

To ruin an Omega #Chapter 211: Memory - Read To ruin an Omega Chapter 211: Memory

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FIA

My breath caught as a distant memory slammed into me.

Stubborn, that was the word Father had used. It was two words, actually. *Stubborn* and *reckless*. I remembered the lock sliding into place, the click loud in the quiet of my room. I remembered being banned from leaving the grounds of Silver Creek, confined like a child for daring to look for a cure when the healers were already certain my mother would die.

Leaving pack territory to gather herbs, grinding them in secret, hoping to slow the rot eating her alive, it was all too damaging to Father's reputation. I was told I was chasing nonsense. That I was only breaking my own heart and wasting time.

The door hadn't mattered.

No one watched me closely enough to notice when I vanished into the secret passages of the estate.

I remembered the meadow far beyond Silver Creek. The way it smelled wild and untouched. I remembered having hope so thin and stubborn. The kind my mother had taught me to cling to.

I had been looking for the flowers of a particular rare tree which held promise. But when I found it, it has been out of reach.

Climbing it had been a mistake.

I remembered the fall. The crack of pain so sharp it stole my voice. I couldn't forget blood slicking my leg and the world tilting as I lay there, unable to move, healing far too slow.

Then came the sound of water.

A splash from the small river nearby.

I remembered someone rising from it, the sun low behind him, olive skin glowing in the light, green eyes catching as he ran toward me. He didn't hesitate. He didn't ask who I was.

His hands were warm as they pressed against my wound, already tearing fabric and trying to stop the bleeding, while the sunset burned gold around us.

The hall snapped back into place.

It was him. There was no doubt about it.

The boy from the river... the boy who saved my life was Alpha blood and from a prominent pack like the Lily of the Valley and now he was standing in front of me, wearing his power like a weapon.

"Luna Fia?" Baruch's whisper barely reached me. "What's wrong?"

I couldn't answer. My throat had closed up entirely. The air in this cramped space suddenly felt too thick to breathe.

The representative gestured with the contract document. "We simply wish to ensure that appropriate measures are taken. That justice is served without bringing shame upon our alliance."

"Shame?" The lead elder's voice rose slightly. "A woman murdered someone in cold blood. The shame is hers."

"Alleged murder." The boy from the meadows tilted his head slightly. "The trial hasn't concluded yet, has it?"

Something in his tone made my skin prickle. That same gentle quality he'd had in the meadow. That patient way of speaking that made you feel like he had all the time in the world.

My father cleared his throat. "Perhaps we could discuss this even more privately. Away from so many ears."

I scoffed at that. Like he was not in on this and wanted to force the hand if the elders without seeming corrupt.

"No need." The representative waved a dismissive hand. "We came to deliver a message. That message has been delivered."

The younger man tucked his hands behind his back. "We simply want everyone to understand the situation clearly. No confusion... No misunderstandings."

The way he said it. Like he was doing them a favor by explaining.

The doors at the far end of the hall burst open. I jumped, hitting my head on the low ceiling of the passage. Pain shot through my skull but I bit down on my tongue to stay quiet.

A group of men hurried into the hall. They wore the practical clothing of technicians. One carried a tablet. Another had a folder stuffed with papers.

They stopped short when they saw the crowd. The lead technician's eyes went wide.

"Honored elders." He looked between the Silver Creek council and the Lily of the Valley delegation. "We didn't realize. We were told to report immediately but if this is a bad time..."

The lead elder turned. His face had gone pale but he straightened his shoulders. "You're here now. What did you find?"

The technician glanced at my father. At the delegation. Then back to the elder.

"The audio." He swallowed hard. "We've completed our analysis. Multiple tests. Different methods. Cross-referenced with known voice patterns we have of the sentinel in our system."

"And?" The lead elder's voice came out tight.

"It's authentic." The technician pulled up something on his tablet. "Unedited. No signs of manipulation or splicing. The voice patterns match Milo's vocal signature perfectly. Time stamps are consistent. Background noise analysis confirms the recording location and approximate time frame."

The words fell like stones into still water. Ripples of shock spread through the room.

"That would prove the Luna of Skollrend right." The technician continued. He looked like he wanted to be anywhere else. "The content is damning as there's a clear admission of premeditation and motive."

Silence stretched. I could hear my own heartbeat thundering in my ears.

My stepmother's pleasant expression cracked. Just for a moment. Then she smoothed it back into place. "Surely there must be some mistake."

