

Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 91

Chapter 91

Tori's POV:

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The murmurs from the gathering crowd buzzed in my sensitive ears, their words cutting deeper than any blade could.

Garrett scrambled to his feet, brushing glass from his expensive suit.

His eyes narrowed to slits as he jabbed a finger in my direction.

"Elizabeth," he snarled, voice shaking with rage. "I demand justice! This... this Omega" - he spat the word like poison- "just attacked me

unprovoked! In your own home!"

The crowd's murmurs intensified. I felt dozens of eyes boring into me, judging, condemning.

My wolf Tracy growled defensively in our shared consciousness.

Stay strong. Don't show fear.

"This is a direct challenge to our hierarchy," Garrett continued, gaining confidence as people nodded along. "An Omega attacking a guest at an Alpha family's gathering? It's completely unheard of! She must be punished severely to restore order."

Hannah stepped forward from the crowd, her face a mask of maternal concern that didn't reach her eyes.

"I'm so sorry, Elizabeth. I've clearly failed in teaching my daughter proper behavior. I'll personally ensure she's-

Elizabeth silenced her with a single raised hand, never taking her piercing gaze off me.

"Tori," her voice was calm but carried an undeniable authority that made everyone lean forward slightly. "Do you have anything to say?"

I swallowed hard, acutely aware that my future might depend on what happened in the next few moments. Would anyone believe an Omega's

word against a rich male?

'I was defending myself,' I stated firmly, meeting Elizabeth's eyes directly. He blocked my exit, grabbed my wrist, and made it clear he

wouldn't take no for an answer."

Elizabeth's expression remained unreadable as she turned to Garrett. Something in her eyes made him take an involuntary step back.

"Mr. Woods," she said, her voice dropping several degrees colder. "Did you put your hands on this young female without her permission?"

'I was merely being friendly,' he stammered, color draining from his face. She overreacted-

"Answer the question." The command in Elizabeth's voice was unmistakable

Garrett's gaze darted around, seeking allies and finding none. "Yes, I touch her arm, but it was completely consensual," he insisted. 'Her mother introduced us! Hannah told me Tori greatly admired me and wanted to get to know me better.'

"That's a lie!" I interjected, unable to contain my outrage. "I made it clear wasn't interested in your advances. You grabbed me when I tried to

leave!

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Elizabeth's piercing gaze shifted to Hannah, who stood uncomfortably at the edge of the gathering. "Mrs. Price, is this true? Did you introduce your daughter to Mr. Woods?"

Hannah shifted her weight, suddenly finding herself the center of unwanted attention.

*I... I only wanted what's best for Tori," she said, voice dripping with false concern. "This has nothing to do with me. I simply made an

introduction. I had no idea she would attack him! I can't be held responsible for her violent tendencies."

Elizabeth's eyes narrowed dangerously, her expression cooling several more degrees.

"Interesting. Most mothers I know would be defending their daughters in such a situation, not distancing themselves."

Her voice carried throughout the silent room.

"And Mr. Woods' particular... preferences regarding young Omegas are hardly a secret in our circles. What exactly was your intention in introducing your daughter to someone with such a reputation?"

Hannah paled, opening and closing her mouth without producing a sound trapped by Elizabeth's direct question and the judgmental stares of

the other guests.

The room filled with hushed whispers that seemed to grow louder with each passing second. I could catch fragments of conversation around

us:

"Always knew there was something off about her treatment of that girl..."

"Using her own daughter as a pawn..."

"I never would have expected this from her..."

"To think we all believed she was such a caring mother..."

Hannah's composure began to crack visibly as the whispers intensified. Her breathing quickened, and a sheen of sweat appeared on her forehead. She placed a protective hand over her slightly swollen belly.

"I... I didn't... that wasn't what..." she stammered, looking increasingly panicked.

Her face contorted suddenly, and she doubled over slightly. "Alexander, I gasped, reaching blindly for her husband. "My stomach-

something's wrong."

Alexander rushed to her side immediately, his face tight with concern.

“We need to get you to the hospital, he said firmly, wrapping a supportive arm around her waist.

“I apologize for the disruption,” Alexander addressed Elizabeth with a quick, formal nod. “Hannah’s pregnancy has been difficult. We need to have her checked immediately.”

Elizabeth nodded solemnly. Of course. Your wife’s health comes first.”

As Alexander guided Hannah through the parting crowd toward the exit, aught her glancing back over her shoulder. Our eyes met briefly, and

what I saw wasn’t pain or concern-but fury.

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A strange mix of emotions washed over me as I watched them leave.

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The old saying about pregnancy making women forget things briefly crossed my mind-“a baby brain” or “one pregnancy makes you stupid for three years as my grandmother used to joke.

But this wasn’t forgetfulness; it was a poorly calculated attempt to humiliate me that backfired spectacularly.

A chill ran down my spine as another thought occurred to me.

If Elizabeth hadn’t questioned so thoroughly-if she hadn’t cared enough to dig deeper-the night could have ended very differently.

Without her protection, I would have been just another Omega causing trouble, my reputation once again in tatters.

The realization was sobering.

“James,” Elizabeth called sharply, and immediately two security guards materialized at her side. “Escort Mr. Woods from the property. He is no longer welcome here or at any Grayson event. Ever.”

The absolute silence that followed was deafening. Garrett's mouth opened and closed like a fish gasping for air.

"But what about her?" he finally sputtered, pointing an accusing finger at me. "She physically attacked me! Are you saying an Omega can assault people without consequences? She used her claws!"

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Chapter 92

Tori's POV:

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Despite my efforts to appear composed, I couldn't stop the slight trembling in my hands.

The aftershocks of my partial shift rippled through my body, bringing back flashes of Silver Fang. Those days of confinement and abuse-I

never wanted to experience anything like that again.

Elizabeth approached with measured steps, her posture regal yet approachable. I braced myself for condemnation, for the inevitable reminder that an Omega should never display such aggression in public, especially not in the hallowed halls of the Grayson estate.

Instead, she stopped directly in front of me, her eyes-the same piercing blue as her son's-studied me with unexpected warmth.

"My dear," she said, her voice carrying effortlessly across the now-silent gathering, "if protecting yourself in a threatening situation is wrong,

then I'm afraid I don't know what right is anymore."

My breath caught in my throat. I watched in stunned silence as Elizabeth gently placed her hand on my shoulder-a gesture of support that

would be visible to every guest in attendance.

It was like watching a weather vane spin in a sudden wind change.

The same guests who moments ago had been whispering about the "unstable Omega" and my "inappropriate display" suddenly adopted thoughtful expressions.

"She showed remarkable restraint, really," commented a woman in an emerald dress who, just minutes earlier, had been eyeing me with

distaste.

"I've always found Garrett's behavior problematic," added a gray-haired male who had previously been nodding along to Garrett's accusations. "Approaching an unclaimed young female like that? In this day and age? Completely unacceptable."

"Did you notice she didn't fully shift? That level of control in someone so young is impressive," remarked another, as if they'd been admiring my self-discipline all along.

Inside, a bitter laugh threatened to escape.

How quickly they changed their tune when Elizabeth had spoken. A single sentence from her lips outweighed anything I might have said in my

defense.

