

The Alphas forbidden mate

Chapter 14

ASHER'S POV

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"You're smiling way too much for someone who just lost an international investor," Michael says, his voice cutting into my thoughts.

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I glance up, startled by the interruption. He leans casually against the doorframe, arms crossed, his expression equal parts curiosity and disbelief.

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"Don't tell me it's because of her," he presses, his tone dripping with amusement.

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My jaw tightens. "Michael, I'm your boss. Stay out of my business," I snap, a warning edge in my voice.

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He chuckles, unfazed. "Sure, you're my boss, but it's break time. Right now, I'm just your friend." He winks, his grin widening. "Now spill. Why the hell are you smiling like a fool?"

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I roll my eyes, trying to dismiss him, but the smug look on his face says he's not going anywhere until I give him something.

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"Fine," I mutter, leaning back in my chair. "I convinced Isabella to stay in one of my houses."

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Michael's jaw drops. "You're kidding. She's living with you?"

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"She's not living with me," I correct sharply. "She's staying in one of my houses. There's a difference. She wanted to leave the city, and I stopped her."

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His eyebrows shoot up in disbelief. “You stopped her? You, of all people?”

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Ignoring his tone, I continue, “She needed a place to stay, and I had one. It’s not a big deal.”

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Michael stares at me, his eyes narrowing. “You do realize she’s pregnant with your brother’s kid, right?”

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My fists clench at the mention of Zachary. “First of all, he’s not my brother,” I growl, the words laced with venom. “And second, she told me the child isn’t his.”

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“Then... is the kid yours?” he blurts, his tone a mix of curiosity and disbelief.

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“The child isn’t mine,” I reply tightly, standing and pacing the room.

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Michael’s gaze follows me, a smirk tugging at the corner of his lips. “What the hell is happening to you, Asher? The guy who swore off women, who thought they were nothing but a waste of time, is now smiling about a pregnant woman who doesn’t even know the father of her child? Are you seriously telling me she’s gotten to you?”

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“Michael,” I say, my voice low and dangerous. “Don’t push me.”

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But of course, he doesn’t stop. He never does. “There’s something you’re not saying. I know you, Asher. Just spit it out.”

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I exhale sharply, raking a hand through my hair. The frustration, the confusion—it all bubbles to the surface. “Fine,” I snap, sinking back into my chair. “I might’ve... imprinted on her.”

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Michael freezes, his eyes going wide. “You what?”

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I stare at my desk, the words spilling out before I can stop them. “It wasn’t on purpose. It just happened. When we were together, it was...” My voice falters, but I push through. “It was like nothing I’ve ever felt before. I couldn’t stop touching her. Everything about her felt... right. The way her body fit against mine, the way she moaned my name—it was primal, raw, like my entire being was locked onto her. I didn’t care about anything else. I just wanted her. Over and over. I couldn’t get enough.”

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Michael is silent, but I can feel his wide-eyed stare boring into me.

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“And it wasn’t just the sex,” I continue, my voice dropping. “When it was over, when we were lying there, I couldn’t let go of her. I didn’t want to. Holding her felt... necessary, like if I didn’t, something inside me would break. That’s when I knew. I’d marked her. She’s mine.”

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“I’ve never heard anyone talk about a one-night stand the way you just talked about her,” Michael says, his voice tinged with something I can only describe as fear. He shifts uncomfortably in his chair, eyes darting to meet mine. “This can only mean one thing. She’s your mate.”

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“My mate?” The words fall out of my mouth like they’re foreign, absurd.

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“Yes.” His tone hardens, as if saying it aloud makes it real. “She’s become the Alpha’s forbidden mate. And you know what that means, Asher. It’s forbidden.”

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I grit my teeth, feeling the weight of his words settle over me like a curse. “What do I do now?” My voice comes out more desperate than I’d like, and it pisses me off. I hate sounding weak, but the truth gnaws at me. “I can’t let her be my weakness. I won’t.”

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Michael exhales heavily, his worry palpable. “You’ll have to forget about her. I don’t know how, but you’ve got to let this go before it destroys you.” His gaze flickers to me, hesitant, as if testing the waters. “Maybe we hit the pub tonight. Or a strip club. Surround yourself with women, drown this out. You need distractions, fast.”

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I shake my head, running a hand through my hair in frustration. “That won’t work. You don’t get it, Michael. Before the welcome party, you introduced me to that woman—what was her name? It doesn’t matter. The point is, even with her all over me, all I could think about was Isabella. I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t touch her. Isabella was... she was everywhere.” My voice trails off, my jaw tightening as the truth stings.

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Michael leans back, a grim look settling on his face. “This is worse than I thought.” He starts to say something else, but a sharp knock on the door interrupts him.

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“I’ll see who it is,” he says, standing up.

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The moment he opens the door, I hear a voice that makes my blood run cold.

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“Zachary, you’re here,” Michael says, surprise evident in his tone.

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I straighten in my chair, my fists clenching under the desk. What the hell is he doing here?

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“Sorry for showing up unannounced,” Zachary says, his tone heavy with worry. “But this is about my wife, Isabella. She’s been missing for days, and I can’t get in touch with her.”

