



# Broken Crown

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**Category:** Romance, M-m Romance, New Adult, Paranormal

**Description:** The kingdom has fallen. Military leaders Phoenix and Griffin Greer have taken the Omega Prince Lars Lyandri as their prisoner. But the Alpha brothers desire more than simple pleasure from their unwilling captive. They have a secret mission, and in order to succeed they must claim something only a royal Omega like Lars can provide them. An heir. Deep in heat, he is unable to resist the mating bond Phoenix and Griffin force upon him. Can he find a way to escape from the grip of the two ruthless Alphas? Or will he succumb to his own body's primal desires?

**Total Pages (Source):** 38

# Page 1

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## Chapter 1

Another two days and he would've been over the border to neutral territory where the terrible reach of the Xyletian Empire held no sway. He would've been safe there. There were people waiting for him, survivors of the Ekdol invasion, elders and advisors who would know what to do in the chaos that had overtaken his country and the entire world.

His parents were dead.

There was no way Lars could've avoided witnessing the horrifying spectacle of their execution. It had been casted onto every viewscreen in the realm by the Empire; forced to their knees before being ripped to shreds by the fangs of rabid wolf shifters. The Emperor of Xyletia, their enemy and executioner, hadn't even been there to look them in the eye. An ignoble death for a king and queen.

And now the bodies of Lars's two best guards lay lifeless, their fur matted with blood. He peered out through a gap in the tarp covering the back of the truck where he was hidden, his heart pounding as the Xyletian soldiers prowled around the vehicle, shifted into their wolf forms, noses scanning over the crimson-spattered soil. He knew it would only be a matter of time before they detected him. If he ran, they'd probably kill him immediately.

What could he do? His people needed him. He couldn't die yet, not here. Not before he could get revenge for his shattered nation.

One by one, the soldiers returned to their human forms, their dark shaggy fur

morphing to become the infamous ink blue uniform of the Xyletian military. Gold collars hung around their necks bearing the vicious wolf skull emblem of the Feral Fangs, Xyletia's most feared and elite unit.

His mind raced, looking for a way out, a pathway to salvation. He felt the cold breath of death on his neck. He'd be knocking on that door momentarily if he didn't do something.

Human or wolf, a warrior's lethality was equal. As a wolf they had the natural tools of the animal: a host of enhanced senses, rapid healing and powerful steel-crushing jaws filled with razor-sharp fangs. As a human they could operate vehicles, firearms, and all the other instruments of civilization.

He was not a warrior.

If he'd been born an Alpha, he would've received combat training from the nation's greatest masters. Born a Beta, he would've studied with the best scholars, philosophers and politicians to join the ranks of the Ekdolian intellect. But Lars was born an Omega—a male Omega, the very rarest of the hierarchy of three. And so he'd been kept a secret.

Only the most trusted members of the inner court knew of his existence, which would be publicly announced when an appropriate mate had been found. Being born a male Omega meant that he was the royal family's greatest asset and an incredibly rare commodity. Male Omegas could bear children, and when paired with an exceptional Alpha, were known to produce offspring of great strength, talent and prowess. Alphas would burn cities to the ground if it meant a chance to claim an Omega prince.

The Hall of Heroes, before it was reduced to a pile of smoldering ashes, had enshrined the towering visages of Ekdol's most legendary figures. Lars knew all of their names. As a child, he'd spent hours there, playing at their feet. He knew that a

great number of them were born to Omega fathers. His parents and the court of Ekdol had raised him to know only one future: mate with an honorable Alpha and bear a child who would eventually join the company of that hallowed space.

But Ekdol was in flames. His family was dead. And now he was facing what could very well be his last few moments on this earth.

"Search the truck," one of the soldiers said. "Use caution. They were guarding something."

They tore through the cabin, ripping it apart.

Lars heard everything being pulled out and tossed onto the ground. The tarp went next, revealing him sitting huddled in the corner, glaring defiantly back at them. They took him by his arms and threw him onto the ground, knocking the breath from his lungs. His cheek scraped against the gravel and was coated in wetness—blood, he realized, but not his own. The broken, shredded bodies of his former guards lay just a few feet away.

Coughing, he rose to his knees. Two of the soldiers produced rifles and aimed them at his head. "Just kill him already," one of them said.

They encircled him, their golden collars glimmering in the moonlight.

Would they know? Could they smell the Omega scent that lingered on every inch of his skin, so strong to the nose of a hungry Alpha? He'd always applied the salves and drank the bitter tonics the healers had prescribed, meant to mask his natural scent markers, but the last time he'd done so had been days ago.

Thank the heavens he wasn't in heat, or else his fate would be worse than death.

Lars could practically feel their breaths drawing in his scent, every lungful threatening to give him away. An icy sweat prickled his skin.

Hands clawed at the ragged tatters he'd donned in an attempt to disguise his identity. He instinctively clutched the opalescent stone pendant that hung around his neck, cut in the shape of three interconnected rings twisting inwards on themselves. It was a symbol of Ekdolian royalty, passed through every clan to take the throne, and the last vestige of that former life.

He was flung to the ground, his shirt torn. His chest dashed against the stone, cutting the soft flesh. Lars wasn't used to pain. He'd lived a life always protected from physical harm, never allowed to do much of anything. He gritted his teeth, tears welling up in the corners of his eyes. He squeezed the pendant, calling on all the strength it represented as the soldiers encircled him, their faces twisted with bloodlust.

Was this it? Was this how his life would end?

One of the soldiers pushed the sole of his boot down on the back of Lars's neck, grinding his cheek into the dirt. Past the men, the golden rays of the setting sun shimmered through gnarled branches of the ancient olive trees that lined the road.

To shift would mean being discovered. No amount of scent-masking tonic would be able to conceal him in his wolf form.

Through vision tinted with his sweat and blood, Lars saw the familiar silhouette of an Ekdolian finch alight on an olive branch. For a moment, everything that was happening to him seemed to fade into the background, and he thought of the days he'd spent bird-watching from the grand terrace. He'd no longer be able to count the birds with his mother, pointing out the particularly beautiful ones. She'd taught him all their names, identifying those that could only be found in the forests surrounding

the royal residence. She kept an aviary filled with many rare species, but Lars felt that none of them could ever compare to those familiar creatures that felt like home.

The aviary had burned in the invasion.

He'd never see the beautiful birds of his country again.

## Page 2

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Lars wasn't strong, he wasn't a fighter, but to lay down and accept death without fighting back would be a final scar on his family name. That would be even worse than anything they could do to him. If he would be letting down his people by dying, he would at least do it with whatever honor a prince could muster.

He closed his eyes and touched the beast spirit that lay deep in his mind. He called it forward, opening the paths of mystic energy as he'd been taught when he was just a boy. His body changed rapidly; bones repositioning themselves, cracking and twisting into place as teeth became fangs, hands and feet formed into paws and a coat of golden-red fur erupted from his flesh. A tail grew from the base of his spine and his ears repositioned themselves on top of his head as his nose pushed forward, stretching to become a long muzzle.

He knew he would only have a moment to act before they cut him down. But to his surprise, there was hesitation. The soldiers recoiled backwards. Lars leapt up, snarling.

"He's an Omega."

There were murmurs.

"Wonderful," one of them said. "I've never fucked an Omega before."

"Looks like your chance."

Grins cracked on their lips. Lars threw himself at one of the soldiers, jaws spread. The man stepped aside, easily dodging his wild and telegraphed attack. They laughed.

"Ohh, he wants to fight."

Lars turned and went for another one. This man didn't evade. He swung with his weapon, bashing Lars against the side of the skull and sending him crashing back to the ground. His ears rang.

"Keep him down."

Two of the soldiers shifted into wolf form and pinned Lars's neck against the ground with their jaws. Unable to move his head, his eyes darted back and forth in an attempt to see his attackers as his panicked breath kicked up puffs of dust. The world was spinning.

"Force him back."

A de-shifter was removed from its holster, a long steel rod ending in crackling sparks of purple energy. Lars's howl pierced the air and became a scream as they rammed the device into the back of his neck, forcing him back into human form. The two soldiers still had him trapped.

"Smells good," one growled.

Lars squeezed his eyes shut, despising the feeling of the wolf's hot and foul breath against his cheek. He thought of his parents and his home and took solace in the idea that he would join them soon.

"What's going on here?" a voice barked.

The pressure on his neck released immediately. Boots scraped on gravel. Lars opened his eyes and saw the two wolf soldiers sitting at attention, their ears pricked and tails straight. The other soldiers stood rigid and raised their hands to their foreheads in a



tight salute. One stepped forward to address the approaching figure.

"Colonel! This Ekdolian Omega was attempting to sneak across the border."

Lars looked up and saw a towering beast of a man striding towards them. His golden collar was studded with three ruby stars that signified his military rank, and Lars could immediately tell that the man was an Alpha. His eyes were sharp and dangerous, smoldering like hot embers in the ruins of a burning city. This man was powerful. He was feared; Lars could see that from the way the men looked at him.

The man stopped a few feet away and glared down at him. The soldiers grabbed Lars by the arms and hauled him up to his feet, where he stood more than a head shorter than the Alpha colonel. Lars slumped, barely able to carry himself on his own feet. His body felt numb from the shock of the de-shifter and his head was ringing like a gong. He felt two massive fingers grip his chin and jerk his head upward. He looked up into the burning eyes of the Alpha. The man's narrow gaze felt like it was penetrating through Lars's skull.

"Just what were you intending to do with him?" the Alpha demanded.

"Partake in the spoils of war, sir," the soldier said. "I was going to—"

"No one partakes in anything without the permission of myself or the commander," the Alpha said. "This isn't some lowly unit. This is the Feral Fangs. I ought to execute you on the spot for this."

"S-sir, I..."

The Colonel reached out and tore the golden collar from the man's neck and tossed it to the ground. "You are no longer a part of this unit. Get out of my sight. Lieutenant?"

One of the soldiers stepped forward and briskly saluted. "Sir."

"Congratulations. You're captain now. See that such an offense will not happen again."

"Yes, Colonel Greer, sir."

"Escort the prisoner to my transport. We will take him back to base to present to my brother."

## Page 3

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"Sir!"

They bound his wrists with a set of plastic ties and dragged him by his armpits, the tips of his shoes digging trenches into the dirt. He struggled against their grip but was too weak to fight. Looking over his shoulder, Lars glimpsed the final shimmers of sunlight disappearing beneath the horizon where his salvation lay. He had failed.

They tossed him into the back of a large transport vehicle bristling with weapons. Painted along its black steel side was the gold wolf skull emblem of the Feral Fangs Unit. Soldiers piled into the front, and the engine growled to life with pulsing vibrations that rattled its thick frame. Through the window, Lars watched as the remaining soldiers tossed two incendiary grenades into his truck, setting it ablaze. The fire spread to the bodies of his guards, consuming them in a flurry of white flame. Then a massive shape blocked his view. The door swung open and the Alpha colonel ducked into the back of the transport and took the bench seat opposite of him. Lars slid into the corner, trying to get as far away from the man as he could.

Two soldiers moved to accompany them in the back of the transport, but Colonel Greer raised his palm to stop them. "I will accompany the prisoner alone," he said.

"Sir."

They quickly backed away and shut the door, and the transport jolted forward as the convoy sped off down the road. The burning truck cast harsh shadows on the man's face as they passed it, and Lars thought that he looked like a monster. Staring at his face, he could now see a series of scars slashed across his temple just beneath his dark hair, which was neatly swept back. His eyes were a light brown with

shimmering red specks, a feature carried by many Alphas. It made Lars think of blood. He shivered.

This Colonel Greer was staring at him silently, picking him apart with his eyes. Lars felt naked and vulnerable. He could feel him analyzing every part of his body, but the colonel's expression betrayed no explanation of what he might be plotting. He was an Alpha. Lars knew what Alphas did to Omegas. He'd been spared a brutal fate at the hands of the soldiers, but that could only be temporary. After all—that was what this war was about. Resources. Breeding resources.

If Lars had been in heat, what would've happened? If the estrus-suppressing tonics were to lose their potency, how would the Alpha before him react?

An even more frightening thought occurred in his mind. How would he react? Would he be able to even resist the instinctual urges that would course through his whole body? Would he want to deny the advances of a powerful Alpha? It wouldn't matter if that Alpha were a killer. Or a member of the Xyletian Empire.

"What are you going to do with me?" Lars asked, finding his voice.

"You're now an asset of the Xyletian Empire," Greer rumbled. "Anything I want."

Lars shivered again.

"But for now," Greer continued, "I'm going to turn you over to my brother, Commander Phoenix Greer." He leaned forward and stretched out a hand. His huge calloused fingertips grazed Lars's chest as they closed around the pendant hanging around his neck. "There'd been rumors of an Ekdolian heir, but none could be verified. Who could've thought? An Omega." With a quick tug, the chain snapped.

"Give that back," Lars pleaded.

"They were wise to keep you hidden. It was my luck to find you. This will change everything." He slipped the pendant into his pocket. "Tell anyone about your true identity and I guarantee that you will die."

"I'm going to die anyway," said Lars.

"Maybe. Perhaps you can receive an extension on your life. But if word of your existence makes it back to the Emperor, nothing can halt your fate."

"Why are you helping me?"

"Is that what you think this is, little Omega? Quite the opposite. You will be helping us." He leaned forward again, resting his forearms across the tops of his thighs. His gold collar flashed under the passing street lights. His name was etched in bold letters along the right side.

GREER, GRIFFIN.

"We needed an Omega," Griffin said. His face was so close Lars could smell his scent. "And now we have one."

At that moment, he felt something awaken inside of him, a vibration deep inside of his stomach. He knew what it was, and he knew what it meant. It was coming. He'd fought and suppressed it for as long as was physically possible but his body was reacting to the catalyst that was this powerful Alpha male, and it wouldn't be long until he was fully engaged in his heat cycle. And when that time came, nothing could save him.

## Chapter 2

The Xyletian base was located in the clearing of a burned-out forest north of where

Lars had been captured, a mobile encampment that had been fortified with weaponry meant to quash any efforts of rebellion and keep the border in check.

Lars's head was covered with a hood, blacking out his vision. He heard the door open and Griffin get out of the vehicle.

"Holding cell, sir?" a voice asked.

"No," Griffin replied. "The Commander's chambers. This one's our guest."