Yet beneath my cynicism, I couldn't deny the flood of relief washing through me. Elizabeth's intervention had done what no amount of my explanations could have accomplished.

The security team worked with swift efficiency, flanking Garrett as he continued to sputter protests. His face had turned an alarming shade of red, but whatever threats or objections he intended to voice died on his lips as the imposing guards escorted him firmly toward the exit.

"Thank you for your protection, Ms. Grayson," I said quietly, using the formal term of respect.

Elizabeth gently patted my shoulder, her eyes studying me with a curious tenseness.

"I believe you, child. I can see you're not the type to cause trouble without reason."

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She tilted her head slightly, her gaze lingering on my partially shifted features.

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"Though I must say, I'm puzzled by your wolf coloring. That silver-white hue is quite unusual. Her voice lowered. "Hannah's genetics wouldn't produce such a trait. If I may ask, who was your father?"

I lowered my eyes, an old familiar ache resurfacing.

"I've never met him. My grandmother told me he abandoned Hannah when she was pregnant with me." I swallowed hard. "It's why she... why she resents me so much."

Something softened in Elizabeth's expression—a flicker of genuine compassion.

"I'm sorry, dear," she said, her voice gentle. "No child should bear the weight of their parents' choices."

I straightened my shoulders slightly. "It's all right. I've made peace with it."

The lie came easier after years of practice. "I should find Morgan now. I've already caused enough disruption to your evening."

Elizabeth's eyes held mine for a moment longer than necessary, as if searching for something beyond my words.

“You haven’t disrupted anything, Tori.” She stepped back with graceful dignity. “Go find your friend. And remember, you’re welcome in this house.”

I nodded respectfully before turning away, strangely warmed by her words despite the evening’s chaos.

With the drama concluded, the party gradually resumed its rhythm.

Champagne flowed, conversation hummed, and the incident began to fade into the evening’s background—just another piece of gossip to be dissected later in private homes.

I slipped away from the center of attention, scanning the room for Morgan

I found her in a quiet corner, slumped in a plush chair, her head tilted at an awkward angle. Beside her on a small table sat an empty plate with chocolate wrappers scattered around it.

‘Morgan?’ I gently shook her shoulder. ‘Morgan, wake up.’

She stirred sluggishly, her eyes opening to reveal unfocused pupils. The sweet, rich scent of alcohol-infused chocolate clung to her breath.

“Tori?” she mumbled, blinking rapidly. Did I miss something?”

“Just a small confrontation that almost ended with me being thrown out, replied dryly. Come on, I think we should head back to the dorms. You’ve had enough excitement for one night.”

Morgan struggled to sit upright, her movements clumsy as she pushed herself up.

“The chocolate... I didn’t realize they had liquor in them. So many... so good...”

I couldn’t help but smile at her innocent mishap.

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Chapter 92

“That’s what those little signs saying ‘alcoholic confections’ were trying to tell you.”

As I helped Morgan to her feet, steadying her with one arm around her waist, a sudden shift in the room's energy made me look up.

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The crowd near the entrance had fallen silent, then erupted into hushed, excited whispers. Heads turned, bodies angled toward the main doors.

Two figures stood in the entrance—one immediately recognizable even from across the room.

Alpha Lucas, commanding and imposing in a perfectly tailored black suit, his blue eyes surveying the gathering with cool detachment.

Beside him stood a woman of breathtaking beauty. Tall and graceful, with flowing auburn hair and the confident posture of someone born to

privilege.

"They look perfect together," someone nearby whispered, not bothering to lower their voice. "The Council will be pleased."

"About time he chose someone suitable," another replied.

An unexpected sourness rose in my throat at their words. I swallowed hard trying to ignore the strange tightness in my chest.

Morgan, who had been leaning heavily against me, suddenly straightened. Her glazed eyes focused on the pair, widening with recognition.

"Oh," she breathed, swaying slightly.

"That's her. That's Vivienne Blackwood." She clutched my arm tighter, her words slurred but urgent.

"She's said to be Lucas's white moonlight—the one he's always wanted. Megan considers her the number one rival for his attention. She

absolutely hates Vivienne."

The words hit me with unexpected force, like a physical blow to my chest.

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Chapter 93

Tori's POV:

They stood side by side, like a pair created by destiny itself.

I watched from the corner, feeling an unfamiliar emotion spreading through my chest-bitter yet burning.

Morgan shifted in my arms, her cheeks flushed unnaturally red from alcohol.

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"Tori?" a gentle voice called from behind me.

I turned to see Mrs. Baker-Morgan's mother-approaching with concern etched across her face. She wore the Grayson household staff uniform, yet carried herself with enough grace to blend into any social gathering.

"Mrs. Baker," I greeted with a nod. "Morgan has... overindulged in the alcoholic chocolates."

Mrs. Baker sighed upon seeing her daughter's intoxicated state.

"Oh, Morgan... she never reads those warning labels." She turned to me, her eyes apologetic. "Dear, I need to get back to helping with the guests. Could you take Morgan somewhere to rest? There's a guest room in the west wing. Let her lie down for a while."

“Of course, I agreed. Though deep down, I wished for an excuse to leave this party altogether-to escape the sight of Lucas with Vivienne.

Mrs. Baker squeezed my hand gratefully, whispering, “Thank you, Tori. West wing, third door. It’s all prepared.”

I nodded, supporting Morgan’s increasingly heavy form as we made our way toward the west wing.

Crossing the ballroom, I couldn’t help glancing at Lucas again. He was leaning down to listen to whatever Vivienne was saying, the corner of his mouth turned up in a gentle smile.

That smile pierced my chest like a blade.

The west wing was quieter than I’d expected. Thick carpets absorbed our footsteps, and wall sconces cast warm pools of light. Finding the third guest room, I pushed open the door and carefully settled Morgan onto a bed covered with silk sheets.

‘Mmm... so soft...’ Morgan sank into the mattress with a contented sigh. Room’s spinning...”

“Close your eyes and rest,’ I said gently, removing her high heels. I’ll get you some water.”

Morgan nodded weakly, quickly drifting into sleep.

I quietly stood, deciding to fetch water from the kitchen. At least it would give me a reason to escape these thoughts temporarily.

The hallway stretched empty and silent, my footsteps muffled by the thick carpet. As I rounded a corner, I froze-not far ahead stood Lucas and

Vivienne.

I instinctively moved to retreat, to avoid this scene, but it was too late..

...is my suite still as I left it?” Vivienne’s voice flowed like water, melodic and smooth. “I’ve missed that room overlooking Moon Lake.”

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Chapter 93

It was clear she had been here many times before. I lowered my head, pretending not to see them, and tried to quickly walk past.

Suddenly, my wrist was caught in a firm grip.

The familiar touch and strength made me pause, and I looked back.

Lucas had a smile playing at the corner of his lips, his dark gaze fixed on me.

“Why are you running? Seeing people without even greeting them is impolite.”

His words were scolding, but his tone was intimate and indulgent, creating a strange contrast that confused me.

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“Alpha. Ms. Blackwood.” I deliberately used the formal address, trying to maintain some distance between us. “I apologize for interrupting. I am

just getting water.”

Vivienne observed Lucas grabbing my wrist, shock clearly washing through her.

She maintained her calm expression, smiling at me. “You know me?”

