

The Alpha CEO's Unloved Wife Chapter 16

Escape Plans

Baron rose with the dawn, dressing with the golden light over him like a benediction. She watched him, wondering how something so beautiful could be the source of so much pain. He saw that she was awake and came to sit on the side of the bed, putting his hand onto her shoulder.

"It is a small thing, Jane," he told her firmly. "My grandfather was murdered, his fortune stolen, my family's pack scattered, and my family was cast out in poverty. These things happen to us in life. It would be nice if they did not, but they do. If my family can rise from their losses, and my mother and father still stand proud amongst their peers knowing all that was said of them, then you too can rise above this.

"Take today to recover, rest, but tomorrow night, I expect you to be ready to go out, do you understand, Jane?" He tilted his head until she had no choice but to meet his eyes. "Say: yes Baron."

"Yes Baron," she repeated obediently, hating him.

"Good," he squeezed her shoulder and rose. "I will see you at dinner tonight."

She lay in bed and thought on what he had said. A photo compared to the loss of a loved one, fortune, pack, and pride, seemed like a small thing, in theory, but the reality was that its repercussions would be felt for years, she knew. That was what pack life was like.

There would never be a time that she could walk into a gathering and not see sly looks and hands covering whispered gossip. Men would see the exposure of her body in that photo as invitation to touch and indecently proposition her. Her children would come to her after being teased about it by their peers.

As an omega, she was a victim who could not defend herself, and her alpha husband, who could offer some protection, openly kept and paraded his alpha mistress and so might as well have publicly declared his indifference to her. She was prey, set amongst natural predators. And they would prey, and prey, and prey until she was stripped to the bone.

At midday, Heathridge brought her tray and set it up in the sitting room. He paused by the bedroom door with his gaze politely averted. "Madam," he said. "If I may speak freely. Bullies feed off the reactions of their victims. At the moment your bully grows fat off your misery. You need to stand up, shake it off, and pretend, at least, to be indifferent to the injury. Otherwise, the bully will continue, not stop, greedy and glutenous off their success."

“You are a beta,” she replied. “You do not understand what it is to be an omega.”

“No, I don’t, but I am not a wealthy man,” he replied. “And I understand what it is to be in a lesser social position. Think on what I have said.”

She picked at the salad he had brought her for lunch and lay in the bed reading through the messages from her family as they had grown increasingly irate, berating her for bringing shame on them. Late in the evening, around the time that Baron would have issued his announcement, the messages went silent. There were no condolences or comfort offered, no balm to the insults of their earlier communications, just silence as Baron’s explanation was received, sating their anger.

There was one message from the manager of the café she had started working for, telling her tersely not to worry about returning. She had let them down, she thought, feeling the burn of shame in her esophagus.

She opened a search page and looked up local short courses and booked herself into one that started the next week, entering her credit card details from memory. She had lost her job, but she would try again, from another direction, she decided.

There was an escape from her situation, she just had to take it.

She downloaded the course material onto her laptop and sat picking at her lunch tray and reading through the requirements.

Heathridge knocked at the door, come to collect the tray. “I can return, madam, if you are still eating.”

“No, take it, thank you,” she told him, carefully keeping her screen angled away from him.

She worked on the computer following the course material to begin building her resume, though it was frightfully thin on information: her contact details, her education, and the course she had signed up for. No professional references, and no personal references.

She sighed and tried not to be discouraged. She had won that first job with nothing; she could win another with a resume and a course.

Heathridge brought her dinner up and she ate with more appetite, showered, and went to bed, lying awake and trying not to think of the next evening, but her imagination running wild with images of eyes staring, mouths laughing and fingers pointing.

Before midnight, the door to her room opened, and Baron came in, as if it were a normal thing to do. He undressed, hanging his clothing over the back of the chair, and slid into the bed, his skin coming up against hers in a way that sent her body into a wave of

desire. She tried to push it down and away, but knew, from the expression on his face, that he had scented it.

He pulled her nightgown from her, baring her to his touch, and tasted his way down her throat to her breast, sliding his skin against hers as he descended, before lifting her legs over his shoulders. She arched, her eyes closing, her fingers pulling at the sheets, gathering them tightly into her fists, as the pleasure of his mouth on her pulled her body into breath-taking orgasm.

He braced himself over her, the tip of his c-ck finding entrance without aid, slipping through her easily, and he groaned as he sank into her. She pressed off her heels, arching her back, pushing into his thrusts with energy, desperate to feel something other than despair, wanting another release to ease her into sleep, wanting... Wanting to be loved.

“Oh god,” he cried out, his head thrown back, and his hand clasped her thigh as he thrust. “Oh f-k.” They came within moments of each other, and he sighed, a contented sound, as he lay over her. He stayed where he was so long that she thought that he had fallen to sleep. “Heathridge says that you ate today.”

“I eat every day,” she replied automatically, and closed her mouth with a shocked click of teeth, taken aback by her own daring.

“Not enough, from what I have seen,” he was calm, not angered and she felt some of her tension ease. “If you don’t like the food that is served, Heathridge will adjust the menu to your liking, you only have to say.”

There were so many things, she thought, that she could say, that she wanted to say, but nothing that would end the conversation, only start new ones, angry ones, hurtful ones, and she did not want him to move, to leave. She did not want to be alone, and if it was a choice between sleeping in the bed on her own and sleeping with his skin *warming* hers, she would choose that.

“I will try to eat more,” she offered, not *meaning* it, but hoping that he would take it as the end of the conversation.

His fingers stroked the skin over her collar bone. “When I asked for trust and obedience last night,” he said softly. “I | did not mean that you were not free to speak your opinion or that you had to do everything I said.”

“Okay,” she just wanted him to go to sleep, to stop talking and go to sleep, because if he did, then she would know that he would stay, and she could sleep too in that knowledge.

“The event tomorrow is at six,” his hand closed over her shoulder as if to hold her in place, as if his big body over her was not already doing that very effectively. “Be ready to leave half an hour before. It is evening dress.”

She closed her eyes and felt a tear run down her cheek. “Okay.”

“Okay.”