They dragged him out and forced him to march, prodding a gun into his back whenever he slowed or tried to resist. He smelled the sharp, noxious scent of gasoline and the sound of boots on gravel. The shouts of men. The howling call of wolves and the drumming of paws. Even in his human form he could smell them—Alpha males who could sense his Omega presence. He could feel their attention shifting to him as they detected the minuscule hum that was slowly building strength inside of him.

The healers had told him the concoction of tonics would override his cycle and last for at least this month. That was only a week ago, and suddenly now the suppressors were failing. His estrus was breaking through like a bad fever. Could it really have been all because of one Alpha?

Resist.

## Page 4

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Lars repeated the word silently in his mind.

Resist.

He wanted to believe that he could control his body's urges, that he had some power to resist the pressing, aching, primal want that arose during heat. He especially wanted to believe that no one, especially that monster, could influence him. He'd received some training for resistance, mental exercises that were meant to keep his mind strong. But he'd never had to actually use the skills he'd learned.

The air changed and he was no longer walking on gravel. He was indoors, and he tried to retain some sense of where he was by noting every corner they forced him to turn and how many steps he'd taken. But his brain was rattled. Had it been three lefts and a right? Fifty steps? Why did it feel like they were going around in circles?

A door unlocked and banged shut behind him. More walking. Then the whirl of an elevator.

A final door opened and Lars was marched inside. Someone shoved him sharply on both his shoulders. He tumbled forward and tried to catch himself, but momentum sent him stumbling over his feet. He fell, braced to meet the floor, but instead was greeted by the embrace of a soft mattress. Boots clomped, a door slammed, and then there was silence. At least, for a moment. As his ears adjusted to the softer volume, he picked up the sound of trickling water from somewhere in the room. Then the soft tick of a clock.

He struggled to sit up—it wasn't easy with his hands still bound behind his back. The

damn hood wouldn't come off either, no matter how hard he tried to shake it loose. Shifting wouldn't do him any favors; the binds would break his arms in the process, and what would shifting do to his estrus? Would entering his wolf form make it worse?

He sat on the edge of the bed—at least, he was fairly sure it was a bed—and listened. He could just make out a rumbling sound coming through the ceiling. He was underground. When he sniffed the air, he caught the scent of varnished wood. Books, too? It reminded him of his father's study in the palace, a thought that brought a stab of pain to his heart.

I failed you, he thought. Mother, Father, I'm so sorry.

Lars felt even more remorse for his countrymen, the people of Ekdol. It was his duty to protect them as crown prince. If he had made it over the border, he would've been made king. He could've gathered his allies and done something to strike back. He could've done something to help. But in the end, he'd done nothing but flee.

Standing, he shuffled around in an attempt to find a way out. He tripped over something on the floor and landed back on the bed, his face slamming into a heap of pillows. Through the fabric of the hood he could smell a deep, warm scent that caused an immediate shiver to course down his spine. It proceeded to run through his entire body, moving deeper and deeper into his belly until it struck the humming cord there and sent it vibrating with even greater energy. His head spun. The feeling was so unexpected, it caused him to cry out.

He took a lungful of that intoxicating smell again. What was that? Why did it smell so incredibly good?

The vibration inside of him grew and grew, and it sent ripples of heat out from a spot deep within. His skin tingled and grew sensitive. He felt a deep and primal urge to



burrow, to make a den where he could be mounted and filled so that this damn rising ache could be satisfied.

He took deep breaths to try and calm himself and slow the onset of his cycle, but the heat was well on its way to becoming a flame.

The lock clicked and Lars froze, alert. The door swung open and heavy footsteps entered the room. Not just one pair. Two pairs of footsteps. The door shut. He readied himself to lash out; he'd kick and bite if he had to. But then he smelled them. He recognized Griffin's scent, except now it felt different. It wasn't putting fear into him, but something else. And the other scent... It was the same that lingered on the pillows. The man it belonged to slept here.

Both intermingled and sent his senses into overdrive.

No!

He had to center himself. He had to remember the lessons and apply what he knew to quell the urges, otherwise...

The hood pulled free from his head, the light momentarily blinding him. As his vision slowly adjusted, a bunker of a room came into focus, one that was hastily constructed with exposed dirt walls supported by crisscrossed wood and metal beams. As temporary as the construction was, it was furnished with a massive bed, a metal bookshelf jammed full of books and files, and a large wooden desk with a map unfurled on its top.

Lars's attention quickly shifted back to the two men standing in front of him. His captor, the Colonel Griffin Greers, stood to the rear, his arms folded across his chest. Dangling from one fist was the royal pendant that he'd stolen from him, and it sent a surge of anger through Lars's body. The other man had leaned over to pull the hood

from Lars's head. Also dressed in the Xyletian military uniform, this man's collar displayed the rank of commander. He was the colonel's brother, then. Lars could see the resemblance. The same dark hair, the same vicious eyes. They were unlike any eyes that Lars had seen before. A monster's eyes.

Griffin handed the pendant to his brother, and the man dropped into a crouch in front of Lars. He cradled the necklace in his palm, examining it pensively. Then he looked up, and Lars's heart jumped as their eyes met. He wiggled backwards as Phoenix came closer to him.

"What's your name?" Phoenix asked. His voice was sharp and precise, less coarse than his brother's. He held the chain and let the pendant dangle in front of Lars's face.

Lars glared and said nothing.

"That's fine. We can call you Omega. So, Omega, tell me what you believed you could accomplish by crossing the border. Did you actually believe that you would be safe? Is that what your advisors told you? You would need to run further than Atlas if you wanted that."

"That is not what I was doing," Lars snapped. "Running away."

Phoenix glanced over his shoulder at his brother, who did nothing except cock his head slightly.

"Were you not?" Phoenix asked, sounding amused. It only made Lars angrier. "Then tell me, Omega. What were you doing?"

Lars kept his mouth shut this time. He fought to keep control over his senses as they were assaulted by the overwhelming presence of the two Alphas. He could smell Phoenix's scent, even more intoxicating than what had teased him on the bedsheets.

He felt dizzy, like every lungful he breathed was a swallow of sweet liquor that was slowly altering his mind, making it soft and pliable to any suggestion. It was like a part of him was slipping away and being replaced with someone else. Someone who didn't want to run away, someone who didn't care that these two men were officers in the Xyletian military, someone who didn't care at all about what they were planning on doing with him.

The healers and advisors had never warned him it would be like this.

Phoenix stood, towering over him. "Alright. Allow me to hazard a guess. You were told that the government of Atlas would provide you with a safe haven in the capital, that if you could cross the border you would safely reunite with members of your royal house—members who would guide you in the restoration of your country. Is that about right?"

## Page 5

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Lars knew that his shock was showing plainly on his face, but how could he hide it?

Phoenix smiled and walked over to the desk. He sat down in the wooden rolling chair and placed the pendant inside a locked drawer. "Why don't you tell him, Brother? Inform our guest."

Griffin was like a statue, his arms still folded across his broad chest. "The Atlas Clans have always been in the service of Xyletia. The prime minister was tapped by the Emperor years ago and he personally assisted in opening routes for our troops into your country. In short, the men you seek have long been locked away or wiped from existence."

"I-impossible," Lars said.

"I have to give Ekdol credit, though," said Phoenix. "The fact that they were able to conceal your existence is remarkable. An Omega prince, unknown to the rest of the world. We knew that someone important would be making their way across the border tonight, but a prince?" He laughed. "You were lucky that we were the ones to intercept you."

"Why? You're going to kill me anyway, aren't you?"

"No, little Omega. We're not going to kill you." A smile curled on his lips that Lars couldn't interpret. All he felt was a shiver that moved through his entire body, so strong that it made his shoulders shake. But it wasn't something triggered by fear.

Focus, he thought. Please, focus. You have to focus.

"Then... if you won't, your emperor will. Just like he did to my family."

"The Emperor doesn't need to know who you are. We can keep your identity secret."

"Why would you do that?" Lars asked.

"Because. We want you." Phoenix's eyes flashed. "You will be ours. Our mate."

"What?" Lars stammered. "I don't... No! I refuse!"

Griffin approached and Lars jerked back, trying to push farther across the bed. He stretched against his ties, and they cut painfully into his wrists. His heart was hammering and his head swam from the wash of conflicting feelings pouring over him. He couldn't believe how he was reacting to this. He could feel the tingling warmth of arousal building up inside of him, bringing heat and wetness to his entrance. He felt all the binds of control breaking free, no matter how hard he struggled to cling to them.

"You'll be in heat soon," Griffin said. "You can't hide. Not here. Every Alpha in this complex will know, and every single one of them will want to fuck you. No one will be able to protect you. You'll be filled so many times that it'll be impossible to know which cock was responsible for putting a baby inside of you."

Lars squeezed his eyes shut. This wasn't supposed to happen. Concentrate. Please, just concentrate.

"We will make you our mate," Phoenix said, and Lars felt his scent draw near. He gasped and opened his eyes. The man was kneeling in front of him again, his face just inches away. He should've been repelled but it was the opposite. He felt drawn in. Phoenix smiled, his lips pulling back just enough to reveal his canines, which slowly became his deadly wolf fangs. His body responded immediately to them being bared,

sending a charge of arousal to his cock. He squeezed his thighs together in a futile attempt to stop himself from becoming hard.

"None will dare touch you if you're ours," Phoenix murmured. His voice reverberated inside of Lars's head, and it made his body weak and loose. He was slipping so fast now. He was tumbling down towards a deep pit of sin and depravity that he'd never knew could be possible. No amount of training, or coddling, or protection could've prepared him for this. This feeling had always been inside of him, a tiny flame that was now turning into a bonfire. These two Alpha brothers were like gasoline.

His eyelids fluttered dreamily as Phoenix's words continued to echo inside of his mind.

If you're ours...

He felt the Alpha's hand press against his cheek, taking his face into his palm. He reacted by moaning. He couldn't stop it from escaping. Goosebumps spread across his flesh. Phoenix's grin widened, and he dragged his thumb down Lars's lips. He could've bitten the Alpha. Shifted out his fangs and ripped his damn thumb from his hand. But instead...

Instead he kissed him. He tasted Phoenix's skin, allowed him to push his thumb into his mouth. He flicked his tongue across it, sucked on it, did things he'd never imagined himself ever doing...

Phoenix's hand gripped Lars's head, pulling him closer. The humming vibration deep inside of his belly was singing now, sending ripples of energy through every part of his body, readying him for what would come. His cock throbbed painfully, wanting to be free of the constraints of his underwear. His entrance was slick and hot as a furnace, aching for a knot. His skin prickled with ultra-sensitivity, so that the slightest touch from an Alpha could send him into fits of pleasure.

"We can smell your heat, Omega," Phoenix growled.

"Don't call me that," Lars replied. He was sweating, his breathing shallow. "My... My name is Lars... Prince Lars Lyandri of Ek—"

"We'll call you whatever we desire," Griffin said, interrupting him. He sat next to Lars and his massive body made the mattress bend. His hands explored up Lars's thigh. He was powerless to resist. The restraints cut deeper into his flesh as he writhed, his mind slipping further and further away into the depths, succumbing to the two Alphas.

Phoenix's lips pressed against his. He responded by kissing him back with everything he had. The desire to be taken was just too strong. He needed them, as badly as a drowning man needed air. Griffin's hands moved higher, reaching the band of Lars's pants. He hooked his fingers underneath and yanked, tearing the seam. Lars screamed in both shock and arousal.

Phoenix thrust his hand down the front of Lars's underwear and took his cock into his fist. Lars's eyes rolled back as a tremor of pleasure shot through his body. He bucked his hips, wanting more. They gave it to him. Griffin tore away his underwear, then took a knife from his belt and in one quick motion cut the ties from Lars's wrists.

Now unrestrained, Lars didn't try to fight the two Alphas away. Protesting wasn't in the cards. The voice of reason that'd been calling out to stay in control was confined to a corner of his mind. Its shouts were muffled by everything else.

Griffin ripped away what was left of his shirt, tossing the tattered and bloodied rags onto the floor. Lars was naked now, sitting on his knees between the two brothers. Phoenix pushed a hand against his neck, throwing Lars back against Griffin's chest. He pushed his face into Lars's neck, tasting him.

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The feeling of the Alpha's canine fangs raking against his skin drove him wild. His primal instincts were overcoming every part of his mind, driving him to a fevered intensity. "Please," he begged. "I need..."

"What?" Phoenix took his small chin into his hand, tilting Lars's head up to look at him as he stood. Then he began to remove his uniform, revealing his scarred muscle beneath. "Voice your need, Omega."

"Make this stop."

Lars's eyes fell on the bulge in Phoenix's trousers. He wanted what was there, wanted it inside of him. He needed the release. To feel an Alpha's cock filling him up, spilling its seed deep into him. He reached out dazedly, groping for it. He missed and grabbed a handful of fabric as he fell forward against Phoenix's legs. He was drunk off the intensity of the flush of chemicals flooding into his brain, spurred by the pheromones of the two virile Alphas. When he breathed in, his lungs were filled with Phoenix's scent, incredibly potent from the proximity to his cock.

Lars got on all fours and this time was successful in his attempt to remove the Alpha's trousers. They fell to his ankles, exposing everything. Lars looked up with wide eyes and dilated pupils, feeling the energy rushing through him as he took in the sight of the huge cock standing erect above his face. Its head was glistening and swollen, ready to take him. The smell of it was enough to make Lars groan hungrily; it was the potent scent of a rutting Alpha male wolf.

Griffin removed his clothes as well, stripping down to nothing but his golden collar. His left bicep was tattooed with a sigil that Lars recognized even in his state of deep



heat, the crescent moon above two overlapping mountains that was the mark of the nation of Maitran, a small kingdom to the west that had become of a colony of Xyletia thirty years ago. His attention to the tattoo was fleeting, replaced quickly by a sharp bite of pleasure as Griffin slid his tongue across Lars's seeping hole.

He drew in deep breaths of the Omega, reveling in the scent of his fertility. Lars was slick with arousal, his asshole lubricating itself in the way that only an Omega's could. Griffin watched as Lars clawed at his brother's legs, licking at his flesh, worshipping his cock but seemingly frightened to take it into his mouth. He was obviously inexperienced, operating off of instinct.

Griffin was in position to take the Omega from behind, while Phoenix would penetrate him from the front. Griffin was lesser in rank, but outside of the military things were different. They'd both agreed from childhood that whatever they did, they did for each other. They would fight by each other's side. They would kill for each other. They would share a mate. They had to. They'd always understood that it would be the only way for them to rise up, to achieve their ultimate purpose.