“Morgan told me about you,” I answered honestly.

”

“Morgan? That little girl from the Baker family?” Vivienne glanced at Lucas before turning back to me with a deepening smile. “What did Morgan say about me?”

That you’re Lucas’s college classmate, his white moonlight, the woman who almost got engaged to him, and Megan Howard’s number one rival.

The thoughts made my chest tighten, but I didn’t answer.

I avoided looking at Lucas and spoke with distant coldness.

“If you’ll excuse me,” I said, stepping forward, “Morgan is waiting for her water.”

The corner of Lucas’s mouth twitched, as if amused by my directness. “Of course. Don’t keep your friend waiting.”

I quickly moved past them, feeling Lucas's gaze like a physical weight only back.

As I turned the corner, Vivienne's voice carried clearly down the hallway.

"It's been years since I've visited. I've forgotten which one is my exclusivoom. Would you take me there?"

My steps faltered for an instant before I quickened my pace, not wanting hear Lucas's response. The implication in her tone was unmistakable-this wasn't about finding a room.

Back in the guest room, I set the glass of water on the nightstand and gely roused Morgan enough to take a few sips before she drifted back to sleep.

As Morgan's breathing deepened into sleep again, my mind wandered treaerously.

Where was Lucas now? Was he with Vivienne? Was she the Luna that the puncil members had been whispering about? But Lucas had told me I was the only one he was interested in... hadn't he?

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Chapter 93

The thoughts swirled in my head like autumn leaves caught in a whirlwind

I paced the room, suddenly restless with emotions I didn't want to name.

The sudden chime of the doorbell startled me from my thoughts.

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Morgan's mother must have come to check on her. I hurried to the door, almost grateful for the interruption from my own turbulent thoughts.

When I pulled the door open, my breath caught in my throat.

Instead of Mrs. Baker, Lucas stood leaning against the doorframe, an amused smile playing on his lips.

"Surprised to see me?" he asked, his voice low and smooth.

My first instinct was to close the door. I pushed it quickly, but his palm shot out, effortlessly holding it open.

“Didn’t you say on the phone yesterday that you were thinking about me? His eyebrow arched playfully. “And now you’re shutting the door in my face?”

“I never said anything like that,” I replied firmly. “You must be confusing me with someone else.”

“Am I?” His eyes held mine, searching.

“You’re acting strange tonight, Tori. ”

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Chapter 94

Lucas’s POV:

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I leaned against the doorframe, watching Tori’s startled expression with amusement.

“You’re acting strange tonight, Tori. Running away when you see me in the hallway isn’t like you.”

She stiffened, her fingers tightening on the door handle.

“I wasn’t running away. I was getting water for Morgan.”

“Of course.” I stepped into the room, uninvited but unconcerned.

Duke, my wolf, purred with knowing amusement.

She’s jealous, he insisted. “And I’m sure avoiding eye contact with us all the time.”

In two strides, I closed the distance between us and pulled her into my arms, enveloping her in a gentle embrace.

She tensed immediately, trying to push against my chest. “What are you doing? Let me go-”

“Don’t,” I whispered against her hair. “Just... let me hold you for a moment

Tori stopped struggling, her body gradually relaxing against mine. I felt a small smile form on my lips at how quickly she yielded.

She’s so cute, easily pacified, I thought, both pleased and concerned.

Such softness of heart wasn’t always beneficial in our world. Someone asusting as her could be easily hurt.

I sighed, my breath stirring the fine strands of her hair.

“You’ve been listening to Morgan again, haven’t you?” I pulled back slight to look into her eyes, but kept my arms firmly around her. ‘Don’t believe everything she tells you about Vivienne or anyone else. Trust what I’ve said to you. Only that.”

She bit her lower lip, her silver eyes clouding with vulnerability I rarely wnessed.

She admitted quietly. ‘I was just feeling... insecure. She shook her head lightly. “Can I really trust you completely, Lucas?”

Something in her tone made me pause.

This wasn’t merely jealousy-there was a deeper current beneath her word

Just as I was about to say more, Morgan suddenly rolled over in bed with loud mumble, “No... chocolate bunnies can’t swim...”

Tori jumped out of my arms like she’d been shocked, her eyes wide with panic.

“You need to leave,” she whispered urgently, glancing nervously at Morgan then back at the door. “Mrs. Baker might come check on Morgan any minute. If she finds you here-

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Chapter 94

“What?” I raised an eyebrow, amused by her flustered state. “Am I someone to hide? Something shameful?”

Her cheeks flushed beautifully. “That’s not what I meant.”

“Come back to my private residence tonight,” I said, the words escaping before I could reconsider.

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She shook her head firmly. “I can’t. I told you, I have the competition. I need to study and get back to campus.” Her voice grew softer. “I really

need to focus right now.”

I nodded, impressed despite my disappointment. “Don’t overwork yourself. Even the most brilliant minds need rest.”

She nodded, relief and disappointment warring in her expression as I closed the door between us.

Back at the ballroom, the celebration continued in full swing.

I scanned the room, seeking the quickest exit, when Mother appeared at my side.

I was engaged in obligatory social pleasantries with several Pack elders, nodding at appropriate intervals while my mind remained elsewhere, when Mother appeared at my side.

“Lucas,” Elizabeth’s elegant voice carried a note of concern. “Have you seen Tori Sullivan?”

“Just now,” I replied carefully. “Why do you ask?”

Mother’s face tightened with barely contained anger.

“That poor

Omegas.”

child was harassed at our gathering. Hannah Sullivan deliberately introduced her to Garrett Woods, knowing his reputation with

My body went rigid as she recounted the evening's events-Garrett's inappropriate advances, Tori defending herself, and Hannah's transparent manipulation of the situation.

"Tori handled herself admirably," Mother concluded, 'I sent Garrett away with a warning, but the girl was clearly shaken."

Ice crystallized in my veins.

'Excuse me,' I managed through clenched teeth, stepping away to a quiet orner.

Jack answered on the first ring. "Alpha?"

"Garrett Woods," I said, my voice deadly calm. "The hand he used to touch fori-make sure he won't be using it again."

"Understood. Anything else?"

I thought of Hannah, who had conveniently escaped with Alexander after er scheme was exposed.

"I hear Hannah Sullivan has developed a fondness for horse racing, I said asually.

'Perhaps she needs a more... immersive experience with the

sport.'

"Alpha?"

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Chapter 94

'Gambling is such a peculiar pastime, Jack, I continued, my tone conversational despite the rage pulsing beneath. 'Small stakes provide entertainment. But when the stakes grow too high..." I paused. "Fortunes disappear. Families crumble. Sometimes, lives are ruined."

"I'll make the necessary arrangements," Jack replied, understanding perfectly.

"Good." I ended the call, my expression once again composed as I rejoined the party.

No one touched what was mine without consequences.

As I moved to find Tori, the distinct scent of expensive whiskey and a familiar scent caught my attention.

Ethan was leaning against a marble column, his normally immaculate appearance slightly disheveled.

"Uncle," he straightened upon seeing me, attempting dignity despite his inebriated state.

I studied him carefully. "You've had enough to drink, Ethan."

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He laughed, too loudly. "Perhaps. But sometimes clarity comes with intoxication." He glanced around before stepping closer. "I need to speak with you. About something important."

