

Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 11

Chapter 11

Tori's POV:

24%

Morgan's cheeks flushed pink.

"Me? Oh goddess, no!" She shook her head emphatically, and her eyes shone with genuine reverence. "I have nothing but complete respect and admiration for Alpha Lucas. He's our pack leader, our protector."

She protested, her voice rising an octave higher than usual. "That's-that's practically blasphemy!"

Morgan continued to gush about Lucas Grayson's accomplishments. Her reaction was so dramatic that I couldn't help but smile slightly. I hadn't expected Lucas Grayson to have such devoted admirers among high school students.

Tracy, my wolf, chuckled in my mind. What an innocent little wolf.

The classroom chatter died down as Mrs. Blake returned to the front of the room.

"Before you all leave today," she announced, "I want to remind everyone that we'll be having our entrance assessment exam next week. This will cover all the material from the first two weeks of class, with particular emphasis on lunar phase calculations and their effects on different wolf classifications."

A collective groan rippled through the classroom. Even Morgan slumped in her seat, looking genuinely distressed.

"I'm doomed," she whispered, dropping her head into her hands. "Completely doomed. My entire happiness index at home depends on my grades. Mom will give me that disappointed look, and Dad will start his 'back in my day' lectures. My brother won't let me go out and play

anymore."

Looking at her distressed expression, I couldn't help but offer some reassurance.

“There’s still time,” I said quietly. “The first two weeks’ material isn’t that extensive. If you focus on reviewing the core formulas and practice the calculations, you could still do well.”

“Really?” Morgan asked, her eyes lighting up with a flicker of hope.

I nodded. “If you have any questions, you can always ask me.”

Glancing at my watch, I realized my shift at Moonlight Shadow was about to start. “I have to go,” I said, quickly gathering my things. “My work starts in twenty minutes.”

“Wait!” Morgan called, scrambling to pack her colorful notebooks. “I’ll come with you!”

Before I could respond, she had slung her backpack over her shoulder and was following me out the classroom door.

“I can study at the café,” she explained, matching my brisk pace. “This way I can ask you whenever I encounter something I don’t understand.”

By the time we arrived at Moonlight Shadow, Morgan had already claimed a corner table, spreading her notes in a chaotic rainbow across the surface while I tied on my apron and began my shift.

Greg, the manager, glanced between Morgan’s study setup and me. “Friend of yours?” he asked.

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“Classmate,” I replied. “She’s studying for an exam.”

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He nodded, his expression softening. Greg had always had a soft spot for studious kids. “If it gets slow, feel free to help her out. Just keep an eye on your tables.”

“Thanks,” I said, truly grateful for his understanding.

Morgan overheard our conversation and beamed. “Thank you, sir! I promise I won’t distract her too much.” She then promptly ordered two coffees, insisting on paying full price despite my offer of an employee discount.

“Can’t have your boss thinking I’m just here for free stuff,” she whispered with a wink.

The first hour of my shift was busy, with a steady stream of customers keeping me on my feet. I caught glimpses of Morgan frowning at her notes, occasionally tugging at her curly hair in frustration. She looked up hopefully when I passed by, but I could only offer apologetic smiles as I balanced trays of drinks.

Finally, as the evening progressed, the crowd thinned out. After delivering a final round of drinks to a table near the window, I untied my apron and slid into the seat across from Morgan.

“Okay,” I said, pulling her notebook closer. “Show me where you’re stuck.”

Morgan pointed to a complex formula for calculating how the waxing gibbous moon affects an Omega’s transformation abilities. “All of it. I’m stuck on all of it.”

For the next half hour, I walked her through the basic principles, breaking down the formulas into simpler components.

As we worked through more problems, I realized Morgan was actually quite intelligent. She grasped concepts quickly once they were explained properly, and her questions were thoughtful and precise.

“You explain things so much clearer than Mrs. Blake,” she said, successfully completing a practice problem. “How did you get so good at this?”