Lars moved his hips to the movement of Griffin's tongue. He watched the prince's body tremble as he licked him, tasting his delicious fluids. It was almost time. The peak moment was nearly here, when the Omega would be the deepest level of his heat cycle.

Phoenix took his cock into his hand and dipped it down, tilting Lars's head by gripping his hair. "Suck," he commanded, and he pushed his cock forward so that the head pressed against the Omega's lips, smearing them with his thick pre-come. He watched as the Omega accepted it willingly, opening his mouth and taking the huge organ inside. Phoenix groaned as the warmth enveloped him. He felt Lars's little tongue moving around the head of his cock, tasting him. He moved deeper until tears formed in his eyes.

"Farther," Phoenix growled.

Lars didn't think he could take it any deeper, but he tried anyway. He felt a deep urge to please the man, this stranger who he'd only met just a handful of minutes prior. He wanted to make the Alphas happy.

The humming inside of him now pulsed like an engine at full bore. He gulped down Phoenix's gigantic cock, not even thinking about what he was doing. He was driven by his need to be taken, his instinct to be mated.

That was when he felt Griffin's thick fingers slide across his opening, pushing inside, stretching him out. He cried out for more, moaning on Phoenix's cock, saliva dripping from his stuffed-up mouth. It felt like he was going to die if wasn't penetrated at that instant, like every second a cock wasn't filling up his insides was a moment of unbearable torture.

Then the real thing finally came. The Alpha's member pressed against him, and Lars moved his hips backwards in an attempt to accept him inside. But he was huge and Lars was small and had never been breached before by anything except his own fingers. He spread himself as much as possible, his groans muffled as Phoenix gripped his head and thrust deep into his throat. He gagged and choked, and he enjoyed it. He, the crown prince of Ekdol, was enjoying this disgrace. But at that moment, it was the only thing that seemed to exist in the whole universe. He was consumed.

The size was almost too much to bear. Lars cried and moaned as it filled him until it finally reached the hilt. The pain stuck for just a few seconds until his body converted it into pleasure and satisfaction. Griffin moved his hips, beginning the piston-like thrusting that sent blissful waves of pleasure pulsing through Lars's body.

Having them both inside of him was carrying him to another plane of rapture. His

cock throbbed and ached as Griffin's thrusts drove against his spot. He slammed himself back against the Alpha, matching his thrusts, trying to accept him deeper and deeper into his Omega womb.

Everything was melting away. The war, his title, his country... It all didn't matter. None of it mattered. That Lars had vanished. Now, all that remained was a primal version of himself who only cared about one thing, and that was to be impregnated with the strongest Alpha seed possible.

He reached down and vigorously pleased himself, the tip of his cock slathered with wetness that had flowed down from his entrance. Phoenix gazed down at him, his eyes full of fire and delight, his mouth hanging open in a grimace of ecstasy. Griffin's hand gripped his waist, grunting as he buried into him. The thrumming inside of Lars's body spiked to another peak as a rush of base happiness flowed through him.

He was pleasing them, and that was all he wanted to do.

That was the thought that drove Lars over the edge. He felt the climax; it burst forth from the humming vibration that sang within him. It carried over him like a tidal wave, rippling into every part of his body and making him tighten around Griffin's cock. His own member spilled out a gush of hot semen onto the bedsheets as his body continued to tremble with orgasm. But the two Alphas weren't done with him. They continued to fuck him until his knees were wobbling like jelly, barely able to support him.

Griffin held him tightly by the waist, gripping him with both hands to keep him up. "I'm going to make you come again," he murmured through gritted teeth, pounding his cock into him, drawing his hips back to allow his full length to hammer in each time.

The spell over Lars wasn't broken yet—his body was still waiting for an Alpha's knot.

It didn't take long before his cock was primed and ready again, and he was moaning at the top of his lungs, primal sounds that came from the raw feeling of being milked past the first orgasm. His body lost all control and he slumped down onto the bed, his chest sliding onto the puddle of fluid he'd created on the sheets. Through all this he managed to continue slurping down Phoenix's cock, never wavering in his attention to him.

It didn't take much longer for Griffin to come. His thrusts exploded in harder, feeling like they would just about shatter Lars's much smaller body, squeezing onto his hips so tightly that bruises immediately began to form. His grunts became primal growls and he slammed in one final time, driving himself as deep as possible. Lars felt the fog gust from his mind as Griffin's knot expanded inside, securing his cock in place, and his mouth dropped open in a silent cry. Then he felt the heavy spurt of come inside of him, filling him up with every pulse of the Alpha's cock.

Phoenix moved back, pulling his cock away from his grip. Lars found himself reaching out for it, trying to get it back, angry that something so precious had been taken from him. He couldn't move, anchored in place both by Griffin's powerful hands and the securing knot of his dick. Lars was kept like that for a while, as Griffin's orgasm slowly subsided, still pulsing into him. Phoenix stood to the side and stroked himself, looking like a predator waiting for his turn at the kill.

When the knot finally released and Griffin pulled out, his hot seed oozed out and dripped down Lars's balls onto the bedsheets. Phoenix approached. Gripping the base of his erection, he took hold of Lars's waist and yanked the Omega back onto him. Lars cried out, tossing his head back as he did. He was hit with an intense, feral feeling, the satisfaction of being mounted twice. His body loved that he was being shared by two Alphas, that both men's mark had been left on him, invisible to sight but detectable by any Alpha who came within scent range of him.

Griffin had been gentle compared to the way Phoenix fucked him. The commander

was all fire and fury, barking and bellowing like a wild animal as his thrusts made reverberating slaps of flesh throughout the quarters. Lars gripped at the sheets with fading strength. He could feel the incredible sensation of Phoenix's dick pumping Griffin's seed deeper into him. He was reaching the end, the point where he would no longer be able to hang on at all. His world was tunneling around him as his eyes rolled back into his head, the pulses of pleasure completely sapping all ability to think or to even feel anything except the torturous desire to continue being fucked. But then that all slipped away, and soon he was coming again, screaming into the sheets as every muscle down below flexed and contracted from climax.

This was enough to trigger Phoenix. He pushed his hand against the back of Lars's neck as his cock knotted up inside. His muscles tensed, bulging furiously. His roar was deafening, and Lars felt the hot gush of his come deep inside, mixing with his brother's. He stayed there, his knotted cock holding the potent semen in place as he panted and growled. When he'd deposited everything, he ripped his cock free. Lars whimpered as he felt the flow of the finish cascading out of him. There was so much, and the primal urge he felt was to not waste a single drop. He found himself turning around, clawing at Phoenix's legs like a beggar at the feet of a king. He used his tongue to clean the last streaks of pearlescent fluid from his throbbing cock before finally collapsing sideways onto the bed, glassy-eyed.

Naked, Griffin sat in the chair across from the bed and watched with a dark, serious expression.

The Omega belonged to them now.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

### Chapter 3

When Lars awoke he had no idea where he was, but the state of his body gave him the first reminder. He was still naked and everything was sore. He could feel the cold, sticky presence of the brothers' finish still on his legs, soaking the sheets of the bed. He was a mess. How long had been out?

He looked around. Being underground, there was no indication of how much time had passed. There was a clock on the wall, but he hadn't noted the time before everything had happened.

Everything...

A strange feeling came over him—disgust and anger that was quickly replaced by need. He hated them, but he wanted them so badly. Where were they? He felt empty without their presence. How could he feel such a longing for two men he didn't even know? For two enemies. Two monsters.

Because he was their mate now.

He belonged to them.

The scent that hung in the air was heavy and potent and only made the desire stronger. He thought that the coupling would've burned away the intense cravings that'd struck him in their presence, but he'd been wrong. It lingered, along with a humming vibration deep inside of him. He touched his belly, wondering if the strange sensation would ever subside.

Lars had always been a fastidious person. In his protected residence on the royal grounds he had a small team of people to care for him and provide him with baths and spa treatments whenever the whim struck him, trusted members of the court who of course had been with him since birth. He focused on his appearance, kept himself clean, and spent a lot of time decorating spaces around the residence, because as Omega there really was not much else required of him.

But right now, Lars wasn't concerned about the state of his body. He had no desire to wash away the scent of sex that clung to his skin. He felt like keeping it on himself for as long as possible, wanted to nest up on the bed where it was most potent.

He pulled himself away from the soiled sheets, wincing at the ache that throbbed down below. His legs couldn't support his weight, and he crumpled onto the cold concrete floor. It felt like he was being pulled in two directions as the little voice that'd been caged in the back of his mind managed to momentarily overpower the all-encompassing, intoxicating fog that now gripped him, triggering his base desires and incapacitating everything else. And that little moment was enough to send him into a trembling shock. He squeezed himself into a ball, wrapping his arms around his legs as his entire body shook from the sobs.

"I am Prince Lars Lyandri of Ekdol," he whispered to himself. "Prince Lars Lyandri of Ekdol..."

He repeated it over and over again until the tears stopped. He felt a little stronger then, and brought himself to his feet. He was alive. That was the most important thing. He was alive, and mated to two powerful officers in the Xyletian military, men who did not seem to have any intention to turn him over to the Emperor or to end his life.

Why were they protecting him? What did they have to gain by keeping his existence a secret from the leader of the Empire? Their deaths would almost certainly be

guaranteed if the truth got out. Men like them could take their choice of any Omega, so if mating was the only goal... Why would they take such a dangerous prize?

Lars moved to the desk and tried the drawer where his pendant had been stored. It was locked. He pulled harder, suddenly driven by a mad need to get it back into his possession. That was his last connection to his family, his nation, his life, aside from what was held in his memories—and those seemed to be slipping. The lessons on what he could expect as an Omega had failed to adequately convey just how incredibly powerful the experience of mating would be.

He searched the surface of the desk for something that could pry open the drawer, rummaging through the layers of maps and military paperwork, when his fingers landed on the cool kiss of polished steel. It was a letter opener, its handle wrapped in red leather, the blade stamped with the Feral Fangs skull emblem. He held it in the palm of his hand, eyes tracing the glimmering taper of the blade to its point. He forgot about the pendant. He stopped thinking about everything except what he could do with the tool he held in his hand...

The door opened and Lars turned around, concealing the letter opener behind his back. Phoenix and Griffin entered, once again clad in their Xyletian uniforms. Griffin carried a tray of cooked rations, and Phoenix had with him a bulging tote bag which he tossed next to the bed.

"Good," Phoenix said. "You're awake."

Griffin walked over to the desk and set the tray of food on top of it. Lars squeezed the opener tighter against his lower back, hoping it wouldn't be seen.

As if he were just casually taking off a jacket, Phoenix stripped off the top of his uniform down to his bare muscles. Immediately the hunger struck Lars again, and his grip loosened on the letter opener. His eyes dilated and sweat prickled on his body as



a flush of heat rose through him. There was no urgency or compulsion to hide his own nakedness from the two—the thought didn't even cross his mind. It already felt normal to show himself to them.

"First you will bathe," Griffin said. "Then you will eat."

"I don't want to," Lars said, his eyes moving from Griffin to Phoenix, unsure why the Alpha was stripping himself of his clothing.

Griffin glared. "I wasn't asking if you wanted to. I was commanding you."

"I'm not one of your soldiers to command." His voice was small, but gained some strength as he went on. "I'm Prince Lars Lyandri of—"

The Alpha's palm clamped over his mouth, stifling the words. Lars gripped the tool behind his back. From this distance he could plunge it into Griffin's arm, or his chest, or maybe even his neck.

"Be quiet," Griffin rumbled. "You are our Omega, and you will do as you are told." He brought his face close, until their foreheads were touching. Lars shrank back. He was overwhelmed at first by fear, and then by arousal, that mind-bending feeling of sobadlywanting to please his Alpha.

Then Griffin kissed him, his hot tongue teasing his lips. His hand slid down Lars's chest, moving across his nipples to his abdomen, then to his thighs where the thick come still clung to his flesh. He ran two fingers across it, collecting it, and then brought it back up to Lars's mouth. He didn't object, didn't deny it. He parted his lips and accepted the Alpha's fingers, licking them clean.

Phoenix opened a door on the far side of the room, revealing a private bathroom with a shower. "Come here, Omega," he said.

Griffin lowered his hand from Lars's mouth and slid it around his back to where the letter opener was hidden and took the blade into his hand. Lars, his breath heavy and his cock growing hard, released it and handed it over. Griffin said nothing and placed it back on the desk. He then draped his arm around Lars's shoulder and guided him to the bathroom.

Lars moved forward. His body would not do anything else. He had to obey. Tears filled his eyes. His fate was sealed and there was nothing he could do. He was so weak, so powerless.

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

The shower was a no-frills open area in the corner of the bathroom, with a steel spray nozzle on a hose attached to a copper pipe jutting out from the concrete wall. Sitting in the middle of the floor was a small wooden stool. It was a grim-looking place, lit by a single lightbulb. It looked like a torture chamber, and Phoenix stood inside, completely naked. The man wore his nudity as comfortable and confidently as he did his uniform.

Phoenix pointed to the stool. "Sit down."

Griffin was behind him, blocking his way out. He began to remove his own uniform.

"What are you going to do to me?" Lars asked, though he was certain he already knew. He felt that twisting, clenching sensation as his mind wanted one thing but his body, another. His eyes were drawn across Phoenix's naked flesh, eating it up once again. He jerked in surprise as Griffin's hand pushed against his lower back in a surprisingly gentle touch to usher him forward.

"Sit, Omega," Phoenix said, his tone bristling on the edge of losing patience.

Lars sat. Griffin was naked now, and the two brothers stood on either side of him. He looked up at them, expecting them to use his mouth for pleasure, but they both were unaroused. Phoenix turned on the water and the room immediately became hazy with hot steam. Lars gasped as he was drenched in the cascade of scalding water. It wasn't painful, though. He'd always enjoyed hot baths—the royal residence had a sprawling complex of geothermal pools that were for his exclusive use. His body adjusted to the temperature, and he embraced its cleansing feeling as it scoured away the remnants of the night's sins.

Griffin knelt on the bare concrete in front of him, the water pouring across his back and over his shoulders. He took Lars's arm in one hand and, to the Omega's surprise, began to gently rub his skin with his other hand, washing him. Phoenix was now behind him, and he lathered a floral scented soap into Lars's hair.

