dear goddess,” I cry out when he bites into my mark and my orgasm explodes in a kaleidoscope of pleasure and fulfilment.

I collapse onto him completely numb and drained of energy as he thrusts more until he ejaculates.

“Fuck it,” I fight for air. “We’re going to be so late.”

“Nah,” he bundles me into his arms and stands up. “Your boss is formidable, he won’t mind.”

“We’re obviously not working for the same man,” I smile wickedly as he carries me to the bathroom.

“My ego,” he rolls his eyes as he puts me down and opens the shower taps.

“Are you planning on showering with me?” I raise my eyebrows.

“Why not?” he shrugs. “It’s saving time.”

“No shenanigans,” I warn him as I reach for the painkillers in the bathroom cabinet.

“Wait, you were serious about the headache?” Axel frowns.

“Of course,” I give him a perplexed look. “Why would I joke about something like that?”

“I thought you were going to tell me it’s because of everything we discussed last night,” he replies thoughtfully.

“Make no mistake, that is headache potential,” I smirk. “But this has nothing to do with that. Headaches are common during the first trimester, Axel. It’s hormones and nothing to fuss about it.”

“Liana,” his voice is stern as he comes to stand in front of me. “Why would you agree to have sex when you have a headache?”

“For one, it’s only a slight headache,” I say before swallowing the pills. “Two, an orgasm is thought by researchers to act like a natural analgesic, thanks to feel-good endorphins and hormones released during a sexual climax.”

“So, you’re willing to endure pain for happy hormones and an orgasm?” He grunts.

“It wasn’t painful, Axel,” I sigh as I get into the shower. “And if it was, the happy hormones made sure that I don’t care.”

“Liana, please,” he begs as he joins me in the shower. “You need to look after yourself. Headaches might be normal but if it’s persistent, you’re going for a check-up.”

“Yes, dear,” I roll my eyes at him.

With a growl, he grabs me around the waist and pulls me to his chest.

“Axel, we’re already late and I said no funny business,” I protest laughingly as the water streams over us.

“I’m not kidding, Liana,” he says seriously, and my laughter dies down. “Promise me you won’t ever put my needs above yours or Wolfie’s. I will not survive if something happens to you or our child. Please take care of the two of you.”

“I promise,” I place my hand against his cheek. “I won’t do anything to compromise us.”

“Thank you,” he kisses me long and tenderly and I turn to mush. I never knew it could feel so good to have somebody care so much.

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Axel POV

“We’re just in time,” I say softly as we walk to the elevators. “Angela and her parents will be here in ten minutes.”

“Are you sure you don’t want me in your office when you tell them?” Liana sighs. “She’s eventually going to find out it’s me. We might as well get it over with.”

“No,” I shake my head determinately. “She’s erratic and I’m not taking chances.”

“Okay,” she nods, and we walk in silence to my office.

“Sir,” Juliana jumps up and rushes over to me. “Alpha Jack just arrived at the lobby.”

“I’m here, aren’t I?” I smirk.

“I know,” she looks bewildered at me. “But I must warn you, Angela was pissed when you disappeared Friday.”

“Just wait until after our meeting,” I smile wickedly and pull Liana closer.

Her eyes widen in surprise, but she does not protest when I thoroughly kiss her.

“Wish me luck,” I smile at her.

I look at Juliana who is standing like a statue gawking at us.

“And get Juliana sugar water before she collapses before you tell her what’s going on,” I smile and walk to my office.

Less than five minutes after I made myself comfortable behind my desk, Angela and her parents walk in.

“Babe,” Angela sighs theatrically as she storms towards me with open arms. “What happened to you Friday? I was worried sick.”

“Take a seat,” I say politely as I take her wrists and effectively stop her from hugging me. “We need to talk.”

“This sounds sombre,” Jack frowns as everyone sits down.

“Jack,” I look at him and ignore the women. “I’m not going to waste time with niceties. There is no easy way to say this. If you recall, I agreed to marry Angela on condition that I do not find my mate before my inauguration. I regret to inform you that I’ve found my mate and that I will no longer marry Angela.”

“What?” Angela shrieks and jumps up. “No! No! You’re lying.”

“Angela,” I look at her. “I’m sorry. Please accept my apology and keep the ring.”

“The ring?” She yells and her mother gets up and pulls Angela into her embrace. “I don’t give a shit about the ring. You asked me to marry you. I already have a dress and ... and ... Daddy, talk sense into him.”

“Sweetheart,” Jack stands up and joins his wife and sobbing daughter. “There’s nothing to do here. That was the agreement, and you know it. It’s our law that he must marry his mate to keep his position.”

“But I love him,” she sobs uncontrollably and turns to me. “Don’t you love me? Tell me you don’t care. After our night ...”

“Angela,” I cut her off before she could blab about that dreadful incident. “I’m sorry, this brings me no joy.”

Liar, I reprimand myself.

“Then get rid of her,” Angela shouts desperately. “I know you can’t reject her, so kill her and marry me.”

“Angela,” Jack snaps. “Control yourself. A future Luna doesn’t behave like this or say such things.”

“Future Luna,” she looks at her father as she wipes her nose with the back of her hand. “I’m not even a future bride anymore. I can say what I want.”

“Axel,” Angela’s mother looks at me with cold, dead eyes. “When and where did you find your mate?”

“I met her in a bar,” I stick to the truth as I stand up and undo my tie to reveal my mark. “And she accepted me as her mate this weekend.”

“Noooooo!” Angela’s scream echoes through my office and Jack catches her just in time when her knees give in.

“How can you do this to me?” Angela weeps as she looks at me through snot and tears.

“I found my mate, Angela,” I say firmly. “It’s not being done to you.”

“So, where is the lucky lady?” Her mother sneers and I know she is just as furious as Angela. “We should congratulate her.”

“Are you serious, Mary?” I glare at her. “Angela just yelled at me to kill her. Do you really think I’m going to introduce her? Honestly, I should ban you from our territory.”

“Don’t be hasty, Axel,” Jack intervenes as he helps a sobbing Angela into a chair and turns to me. “She was only upset and didn’t mean it. Look at her, she’s devastated. Have a heart, son.”

“Fine,” I pull my shoulders back and look at him. “Out of respect for you and your friendship with my parents, I will let it slide. But Jack, if Angela ever threatens my mate in any way, she will be punished. Do I make myself clear?”

“Understood,” Jack nods. “And I appreciate your leniency. I know I would not have tolerated such disrespect towards my mate.”

“I’m glad we agree,” I smile stiffly.

“Axel,” Angela whimpers as she stumbles to her feet. “Please don’t. Please. I ... I love you, please.”

“Jack,” I look at him and ignore Angela. “I think it’s best if you leave now.”