I could smell the anxiety rolling off him beneath the alcohol. "Go on."

"Fiona and I," he hesitated, then squared his shoulders. "It's not working. Our mating was a mistake."

I kept my expression neutral. "You're drunk."

"I'm serious," he insisted. "I want to break the engagement. Find someone who actually cares about."

"Listen carefully," I said, my voice dropping to a dangerous register, "Fiona is pregnant. The matter is settled. You need to take responsibility."

His eyes narrowed in defiance. "I can't forget-"

"Have you forgotten what I told you?" I cut him off, my tone hardening with Alpha authority. The air between us grew heavy with my

displeasure.

The effect was immediate. Like cold water dousing flames, the alcohol-induced bravado drained from Ethan's face.

His pupils contracted sharply, momentary sobriety cutting through the haze of whiskey.

Without another word, he lowered his gaze in submission and turned away his previously confident stride reduced to the defeated shuffle of a chastised pup.

The scent of disappointment and resignation trailed behind him as he disappeared into the crowd.

Still a child playing at being a male, I thought, watching him go. Given enough time, he'll learn to prioritize duty over fleeting emotions.

I turned my attention back to finding Tori, making my way toward the room where I'd left her earlier.

When I reached the room, however, I found only lingering traces of Tori's ent. She had departed some time ago.

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Chapter 95

Ethan's POV:

12%

"Have you forgotten what I told you?" Lucas's voice dropped to a dangerous register, heavy with Alpha command.

Of course, I hadn't forgotten. How could I?

The words he'd spoken echoed in my mind like a death knell: "I will never allow a female who has served time to mate with anyone from the

Grayson bloodline."

Watching Lucas's retreating figure, the bitter taste of whiskey lingered on my tongue.

I'd been drinking again-too much, too often lately.

But alcohol was the only thing that numbed the constant ache of loss and regret that had been my companion for four years.

Four years of waiting for Tori to be released. Four years of hoping against hope that somehow, things might be different when she returned.

I couldn't believe she would move on so quickly, not after everything we'd shared.

In my heart, I still clung to the desperate wish that she would wait just a little longer—once I get what I want from Fiona, it'll be fine.

Just wait for me, Tori, I silently pleaded to the moon. Just a little longer and we can be together.

Hours later, I found myself being half-carried up the steps to the house Fiona and I shared.

My assistant, Steve, struggled under my weight.

"Mr. Grayson, please try to walk," he hissed as we stumbled through the doorway.

The lights inside were dim, but I could make out Fiona's silhouette as she posed from the couch, one hand resting protectively over her still-flat

stomach.

Fiona sighed, dismissing Steve with a nod. "Thank you for bringing him home."

When we were alone, she approached cautiously, her expensive perfume mingling with the subtle scent of pregnancy hormones. She knelt beside me, beginning to loosen my tie.

"You can't keep doing this, Ethan," she said softly. "We have a baby."

I looked at her through the haze of alcohol.

She was beautiful, objectively. Golden-brown hair, perfect features, the scent of wealth and breeding. But she wasn't Tori. She would never be

Tori.

As her fingers worked at my collar, I suddenly caught her wrist.

"Ethan?" Fiona's voice held a note of concern.

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Chapter 95

Her voice grated on my nerves, stirring a deep-seated resentment that alcohol had loosened from its careful restraints.

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If not for her, none of this would have happened. If not for her schemes and manipulations, Tori wouldn't have gone to Silver Fang. We wouldn't have been separated. It could have been Tori here with me now. Should have been Tori wearing my mark, carrying my child. This

woman-this schemer-had ruined everything.

Rage bubbled up inside me, and before I could stop myself, I shoved her away. Hard.

Fiona stumbled backward, her hand immediately going to her stomach as he steadied herself against the wall. Her eyes widened with shock

and fear.

"The baby," she gasped, clutching her abdomen protectively. "Ethan, the baby..."

Reality crashed over me like ice water.

The baby. The linchpin in all my careful planning. I couldn't risk harming them-not when I'd come this far in the charade.

I forced my expression to shift, arranging my features into a mask of contrition as I pretended the mention of our child had sobered me

instantly.

"Fiona, I'm sorry," I said, moving to help her to the couch. "I've had too much to drink. Are you alright? Is the-is our child okay?"

She nodded shakily, still holding her stomach. "I think so. Nothing hurts. st... you frightened me."

I sat beside her, playing the role of the concerned father-to-be.

"I'm so sorry. I don't know what came over me. The alcohol-*

"It's fine," she interrupted, though her voice was strained. "Just... be more careful next time, Ethan. Please. For the baby's sake."

I nodded, wrapping an arm around her shoulders while inwardly calculating how much longer I needed to maintain this façade.

How much longer before I could finally break free and find my way back to Tori.

The shrill ring of Fiona's phone shattered the tense silence. She glanced at the screen, her eyebrows lifting in surprise.

"It's my father," she said, answering quickly. "Dad? What's wrong?"

I watched as her expression shifted from concern to shock. She straightened, her free hand unconsciously tightening around mine.

"What? When?" She paused, listening intently. "Yes, we'll come right away

She ended the call, turning to me with wide eyes. "Hannah's had a miscage. She's at Moontouch Medical Center now."

"What?" I blinked, genuinely stunned.

My mind flashed back to hours ago-how Hannah had been confronted by Elizabeth about setting Tori up, and how she'd suddenly clutched her stomach and claimed to feel unwell. Alexander had hurriedly escorted her out, and I'd assumed it was just a convenient excuse to escape further questioning.

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Chapter 95

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"Dad says she's stable, but... upset, obviously." Fiona's voice carried the appropriate concern, but I caught something else flickering in her eyes -a flash of satisfaction quickly concealed beneath a veneer of sympathy.

"We should go, I said, standing. The alcohol in my system seemed to have burned away, replaced by a cold clarity.

"Of course, Fiona agreed, reaching for her coat. But as she turned away, I caught the smallest hint of a smile playing at the corner of her

mouth.

I said nothing, filing away this reaction with all the other fragments of evidence I'd been collecting. Someday soon, I would have enough to expose Fiona for who she really was.

By the time we arrived at Moontouch Medical Center, the situation had escalated from somber to chaotic.

We could hear Hannah's raised voice even before we reached her private room.

"I will avenge my child!"

When we entered, Hannah's tear-streaked face was contorted with rage, her scent sharp with grief and fury. Alexander stood beside her, looking helpless as he patted her hand.

Fiona rushed forward with a convincing display of concern, her voice soft and sympathetic. "Oh, Hannah, is it true? The baby is really gone?"

Hannah nodded, fresh tears spilling down her cheeks.

"This is all Tori's fault," Fiona continued, her tone hardening just enough to feed Hannah's anger.

"She publicly humiliated you at the gathering, forcing you to endure all that criticism in front of everyone. Doesn't she know how dangerous stress is for pregnant women? How emotional turmoil can affect an unborn child?"

With each word from Fiona, Hannah's scent grew more acrid with hatred. The monitors beside her bed beeped faster as her heart rate

increased.

"That ungrateful little wretch, Hannah snarled, her fingers clutching the hospital sheets.