"What are you doing?" Lars asked, stunned at what was happening. This was the kind of treatment he was used to receiving his whole life, but now it felt wrong. After what they'd done, were they actually tending to him?

"We're bathing you," Phoenix said as he tipped a bucket of water over Lars's head to wash the soap out from his hair. "Is that not obvious?" He spread more of the soap across Lars's shoulders, passing the bottle to Griffin who did the same to his chest and legs. The night before, their touch had been brutal and dominating. Now, it seemed almost tender. Almost caring.

"Believe it or not, I am capable of bathing myself," Lars said. "I didn't have attendants doing everything for me. Not all the time."

Phoenix chuckled. "Is that what you think this is? Omega, we aren't doing this out of the kindness of our hearts."

"Please. My name is Lars..."

"Omega," Phoenix said. His voice boomed angrily, but his touch remained gentle.

Lars lowered his head. He would continue to fight that battle a different time. "Then why are you doing this?" he asked, half-expecting another reprimand.

"Brother? Why are we doing this?"

"The traditions must be upheld," Griffin said. "No matter what."

Phoenix leaned in, wrapping his soapy hand around the back of Lars's neck. His fingers could almost entirely encircle it. "There you go," he said into Lars's ear. "Happy? Now shut it and let us finish. There's a war we must return to."

Lars's bold streak upheld. "Traditions? I didn't realize Xyletia had any traditions, other than mass murder."

Griffin squeezed his hand tightly around Lars's thigh, where he'd been soaping him. Lars jolted from the sudden pressure. A darkness crossed over Griffin's face. "No. Not Xyletia," he said.

Not Xyletia? What did he mean? Lars's gaze fell on the tattoo on Griffin's bicep. Water streaked down his skin and over the black ink that formed the crescent moon shimmering over two mountains. "Maitran," Lars said, almost whispering it.

The vise grip on his thigh released. Griffin blinked, looking surprised. For a moment, the man crouched before him didn't look like the same fearsome Alpha commander who had executed one of his own men without a second thought. He looked softer, somehow. Phoenix's touch seemed to change in that instant, too. Just a flash. Then it was gone, leaving Lars wondering if he'd imagined it.

Griffin studied him. "Not many know this sigil," he said, and continued washing him. "We had a tradition there. An Alpha is responsible for bathing his Omega in this manner once the first bonding has been completed, using the essence of the qui mountain wildflower. No qui blooms in Ekdol, so we did substitute with something else. But it's important that we upheld this tradition." He picked up the bucket of water and unceremoniously dumped it over Lars's head. He turned off the water. "Stand."

The temperature in the room quickly dropped now that the shower was off. Aside from goosebumps, the two Alphas seemed to be unaffected by the cold. Without any

acknowledgement to him, they walked back into the room. Lars followed after them, shivering like a wet dog. They dried off and put on their uniforms while he stood clutching himself, trying to keep warm. Griffin scooped up the bag from the side of the bed and thrust it towards him.

"Get dressed. Or don't. It's your decision. You're leaving this place."

Inside the bag was a small towel and a set of plain grey clothes, just trousers and a shirt. It looked like a prison uniform.

"Leaving? Where?"

"Your quarters."

Lars looked around the room that he had somehow grown attached to, even though he'd been there for such a short time. His eyes lingered on the bed, where the sheets were still tussled up and used. He was drawn to it. It felt secure. Was it because it was where the mating had taken place? Whatever it was, he hated the idea of parting with it. It felt as painful as leaving his own home.

Phoenix must've seen the look on his face. He laughed. "These are my quarters, Omega. I wouldn't suffer to have you sleeping in them every night."

"And I wouldn't suffer to spend another night with either of you," Lars said, hoping his expression didn't betray him. He dried himself and put on the dreary clothing, which were a size too large and hung loosely on his body.

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

Phoenix opened the door. "Out."

"Wait," Lars said. "Please. My pendant. It's the last thing I have of my family, and—"

"OUT!" Phoenix roared.

Lars stumbled into the hallway and the two Alphas followed him, Griffin carrying the tray of food he'd left on the desk. A passing soldier stomped to attention, saluting the two men before continuing on.

The passageway was a hastily dug tunnel with bare rock walls. Lightbulbs hung along the ceiling connected by waves of wires that criss-crossed over ventilation tubing that pumped oxygen into the passage. Puffs of dust and crumbles of dirt scattered down from the roof, shaken loose by the low vibration of a passing vehicle up on the ground level.

Where exactly was this place? It was strange to think that he was still in his own home country. The Empire had dug in deep, like a feeding tick. How many bases were already set up across the nation? What was the state of the royal city now?

Griffin placed his hand on Lars's shoulder and guided him down the hallway. They passed another door with a printed sign attached to it that read, COLONEL GREER. Two more soldiers stopped to quickly salute them, seeming absolutely terrified by their presence.

They passed a number of unmarked doors and finally stopped in front of one that Griffin opened, revealing a dark and dingy room lit by a single lamp. Without saying

another word, Griffin slid the tray of food across the floor and shut the door, locking Lars inside, all alone.

Lars banged on the door until his hands and arms were raw and bruised. No one answered. He slammed his shoulder against it with a frantic desperation, until he no longer had the strength to continue. He slid to the ground and crawled to the canvas cot in the corner of the room, which was its only furniture. Too numb to cry, Lars curled up on the cot and stared at the wall as the hum continued inside of him.

Why was he feeling these things? Why did Phoenix's quarters feel so comfortable? How could it have taken up such deep roots in his heart? How could he miss a place like that so deeply? If anything, he should've despised it. It just made no sense.

And the two of them. His body ached for them. He longed to see them.

He felt ill.

Hours passed, except this time there was no sleep to soften the torturous drag of time. All he could do was repeat his name to himself in an effort to maintain who he was and not let these strange and unwanted yearnings completely erase everything.

He was Prince Lars Lyandri of Ekdol. The two Alphas may have left their imprint on him, changing him forever, but he was still Prince Lars Lyandri and he would never forget that or his family.

What frightened and disturbed him the most was how the memories Griffin and Phoenix manifested in his mind. Thinking back to when they took him, he could hardly remember the fear or the disgust, almost as if there hadn't been any at all. He only recalled the incredible feeling of their bodies against his, their warmth, the smell of their flesh and their sex. The way they felt inside of him. How he wanted more.



Whatever distaste did arise seemed to be quickly countered by the sweet memories of the bathing ritual. He should not have enjoyed that as much as he did. He shouldn't be savoring the memories, replaying them in his mind, reliving their gentle touch on his body, the smell of the floral soap they'd used.

Now the tears came, just a few that traced lines down the side of his nose and his cheek.

His stomach rumbled. His last meal felt like a lifetime ago—just a small package of dried rations that he'd eaten while hiding in the back of the truck.

The tray of food had gone cold, but he scooped the bland contents into his mouth anyway, nearly choking on it as he did.

Why would they make him their mate? They'd put in the effort to perform that ritual, and yet they'd abandoned him like this. What did they want from him?

Lars went cold.

Could there be others? Other Omegas imprisoned behind the other unmarked doors? Or was he the first of many?

He remembered what Griffin had said to him. "You're now an asset of the Xyletian Empire."

He felt sick. This war was a fight over breeding resources.

The meal came back up and splattered onto the tray. He groaned and rolled over on the cot, crippled by an overwhelming feeling of despair.

Chapter 4

Lars was despondent when they returned to collect him. He lay motionless on the cot, feverish and cold. Phoenix stared down at him. Was there a hint of actual concern in his gaze? Or was he just worried about the condition of his property?

"Omega," he growled. "What's the matter?"

He sat on the edge of the cot and wrapped his arms around Lars's body, lifting him so that he lay against his chest. He placed his hand against Lars's forehead, which was clammy to the touch.

Phoenix's scent filled Lars's lungs, and some light returned to his eyes.

## Page 10

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

"Brother?" Phoenix looked at Griffin, who was standing at the door, his arms crossed over his chest.

"It's as I told you, Phoenix. The bond can't be neglected. You never paid much attention during the lessons, did you?"

Phoenix snorted. "That was almost two decades ago. What should I remember from the teachings of a decrepit old priest? You were always the academic one." He turned to Lars, pressing his forehead to his and rubbing his temples with his enormous thumbs. "Hey. Come back to us," he rumbled.

Lars groaned and clung to Phoenix's coat. His eyes were glassy and delirious. He looked up at the Alpha, his mouth moving like he was trying to say something.

"We were taught that Omegas form a bond to the place where they were mated," Griffin said. "It becomes their den."

Phoenix grunted. "And when our post changes? We won't remain here for much longer."

"We should keep him close. At all times."

"That would be unwise." The battle-hardened commander gritted his teeth and then ran his fingers through Lars's hair, pushing it back. He held the back of his head, cradling it so that he could look down at the Omega's pale face. "But if it's what our Omega requires, then I suppose we have no choice. We'll share quarters, then."

"Yes," Griffin said.

With a sigh, Phoenix scooped Lars up into his arms.

He brought him back to his room and set him down on the bed. The sheets had been changed, but the scent of the mating still seemed to linger. It brought more life back to Lars's body and mind. He burrowed into the linens, surrounding himself with them, murmuring happily.

A soldier arrived to notify Phoenix of some urgent business that needed to be attended to on the surface. "Colonel," he said to Griffin. "Take care of things here. Take care of the prisoner."

"Yes, sir," Griffin replied with a salute.

Lars drifted in and out of consciousness, affected by the lack of sleep, the lack of food, and most of all, the withdrawal symptoms that had struck him after being ripped away from the mating den.

"What's wrong with me?" he whispered, shivering. He wrapped himself up in the blankets and pushed his face into the firm pillow, drinking in the scents that clung to it. Every time he closed his eyes it seemed like hours passed. His mind was slowly returning to him. Through hazy vision, Griffin's form came into focus. He was sitting at the desk, staring at something in the palm of his hand. He seemed to detect Lars's gaze and looked over. He placed whatever he was holding into the desk drawer and quickly shut it.

Lars was damp with sweat, the sheets pulled tightly to his chin. He didn't take his eyes off Griffin as he stood from his chair and came to the bed. He held a tray of food in his hand.

"Eat," he said.

"I'm not hungry," Lars said in a thin, raspy voice.

"Fool. You're starving."

"There's food in the kitchen," he muttered. "The cooks prepared beef shanks with truffle sauce..."

Griffin stared at him. "You certainly are a prince," he muttered, scooping up a piece of the meatloaf from the tray. "This is from the officer's mess. Don't waste it."

The smell of the food seemed to bring Lars back to reality. His eyes focused and turned to the fork of meat floating in front of his face. He opened his mouth and accepted it. He gobbled it down quickly and reached to take the utensil from Griffin's hand, but he pulled it away from him.

"Slowly," Griffin said. "If you throw this up, there will be hell to pay. Are you present? Can you think clearly?" He forked up more of the meatloaf, which was more loaf than it was meat, and held it in front of Lars's mouth like a parent feeding a child.

Lars glared. "I can feed myself."

Griffin huffed, which was probably the closest thing to a laugh the man could muster. His stone-like face seemed incapable of anything other than a scowl. "Good. You're back, then." He handed the fork and tray to Lars, who backed to the opposite corner of the bed, protecting his meal like a stray animal. He didn't take his eyes off Griffin as he ate.

"Lars Lyandri," Griffin said.

Lars nearly sprayed all the food in his mouth across the bed in surprise at hearing him say his name. "Why are you saying my name?"

"Did you not want me to address you with your name?"

"You refused to before."

Griffin returned to the desk, the wooden chair creaking under his weight. "Then I'll call you Omega."

## Page 11

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

"No!" Lars exclaimed. "No. My name is Prince Lars Lyandri."

"You were a prince. You aren't one here."

"I am a prince," Lars said.

Griffin grabbed a spread of paper from the desk and tossed it onto the bed in front of Lars. It was a map of the continent, with Ekdol and much of the surrounding nations shaded in blue, the color of the Empire. The Xyletian Empire's sigil, a bipedal wolf flanked by a fang, a sword, and a sun, was stamped over each region. "Your family is dead," he said, his voice low. "Your house, crumbled. Your nation, conquered. You're the prince of nothing." The way he spoke was calm and flat. There was no animosity, just the statement of facts. "Be thankful. You're still alive to see tomorrow."

"My people," Lars said. "They're counting on me to lead them."

"Your people don't even know of your existence. They're in the hands of Xyletia now. As long as they obey, they too will live to see tomorrow. They'll be taken care of. And perhaps even one day, a young Ekdol Alpha will rise to be an officer in the Xyletian military."

Lars eyed him, finishing the rest of the food. "Like... you. You and your brother are from Maitran."

"We are your Alphas. You will refer to him by his name. Phoenix."

"...Phoenix," Lars repeated, quietly.

Griffin huffed. "Maitran used to be called Adosh, in our father's time and before."

"I know that. Before Xyletia conquered it," Lars said.

"Then you know your history."

"I'm a prince. I was expected to know these things, even though I'm an Omega."

Griffin didn't correct or challenge him this time. "Well," he said, his voice a low rumble. "I've spent much of my adult life in Xyletia. I never met many who would recognize the Adosh sigil."

"It's a small country," Lars said. "Smaller than Ekdol, if I remember my geography. And beautiful birds, if I remember my ornithology."

"Yes," Griffin said, with just the slightest hint of surprise. "It does."

They stared at each other.

"Why am I still alive?" Lars asked. "Why did you... Why did you take me?"

Griffin stood. He came to the bed and took the empty tray out of Lars's hands and tossed it to the floor. Then he kissed him. His tongue glided against Lars's lips, parting them. Their tongues touched.

"No," Lars panted, trying to writhe out from his touch. "Get away. Please, stop."

Griffin began to strip out of his uniform, tasting the Omega's neck as he did. "I'm your Alpha," he growled. "You do not get to give me commands. This is for you." He pressed his naked body against Lars and brought his lips back against his, silencing any further protests. "You need this contact, or else you'll feel the withdrawals again."



And don't lie to yourself." He took Lars's face in his hands and looked deep into his eyes. "You desire this."