“Maybe if you stayed awake during class, you’d learn just as well from Mrs Blake, I teased gently.

Morgan laughed instead of being offended. “No, Mrs. Blake’s voice is like an actual sleeping potion.”

Just as Morgan was about to ask another question, my phone vibrated in my pocket.

I glanced at the screen and felt my stomach tighten. Hannah’s name flashed across the display.

I stared at the phone, letting it ring. Whatever it was, I was certain it wouldn’t be pleasant.

The ringing eventually stopped. A moment later, my phone buzzed with an incoming text message.

How dare you ignore my calls? Perhaps your grandmother doesn’t need her medication this month after all.

I felt the color drain from my face. Tracy growled deep within my consciousness, anger rising at the blatant threat.

How could someone be so coldly calculating? To use her own mother as leverage against me showed a level of heartlessness I still struggled to comprehend.

From childhood, Hannah had never shown me an ounce of maternal affection I was raised by my grandmother while Hannah pretended 1

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hardly existed.

I'd even asked my grandmother once, when I was eight, if I was adopted.

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The sadness in her eyes as she shook her head still haunted me. "Your mother was pregnant with you when your father abandoned her, she

had explained gently. "The shock and grief complicated the pregnancy, and giving birth to you left her with lingering health issues. She...

associates you with that loss and pain."

My grandmother had stroked my hair then, adding, "It's not your fault, little one. Never think it's your fault."

"Tori? What's wrong?" Morgan asked, leaning forward with concern in her eyes.

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Chapter 12

Tori's POV:

↶ 24%-

I stared at my phone, Hannah's threat weighing on my mind while my fingers clenched the device.

"It's nothing," I told Morgan, forcing my voice to remain steady. "Just family matters."

But Morgan's concerned expression didn't fade. "Are you sure? You look like you've seen a ghost."

I took a deep breath and stood up. "I need to make a call. I'll be right back

Stepping outside the café, I dialed Hannah's number.

"Finally decided to acknowledge my existence?" Hannah's voice dripped with disdain.

"What do you want?" I asked, keeping my tone neutral despite the fury building inside me.

"Tomorrow night. Fiona's mating ceremony at Moonlight Restaurant." Her words were clipped, each syllable laced with impatience. "You should

be there."

It wasn't a request. I know I have no right to refuse at all.

"What time?"

"Seven sharp. And for goddess' sake, don't show up looking like... that." I could practically hear her wrinkling her nose in disgust.

"I've arranged for a proper dress to be delivered to your dormitory tomorrow. Get yourself to Crescent Moon Salon by four for hair and makeup.

I won't have you embarrassing us looking like some destitute Omega."

Tracy snarled at the insult, but I kept my voice steady. "Fine."

"And Tori?" Hannah's voice hardened. "Try to act civilized. That is an important night for this family."

"Understood," I replied coldly before hanging up.

When I returned to the table, Morgan was pretending to study her notes, at her eyes immediately darted to my face.

"Everything okay?" she asked.

"Just my mother," I said, sliding back into my seat. "I have to attend my stepsister's mating ceremony at Moonlight Restaurant tomorrow night."

Morgan's eyes widened. "Wait, tomorrow night? Moonlight Restaurant? You're not talking about Fiona and Ethan Grayson's mating ceremony, are you?"

I stared at her, surprised by her immediate recognition. How did you know

"Don't forget, I live on the Grayson estate, Morgan said, leaning forward citedly. "Sure, were in the more remote section, but everyone knows when there's big drama happening at the main house."

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She couldn't contain herself and launched into gossip mode. "Oh goddess! And here I thought you were from a struggling family, which is why

you're working while studying!"

"I am indeed poor," I said quietly. "I can only rely on myself."

Morgan's expression shifted as understanding dawned on her face.

“Wait, so your own biological mother treats you like this?” Morgan’s indignation flared. “That’s messed up! Isn’t it usually stepmothers who are cruel to their stepchildren in the stories? How can your actual mother be so heartless toward her own daughter?”