I stepped forward, unable to stay silent. "You can't seriously believe Tori did anything to do with this. She wasn't even-

'Don't you dare defend her!' Hannah's voice rose to a shriek. "Not in front of me! Not after what she's done!"

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Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 96

Chapter 96

Hanna's POV:

"Mrs. Price, please try to calm down. Your blood pressure is dangerously high the doctor said as he entered the room, chart in hand

His face wore that patronizing expression medical professionals use when they think you're being hysterical

"Calm down.?" I snarled. "My baby is dead because of that ungrateful wretch

The doctor cleared his throat.

13%8

Mrs. Price, while emotional distress can certainly be a contributing factor in pregnancy complications, I believe there may be other underlying

causes for your miscarriage. Have you experienced any unusual symptoms prior to this event? Perhaps some discomfort or—"

The only unusual thing was that my daughter made me lose face in front of the entire gathering." I cut him off, unwilling to bear his medical

babble.

What did he know about a mother's pain?

From the corner of my eye, I saw Fiona step closer to my bed, her golden brown hair perfectly styled despite the late hour. Even in crisis, my

beautiful stepdaughter maintained her composure.

“Doctor,” she said softly, “Hannah was under tremendous stress after Tori embarrassed her at the Grayson gathering. Everyone knows how

dangerous that kind of emotional trauma can be for an expectant mother.

The doctor sighed. “While stress is a factor, Mrs. Price, I’d still recommend further tests to-

“Get out,” I whispered, then louder, “GET OUT! I don’t need tests, I need justice!”

Alexander squeezed my hand. “Hannah, please listen to the doctor.”

I yanked my hand away. How could he take their side? Didn’t he understand what I’d lost?

The moment the doctor left, shaking his head in disapproval.

After Alexander and Ethan left to speak with the doctor, I turned to Fiona. I need your help.”

Her perfect lips curved into a slight smile. “Anything, Hannah.”

“Do you still have those contacts? The ones who helped with... other matters?”

She nodded, understanding immediately. “Yes, but... are you thinking what think you’re thinking?”

“I want her run out of Moonhaven for good,” I said, my voice dropping to whisper despite the private room. “Everyone knows once you leave the four packs territories, you become a Rogue wolf with no protection. Shall never be allowed to set foot in Moonhaven again. Let her wander the outside world alone, just like the worthless Omega she is.”

Fiona leaned closer, her golden brown eyes filled with understanding.

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Chapter 96

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“Whatever you decide to do, Hannah, I’m with you all the way. But you’ve just suffered a miscarriage... perhaps you should rest at home for a few days first? Your health matters too.”

I felt a rush of warmth toward my stepdaughter. Always so thoughtful, so considerate—everything Tori had never been. Fiona truly was the daughter I deserved.

I followed Fiona’s advice and spent the next week recovering at home.

Alexander, despite his usual business-first attitude, had arranged for one of Moonhaven’s most skilled healing practitioners to visit daily.

By the seventh day, I felt renewed—physically, at least. The emptiness where my child had been remained, but it had hardened into resolve.

My body was healed; now it was time to act.

While Alexander was at work, I retrieved the piece of paper Fiona had slipped to me at the hospital. The number had no name attached—just ten digits scrawled in her elegant handwriting.

I dialed from the burner phone I’d purchased specifically for this purpose.

“We were wondering when you’d call,” a deep voice answered on the second ring. No greeting, no introduction.

“I’m ready to proceed,” I replied, matching his businesslike tone.

“The terms Fiona discussed still stand. Ten million moonstone, half now, half upon completion.” He paused. “We’re available whenever you need us. Just get the Omega out of school.”

My grip tightened on the phone. “I’ll handle that part. I just need to know you’ll do what’s necessary to make her leave Moonhaven permanently.”

“We understand our role, Mrs. Price,” the voice continued with cold efficiency. “We have contacts at the Moonhaven border patrol who can help. Once we grab her, we can slip her outside the boundary without raising alarms. Once she’s beyond the barrier, she’ll be officially marked as a Rogue wolf.”

The casual calculation in his voice mirrored my own thoughts perfectly.

‘I’ll contact you when it’s arranged,’ I said, ending the call.

I stared out the window at the manicured gardens of the Price estate. So very soon, I would avenge my precious baby.

Tori would pay for taking my child from me.

I parked near Moonridge High School at dismissal time, watching waves of students exit the building.

My fingers drummed impatiently on the steering wheel as minutes ticked by with no sign of Tori.

Just as I was beginning to wonder if she somehow slipped past me, my phone rang.

It was Victoria, one of my socialite friends.

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Chapter 96

13%8

“Hannah! Are you coming to Moonlight Downs today? They’ve added a special race with those new thoroughbreds from the Eastern territories,”

she gushed. The odds are fantastic!”

My heart quickened with anticipation.

During my week of recovery, I’d discovered that betting on the races provided both distraction and profit. I’d already won nearly five million moonstones, and the thrill of watching my chosen horses cross the finish line first had become almost addictive.

I’d just begun, then stopped as I finally spotted her emerging from a side entrance.

Silver-gray eyes, slim figure, that perpetual look of defiance. Tori.

“I’ll be there shortly, I told Victoria, my eyes never leaving my target. Save me a spot in the VIP section. I have a quick errand to run first.”

When she passed near my car, I rolled down the window. “Tori.”

She froze, her body tensing like a wild animal sensing danger. “Hannah? What are you doing here?”

“Get in. I have information about your father.”

Her eyes widened, suspicion battling with desperate curiosity. “My father?”

“I’ve decided it’s time you knew the truth. But not here.”

Tori hesitated, taking a step back from the car. “Why the sudden change of heart? After all these years of keeping it secret?”

I forced my lips into what I hoped resembled a regretful smile. “Let’s just hy recent events have made me... reevaluate certain decisions.”

‘I don’t trust this,” she said, crossing her arms. “You could tell me right hele.”

‘Fine, I snapped, feigning irritation. “Walk away. This is your only chance Tori. I won’t offer again. The truth about your father dies with me, and you can spend the rest of your life wondering.”

I put the car in drive, making a show of preparing to leave.

“Wait,” she called, her voice tight with frustration.

I watched the internal struggle play across her face-the desperate need to know warring with her instinctive distrust of me..

Finally, need won out. She yanked open the passenger door and slid in bee me.

“This better not be another one of your games,” she muttered.

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Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 97

Chapter 97

Tori's POV:

* 3.13%8

"Where exactly are we going?" I asked, watching as we drove farther from the school, beyond even the industrial zone.

The number of people outside gradually diminished until the streets were early deserted.

My hand drifted to the door handle, fingers wrapping around it tightly, ready to jump out at the first sign of danger.

My wolf, Tracy, paced anxiously in my mind, her silver eyes alert with distrust.

Get out now, she growled. This is wrong.

Hannah noticed my gesture and smiled thinly.

"Don't panic, Tori. Who knows? You might even meet your father today."

My heart skipped a beat despite my better judgment.

The buildings grew sparse, replaced by abandoned warehouses and factories.

When Hannah finally parked beside a dilapidated warehouse, its windows like hollow eye sockets staring at us, my skin prickled with

goosebumps.

Reluctantly, I followed Hannah out of the car but stopped at the warehouse entrance, refusing to step inside the ominous structure.