Griffin's hand thrust down the front of Lars's trousers, where the Omega's swollen cock was waiting. Lars threw his arms around Griffin's neck, unable to control his own body. He let out a small cry, a sound that was both pleasure and pain as he felt his defenses disintegrate once again. He bucked against his grip, wanting more than Griffin was giving him. Griffin pushed his own trousers down and laid back on the bed, his pillar standing tall. But when Lars moved to mount him, he stopped him.

"No."

"What?" Lars said. He reached down and tugged at Griffin's erection, desperately pulling it towards his dripping entrance. "Please, Griffin. Please."

"I'm not your only Alpha. I'll not penetrate you unless Phoenix is here to share you, as he would do the same for me."

Lars whimpered. His head spun. The humming had again reached a painful crescendo, like a spring coiled too tightly, begging for release.

Griffin slid his hand around the back of Lars's neck and pulled him down to kiss him. "You can satisfy your cravings with other means," he rumbled. "Drink your fill of me."

He slid off Griffin so that he was kneeling at the Alpha's side. Then, like he was bowing down in worship, Lars lowered his head and took the man's cock into his mouth.

The Alpha was right. His whole body had been demanding this, and now everything felt so right.

He hated it, and he loved it.

\* \* \*

Both brothers liked to sleep in their wolf forms. Lars lay between the two rumbling beasts, like a little sheep who'd stumbled into the wrong den. But there was nowhere else he could go. He needed to be near them, or else his body began to go through withdrawal cravings. He felt both terrified and oddly secure.

The two woke early to attend to their military duties, and Lars woke when Phoenix dropped his heavy boots onto the ground near Lars's head. He sat up with a start, clutching the sheet to his body.

"You're coming with us, Omega," Phoenix said, buttoning up his uniform and fastening his golden collar around his neck. "Be ready in one minute or I'll drag you naked to the surface."

Lars looked over at Griffin.

"Up," he grunted. "You speak to no one. You will be invisible, understood? You will stay near us, but always behind us. And if we require a service from you, you will carry it out without delay. If you act out of line, we will be forced to punish you."

"Yes, alright," Lars agreed reluctantly. "So, is that why you've taken me? To be your servant?"

Neither of them responded.

He stood behind them in the freight elevator, unable to see over their massive frames.

He craned his neck to stare up through the wire grating, where light from the surface grew stronger and stronger. Soon, he had to close his eyes and block them with the back of his hand. He hadn't seen the sun in days, and its rays heated his skin and penetrated deep into his vision, burning in the silhouettes of Griffin and Phoenix.

The elevator clanged and shuddered as it reached the top, and Lars took in a breath of fresh air that made him open his eyes despite the glare of daylight. It was the familiar scent of Ekdol. He could smell the olive trees and the sweet, pungent pollen of the meitu flowers. There was the aroma of the thousand Sentol Lakes to the east, with their delicious, crystal flowing waters and the clear smell of fresh snow on the Hound's Teeth Mountains beyond them. He gathered it all in one breath, and it brought clarity back to his mind.

Run.Escape. Break free.

But how?

Slowly, his eyes adjusted to the light. The sight before him brought him great sadness. They were inside the forest, but in an area that had been clear-cut and razed to make room for the Xyletian military base. Heavy machinery and weapons of war trundled across the scorched soil, with jangling treads and belches of hot smoke. A series of gun batteries sat with their barrels pointed towards the forest in a threatening salute. The Xyletian banner fluttered on a pole.

Two soldiers wearing the Feral Fangs emblem pulled open the elevator gates and saluted as the two Alphas emerged. Lars followed behind them as he'd been told, and the soldiers didn't even acknowledge his existence.

They walked across the grounds, passing by a ring of soldiers who were watching two wolves practicing combat. Their snarls and vicious growls sent an instinctive shiver down Lars's spine. This was dangerous territory for an Omega, and he found

himself walking closer to Phoenix and Griffin.

Terrified, yet secure. That was the contradiction that tugged at him.

He also noticed others wearing the same drab grey uniform as him, some walking around in their wolf forms carting loads of supplies on their backs, but most following around officers like obedient dogs. Were they Omegas, too? Something told him no. But they were other prisoners of war. Were they all Ekdolian?

The command building was a two-story structure that looked like it could be assembled and disassembled in a matter of days. Wordlessly, Griffin split off from them. Lars began to follow him, but Phoenix snapped his fingers.

"With me, Omega."

Lars followed. "Where is he going?"

"Were you not warned? Do not speak until spoken to."

"You spoke to me," he said, with just a hint of unrestrained cheek. "I was responding."

Phoenix whipped around and slammed his fist against the wall, narrowly missing Lars's head. The exposed particle board cracked from the impact. "Do not test my patience, Omega, or you will quickly discover just how little of it there is."

Lars found himself glaring back. He was frightened, but maybe seeing the sky and breathing the air of his home had given him some confidence.

"My brother has other business to attend to," Phoenix said after a long pause. He turned and walked away. Lars hurried to follow. "Trust me, I would not have chosen

to take custody of you."

"Why did you?"

"Are you slow? Because Griffin cannot."

"You could've left me in the room."

"Is that what you want?"

He would've much preferred that to spending time with the two of them—though he knew what would happen without their presence. "I suppose seeing the sun and feeling the breeze was more favorable."

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Phoenix snorted. "You would've been withering away without being around us. You should thank my brother for his compassion, convincing me to let you sleep in my bed."

"I know you and your brother are responsible for thousands of deaths. Did you show any of them compassion?"

"We do what we must to keep order."

"You're a horrible person. Monster."

"So they say."

"Am I anything more than just a servant? Is that why you mated me?"

Phoenix laughed—it was a loud, barking sound that rang through the hallway. "You must be slow. We mated you for the same reason that all Alphas mate: to impregnate you. To create an heir, or as many as you're physically able."

Lars felt sick. Of course he'd known—his own body had been calling for it. Maybe, somehow, he'd managed to convince himself that wasn't what his fate would be, but now hearing the words spoken gave it reality.

"Now, enough," Phoenix said. "I'm tired of speaking to you."

This time, Lars didn't respond.

They continued through the building, making their way upstairs to the main command center. Lars was again struck with a whiplash of emotions. The ill feeling was soon replaced by arousal, and his imagination burned with thoughts of the ways the two of them could take him. He fought to stay in control, to keep the fantasies at bay, but heat was growing between his legs and his cock was swelling to hardness.

They passed soldiers and officers who stopped to salute Phoenix, and Lars was certain that every single one of them could smell his excitement. Maybe Phoenix was relishing it, knowing that if a single one of them made a wrong move towards his Omega he would be within his rights to challenge them to combat.

The worst part of that realization was that it managed to turn Lars on even more. How the refined had fallen. He was losing his way, slipping further from the elegance and sophistication of his upbringing into this carnal madness.

"What's the matter?" Phoenix asked, when they were walking alone. "No, let me guess. Are you enjoying the thought of my seed inside of you? Of a baby growing in your belly? My baby? Griffin's baby? Does that make you hard and wet, Omega?"

Lars didn't want to reach down to confirm it, but he felt that his excitement had soaked into his pants. He was sure the grey fabric must've been pockmarked with grey spots at the crotch and between the thighs from his slickness.

"Lars," he said in a low voice. "My name is Prince Lars Lia—"

Phoenix grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and threw him into an empty office, slamming the door behind him. He unbuckled his trousers and pulled out his prodigious manhood, which was already rock hard, and threw Lars over the edge of the desk that sat against the wall. Then he grabbed Lars's pants and yanked them to the floor.



"What are you doing?" Lars cried out. He looked over his shoulder at Phoenix as he clutched the sides of the desk. He found himself widening his stance for him, giving him access to penetrate him. He was dripping wet, down his thighs and his balls.

"I told you, you would be punished if you tested me."

Phoenix palmed his ass, sending a loud crack through the room. Lars shouted, tensing. Phoenix swatted him again, and this time a moan emerged from Lars's lips. "Stop," he begged.

"Not until you've learned your lesson, Omega."

Phoenix pulled him off the desk and drove him down to his knees in front of him, and Lars looked up at him with hazy eyes. The mating lust had overtaken him again, making him drunk. Phoenix swung his heavy cock in front of his lips, and the Alpha's strong scent filled his lungs. He opened and greedily gulped him down all the way to the hilt. His own cock was painfully hard, begging for release. But when Lars tried to touch himself, Phoenix snatched up his discarded pants and used them to bind his hands behind his back.

"This is a punishment," he snarled. "Now take it." He took his cock and pushed it back into Lars's waiting mouth.

He struggled to breathe as Phoenix pummeled him, thrusting down his throat. The Alpha glared down at him with wide, serious eyes. He was taking no pleasure in this. As he stated: this was punishment. This had to be done, because Lars had pushed him too far, hadn't heeded the warnings of his Alpha.

Phoenix roared and his cock swelled, expanding at the base of its head into a knot. His hot fluid spilled across Lars's tongue and down his throat. Phoenix held himself there, throbbing as Lars swallowed every drop he was given. Tears spilled down his

cheeks, a reflex from gagging down his massive cock. Finally, Phoenix pulled away. Unable to support himself with his hands bound, Lars fell sideways, but was caught by Phoenix's massive palm before he hit the floor. He looked blearily up at the Alpha, coughing for breath. His body ached. He needed his Alphas to relieve him of the pressure.

"Please," Lars whispered. "Make me come."

He shook his head and held Lars's chin with his thumb and forefinger. "No, Omega." His voice was stern, but soft. "This is punishment. Do not disobey me. Understand?" He leaned forward and kissed the side of Lars's mouth, where a pearl of semen remained. Lars quickly turned his head, wanting to resist the strange show of affection. Phoenix untied Lars's hands and dropped the pair of pants on the ground in front of him.

They left the office. Lars kept his hands pressed over his crotch in an attempt to hide the erection that was tenting his pants. He could still taste Phoenix's flavor lingering in his mouth. He could still feel the burning desire to be filled by him. Having been given that taste and denied the release of being taken was truly the ultimate punishment.

\* \* \*

A long table occupied the center of the command room, its surface an illuminated viewscreen that displayed a flickering map of the region marked with troop and armor placement. The men around the table snapped to attention, saluting Phoenix as he walked into the room with Lars following behind. All except one, an older man with thinning hair who wore a grey suit with a Xyletian sigil pin on the lapel. Lars noticed that there was no ranking collar around his neck—he wasn't military.

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"Commander Phoenix Greer," the man said, presenting a hand. "Marquis Vin Delefont."

Phoenix gripped his hand. "Marquis. Is this an official visit? I wasn't expecting you."

"No, no," Delefont said. "His Majesty the Emperor promised me a parcel of land east of here. A beautiful spot for a vacation estate. The bounty of fresh land just waiting to be lapped up is my favorite part of war." He swept his hand over the map. "I've always heard so much about the legendary Feral Fangs. You've captured a great number of victories for the Empire, Commander. When I learned you were stationed here, I had to take the opportunity to come and meet you in person."

The grim expression on Phoenix's face went unchanged. It was obvious that he didn't care for the man. "I'm sure those who've paid the ultimate price would be pleased to hear about your vacation home, Marquis," he said.

The man seemed to not hear him. He tucked his hands behind his back and walked around the room, inspecting things as if he were in a gift shop. There was a brief moment when Lars caught him eyeing him, and when their eyes made contact and the old man smiled and looked away. Lars felt a strange shiver go through him. There was something distasteful about that look. His erection had subsided but he was sure that the scent of his arousal still remained, and this old man was keen to it.

One wall of the command room was covered in windows that overlooked the grounds of the base below, with a view of the edge of the forest. In the distance beyond, Lars could see the shapes of mountains and knew exactly where they were. At the foot of those mountains was the capital city of Ekdol.

"Do you have territories staked in Ekdol, Commander?" Delefont asked.

"I do not," Phoenix said. An officer offered him a clipboard and he flipped through the papers attached to it, looking like he was trying to ignore Delefont's existence.

"A man like you should. You deserve it. The Feral Fangs broke the Ekdol defense. They took Carthonia and Delas Island, too. I've heard your spies even infiltrated the neutral territories. Is that true?"

"I could tell you, Marquis. But then I'd have to rip out your tongue and cut off your hands. Classified information. You understand."

Lars wondered if he was at all joking. He certainly seemed serious, but Delefont laughed, still oblivious to Phoenix's irritation. "Of course, of course. Well, a patriot deserves to have his pick of fresh territory. I can pull some strings for you if you have your sights set on anything in Ekdol."

"There's only one territory that concerns me."

"Oh? And what is that?"

Phoenix ignored his query. He suddenly seemed pensive, staring out the window. "Have you ever known what it's like to be tasked to restore honor, Marquis? The honor of an entire nation?"

"Hm. Do you mean bringing the Empire to be the great power that is today?" He laughed. "I'm afraid I'm not that old, Commander, though I may look it."

After a moment, Phoenix turned away from the window. "We appreciate your visit, Marquis, but the war continues and I am busy. I'll have someone escort you if you wish to tour the base. I cannot do it myself."

"Certainly, I understand, Commander. You have a great task ahead of you. Honor to the entire nation, as it were."

"Lieutenant Luna," Phoenix said to one of the guards standing by the door. "See the Marquis out."

Delefont walked towards the exit and paused as he passed by Lars. The man's nose twitched, like he was sniffing the air. "Is this your servant, Commander Greer? Where did you find such a...fineOmega? I've never seen such a gorgeous one before, even in the capital. Is it an Ekdolian?"

"He belongs to my brother and I," Phoenix said, his voice lowering dangerously.

Of course, the man paid no notice. He moved around Lars, inspecting him. Lars stood still, doing what he could to hide his disgust and anger.

"Lieutenant, no need to accompany me," Delefont said. "This one can show me around." He smiled at Lars. "I'm sure that will be alright, Commander?"

Phoenix's eyes were like balls of flame. "Certainly not. This one is my Omega."

"Well, that's alright. We can all share servants. How about this? I'll pay you to let me use him." Delefont grabbed Lars's wrist. The reaction was immediate. Lars yanked himself away from him like the man's touch had burned his skin, snarling at him like a wild animal. The humming sensation that occurred with Phoenix and Griffin suddenly flipped, becoming what felt like a shrill and shrieking alarm that send waves of cold revulsion through his body. Then, suddenly, Phoenix was striding forward like a moving mountain. Delefont's eyes widened as the giant man grabbed him by the shirt and slammed him against the wall.

"Do not touch my mate. Do not look at him, do not even think about him."

"Y-your mate," Delefont stammered. "I... I didn't know."