I remained silent, not wanting to delve into the pain.

Noticing my dampened mood, Morgan quickly changed the subject.

“Anyway, did you know Ethan has an ex-girlfriend he can’t get over? He got himself completely drunk last week when the engagement was announced.

I jerked my head up in surprise, unable to hide my reaction.”What?”

Morgan leaned forward, her voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper.

“Four years ago, when Ethan was a senior, he dated this brilliant girl from Crescent Moon High-total academic star, from what I heard. But then everything fell apart.”

Morgan rested her chin on her palm, lowering her voice. “Unfortunately, the girl apparently got involved with some rich playboy behind Ethan’s back.”

My hands clenched beneath the table, knuckles turning white as I listened to Morgan unknowingly recounting a twisted version of my own past.

“The worst part, Morgan continued, oblivious to my discomfort, “was that the girl ended up in serious trouble. Story goes that the other guy tried to force a mating bond on her when they were alone, and she fought back-hit him with a liquor bottle or something. He died.”

I stared at my cooling coffee, watching ripples form from my trembling hand on the table.

“Ethan begged his parents and even Alpha Lucas to help her, but they refused. The girl got four years. Morgan shook her head.

“So now he’s engaged to Fiona, but everyone knows his heart’s still with his ex. Morgan sighed dramatically.

“Tori? Are you okay? You look really pale.”

I forced myself to take a slow, measured breath, willing the color back into my face.

“I’m fine,” I said, my voice surprisingly steady despite the storm raging inside me. Just a little tired from work.”

Before Morgan could press further, her phone rang. She glanced at the screen and groaned.

“It’s my mom. I need to head home. She gathered her books hastily.

Looking at the clock on the wall, I realized it was closing time for the café I need to close up anyway, I said, beginning to stack our cups and clear the table.

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Chapter 12

After locking up the café and turning off the lights, Morgan and I stepped out into the cool night air.

A sleek dark sedan idled at the curb, headlights cutting through the mist.

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“Jason!” Morgan called out excitedly, waving at the car. A tall young man with curly hair similar to Morgan’s leaned out of the driver’s window

and nodded to us.

It must be Mom who asked him to pick me up.”Morgan turned to me. “It’s too late, we’ll drop you off.”

‘I don’t want to impose- I started, but Morgan was already pulling me toward the car.

‘Nonsense! It’s on our way,” she insisted.

She pulled me toward the car door, and I stumbled, my steps faltering. Through the window, I caught sight of a familiar silhouette in the back seat-broad shoulders, commanding presence, the unmistakable aura of an Alpha.

Lucas Grayson.

Morgan opened the car door and froze momentarily when she saw Lucas sitting there.

Her brother leaned over from the driver’s seat.

“Morgan, sit up front with me,” he called out.

Alpha Lucas was having drinks nearby and couldn't drive. I came to pick him up, and Mom mentioned you were in the area too, so I thought I'd get you both in one trip.

Morgan hesitated for only a fraction of a second before practically diving for the front passenger door.

"We should drop Tori off first," she said, settling into the front seat and buckling her seatbelt. "She's staying at the dorms-it's super close, just a few blocks away."

Left with no alternative, I reluctantly slid into the back seat beside the most powerful Alpha in Moonhaven, careful to press myself against the door to maintain as much distance as possible.

"Afraid of me?" came Lucas's deep voice.

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Chapter 13

Tori's POV:

I stared at Lucas Grayson, knocked off balance by his question.

Those piercing blue eyes held mine, waiting for an answer.

The intensity of his gaze made my heart beat faster, and I felt Tracy, my wolf, stir restlessly within me.

I shook my head quickly.

“No,” I answered, surprised by the steadiness in my voice.

The corner of his mouth lifted in a slight smile. “Then why are you pressing yourself against the door as if I might bite?”

Heat rushed to my cheeks.