"You can tell me right here," I said firmly, crossing my arms. "And if my father is really here, he can come out and meet me. I'm not going in

there."

Hannah stood with her back to me for a moment, then let out a derisive sport.

When she turned around, her face was twisted with malice.

Veep dreaming, Tori,' she sneered. "You really think I'd ever let you know who your real father is? You'll never know not today, not ever,"

From the shadows of the warehouse, two males emerged-one tall and muscular, the other shorter but equally menacing.

They moved with predatory grace, their expressions cold and calculating they positioned themselves on either side of Hannah.

Tracy howled in warning, my silver eyes beginning to glow in response to the threat.

"What are you trying to do, Hannah? I demanded, fighting to keep my voice steady despite the fear clawing at my chest Why do you hate me

so much?

'Because your very existence is a mistake!" she exploded, her voice echoed off the concrete walls. If you hadn't gotten me humiliated at the gathering, my baby would still be alive! You took everything from me, and now I'm taking everything from you'

"Miscarriage? I gasped, genuinely shocked. 'I had nothing to do with that wasn't even

1/4

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Chapter 97

"Enough!" She turned to the men, her eyes wild.

"Take her! Make sure she suffers for the rest of her miserable life. I want her to wish for death every single day!"

The males moved closer, circling like predators. One of them licked his lips, exposing yellowed fangs.

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The taller man lunged forward as Tracy surged within me, pushing for the shift to defend ourselves. My fingernails began lengthening into

claws, the transformation starting-

Then, a sound cut through the tension-tires on gravel, an engine growling to a stop.

The atmosphere shifted instantly.

A wave of Alpha power rolled through the air like thunder before a storm, so powerful it made the rogue wolves whimper and retreat several

steps.

Heavy footsteps approached, and a tall figure appeared in the doorway, silhouetted against the fading daylight.

Even before he stepped into the light, I recognized William Sullivan by his unmistakable aura of authority.

“Mrs. Price,” he said, his voice cutting through the air like a silver blade. How bold of you, attempting such violence in broad daylight.”

Hannah’s face paled, but she quickly recovered, lifting her chin defiantly.

“I’m merely disciplining my own daughter, Alpha William. This is a family matter.”

I blinked in confusion, my mind racing. They knew each other?

William’s silver eyes flashed dangerously as he stepped closer, his power rolling off him in waves that made the males shrink back.

“Family matter?” His voice was deceptively soft. “Hiring males to attack your daughter seems extreme, even for you.”

Hannah let out a bitter laugh, her eyes darting between William and me.

It’s interesting how concerned you are about her, Alpha Sullivan. Fortunately, I know exactly whose blood runs in her veins. Otherwise, I might suspect she was your illegitimate daughter.”

Something flashed across William’s face—rage, raw and visceral, his silver eyes blazing with a fury so intense it.

I remembered suddenly what Morgan had told me about William Sullivan and his daughter years ago. Hannah’s cruel manipulation had clearly struck a devastating nerve, turning his controlled demeanor into something dangerous and primal.

“Leave,” he growled, the command infused with Alpha authority. Now”

Hannah flinched but managed one last venomous glare at me before turning to leave.

"This isn't over," she hissed under her breath as she stalked past William, her shoulders rigid with humiliation and rage

Once Hannah had scurried away, William turned to me, his expression softening remarkably. "Are you hurt, Tori?"

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Chapter 97

"I'm fine, but..." I hesitated, my brow furrowing. "You know my name?"

William smiled, the last traces of his anger melting away.

"I've attended every round of the lunar phase mathematics competition. You have a natural talent that caught my attention."

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Alpha William-founder of the prestigious Lunar Phase Research Institute and widely regarded as the most accomplished lunar phase calculator in all of Moonhaven. Mrs. Blake had spoken of him with such reverence during class.

To think this legendary figure knew who I was...

"I'm honored you think I have potential," I said, genuine warmth spreading through my chest despite the harrowing situation we'd just escaped. "I'll do my best to place well in the finals."

William chuckled softly, then did something unexpected-he reached out and gently patted my head, the gesture somehow both paternal and respectful.

"I expect nothing less. You have a gift, Tori. I have high hopes for you."

The simple touch left me stunned. No one had shown me that kind of casual affection in years.

"Come," he said, gesturing toward a sleek black SUV parked beside the warehouse. "I'll take you home."

As we pulled away from the warehouse, a thought suddenly struck me.

"Wait-why were you here? It seems pretty desolate here."

William glanced at me, his silver eyes crinkling slightly at the corners.

“Perhaps it was fate,” he said lightly, then added more seriously, “This area falls within my Pack territory. We’ve received reports of black trading along our borders recently. I was conducting a patrol when I heard voices.”

He shrugged. “The borders have been unstable lately. Just happened to be the right place at the right time.”

The cold calculation in Hannah’s eyes, her talk of making me “suffer for the rest of my miserable life”... she hadn’t planned to kill me. She had intended something worse.

My hands trembled slightly in my lap. After surviving four years in Silver ng Detention, I’d nearly walked into another nightmare.

T-My voice caught. I cleared my throat and tried again. “Thank you, Alpa William. If you hadn’t arrived when you did...

William’s gaze remained fixed on the road, but his expression softened.

‘No need for thanks. Just be more cautious, Tori.’

“These are uncertain times. Don’t place your trust too easily in anyone.”

I nodded, a simple gesture that concealed the complexity of emotions surging beneath. A warmth spread through my chest.

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Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 98

Chapter 98

Tori’s POV:

13% #

The shrill ring of my phone cut through the peaceful silence of my dorm room.

I'd been enjoying the rare moment of tranquility after finishing the lunar phase mathematics finals yesterday.

My body still ached from the mental strain of calculating complex lunar patterns for six hours straight, but there was satisfaction in knowing

I'd done well.

I glanced at the caller ID and my heart skipped a beat. Alpha Lucas.

"Hello?" I answered, keeping my voice neutral despite the sudden acceleration of my pulse.

"Congratulations on completing the finals," his deep voice rumbled through the speaker. "I heard you were exceptional."

I bit my lip, wondering how he already knew about my performance when results wouldn't be announced for another week.

"Thank you," I replied cautiously.

"Do you might want to move in with me at my private residence," he continued, his tone casual as if he were discussing the weather rather than asking me to live with him. "I can take better care of you at my place

My wolf, Tracy, perked up at the suggestion, her silver eyes gleaming with interest.

Say yes, she urged, practically wagging her tail in my mind. His territory will be safe.

I mentally shushed her.

"I appreciate the offer, but I promised Morgan I'd spend time with her during the break," I lied smoothly.

Well, not entirely a lie-I had mentioned to Morgan that we should hang out, but nothing concrete had been planned.

Coward, Tracy accused, but I ignored her.

There was a pause on the other end. "I see," he finally said, his tone unrelenting. "Another time, perhaps."

After ending the call, I flopped back on my bed, staring at the ceiling.

Why was I avoiding him? The answer was simple yet terrifying: because every time I was near Lucas Grayson, I felt myself wanting to trust him, to lean on him. And after what happened with Hannah's trap, I'd promised myself not to trust anyone too easily, especially not powerful men who could destroy me with a single word.