"You knew," Phoenix growled, with murder in his voice. "Any Alpha could smell my mark. You've just forgotten yourself. Well, let me remind you. I'm well within my rights as an Alpha to destroy you for touching my mate. No status or money or rank can protect you."

The man was frantically nodding his head. "I'm sorry. Please, please forgive me! I didn't know!"

Slowly, Phoenix released Delefont's shirt. "It must be your decrepit nose. It no longer functions."

"Yes. Yes, that's it." He inhaled sharply. "It's always so stuffed up these days."

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Phoenix backed away, and Lars found himself moving behind him, sheltering close to his body. His heart was hammering with excitement.

Delefont straightened his suit and, without another word, hurried out of the command room.

"Make sure he finds his way off the base safely," Phoenix grunted to the lieutenant, who saluted and quickly left after the Marquis.

None of the officers in the room batted an eye at the incident. Everyone carried on with what they were doing as if it had never occurred at all. Lars had read about mating challenges, but from the seclusion of the royal grounds he had never experienced or witnessed it in person.

Lars wondered what would've happened if the war had never occurred. During his isolated existence he'd never felt much yearning to know the outside world. He was ignorant to it all, and perfectly happy to be. Perhaps he would've remained a caged bird, eventually given to an Alpha who would've also kept him locked away.

He hated Phoenix, but this display of possessiveness had only further stoked the fire of primal desire inside of him. It disturbed him that he had to remind himself of who the man was and what he'd done to him. How strong were these instincts that they could wipe memories of things that had happened just minutes prior? That they could turn disgust into lust? The training from the advisors and healers certainly had not prepared him for this. Looking back, they hadn't taught him much of anything about being mated.

The power of the bond was intoxicating and potent. He knew it was blinding him, changing the way his mind looked at things, and yet there was so little that he could do. If an opportunity to escape presented itself, would he even be able to take it?

Lars stood off to the side, ignored and invisible as Phoenix discussed combat strategy with the officers over the table map. He watched Phoenix. His eyes were drawn to him like moths to a flame, and his mind flashed with memories of the things he'd done to him, a slideshow of depravity. He was getting aroused again, now imagining everything Phoenix and Griffin would do to him. He still ached from the punishment, not just from being struck on the behind but from the lack of release. His body craved more. It was thirsty for their seed, needing to be sated by their cocks.

His enraptured gaze was interrupted by a sight that, if not for his sharp eyes, he wouldn't have been certain he'd even witnessed it at all. In the span of less than a second, Phoenix reached his hand over and slipped a piece of paper into the hand of the officer standing next to him. There was no other acknowledgement between the two, and the officer spirited the paper away into a pocket so quickly and so smoothly that it barely seemed to have happened at all.

What was that all about?

The meeting ended and the officers returned to their stations. Phoenix snapped his fingers. "Omega. With me."

He turned to leave and Lars followed after him. For a moment he considered bringing up what he'd just seen, but then remembered what would happen if he did. And maybe it'd be worse--after all, he was sure that what he'd seen was not meant to be witnessed.

Griffin met them downstairs. "Colonel," Phoenix said to him. "Zone E requires our immediate attention. I've arranged for us to make a joint inspection, since we can't



leave this one behind." His eyes flicked towards Lars.

"Understood."

They walked outside and moved across the grounds. When they were isolated and away from command building, Griffin quietly said, "The package was successfully delivered."

"Excellent," said Phoenix. "As was mine. It's finally under way, then."

Again, Lars's sharp eyes caught an unexpected sight: the smallest hint of a smile on Griffin's lips.

"Yes, Brother," Griffin said. "We've waited our whole lives for this. Honor will be restored."

## Chapter 5

During the invasion, Zone E was one of the offensive positions the Empire had taken to assault the capital and cut it off from supply trains. It encompassed a small town and a portion of the neighboring forest, and now that the capital had been won and Ekdol had fallen, it remained as a defensive outpost and checkpoint for those coming into the capital from the southern territories.

They drove in a caravan, the three of them in the back of an armored transport that was led and tailed by two assault vehicles carrying a detachment of troops.

"May I speak now?" Lars asked, knowing that there was just the slightest hint of snarky insolence in his voice.

Phoenix glared at him, and Lars felt his heart flip. Was he in for another punishment?

Was he hoping to be punished?

"What do you want?" the Alpha grumbled.

"Where are we going?"

Phoenix ignored him and stared out the window, his chin resting firmly in his palm.

"Zone E used to be the bloodiest zone of the war," Griffin said. "Things have quieted down considerably in the last week. You'd barely know any fighting had occurred at all. The blood has been washed from the streets and your soldiers have laid down their arms. The people of the town fly Xyletian flags from their windows. It'll be like this throughout the country."

"Not willingly," Lars said. "The people will be dreaming of rebellion. And when the opportunity comes, they'll rise up and take Ekdol back."

"They'll forget, Omega," Phoenix said. "Once the Empire puts food on their table and money back in their wallets as the blockades are lifted, they'll all forget. Within a generation, any loyalty they'd had will have vanished."

"I won't have forgotten," Lars said, angrily.

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*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

"And just what will you do?" Phoenix asked, amused.

"Whatever I can," Lars said.

"Hold that rage, Lars," Griffin said. "It pleases me to see such resolve in my Omega."

Phoenix's eyes shifted for a moment, but he otherwise didn't react to his brother using Lars's name.

The caravan rolled through Estria, the town that was contained within Zone E. Except for the main road passing through the center of the town, most were cobbled. The buildings were old, made of cracked brick and stone, and some overgrown with ivy. The largest structure was the banquet hall, which acted as a meeting place for the town council, lodging for visiting dignitaries and royalty, and where holidays were celebrated. The town pub and inn were right next door.

This was the real Ekdol. Lars stared out the window, watching a pack of wolves guiding a herd of sheep through the streets. Xyletian soldiers, in both human and wolf form, patrolled with weapons and fangs bared as passing Ekdolian citizens kept their heads low. A couple of pups bounded and played in the mud as an old man sat on a porch and watched. His eyes flicked to their caravan and followed after them until they were out of sight. Lars wondered if the man could see them through the tinted glass. Of course no one would know who he was. No one even knew he existed.

They passed through the Estria into the forest, where signs of the war grew vivid. Tangled coils of rusty barbed wire lined the road like a vicious thorn bush, the muddy, cratered earth beyond pocked with spiked wolf traps and the splintered

remains of trees.

A line of wolves sat at attention as the brothers alighted from the vehicle. Lars followed after, however, this time he didn't feel invisible. Eyes followed him and wet, slobbering tongues lolled from their muzzles. These weren't the same elite soldiers from the base who knew Phoenix and Griffin and their reputation. These were ordinary foot soldiers, young and undisciplined, easily riled by the potent smell of a rare fertile Omega, marked or not.

"Commander Greer." One of the wolves, a captain, shifted into his human form and saluted.

"Captain Luna," Phoenix said.

The captain ushered for them to follow, briefing them on some situation that was going on in the Zone. The only thing that Lars could gather from the conversation was that they would be staying in Zone E for some time. They went to the captain's tent, where he offered the brothers cups of coffee.

"I wasn't expecting you to bring a guest," Luna said.

"He is our mate," Phoenix said, taking the coffee. There was something about the way he said it, like there was something else behind the words. Whatever it was, Luna seemed to understand. He nodded.

"Dangerous to bring an Omega to the Zone."

"We had no choice," Griffin said.

Luna nodded. "Well, I've come this far. I trust your judgement."

"It will make sense," Griffin said.

The captain eyed Lars, stroking his chin. He looked like he was about to ask him something, but decided better of it. He turned to his coffee and took a sip. "We're playing a dangerous game."

"The pieces are in place," Griffin replied. "And soon, all questions will be answered." He put his coffee cup onto the table, and with it, slid across a folded piece of paper. The captain quickly picked it up and tucked it into the inner pocket of his coat. Nervously, he adjusted his golden collar. As they were leaving, after saluting the brothers, Luna added a quick and formal bow. It reminded Lars of the type of bows he and his parents received from members of the court. Deep, with a slight bend in the back knee, the right hand covering the heart.

The three of them were shown to their quarters, a spacious officer's tent. Instead of a bed, a plush sleeping fur was spread out across the floor—a common arrangement for sleeping in wolf form.

"You're plotting something," Lars said, sitting down on the sleeping fur. "What does this all have to do with me?"

Neither brother responded. Griffin unbuckled the combat belt strapped around his waist and across his chest, which held his pistol and de-shifting rod, and hung them on a rack.

"Tell me," Lars demanded. "I saw you passing a piece of paper to an officer today," he said to Phoenix. "Just like you did to the captain."

Phoenix smirked. He bent over and grabbed Lars's chin with his hand.

"Don't do that," Lars said, pulling away.

"You're feeling bold," Phoenix said, chuckling. His smirk turned to a grin. His canines gleamed, and Lars felt his body react to the sight of them, arousal pulsing down to his groin. His base wolf desire wanted those teeth to hold him by the scruff of his neck, to pin him in place while he was mounted from behind. Phoenix grabbed him again, more forceful this time. "We will not be denied."

Then Phoenix pulled him into a kiss. Lars shuddered with pleasure, unable to stop himself from enthusiastically returning it. He bit Phoenix's lip and tugged. It was defiant but surprisingly playful. Phoenix snarled and shoved him so that he fell back against the fur, grinning as he touched his swollen lip.

Griffin came over, removing his coat and shirt. "What else have you seen?"

"Nothing," Lars said. His chest rose and fell with each heavy breath. He tried to detach, as he had all the times before, but his efforts were fruitless. The men just had too much power over him. And wasn't this what his body had been craving the entire day, since he'd been punished in the empty office that morning? Hadn't he been waiting for the moment the two Alphas would finally sate him?

"Are you lying, Omega?" Phoenix rumbled into his ear.

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"I'm not," he answered, shivering as Phoenix's lips touched his neck.

Griffin was on his other side, nipping at his shoulder with his canines. He tugged Lars's shirt off and wrapped his arm around his chest, pulling him onto his lap. Phoenix grabbed the ankles of Lars's pants and ripped them off of his body. He struggled against Griffin, but the Alpha held him there, pinned to his chest. Griffin was radiating heat, as great as a furnace. Phoenix stood, opened the fastener on his trousers, and exposed his erection in front of Lars's face.

Phoenix's powerful scent was an aphrodisiac to him. The hum sang throughout his body, a resonating note that could only harmonize with these two Alphas. And it was harmonizing now, producing a feeling of absolute bliss. Everything else began to slip away. The questions lost their importance, and then their meaning altogether. All that was left was his urge to mate.

Pregnant. He needed to get pregnant.

He reached out and grabbed for Phoenix's cock, murmuring that he wanted it inside of him.

Denying him of his wishes, Phoenix pulled his hips back. Lars growled and whined, but still Phoenix denied him. "Ride him," the Alpha said. "I want to see the face you make when Griffin's cock goes inside of you."

Griffin laid back onto the sleeping fur and watched Lars tug at his pants, hurriedly trying to remove them so that he could get at the prize inside. Phoenix stood with his hands on his hips, watching pleased as his Omega obeyed his command.

Lars got Griffin's trousers down to his ankles and scrambled to position himself over his erect pillar. He reached down between his own legs and confirmed just how wet he was, then gripped the Alpha's cock, holding it still as he lowered himself onto it.

Release. The feeling of contact, of penetration, breaking his seal and moving deeper and deeper... It was like scratching a deep itch that he'd been suffering through for hours. What he felt at first wasn't even sexual pleasure, it was just relief. He ground his teeth and bit his lip as tears dotted the corners of his eyes. He could feel Griffin's cock inside of him; the distinct, unique energy of it. It was his Alpha's cock, and he knew that Phoenix's would spur the same reaction.

Lars dropped onto his knees and Griffin grabbed him at the waist and began to thrust his hips upward into him. The moment Lars's mouth dropped open to let out a moan, Phoenix stepped forward and filled it with his waiting erection.

The voice called faintly in the back of his mind, telling him to stop, to regain control. He ignored it. Or maybe it was more that he had no power to heed it. In these past few days, his will had been tested and broken. He'd wanted to believe he was strong. After all, he'd already suffered through so much and survived. He'd escaped the burning of the royal grounds. He'd fled with just a guard of three Alphas, dodging checkpoints and hiding out from patrols of search wolves. He'd kept his head through all of that, despite having never experienced a moment of danger his entire life. But these two... They'd ignited his estrous and enraptured him into being unable to refuse their wishes.

When Griffin came, Lars felt the anchoring bulge of his knot inside him, pressing against his spot. With a strained bellow, he wrapped his arm around across Lars, squeezing him against his chest as he buried his face against the back of his neck and bit him. Lars screamed in surprise. They'd never scruffed him like that before. The pain gave way to an overwhelming sense of calm. His eyes rolled up into his head as his body went loose. He could feel the rhythmic pulse of Griffin's cock inside of him,



pumping him full of his semen.

Phoenix backed away, stroking himself as he waited for his turn.

Griffin released Lars from his bite and lifted him from his cock. Lars could barely move his limbs; his body was still sedated from the Alpha's scruff.

Powerful hands flipped him over so that he was on his hands and knees over Griffin, his ass up, presenting and waiting to receive Phoenix. A vise grip on his hips, a tug backwards, and that same back-bending sensation of relief arced through his body as he was filled. He hung his head and hid his face as he rocked back and forth with each pounding thrust of Phoenix's cock.

"Look at me," Griffin said. "Look into my eyes as he takes you."

"No," Lars moaned, but he looked anyway. The Alpha's gaze pierced his with a dominating energy, holding him captive. Phoenix pumped deep into him, breaking his will with every thrust. And the deeper Phoenix sank into him, the tighter he squeezed around him, holding him inside, inviting him to finish inside of him.

Climax hit Lars first, sending tension through his entire body. His entrance gripped around Phoenix's cock; he never wanted him to withdraw. Phoenix roared, the sudden embracing tightness inducing his orgasm. He knotted, sealing and locking inside of Lars's channel as he wave after wave of come shot deep inside.

The Alpha was shuddering, his face clenched into a strained grimace. His fingers dug painfully into Lars's flesh, holding him tightly in place. His cock throbbed again and Lars felt another hot gush of his seed deep inside. There was too much—he was filled to the brim, and not even the anchoring hold of the knot could restrain the excess from spurting out. Lars cried out as he felt its warmth seep out from his hole, oozing down his thighs and his balls. His body reacted viscerally to the loss of the potent

stuff, and his hand shot between his thighs in an attempt to rescue it with his palm.