“I’m just... giving you space,” I said lamely, straightening my posture slightly. “It’s courtesy and respect.”

Lucas raised an eyebrow, noncommittal.

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I wasn’t actually afraid of Lucas Grayson.

The problem wasn’t fear-it was Tracy. My wolf seemed unusually restless whenever I was near him, as if his presence triggered something unsettling within her.

After a moment of silence, Lucas’s deep voice filled the car again. “Has anyone else caused you trouble since that night at the café?”

The question caught me off guard. Why would an Alpha of his status concern himself with the problems of an Omega like me?

I shook my head. “No, everything’s been fine,” I replied softly. “Thank you again for stepping in that night.”

His eyes remained on me, continuing. “If anyone bothers you again, you can contact me directly.”

I felt Morgan stiffen slightly in the front seat, though she kept her gaze fixed forward. Jason’s eyes flickered to the rearview mirror briefly before returning to the road.

Despite my confusion at his unusual attentiveness, I simply nodded.

Thankfully, the ride was mercifully short. Within minutes, Jason pulled up to the entrance of the school dormitories, the familiar brick building a welcome sight.

"Were here," Jason announced, sounding almost as relieved as I felt.

"Thank you for the ride," I said quickly, already reaching for the door handle. "I appreciate it."

Morgan twisted in her seat. "See you tomorrow in class?"

I nodded, offering her a small smile.

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"Goodnight," I said finally, closing the door and stepping back as the sleek sedan pulled away from the curb.

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Back in my dormitory room, I finally let out a long breath. The tension that had built up during that short car ride gradually dissipated as I sank onto my narrow bed, staring up at the ceiling.

Alpha Lucas's concern surprised me. And I could help but think that Morgan's admiration of him might be justified after all. He seemed genuinely concerned about the wellbeing of everyone in this territory—even an Omega like me.

The sudden blaring of my phone startled me from my thoughts.

I reached for it on the nightstand, then froze when I saw the notification displayed on the screen—a sequence of digits I'd once known better than my own name.

Ethan.

I didn't want to answer, so I set the phone back down and let it vibrate against the wooden surface.

The ringing eventually stopped, only to start again almost immediately.

By the third call, I snatched up the phone with an irritated growl.

"What?" I snapped, pressing it to my ear.

Silence greeted me. I could hear his breathing on the other end, slightly even, but he said nothing.

The seconds stretched between us like years. My heart hammered against my ribs, and I gripped the phone ge

“If you have nothing to say, I’m hanging up,” I said finally, my voice stead

“Wait.” His voice was rough, almost desperate. “Tori, please. Don’t hang up

He continued, his words coming out strained and halting.

“Is there... is there still any chance for us?” The question was barely audible.

I tightly closed my eyes, struggling to suppress the bitterness welling up side.

“We should just be strangers from now on, Ethan,” I said, keeping my voice carefully neutral despite the ache spreading through my chest WAKE can’t go back to how things were. That’s not possible anymore.”

Before he could respond, I ended the call. My finger hovered over the power button for only a second before I turned the phone at complex

The room suddenly felt too quiet, too empty.

I set the phone down on my nightstand and drew my knees up to my chest wrapping my arms around them.

Just for a little while. I allowed myself to mourn what we had once been, and everything that could have boun

Tomorrow, he would officially become Fiona s mate. The ceremony would them together in the eyes of the pack and the Mina, Göstulemu herself.

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Chapter 13

But why Fiona of all people? How could he choose her, knowing what she done to me?

I don’t remember falling asleep. One moment I was staring at the ceiling he next I was plunged into darkness.

Blood. So much blood.

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In my dream, I stood in a dimly lit room. Someone lay on the floor, crimson pooling beneath him.

A man approached me, his features distorted in the shadows. Fear surged through me—primal, instinctive. My hand closed around something

cold and hard. A bottle. I swung it with all my strength.

The sickening crack as it connected with his skull. His body crumpled to the ground.