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I lean back, forcing my expression into something neutral. “You’re telling me this why?” My voice is icy, detached.

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“I tracked her phone,” Zachary continues, his eyes narrowing slightly. “It shows she’s somewhere near your house. I wanted to know if you’ve seen her.”

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Michael glances at me, his concern written all over his face. I keep my composure, my expression unreadable.

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"I have no idea what you're talking about," I say, my tone sharp and unyielding. "I don't know where your wife is."

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Zachary studies me for a moment, his gaze heavy and probing, like he's trying to peel back my layers. "Alright then," he finally says, though there's a bite to his voice. "I just thought you might know. I would've called, but I don't have your number. Sorry for disturbing you." He pauses, his eyes still locked on mine. "I'll head to the police now."

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The mention of the police is deliberate, a threat disguised as concern. He's baiting me, waiting for me to crack, but I won't give him the satisfaction.

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"Do what you need to," I say coolly, leaning back in my chair.

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Zachary nods once, but as he turns to leave, I catch the flicker of suspicion in his eyes. He knows I'm lying. He's waiting for me to slip. But I won't.

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"You can leave now," I say, my voice cold and sharp. Zachary's jaw tightens, but he doesn't argue. He turns and walks out, his footsteps heavy with restrained anger.

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The moment the door shuts, Michael shakes his head, his face lined with worry. "This is exactly what I was afraid of," he says. "This could start a war between your pack and his. You're harboring his Luna, Asher. It's not just personal; it's political."

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I scoff, leaning back against the desk. "Do I look like someone who backs down from a fight?" I say, annoyance flaring in my tone. "In fact, I'd love to fight him. It'd be entertaining." A smirk tugs at the corner of my lips.

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Michael groans, pinching the bridge of his nose. "You don't get it, do you? If this escalates, the council will side with him. In their eyes, you're the one in the wrong. They won't care about the truth, only the rules. The safest thing for you to do is move Isabella somewhere else. Now. Before this explodes."

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I hate to admit it, but he's right. Zachary knows she's here, and it's only a matter of time before he makes his next move. Isabella won't feel safe here anymore.

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As soon as work ends, I drive straight to the house, my hands gripping the steering wheel tighter than usual. The second I walk through the door, I ignore the greetings from the housekeepers and head straight for Isabella's room. My fist hovers over the door handle, but I stop myself and knock instead.

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"Come in," her soft voice calls out.

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I step inside to find her sitting on the bed, staring at the floor. Something's off. "What's wrong?" I ask, my voice sharper than I intend. When she lifts her head, I freeze. Tears glisten in her eyes, and my chest tightens. Did Zachary come here already? "Why are you crying?" I demand, anger boiling in my veins.

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"These are tears of joy," she says with a bittersweet smile, wiping her cheeks. "My mom... she woke up. She's walking again." Her voice breaks, the happiness in her words tinged with sorrow. "But I can't go see her because Maris is there. She'll find me."

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Her pain is palpable, and I want to fix it, to take it all away. "You'll see your mom, Isabella," I promise her. "But for now, we need to leave. It's not safe here anymore."

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Her brows knit together in confusion. "Why? What's going on?"

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"Zachary knows you're here," I say bluntly. "He'll come for you."

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Her body stiffens, fear flashing across her face. She stands quickly, her lips parting as if to speak, but a knock on the door interrupts us.

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“Come in,” Isabella says hesitantly, her voice trembling slightly.

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A housekeeper steps inside, her expression neutral. “You have a visitor,” she announces before leaving.

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“It has to be Zachary,” I mutter, my jaw clenching. “Stay here. I’ll handle this.”

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Isabella nods, her worry evident, but she doesn’t argue. I leave the room, my pace quick and determined.

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When I reach the foyer, Zachary is already there, standing stiffly with his arms crossed. And beside him... Maris.

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“What are you doing here?” I snap, my tone ice cold as I step forward.

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“Asher,” Maris begins, her voice sharp and accusatory. “Is Isabella in this house?”

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I roll my eyes, my annoyance bubbling to the surface. “Why would she be here?”

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“I know you’re hiding her,” Zachary says, his tone low and dangerous. His eyes burn with anger as he takes a step closer. “Stop playing games. I know she’s here, and you’re not going to lie your way out of this.”

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“She can’t be here, Asher, because she is your brother’s wife, and she is carrying his child,” Maris says.

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“The child isn’t his,” Isabella’s voice breaks out, causing my eyes to widen in shock. “I have said this so many times—that this child isn’t yours—and I overheard your plan to kill my child after its birth,” she adds, her tone laced with anger.

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“Why are you out here?” I ask, shock evident in my voice.

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“There was no point in me hiding in the first place,” she says with a faint smile. “I won’t be living with either of you, and I want a divorce again,” she adds.

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“Don’t be stupid. You can’t live in a society where you are pregnant outside your marriage, and that will be a big shame. To top it all, you don’t even know the father of your child,” Maris says mockingly.

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“I know the father of my child. Asher is the father of my child,” she says, causing their eyes to widen in shock—mine too. What is she doing?

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