Griffin still kept his gaze. The Alpha took his face into his hands, his huge palms cradling his cheeks. "You're lucky we found you," he rumbled. "Do you know why?"

Lars struggled to speak. He could barely keep himself up. His arms trembled. Shocks of the orgasm continued to spark through him, sending spasms to his muscles, curling his toes and shaking his extremities. "My luck..." he managed. "I've had none of it. Not since the war began."

Phoenix, his cock pinned deep inside of him, wrapped his arms around Lars. Holding him tightly, he lay them on their side on the sleeping fur. With Lars in the center, the two brothers formed a kind of protective nest around him. Lars felt the warmth of their bodies surrounding him, felt the lazy pulse of Phoenix's knot, felt their heartbeats. He drew in deep, hungry lungfuls of their scent, bathing and reveling in it. The resonance, the harmonization; it was perfect. It felt so incredibly right—and he absolutely loathed the fact that it did.

Phoenix licked his neck where Griffin had scruffed him, lightly brushing his lips against the wound. A tingling sensation spread across his skin, replacing the raw soreness.

"Bear us a strong child," Phoenix said. "And you'll understand just how lucky you are."

As the fervor of his arousal slowly cleared, Lars buried his face into the furs in an attempt to hide himself away from the situation and his two captors, to comfort himself. But, with cruel irony, only the scent and presence of the Alphas could provide that for him.

\* \* \*

During the following days, Lars was dragged around by one brother or the other and oftentimes both as they went about their duties at the forest camp in Zone E. The rules were always the same: Don't speak unless spoken to. Be invisible. It was past the period of adjustment where his body would suffer from being out of their presence for too long, but the soldiers here were savage and couldn't be trusted. There hadn't been a major skirmish in over a week, but the men had been there for months without much reprieve and they were hungry for blood and for mates.

Lars was more of a pet than a mate or even a servant. He followed quietly and sat at a distance, sometimes in his wolf form, watching and listening to the proceedings. There were no more secret exchanges, no more whispers or unusual meetings. There wasn't much of anything.

He was disturbed by the first intruding thought of actually looking forward to going back to the tent with Griffin and Phoenix. What frightened him was that it was his own thought, not one spurred by cravings he had no control of.

Part of him wanted to run. To escape past the barbed wire where he knew he would be quickly ended, either by wolf trap or the mines that remained. But that part of him was quickly quieted. It was just an intruding thought, too. He had no right to take his own life. He had promised his parents he would live. He had promised his people he would return and avenge them. And he would try.

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And there was the reality that he was slowly coming to accept: Hewouldbecome pregnant soon. Maybe it was already happening now, one of the brothers' potent seed making its way into his Omega womb and fertilizing him. And after he birthed that first child, they'd impregnate him with another. And another. Perhaps that was what his existence would be for the rest of his time on this planet: Just a machine to create a legacy for these two wicked men.

Would he be given the chance to raise his own children? If he was, then maybe that was the way. He could whisper to them, tell them secret stories, plant the seeds of revolution in them. He could tell them the truth.

In an attempt to divert his mind from the dark unknowns of the future, Lars focused his attention on the trees, watching for the signs of birds hiding in their branches. He was in his wolf form, laying outside of the tent where Griffin was meeting with a group of officers. Phoenix was off somewhere meeting with some dignitaries who'd come from Xyletia. More and more were entering Ekdol every day to try and fill positions in the new government and secure new territories and wealth for themselves. Once Ekdol was secured they would push west to invade the nations of Lios and Lyre, continuing their expansion until the entire map was Xyletian blue.

His attention was drawn by a flash of yellow feathers flitting through the leaves. His ears perked up for a call. Then it came, a rising and falling whistle. Warmth gathered in his heart as his mind went back to the comfort of better times. "The Ekdolian Royal Warbler," his mother had told him, "is the only bird in this country whose feathers change color when it's put in captivity. And if it's released, then they change once again."

He'd convinced her to free the warbler they'd had at the aviary, and the two of them had let it go together. In the weeks afterward, he would continue to observe a single blue warbler amongst the golden ones in the trees surrounding the grounds. Then, one day, the blue bird was nowhere to be seen. In its place was one with the most brilliant red and orange plumage that Lars had ever seen.

A presence behind him turned his eyes from the bird. He was shocked to find Griffin quietly approaching, padding over to him in his wolf form. The Alpha sat next to him. Lars said nothing. He hated that he'd now so completely given himself to their rules, but he'd found the punishments too much to bear. Being mounted and taken by them every night was already an overwhelming enough experience without having to deal with the torturous ache of unanswered desire for hours on end on top of it.

"I've never seen that type of bird," Griffin said softly. His voice was deep and gravely from filtering through his wolf throat. "What is it?"

"Ekdolian Royal Warbler," Lars replied coldly.

"It's beautiful. We have warblers in Xyletia. None as beautiful as this one. And none nearly as beautiful as the ones in Adosh. They would gather in the trees by my childhood home. Glimmering rainbow feathers that would change color in the sunlight. Phoenix and I would watch them for hours."

Lars said nothing. The two brothers didn't seem like the type who'd quietly observe birds. More like the kind who throw stones at them, or shoot them down from the branches with guns.

Griffin nodded his head towards the warbler. "Is it a rare bird in Ekdol?"

Lars still held his tongue.

"Well? Answer my question when I speak to you, Lars," Griffin barked. The bird fluttered off the branch and disappeared into the forest. Lars recoiled slightly.

"What's the matter with you?" Griffin asked, his fangs flashing.

"You frighten me," he said hesitantly.

"Good. An Omega should fear his Alpha."

Lars looked away, lowering his head onto his paws. He exhaled sharply, blowing up a little puff of dirt. He could feel Griffin's glare on him, those damn glowing ember eyes. He hated how his body reacted to them.

"I... I apologize. I didn't intend to frighten the bird."

He looked back at Griffin, surprised. It was the first time the Alpha had ever apologized, had ever used that kind of voice with him.

"Just me, then?" Lars asked.

Griffin barked again, this time dismissively. "Do you expect me to apologize for that, too?"

"If I'm your Omega, I'd expect that I would be treated with... perhaps some dignity? I'm more a slave to you both than a mate."

"I'm pleased to hear you acknowledge what you are," Griffin said.

"Your slave?"

"No. Our Omega. It's good to hear you accept it."

"It's not that I accept it. The marking was made, what other choice do I have in the matter? I am your prisoner."

"You play a very important role," Griffin said. "You are important."

"Because I'm going to bear one of you an heir," Lars replied. He'd heard it enough. "And yet neither of you tell me more than that."

"There is nothing more that you need to know. Not at this time. But you will find out."

This was the most openly that either of them had ever spoken to him. Lars took a chance to ask another question, the one that had been weighing on his mind. "So, after I'm pregnant, after I bear a child... What will happen to me? Will I still remain your prisoner?"

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Griffin rose. "That remains to be determined. Follow. We return to the tent. Phoenix is to be transferred into town and you will go with him tonight."

"You aren't coming?" Lars asked.

"I will be there in a day. Don't worry."

"I'm not," he muttered, immediately feeling disgusted with himself. He'd asked because if Griffin weren't around, that meant he couldn't be sated. The humming chord would grow and grow until it ached, threatening to crumble him from the inside. Neither brother would take him without the other present, and he needed their sex.

\* \* \*

Although the Xyletian banner flew throughout Estria, everything was as Ekdolian as it had been before the invasion. The architecture, the decor, the furniture... Their room above the banquet hall was richly decorated, as was to be expected of the accommodations for dignitaries and royal visitors, and for the first time in weeks, Lars found himself in a truly familiar place. It felt like it could've been a room in the palace. The furniture was carved with the same ornate motifs that he saw in rooms around the royal residences. Even the drapes looked to be the same, with their intricate lacework. And the sheets—they were made of Ekdolian silk, the very same that he'd had in his own bedroom.

None of it brought him any comfort. It only served to remind him of the world that once was that no longer existed. He was in Ekdol; these were his people and he was



doing nothing to help them. But what could he do?

How could he escape from this?

Phoenix's cock throbbed in Lars's grasp as he stroked him, signaling his imminent finish. The Alpha roared and thrust his cock back into Lars's mouth, where it spilled hot seed down his throat. Lars swallowed it, and he collapsed backwards when Phoenix pulled away, his cock still dripping with semen. Lars sank to the ground, gasping for breath.

"I'm afraid you'll get no more than that until Griffin returns," Phoenix said, walking to the window. He opened the blinds and sunlight flooded over his naked body, filling the room.

"I'm aware," Lars coughed. The taste of his Alpha's come lingered in his mouth, and he found himself licking his lips.

"Here," Phoenix grunted. Lars looked up and saw the man was offering him a glass of water.

"I don't need it," Lars said, turning away.

Phoenix looked at him out of the corner of his eye and drank the water himself. "Good. You enjoy my taste."

Lars ignored the comment and went over to the window. On the street below, a line of people waited to collect ration handouts while soldiers in both human and wolf forms patrolled. Lars watched as the wolves took their time to stop and investigate random people, invading handbags and jackets with their noses.

"What are they doing?" he asked.

"Searching for contraband," Phoenix said.

Lars drew in a surprised breath as he felt the Alpha's arms slip around his body and his face press into the spot on his neck where Griffin had bitten him. He could feel Phoenix's cock against him, teasing him.

"I can smell your desire for me," he growled into Lars's ear. "For us."

Lars closed his eyes. His fear of Phoenix was on a different level than Griffin. He was unpredictable and he didn't seem to have an ounce of compassion in him. All Lars could do was let go, to float away.

Phoenix released him and moved away. Lars released the breath that he'd been holding in and touched his neck where the man's lips had been.

"I need to leave," Phoenix said. Lars didn't turn from the window, staring out at the Xyletian flag that was fluttering from the eaves of the building across the street. He heard the Alpha move about the room and the rustle of clothing as he dressed.

This room would be another prison. How many would he experience?

Phoenix's heavy footsteps approached again, and Lars braced himself for whatever might come. He felt the soft drape of fabric on his shoulders, and when he looked down he was surprised to see Phoenix had given him a coat. It was a well-made garment, nothing like the cheerless servant's uniform that'd been his sole outfit.

"Take this," Phoenix said. "There are more in the closet."

"What for?" Lars asked.

"I feel your listlessness. You'll need proper clothing to go outside and stretch your

legs."

"Outside? You mean... out there?"

"Where else? If you stay locked in these rooms there's no way you'll be fit to give us the strong child we need."

"Am I to go alone?"

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"I can't always be around. Of course, alone. Or you can stay locked in here. It's your choice."

Lars was flabbergasted, unsure if Phoenix was just pulling his chain.

"What if I run?"

The Alpha's laugh boomed, causing Lars to blush with embarrassment. Phoenix finished strapping on his belt. He pulled out the de-shifter rod and tested it before slipping it into its holster. The crackle of purple electricity that momentarily spat from the end made Lars jump.

"If you run, then I'll find you. I'll find you no matter where you go. I will always be able to find your scent, Omega. But you won't run. You can't leave. We both know what you need, and I know that it's only gotten stronger." He drew on his coat and went for the door. "Go outside. Or don't. You can make that choice. But you won't always have such autonomy. But one thing—if you speak your true name to anyone... neither Griffin or I will be able to stop whatever may happen to you."

Then he was gone, the door slamming behind him.

Lars stood motionless for some time, his heart pounding. He was waiting for something to happen, for Phoenix come bursting back in. Nothing happened. He walked to the door and tested the handle. It was unlocked.

Inside the wardrobe were several outfits—nothing extravagant, but real clothing. And they all seemed to be soaked in Phoenix's scent; every piece he pulled smelled like

it'd been in contact with the Alpha's body. Maybe that was his way of reminding Lars who he belonged to.

He changed out of the grey servant garb and put on some wool trousers, a red shirt made of a knit fabric, and the overcoat that Phoenix had placed over his shoulders. Then he went back to the door.

After some debating, he opened it. Would he be punished for this?

No, Phoenix had given him permission to leave. As unpredictable as he was, as horrible as he could be, Phoenix had never lied. Both brothers always kept their word, and always spoke plainly. He was worried that he would learn about a new, even more sadistic side to Phoenix, but the thought of taking back even just an iota of his freedom trumped the fear.

He stepped into the hallway. When he went downstairs, he passed by soldiers who paid him no attention. There was no one coming after him to stop him, no one watching him. He made his way through the lobby of the banquet hall, which was draped on both sides with Xyletian banners and flags, flying towards the double doors at the entrance. Soon he was past them too, the final barrier. He heard the sound and bustle of the street and the warm afternoon air on his face. He was outside.

He hurried through town, keeping his head down and hidden from the groups of passing soldiers. He would blend into the crowd and leave the town and be free. He could go far away, somewhere beyond the reach of the Empire. There were countries to the west across the ocean that hadn't been touched by the war. He could go there. The brothers wouldn't be able to find him.

A passing truck swerved and honked, narrowly avoiding Lars as he stepped out into the street. He stumbled back nearly fell over a vagrant wolf who was walking behind him, a sack of belongings tied around his back.

"Watch where the bloody hell you're going," the wolf snarled.

"I apologize," Lars said quickly, stepping back onto the safety of the sidewalk. He'd never walked a street on his own before. In fact, he'd never walked a street at all. The times he'd traveled around the capital had always been in a vehicle convoy, with an escort. The streets had always been so empty, and he'd never bothered to wonder why.

He tried to remember the way they'd entered the town, but he quickly realized that he was out of his depth. He didn't know how to navigate. So he walked straight, following the sparse traffic of people and wolves who were walking in the same direction.

An overwhelming feeling of curiosity came over him. These were the citizens of Ekdol, his people. He'd heard about them all his life and had never before met an Ekdolian of the common class before. He wanted to speak to them. Get to know the people who occupied so much of his heart and mind.

"Excuse me," he said to an older woman who was hefting a large trunk under one arm.

"Yes, I could use some help," she replied, sighing in relief. "By the hounds of Hell, I was beginning to wonder if anyone had any common courtesy to assist an old lady."

"Ah..."

She dropped the trunk on the ground. "You're a kind young man. Rare breed these days."