Then sterile white walls. Doctors in masks. The monotone voice announcing, “Time of death...” for both figures from the bloody room.

“Tori! Tori, wake up!”

Hands shook my shoulders, pulling me from the nightmare’s grip.

I gasped, jerking upright, my heart thundering in my chest.

Morgan stood beside my bed, her face creased with concern, her hands still on my shoulders.

“Hey, are you okay?” Her voice was gentle, filled with worry. “You were thrashing around and making these awful sounds.”

I blinked, trying to orient myself. Sunlight streamed through the window.

“What time is it?” I managed, my voice hoarse.

“Almost 10, Morgan said. “You missed morning classes. Mrs. Blake was worried when you didn’t show up, so she asked me to check on you.

She studied my face. “What happened? Are you sick?”

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Chapter 14

Tori's POV:

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I blinked several times, trying to clear the fog of the nightmare from my mind.

The metallic scent of blood from my dream still seemed to linger in my nostrils, though I knew it was just my imagination.

"I'm fine," I said, forcing a small smile as I pushed myself up to a sitting position. "Just a bad dream."

Morgan's worried face hovered inches from mine, her brow furrowed with concern.

"Are you sure? You were thrashing around and... and making these awful sounds." She hesitated. "Like you were in pain."

I swung my legs over the side of the bed, trying to appear more composed than I felt. "Really, it's nothing. Just stress probably."

"Maybe we should go to the medical center? Dr. Howard could take a look at you." Morgan persisted.

My body tensed involuntarily at the word "medical center." Images from my nightmare flashed through my mind-sterile white walls, masked doctors, the monotone voice announcing time of death.

A cold shudder ran through me.

"No hospitals," I replied firmly, perhaps too sharply. "I just need to wash my face and I'll be fine. Really."

Morgan finally nodded. "Okay, if you're sure."

As I splashed cold water on my face in the small dormitory bathroom, my mind drifted to Morgan's story from the night before.

The way shed described Ethan's heartbreak over his ex-girlfriend over me without having any idea she was telling the story to the very girl who had supposedly broken his heart.

If she knew the truth... if she knew I was the girl who'd been imprisoned for killing... would she still sit next to me in class? Would she still defend me against the whispers and stares? Or would she recoil in fear like everyone else?

I dried my face and stared at my reflection.

The silver-gray eyes that stared back at me seemed bottomless, like deep wells that had collected too many memories, too many sorrows.

"Ready?" Morgan called from the other side of the door.

"Coming," I responded, tucking the memories away where they belonged-buried deep.

We walked across campus together, Morgan chattering about how Mrs. Blake had been worried when I didn't show up and how shed volunteered to check on me.

I nodded and made appropriate noises at the right moments, but my mind was elsewhere

The classroom fell quiet as we entered, several heads turning in our direction.

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Chapter 14

I kept my eyes forward, ignoring the stares as I took my seat beside Morgan.

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"Tori," Mrs. Blake said, approaching my desk. "I'm glad to see you're feeling better. Morgan explained you weren't feeling well this morning."

"Yes, I'm fine now. Thank you," I tried to force a smile toward her.

Mrs. Blake smiled warmly, the tension in her shoulders visibly relaxing. "That's good to hear."

She continued. "And I wanted to let you know that the diagnostic test has been moved up to this afternoon. The administration made the change this morning. I know it's short notice, but I wanted to make sure you're prepared."

I nodded calmly. "I'll be ready."

Beside me, Morgan groaned dramatically, throwing her head back. "Are you kidding me? This afternoon? I was planning to study tonight!"

She clutched her notebook to her chest. "My lunar calculations are still a saster. I was counting on those extra days!"

Mrs. Blake gave Morgan a sympathetic smile.

"I understand it's frustrating, Morgan, but I've seen your progress this semester. I believe in you."

The rest of the class passed in a blur of lectures and notes.