What made it worse was how little I actually knew about Lucas.

Just when I thought I was beginning to understand him, something new would appear—like Vivienne Blackwood suddenly materializing at that party, apparently his former flame that everyone seemed to know about except me.

The realization that I was starting to care about Lucas more each day terrified me.

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Chapter 98

13%#

My phone buzzed again—a text from Morgan this time.

Jason got a great contract! He wants to celebrate at Gold Moon restaurant tonight. You HAVE to come with me!

I smiled despite myself. Morgan's enthusiasm was infectious, even through text.

This was perfect—a normal dinner with friends, exactly what I needed to clear my head.

Sounds great. What time? I replied.

Three hours later, I found myself walking into Howling Plaza.

Morgan chatted animatedly beside me as we made our way to Gold Moon.

The Bakers had always been kind to me, treating me with a warmth my own mother never showed.

The host led us through the restaurant toward a private room Morgan seemed unsurprised, but I felt a twinge of unease. Private dining rooms

weren't cheap.

"Morgan, are you sure—* I began, but my words died in my throat as the door swung open.

Sitting around the elegant circular table were four men: Matthew Howard, his familiar grin widening at our entrance; Dylan Freeman, whom I recognized from previous encounters; a silver-haired male I didn't know; and at the head of the table, Lucas Grayson himself, his intense silver-blue eyes locking with mine the moment I stepped inside.

My body froze as if I'd walked into an invisible wall. Morgan stopped abruptly beside me, her expression mirroring my shock.

"What the..." she muttered under her breath, then plastered on a smile. "Jason just said he wanted a lively celebration. I had no idea he meant..." she gestured subtly toward the table of powerful men.

'Morgan...' I began, my voice tight.

'Let's just sit down,' she whispered, gently guiding me forward. "Jason's going to get an earful from me later, I promise."

With leaden legs, I moved to the table. The silver-haired male-introduced as Caelum Sterling-studied me with curious eyes as I sat down.

"You look familiar, he mused, tilting his head. "Have we met before?"

'I don't think so,' I replied cautiously, avoiding his searching gaze.

He continued staring at me, his eyes narrowing until they suddenly widened with recognition.

"Wait-you're that Omega who pulled the fire alarm at Enchanted a month go,' he said, his voice rising slightly. You caused quite the commotion rescuing your friend. Half the club evacuated before we realize there wasn't actually a fire. Cost me a fortune in refunds and comped drinks that night."

My cheeks burned with embarrassment. I hadn't expected that incident to allow me here, and I certainly hadn't known this man owned the

club.

'I'm sorry about that, I began, 'I didn't mean to-

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Chapter 98

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Matthew waved his hand dismissively. "Ancient history. Don't worry about it, Tori. Caelum isn't the owner anymore anyway. The club changed hands last month."

Matthew cleared his throat. "Lucas bought the place for what, 500,000 moonstones? *

I stared at Matthew in shock, then at Lucas, who was watching me intently

"You... bought the entire club?" I managed to ask.

Lucas shrugged slightly. "It showed potential as an investment opportunity

My mind raced with suspicion. What an incredible coincidence.

I'd always wondered why nobody had come after me for that fire alarm incident. Now it made perfect sense-Lucas had somehow found out and quietly taken care of the whole situation.

He'd bought his friend's club and erased my problem without ever mentioning it to me. How many other messes had he cleaned up without my knowledge? The realization sent an unexpected warmth through my chest

Throughout dinner, I barely touched my food, my appetite gone. The conversation flowed around me, but I remained lost in my thoughts, trying to process this revelation.

Suddenly, a plate appeared in front of me, replacing my barely-touched one.

Lucas had moved beside me, serving me a small portion of moonlight honey-glazed silver salmon.

'You need to eat,' he said quietly. "This is milder and easier to digest."

Dylan's voice cut through the moment. "Well, well, Lucas," he teased, "quietly buying the club and personally serving food. You've certainly got the little beauty wrapped in your protection, haven't you?"

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Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 99

Claimed by the Alpha's Love

Chapter 99

Lucas's POV:

13%

I noticed Tori's cheeks flush pink as Dylan's teasing comment hung in their.

She quickly lowered her gaze to her barely-touched plate, but not before I caught the embarrassment in her silver eyes.

Dylan leaned closer to me, his voice dropping to a whisper only my ears could detect.

"So that's why you wouldn't let me near her last time. You already had plans for the little silver-eyed beauty."

He cast an appreciative glance toward Tori before turning back with a smirk that made Duke bristle beneath my skin. "Is it too late to compete for her attention, or have you already staked your claim?"

I knew he was just teasing, but something primal and possessive surged through me at his words.

The rational part of my brain recognized his harmless banter, yet Duke was already snarling, demanding I put the other Alpha in his place.

My hand shot out, gripping his wrist with precisely calculated force-enough to make him wince but not enough to draw attention.

"She's off-limits," I said quietly, allowing a hint of Alpha command to seep into my voice.

Dylan's playful demeanor faltered as he met my gaze. The silver-blue of my eyes would be glowing now-Duke was dangerously close to the

surface.

"Message received," Dylan said carefully, raising his free hand in surrender. When I released his wrist, he rubbed it thoughtfully. "You're serious

about this one."

It wasn't a question, but I answered with a slight nod anyway.

Across the room, I noticed Tori glance our way, a flicker of concern crossing her

I cast a final glance at Tori, who quickly averted her eyes. She'd been avoiding me since the gathering, and my patience was wearing thin.

Tori, I sent through our mind-link, watching her shoulders stiffen at the rusion. Come to the terrace in five minutes.

Her head snapped up, eyes widening before she controlled her expression

I could sense her conflict through our nascent bond.

I'm staying with Morgan, came her, hesitant reply.

Five minutes, I repeated, injecting Alpha authority into the command. Or would you prefer I come get you in front of everyone?

At exactly four minutes, I excused myself and made my way to the private errace overlooking the city.

I'd barely lit a cigarette when the door opened.

Tori stepped out, moonlight catching in her silver-gray eyes. Before she could speak, I reached out and pulled her to me.

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Chapter 99

"Little wolf," I murmured, my free hand tilting her chin up. "You've been abiding me these past few days, haven't you?"

She refused to meet my gaze, her pulse racing beneath my fingertips.

"I haven't," she lied, voice barely a whisper.

13%

"Four days without answering my calls," I said, studying the delicate features I'd memorized. "And now pretending not to see me across the room."

I leaned closer, inhaling her unique scent of moonflowers and winter frost

"Have dinner with me at Grayson estate next week," I said, the words coming out more like a command than a request.

Her eyes widened, genuine surprise replacing the guarded expression she usually wore around me.

"Isn't that... a bit fast?" she asked hesitantly.

I couldn't help the small smile that formed on my lips. "What are you afraid of, little wolf? You've been to my home several times already."

"That was different," she murmured, but didn't pull away when my hand moved to brush a strand of hair from her face.

"You have nothing to fear when you're with me," I assured her, my voice dropping lower. "I'll make sure of that."

The terrace door suddenly opened, and I caught Morgan's scent before I saw her.

I turned my head slightly, not releasing Tori from my hold. Morgan stood frozen in the doorway, her eyes wide with shock at our proximity, mouth slightly open as if she'd forgotten whatever she'd come to say.

