

CHAPTER 109

109 Lisa: Ava's Absence (II) LISA A knock on Vanessa's door has me jumping. The healer reaches over to pat my hand again. "Don't worry, dear. It's just the pack beta. Come in, Kellan." The door swings open and Kellan strides in like he owns the place. Damn, why does he have to look like that? All broad shoulders and stubble along his jaw. And his hair is always a tousled mess, like those old romance movies with teen heartthrobs. I love those movies, and he's got that dirty blond heartbreaker look down to every tiny detail. I tear my gaze away, cursing my weakness. This is so not the time to be noticing Kellan's undeniable hotness. I have got to get a handle on my weakness for s@xy men. "Healer Vanessa," he greets with a polite nod before those piercing gray eyes land on me. "Lisa, we need to head back to your apartment. Lucas brought a dog home." 15:27 177 109 Lisa Ava's Absence (b)) Is he serious right now? Rage flares hot in my veins. "Are you kidding me? You want me to go take care of some random dog while my best friend is lying unconscious in a hospital bed?" Kellan blinks, taken aback. "It's Ava's dog. Lucas thought-" "Oh, I'm sure Lucas thought a lot of things. And you just go along with it, don't you? Never mind what I might want." The words pour out of me in a furious torrent, all the fear and frustration bubbling over. "You're always making these executive decisions without even asking. Newsflash, Kellan—the world doesn't revolve around you and your precious Alpha!" Vanessa's eyes widen as she watches my tirade. Kellan just stares, his mouth slightly agape. I'm breathing hard, hands clenched into fists. "I... I didn't mean..." Kellan clears his throat, shifting on his feet. "Lisa, I'm just trying to look out for Ava's best interests here." "And you think hers align with yours?" I scoff. "Please. You don't know the first thing about what Ava needs right now." 27 <109 Lisa Ava's Absence (II) "Then enlighten me," he grits out, annoyance starting to seep into his tone. I square my shoulders, meeting his glare head-on. "She needs support. Compassion. Not to be treated like some pawn in your pack's power plays." "That's not-" "Isn't it? All you and Lucas seem to care about is this fated mate bond bullshit. Never mind Ava's autonomy or how it might make her feel to have her choices stripped away." Kellan's jaw clenches. "You don't know what you're talking about. The bond is sacred." "Spare me the mystical soulmate spiel. I'm not buying it." I cross my arms over my chest. "Here's what's going to happen. I'm staying right here until Ava wakes up. If you're so concerned about the damn dog, you can go deal with it yourself." "I have a pack to run," Kellan says through gritted teeth. "In case you've forgotten, we're in the middle of a rather delicate transition here." "Cry me a river." I roll my eyes. "I'm sure you'll manage just fine without ma" Gina 100 Lisa Ava's Absence (1) We glare at each other, the tension crackling between us. Vanessa clears her throat. "Perhaps a compromise," she suggests, her voice soothing. "Kellan, why don't you see to the dog for now? And Lisa can stay here with Ava. I'll let you both know the moment there's any change in her condition." "And if that's really Ava's dog," I-cut in sharply, "

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Maybe bring her here instead of leaving her at the apartment. Ava's missed her. It would be good for them to be together." Kellan's nostrils flare, but he gives a curt nod. "Fine. Keep me updated, Nessa." "Of course," the sweet-tempered healer assures him. With one last scathing look in my direction, Kellan turns on his heel and stalks out, slamming the door behind him. I slump back in my chair, suddenly exhausted. "Feel better?" Vanessa asks, a hint of amusement in her tone. I huff out a laugh. "A little, yeah. God, he just gets under my akin aomatimor" 15:27 4417 109 Lisa Ava's Absence (11) "I can see that." Her eyes twinkle. "Though I suspect there might be more to it than simple annoyance." I narrow my eyes at her. "What's that supposed to mean?" Vanessa shrugs, a knowing smile playing at her lips. "Nothing, dear. Just an observation."" Shaking my head, I hold up both hands. "Let me stop you there. Yes, Kellan's hot. Like, super hot. I'd have to be blind not to notice. But I want nothing to do with his egotistical ass. He never considers other people when he does things. It's a major turn-off." "Of course it is, dear." Vanessa pats my hand yet again, but this time, it feels minorly condescending instead of comforting. Even so, I don't scowl. If I do, I'll come off as a bratty teen, instead of a grown ass woman who's capable of hating a certain handsome beta. I take a deep breath and steel myself before stepping back into Ava's room. Lucas is still there, looming over her bed like some brooding shadow of a man. His eyes never leave her face. The intensity of his gaze sends a shiver down my spine. 15:27 109 Lisa: Ava's Absence (1) As I approach the bed, I swear I hear a low growl emanating from Lucas's chest. It's so quiet, almost a whisper of sound. Yet when I look at him, his expression is as stoic as ever, his eyes fixed on Ava's unconscious form. Unnerved, I settle into the chair on the opposite side of the bed and reach for Ava's hand. Her skin is cool to the touch, and I give her fingers a gentle squeeze, "I'm back, Avie," I whisper, brushing a stray lock of hair from her forehead. "I'm right here. We're all waiting for you to wake up, okay? So don't keep us in suspense too long." My attempt at levity falls flat in the heavy silence of the room. Lucas doesn't even spare me a glance. The hours tick by, with agonizing slowness. The room grows dark as evening falls, but neither of us makes a move to turn on the lights. We sit in the shadows, the only sound the steady beep of Ava's heart monitor and the occasional rustle of fabric as one of us shifts in our seat. Every so often, a nurse comes in to check Ava's vitals. They work quickly and efficiently, charting numbers 15.27 109 Lisa: Ava's Absence (1) on the tablets they carry before slipping out again. Each time, I hold my breath, hoping for some sign of improvement. But nothing changes. It's late when Vanessa finally makes an appearance. She looks tired, her usually neat bun coming loose and dark circles under her eyes. She goes straight to Lucas, laying a hand on his shoulder. "No change," she says, shaking her head. "Blood work all normal still." Comment 3 View All >

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