When the afternoon assessment came, I slid into my seat only to see Mrs. Catherine White at the front of the classroom.

Of all the people in this school, we get HER? Tracy growled within me. Enemies at every turn, just our luck.

I silently agreed with my wolf.

"You have exactly forty-five minutes, Catherine announced, her eyes settling on me for a beat longer than necessary. "Begin."

I bent my head over my paper and focused entirely on the lunar calculations.

Then I heard it-the rhythmic click of heels, circling closer and closer to my desk.

Catherine's presence loomed over my desk, her shadow falling across my paper. She circled my desk slowly, her heels tapping rhythmically against the floor.

I could feel her eyes boring into the top of my head, watching every move of my pencil as if expecting to catch me cheating.

I forced myself to breathe evenly, but my usual speed faltered.

All night's nightmare made it difficult to focus, and Catherine's deliberate interference only made it worse.

Fifteen minutes left," she announced to the class, but her eyes were fixed on me, a subtle curl of disdain at the corner of her mouth

She lingered a moment longer, as if expecting me to crumble under the pressure, before finally walking back to the front desk with a satisfied smirk

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Catherine went away, and I worked through the remaining problems with renewed concentration, completing the final question just as she began to announce the exam was over.

I approached her desk to turn in my paper. She took it with a cursory glance, lips curling into a sneer.

Just barely finished, I see. Is this all you've got, Tori?" she said, voice pitched to carry to nearby students. "You'd better consider dropping out sooner rather than later, so as not to affect your class's performance."

A few students paused to watch the exchange, some with awkward discomfort, others with poorly concealed amusement.

"I appreciate your concern for my academic welfare, Mrs. White," I replied evenly, "But your concern is completely unnecessary."

Her eyes narrowed. "Pride comes before the fall, Omega."

I simply nodded, already turning away. "I'll keep that in mind."

It was getting late. I had no time to waste on Catherine White's pettiness. Hannah had made it crystal clear what would happen if I was late for the ceremony.

I rushed back to my dorm room, quickly exchanging my school uniform for the simple black dress that Hannah had prepared for me.

Grabbing my phone and wallet, I hurried outside and hailed a taxi. “Moonlight Restaurant, please, I told the driver as I slid into the backseat.

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Chapter 15

Tori's POV:

The taxi pulled up outside Howling Plaza, a gleaming tower of glass and steel that dominated the Moonhaven skyline.

The Moonlight Restaurant, where the ceremony was held, occupied the entire top floor.

As I paid the driver and stepped out, I took a deep breath and straightened my simple black dress.

With shoulders squared and chin lifted slightly, I walked toward the towering entrance.

The revolving doors swallowed me into the climate-controlled opulence of Moonhaven's most exclusive gathering place, where crystal chandeliers cast their unforgiving light on every imperfection.

The lobby was all polished marble and soft lighting, with uniformed waiter attendants guiding guests to their destinations.

“I’m here for the Price-Grayson mating ceremony announcement,” I said, keeping my voice steady despite the receptionist’s barely concealed surprise at an Omega attending such an exclusive event.

“Luna Lounge, top floor,” she replied after verifying my name on the guest list. “The private elevator is to your right.”

The ride up was mercifully short and empty.

As the doors slid open, I stepped into the Luna Lounge-and immediately felt the room shift. Conversations faltered mid-sentence as heads turned in my direction.

The whispers began instantly, like rustling leaves in an autumn breeze.

“Look, an unfamiliar face...

“...such a beautiful face, don’t you think?”

“Look at those silver-gray eyes...”

...wonder which family she belongs to?”

For a moment, I stood frozen, uncertain which direction to take in this sea of strangers who continued to stare and whisper.

At that moment, a voice sounded behind me.

“Miss Sullivan?”

I turned to find myself face to face with Hunter Brown, the young man I’d limpsed at the Price residence doorstep just days earlier.

This was the very person whose presence had triggered Mia’s jealousy and accusations of me ‘stealing’ her crush.