"No mistake, Luna Isobel." The technician's voice was firm despite his obvious discomfort. "The evidence is conclusive."

The boy from the meadows stepped forward again. "Well. That does complicate things."

His tone remained conversational. Like they were discussing the weather.

"However." He looked directly at the lead elder. "The ultimatum stands. My betrothed is now under Lily of the Valley's jurisdiction as a future member of our pack. Any unnecessarily cruel punishment you levy against her is an act of aggression against us."

The representative nodded. "Our pack has extensive alliances. Economic ties. Political connections. A conflict with us would not be isolated. It would spread. Other packs would be forced to choose sides."

"And I think we all know which side they'd choose." The younger man's smile didn't reach his eyes. "Silver Creek is probably respected. But you're no Lily of the Valley."

My father moved forward. "Surely we can find middle ground here. Perhaps while the trial continues. More evidence could be found and examined."

"Oh, the trial can absolutely continue." The boy from the meadows spread his hands. "We're not asking you to ignore justice. We're simply clarifying what will happen if you choose execution as your form of justice."

"That's a threat." The silver-haired council woman found her voice. "You're threatening us."

"No." The representative's tone hardened. "We're informing you of consequences. There's a difference. Lily of the Valley doesn't make threats. We make promises."

The younger man nodded. "Think about what was said here. Consider your options carefully. We'll await your decision."

He turned to leave. The delegation began moving toward the doors.

The lead elder stepped forward. "You can't just dictate jurisdiction. Silver Creek law applies to crimes committed on Silver Creek territory."

"Does it?" The boy from the meadows paused and looked back over his shoulder. "Because from where I stand, you arguing about jurisdiction is just plain dumb while we're discussing survival. Your survival. The power imbalance seems rather clear."

The lead elder's eyes widened in shock.

"To add to what my Alpha just said; we are not threatening you." The representative's voice carried across the hall. "We are simply explaining what will happen if reason is thrown out the window. If appropriate punishment is abandoned for barbarism."

The words hit like physical blows. I watched the lead elder's face turn even redder.

Pauline seemed quite pleased with herself though.

"Fuck this." The words came out before I could stop them.

Both Garrett and Baruch turned to stare at me.

"Luna Fia." Baruch kept his voice low. "What are you doing?"

"I have to get in there." I was already moving. Sliding along the cramped passage toward the other end. Toward where I knew another hidden door that led right into the main hall was.

"No." Garrett grabbed my arm. "We're not supposed to be here at all. If they find out we were listening..."

"I don't care." I yanked free. "I cannot sit here and just allow this to happen."

"They'll throw you out." Baruch blocked my path. "Or worse."

"Then they throw me out." I pushed past him. "I have to give this one last fight. I have to."

Baruch studied my face. Then he stepped aside. "Goddess help us all."

"Luna Fia." Garrett's voice carried a warning. "Think about this."

"I have thought about it." I was already at the corner where the passage turned. Where the door waited. "And I'm allowed to make my own bed."

My hands found the hidden catch. The door was smaller than the one in my old room. Less maintained. It took three tries before the mechanism finally gave.

The panel swung inward with a groan that echoed through the sudden quiet of the hall.

Every single head turned.

I stepped through the opening. Dust covered my clothes. Cobwebs clung to my hair. I probably looked half mad.

I didn't care.

My stepmother shot to her feet. "What is this audacity? How dare you interrupt..."

"I heard what was said." My voice cut through hers as clear and sharp as I could manage. "Every word. Every threat disguised as reason."

The lead elder's face went purple. "Luna Fia Donlon, I believe you were explicitly told..."

"I know what I was told." I walked further into the hall. My boots clicked against the polished floor. "But I'm not going to stand in the shadows while murder gets swept under the rug because of pack politics."

The boy from the meadows had turned to face me and I could swear I saw recognition flicker in those green eyes.

He remembered me too.

"Donlon..." I heard him whisper.

"Murder transcends pack politics." I addressed the room. All of them. "A man is dead. Killed in cold blood. The evidence is authentic and damning. You all just heard the technical report."

"This doesn't concern Skollrend." The representative's tone turned icy.

"It concerns justice." I took another step forward. "And if Lily of the Valley wants to go to war over this? If you want to threaten economic destruction and political isolation?"

I looked directly at the boy from the meadows. At the stranger who wasn't a stranger at all.

"Then Skollrend will meet you on that battlefield. We'll stand with Silver Creek. We'll call our alliances too. And you can see how your pristine white lilies fare against skull breakers."

The silence that followed was absolute.