"I-I'm sorry," she stammered, clearly uncertain whether to advance or retreat. "I was just... Tori, I was looking for you, but I can come back..."

I felt Tori stiffen in my arms, embarrassment rolling off her in waves.

The moment was broken, but I'd made my point. Reluctantly, I stepped back, allowing Tori some space while keeping a possessive hand at the

small of her back.

“We have some matters to attend to elsewhere, so we’ll take our leave,” Inouced, maintaining my composure despite the interruption,

Morgan nodded dumbly, her eyes darting between us with undisguised curiosity. Tori shot her an apologetic glance that promised explanations

later.

In the car, Tori pressed herself against the passenger door, as far from me as the confined space allowed. “This is bad, she muttered. ‘Morgan’s going to have a million questions.’”

I turned the key in the ignition, amused by her concern. She was bound to find out sooner or later, little wolf. It’s hardly a state secret.”

“Find out what exactly?” Tori challenged, though the slight tremor in her ice betrayed her nervousness.

I chose not to answer, keeping my eyes on the road as we moved through the city.

“Wait-where are we going?” she asked, then recognition dawned on her face as we turned onto the familiar private road. “Your residence? No, I

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Chapter 99

should go back to the dorms.”

13%

“Not negotiable, I interrupted smoothly, pulling into the circular driveway The arrangements will be the same as your last visit. You’ll take the master bedroom, I’ll use the secondary suite.”

Tori sighed in resignation, her shoulders slumping slightly as she reluctantly reached for the door handle.

The moment we stepped inside and the door closed behind us, I made my move.

In one fluid motion, I turned Tori and pressed her gently against the door, my body caging hers without crushing her. Her silver eyes widened, pupils dilating as her breath caught.

“This time,” I murmured, my voice dropping to a husky tone, you won’t be running away from me, little wolf.”

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Claimed by the Alpha's Love - Love Demands Real Courage Author: Michael Anderson 100

Chapter 100

Tori’s POV:

 13%*

I found myself trapped between Lucas’s strong arms and the door, my heart thundering like a stampede in my chest.

The warmth of his body radiated against mine, and his silver-blue eyes seemed to glow in the dim light of the entryway. The scent of pine and winter frost enveloped me, distinctly his and impossibly intoxicating.

“This time,” he repeated, his voice a low rumble that sent shivers down my spine, “you won’t be running away from me, little wolf.”

I swallowed hard, trying to find my voice. “Alpha, 1-

Before I could finish, Lucas leaned forward, his lips brushing softly against my forehead. My breath caught in my throat as he trailed gentle kisses down my temple, then my cheek, his movements deliberately slow and tender.

“Stop calling me that,” he whispered against my skin. His thumb traced the outline of my jaw, tilting my face upward. “Say my name,

His request hung between us, weighted with meaning I couldn’t ignore.

Tori.

Though he’d asked me to use his first name before, I’d deliberately reverted to formal titles since the gala. Using “Alpha” had become my small defense, a way to maintain distance and protect myself from the intimacy that still terrified me.

Calling him by his first name in this situation meant crossing a line, stepping into a territory of intimacy that terrified me.

“I don’t think that’s appropriate,” I managed to reply, my voice barely audible.

Lucas’s lips curved into a small smile. “Say it. Just once,” he coaxed, his voice dropping to a seductive whisper.

His fingers traced patterns on my skin, igniting tiny fires wherever they touched, making it increasingly difficult to maintain my resolve.

My wolf, Tracy, stirred within me, pushing me toward him, yearning for his touch.

Say it, Tracy urged. You want this too.

I closed my eyes, gathering what little courage I had left. “Lucas,” I whispered, the name unfamiliar yet somehow right on my lips.

His response was immediate.

Lucas captured my lips with his, no longer gentle but hungry, as if my saying his name had broken some final barrier between us.

His hand slid to the small of my back, pulling me closer, while the other cradled the back of my neck. Against my will, my arms found their way around his shoulders, my body melting into his embrace.

When we finally broke apart, both breathing heavily, Lucas rested his forehead against mine. That wasn’t so difficult, was it?” he asked, a hint of smug satisfaction in his voice.

I couldn’t help the small laugh that escaped me. “You’re impossible.”

Lucas reached into his pocket and pulled out a small velvet box.

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Chapter 100

My stomach dropped as he opened it, revealing an exquisite ring that caught the moonlight and scattered it like stars.

4.13%8

The central stone was a perfectly cut gemstone that seemed to glow with inner light, surrounded by tiny diamonds set in intricate silver

that resembled flowing water.

“This is...” I trailed off, unable to find words.

“I realize, Lucas said softly, “that I’ve never properly asked you to be with me.”

His eyes held mine, vulnerability mixing with determination. “This ring has been in the Grayson family for generations, passed down to the

Alpha who finds someone truly special.”

I stared at the ring, my heart hammering against my ribs.

The significance wasn’t lost on me—family heirlooms were sacred in wolf culture, especially ones belonging to Alpha bloodlines.

“I believe you can understand my feelings,” Lucas explained, his voice taking on a formal tone. “It represents my intention and commitment. I want you in my life, Tori. Not just temporarily, but for always.”

He took the ring from the box. “And I hope you will.” He took my left hand in his. “May I?”

I found myself nodding, unable to refuse the earnestness in his eyes. The ring slid perfectly onto my finger, surprisingly warm against my skin,

almost pulsing with energy.

“Perfect,” he murmured, bringing my hand to his lips for a gentle kiss.

“Where is everyone?” I asked, looking around the empty hallway of his private residence. “I don’t see Margaret or any of the security staff.”

“I gave them all the night off,” Lucas replied casually, as if dismissing his entire household staff was nothing unusual. “Tonight, it’s just us.”

The implication made my cheeks burn. Lucas had planned this, all of it, down to the last detail.

The privacy, the ring, even the traditional pine-scented candles burning in strategic locations throughout the house of traditional wolf courtship..

these were all elements

As we entered the living room, I noticed more touches that spoke of care preparation: fresh winter blossoms in crystal vases, soft music playing from hidden speakers, and a table set for two near the large windows overlooking the forest.

He’s serious about this, Tracy whispered in my mind. He wants us.

I touched the ring, feeling its gentle warmth against my fingertips. The wght of it seemed to ground me, connecting me to Lucas in ways I couldn’t fully comprehend.

Lucas came up behind me, his arms encircling my waist as he pressed agast my back. His lips found my neck again, just below my ear, and I couldn’t help leaning into him, tilting my head to give him better access.

“Do you like it?” he asked, his breath warm against my skin.

“It’s beautiful, I admitted, fingers still tracing the outline of the ring.

“Not the ring,” he clarified. “This. Us. Here.”

2/3

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Chapter 100

13%

Before I could answer, a sharp car horn sliced through the silence, startling both of us. Lucas stiffened, his hold on me tightening for a brief moment before he relaxed, an annoyed expression crossing his face.

“Wait here,” he said, reluctantly releasing me.

I moved to the large window, curious about our unexpected visitor. In the moonlight, I could make out Ethan’s car pulling up to the entrance.

My stomach clenched at the sight of him getting out, his face set in lines of determination as he strode toward the front door.

Comments

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