Stay away from him, Tracy warned. If Mia sees us talking, she’s gonna lose again.

I pivoted on my heel, intent on finding another path through the crowded room, but Hunter smoothly sidestepped to block my rettuat

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Chapter 15

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“Why are you trying to avoid me?” he asked, his smile never faltering. “Do you remember me? We met briefly at your family’s home.”

I opened my mouth to dismiss him, but before I could utter a word, a flash of emerald fabric caught my peripheral vision.

24%-

“Hunter!” Mia’s voice was honey-sweet, but her eyes were glacial as they swept over me. “There you are. I’ve been looking everywhere for you.”

Well, isn’t this just perfect? Tracy growled sarcastically within me. Here comes trouble.

Mia slid herself between us with practiced grace, positioning her body as barrier. The cold look she shot me carried a clear message: Stay

away.

Then she fixed a possessive smile on Hunter. “The Peterson Group is looking for you. It’s urgent.”

Without waiting for his response, she looped her arm through his and practically dragged him away, throwing one last frigid glare in my direction.

She acts like he’s some precious treasure, Tracy scoffed inside my head. As we care about her puppy crush.

I sighed and couldn’t help but wonder how many more landmines awaited me in this room.

Deciding to minimize further drama, I made my way toward a relatively quiet corner of the lounge.

Conversations grew louder soon, necks craned, and bodies shifted to look toward the entrance.

I followed their gaze and immediately understood the cause of the commotion. Fiona Price and Ethan Grayson had arrived, moving through the crowd with practiced ease.

Fiona wore a champagne-colored gown that caught the light with every movement, while Ethan's tailored suit emphasized his broad shoulders and athletic build.

Ethan's gaze swept the room-and then locked with mine.

Something flickered in his eyes, his step faltered, and for a moment, he shifted his weight, instinctively angling toward my corner.

Fiona noticed the subtle change in his posture immediately. Her eyes followed his line of sight, landing directly on me.

A fleeting expression crossed her face-something sharp and calculating-before it transformed into a radiant smile.

Without hesitation, she linked her arm firmly through Ethan's and steered them both in my direction.

"Tori, Fiona greeted me with practiced sweetness once they reached my alcove. "How lovely to see you here. I'm so glad you could join us for this special evening."

I stood up to face her, maintaining a careful distance. "You didn't give me much choice. Isn't it?"

Fiona's expression immediately transformed into one of wounded innocence

"Oh," she breathed, one hand rising delicately to her collarbone. "Are you still blaming me for taking you away from you? I truly am sorry if we've hurt you, Tori."

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Chapter 15

"But we can't control who we fall in love with, can we? It just... happened

I stared at her performance with detached coldness, not bothering to hide my contempt.

When her dramatic confession failed to provoke a reaction from me, Fiona pivoted smoothly, turning to Ethan with wide, glistening eyes.

"Darling, I feel terrible. I just couldn't help falling in love with you," she said, her voice trembling just enough to seem genuine.

“I never meant to come between you two. Please tell me you don’t think less of me for following my heart.”

She leaned forward, practically collapsing against his chest in a perfect display of vulnerability and remorse.

Ethan’s gaze shifted to me, something unreadable flickering in his eyes.

Then, he placed his hands on Fiona’s shoulders and stepped back, creating distance between them. His movement was controlled but unmistakably deliberate.

“There are still guests we need to greet,” he said, his voice cool and formal “I should attend to them.”

Without waiting for her response, he turned and walked away, his broad shoulders rigid under the tailored suit.

Fiona watched him disappear into the crowd, her expression momentarily unguarded as anger and surprise flashed across her features.

When she turned back to me, the sweet, remorseful mask had vanished entirely, replaced by cold disdain.

She moved closer, lowering her voice so only I could hear.

How was Silver Fang? I hear the cells are quite... cozy. Especially for Omegas.”

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters. Tap the middle of the screen to reveal Reading Options.