Lars hadn't actually intended to volunteer himself to carry her luggage, but he did so anyway. His eyes bugged out when he hoisted up the bag—the thing felt like it

must've contained everything she owned.

"I'm just heading towards the checkpoint," she said. "If you can help me for as far as you're going in that direction, it's greatly appreciated."

"I'm going there, too," he said.

"Well, good."

"Do you know the way?"

She laughed. "Well, I sure hope so. It'd be terrible if I forgot how to get out of a town with one main road!"

"Are you leaving Estria?" he asked.

"Indeed I am. Might be opportunities for a young man like yourself—" She paused and sniffed. "Are you an Alpha, or a Beta? My senses have dulled and I can't so easily these days."

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"Uh... a Beta," he said.

"Well, plenty of Alphas coming through now with the Empire in control. Not so good for an old Beta like me. This Estria isn't the peaceful place it once was, as I'm sure you know. But then again, maybe everywhere in Ekdol is the same now."

"I'm leaving, too," Lars said. It felt like he was trying to convince himself.

"Where are you headed?"

"Out of the country," he replied, feeling strange.

"You have clearance?" she asked.

"Clearance?"

"It was in the infocast. They've shut the borders. No one in or out without special clearance."

Clearance? What kind of clearance would he need? Could he really go through with this?

They reached the checkpoint, which was congested with a line of people waiting to pass through. The guards waved in a convoy of Xyletian trucks, and soldiers in wolf form inspected those making their way out. He tensed as two wolf guards padded down the line, sniffing at the dirt. They paused for a moment in front of him, raising their noses in the air. Lars pulled his coat tight, hoping that Phoenix's scent would



properly hide that he was an Omega. He didn't want any extra attention. Obviously, he hadn't thought this plan through. The wolves continued on.

He and the woman neared the front of the line. She reached into her jacket and pulled out a fold of papers, and when they reached the inspection officer he held out his hand.

"Papers, please," he demanded, and she gave them over to him. The officer turned to Lars. "Put the luggage down and have your papers ready. Any baggage, ma'am?"

"Just the one my friend here is carrying. You can set it down, young man."

Lars froze. He watched as the officer unfolded the woman's papers. They were marked as identification, with a photograph of her, fingerprints, a paw stamp, and a yellow marking that indicated her status as a Beta.

"Ah... I need to..." He slowly set the trunk down. "I forgot my..."

When no one was paying attention to him, he left the line. He walked quickly, praying that the officer wouldn't send someone after him.

Stupid.

How could he leave? He felt stupid to think it would be possible. He had no way of navigating this world—he could barely even find his way to the border of a one-road town. He had no protection, no escorts, no power. He was an Omega, and he bore the permanent scent marking of the Greer brothers. Eventually, someone would find him out—if he wasn't kidnapped before that. He was a naive fool to think it would be so easy.

He quickly ducked down a side street, needing to calm his racing heart. He peered

back around the corner and was relieved to find that he wasn't being followed.

The worst truth was that Phoenix was right. Of course he was. Even if he had somehow made it out of the town, made it miles from here, he would've ended up being sick for the two Alphas. His body would never let him leave them. His body would always be tethered to theirs, no matter how much his mind tried to pull away and protect himself. He really was helpless. How did he expect to help the Ekdolian people? Just what could he have done? He couldn't even save himself.

He refused to cry, even though he was ready to burst. It was painful, but at least it was one decision he could still make for himself.

When his nerves had calmed, Lars returned to path to walk back to the banquet building. It felt as though a layer of stone had settled around his heart, encasing it. He wondered what would've happened if he'd never been captured by the Greer brothers to begin with, and realized the situation probably wouldn't have been so different. They'd told him the neutral zone had been compromised, that Xyletia already held the government there. Perhaps his fate had always been to stay in the shadows, locked away to exist as not much more than a breeder for whatever high-born Alpha would've claimed him to legitimize their right to the Ekdol throne. Perhaps it would've been the same even if Ekdol had never been invaded.

"They told me I could get one more ration portion! Please, my mother needs this..." A young boy stood defiant in front of a group of soldiers operating a food ration cart. He held a package of rations under his arm and was waving a fold identification papers with his other hand. Lars slowed his pace as he passed by.

"Then your mother should be here," the soldier said. "Get a move on, kid."

"She's sick. I have her papers here! They said I could collect another ration if I had her papers!"

"Shut the hell up and get a move on, I said!" The soldier swung out and caught the boy in the side of his head with the back of his hand. The boy stumbled to the ground, dropping his package which burst open, scattering dried ration wafers across the stone. He groaned and scrambled to pick them up, but one of the soldiers slammed his boot against his side. He tumbled over, coughing. The soldiers then proceeded to smash the wafers into dust with their heels. The line of people pretended not to see, each person collecting their packages and quickly moving on.

The boy clutched his stomach with tears in his eyes and moved to sweep up what he could salvage of the pulverized rations while the soldiers watched, snickering.

Lars was unable to hold his anger. These were his people, who he was supposed to support and protect. He couldn't just let this happen. Maybe he had no power to do anything about it, but he wasn't thinking about that now. He moved forward, reacting without thinking.

"Give this child what he needs," he demanded, putting himself between the boy and guards. "You have no right to deny him."

The guards laughed. "Walk away, unless you want to be put down."

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"I will not," he said, his voice raising. "Two ration packages for this boy, now."

"Listen to him," the lead guard said. "Who does he think he is? The Emperor?"

People were watching now, talking quietly amongst themselves. A crowd was gathering. Some looked afraid, but others were angry. They'd all suffered from the invasion, and now that someone was speaking up, their frustrations were bubbling forth, emboldened.

"I'm an Ekdolian," he said. "As is each person who stands here with me. Now feed this child and his mother, or else this transgression will be brought before the Commander Phoenix Greer." He hated to invoke the Alpha, but he could think of no other way to help the boy.

The soldiers looked at one another, uncertain, but the leader just laughed. "Why would a Commander listen to you?" He was just an ordinary soldier, not one of the Feral Fang. He may never have even encountered Phoenix in person before.

The crowd grew larger, filling with angry faces.

"Give him the packages!" someone shouted.

"Silence!" the lead soldier shouted, drawing his pistol.

Lars reached deep into his mind and called his wolf form forward. He was ready to shift, to lash out and defend these people with his life if he had to.

"Hey," one of the other soldiers said, frantically putting his hand on the leader's arm. "This isn't good."

The lead soldier seemed to finally see the situation was quickly growing out of hand. Gritting his teeth, he gestured at the two soldiers distributing the rations. They were wide-eyed, their hands hovering over their holsters. "Give him what he needs," he grunted. "Hurry up."

They got two packages from their truck and gave them to the boy.

"Remember the Empire's mercy," the lead soldier shouted, holstering his pistol. "Everyone get back to their business."

Lars quickly hurried away, dipping into the crowd. He was shaken by the experience, but he felt heartened. He might not have the strength to do much, but at least the will to help his people had not been compromised by fear and self-doubt.

He neared the banquet hall when suddenly he found himself surrounded by three wolf soldiers, two flanking him on either side and one boxing him in from the rear. "You're coming with us," the one on his right said—it was the soldier from the ration line. "Don't try to run."

They pushed him down an empty side street and shifted back into their human forms. Lars opened his mouth to protest but was unable to get a single word out before being struck in the face by the leader's fist. He fell backwards, knocking his head on the cobblestones. His vision turned to a field of stars before giving way to the sight of an incoming boot heel. He tried to concentrate enough to bring forth his wolf form, so he'd at least have some kind of a chance at defending himself, but was immediately met with the business end of a de-shifting rod. The energy arced through his body, sending him into convulsions. One of the soldiers kicked him in the stomach, knocking the wind from his lungs. He coughed and sputtered and eventually vomited.

His attempts to protect himself were in vain. Soon, he was unable to do anything at all.

Would they kill him? Was he going to die here?

In the delirium of the moment, he found his mind calling out for his Alphas. It must've been an automatic defense mechanism, because he never would've wanted to turn to those two for help. But now all he could see was them.

Everything he saw was encapsulated in a dark tunnel that was slowly constricting in the center, like a closing iris. He saw a dark figure appear at the end of the street, just a silhouette. Was that...?

"Pardon me," a distant, echoing voice said. "But I'm going to have to ask you all to stop."

"Turn around and go about your business, citizen," one of the soldiers barked.

The man approached, and in the haze of his blood-soaked vision, Lars saw it was not who he expected. The Alpha was a stranger. He was clad in a well-tailored suit and bore a playful smirk on his handsome face. "I don't like what I'm seeing here."

"You'll be sorry if you don't get the hell out."

"I'm afraid I can't do that, sir. And I'm afraid I cannot just ignore this without bringing it to the attention of your superiors during tonight's meeting. No, I do believe it will be you three who will be sorry. I cannot expect that your commander will enjoy the knowledge that three of his men have beaten his mate nearly half to death."

"What? What are you talking about?"

"Surely you knew who this Omega was before you turned your boots on him?"

The soldiers said nothing.

"Don't tell me you didn't even realize he was an Omega? What would your emperor think? Destroying property of the Empire."

"Just who are you, anyway?" the leader asked, a vein of fear in his voice.

It was at that moment that the darkness enveloped Lars, pulling him into the inky pit of unconsciousness.

### Chapter 6

Consciousness came in waves. Lars heard the Alpha's booming voice, furious and demanding, though he couldn't understand what he was yelling about, or he was just unable to maintain the memories. He saw the concerned face of the stranger who'd defended him.

He could feel Phoenix's presence and his touch. It reached into him, finding him in the dark like a beam of fiery sunlight cutting through murky water. Lars saw him sitting at his bedside, Phoenix's gaze fixed on him like a watchful guard.

He impatiently dismissed the healers attending to Lars as soon as they were finished with their basic duties, not wanting anyone to be around his Omega any longer than necessary. He insisted that he would be the one to change his bandages; no one was to touch Lars other than him. He applied the healing salves himself, cursing under his breath for allowing this to happen.

Lars heard and felt it all, though none of it really stuck. All he knew was the feeling of security when Phoenix was there, like a warm blanket on a cold day. Then he felt Griffin's presence and knew he was there, too. His body reacted immediately, like it was suddenly connected to a source of healing energy. He could hear the wavering call of a royal warbler.

Where was he?

The haze surrounding his mind began to clear. And for a brief moment when he fully regained consciousness, he thought he was back in his room at the royal residence.



Then the illusion quickly faded and reality greeted him. He was in the bed in the banquet hall's VIP suite.

Grimacing, he slowly raised his head. The first layer of thin drapes were partially pulled closed to diffuse the bright sunlight, but the window was ajar and they fluttered softly in a cool breeze. He heard the sound of the warbler again. He managed to sit himself up. Griffin stood by the window, his hands clasped behind his back. Next to him, inside a large birdcage, was a bright blue royal warbler.

The Alpha turned around, sensing him come to. "Lars," he said, walking over to kneel by his bedside. "How do you feel?"

"What happened?" Lars asked weakly. Complete lucidity had still not returned.

"You were badly beaten by three Xyletian soldiers," Griffin said. Fury flashed across his face. "Ambassador Longfang witnessed it all, including the situation with the rations."

"Your army is full of wild beasts," Lars muttered. "They have no control. It pains me to know that this is happening across Ekdol. Across the world."

"There's no room for such behavior in my army," he said gravely. "My brother agrees. I promise you, this will not always be the way it will be."

Lars laughed and turned away, a sharp pain shooting through his chest from the effort. "That doesn't console me."

Griffin used the back of his hand to caress him, gently brushing Lars's hair and shoulder in a way that felt surprisingly affectionate, and it made Lars freeze. His body wanted to open up to Griffin, to melt into his touch and soak in every moment of it, but his mind and heart were muddled with suspicion.

Affection? It couldn't be. And even if it was, he wouldn't want to receive affection from the man. Or, at least he shouldn't want to.

Griffin left the bedside and returned to the window. "You'll be glad to know that an example has been made of them. I pulled the trigger myself."

"I'm not glad," Lars said, but it was a lie. It filled him with a sick glee that he'd not known before. "You seem to enjoy murdering your own men."

"I will not hesitate to dispense justice on those who deserve it. Nor will I fail to reward those who demonstrate their loyalty." Griffin looked like a statue. He reminded Lars of one of those towering statues he used to admire in the Hall of Heroes. Dominating. Powerful. Intense. "I brought this back for you," he said. "An Ekdolian Royal Warbler."

Griffin brought the cage over to Lars's bedside. The bird hopped around on the perch, pruning its sapphire feathers.

"Why?" Lars asked, genuinely perplexed by this gift.

"You are my Omega," Griffin said plainly.

The door opened and Phoenix burst in, filling the room with his fervid energy. The warbler, startled, fluttered around the cage.

"This was my error," Phoenix said. "I should never have let you out of my sight."

Griffin's tone was calm and even. "Brother... You should—"

"No, Griffin. He should never have been allowed outside. I told you it was not wise, and look what happened? He was nearly killed." His eyes were full of flame. He

crossed the room and kicked the door, slamming it shut and knocking a painting off the wall in the process. It fell to the ground, the glass smashing out of the frame. Lars watched Phoenix's rage with a mix of awe and slight terror.

"Phoenix," Griffin said.

"I would raise them from the dead to kill them again. I'd punish them for eternity for what they did to our Omega. Are you not angry? He will never leave my sight again. He will never—"

"Phoenix," Griffin boomed. He wasn't shouting, but his voice filled the room, dominating everything. This seemed to knock Phoenix back to reality. He stammered, unable to get any further words out.

"This isn't your fault," Griffin said, his voice mellowing. "Nor is it his. Don't punish yourself, and don't punish him. He's not our prisoner, he's our Omega."

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Phoenix fumed, pacing back and forth. "I apologize, brother," he said. "It was not my place to raise my voice against you."

Griffin nodded.

Lars was stunned by the display of humility he was witnessing—the way Phoenix bowed his knee and head slightly to Griffin in a show of submission. Being of a higher rank, the balance of power always seemed to flow in Phoenix's direction, at least to Lars's observation. Then, to make things even more confusing, Phoenix turned to Lars. "I will never let anyone harm you again. Forgive me for failing to protect you."

He could only manage a nod in response.

"I'll call for someone to clean up this mess," said Phoenix. Before stepping out of the room, he paused and said, "I'm pleased that you're alright, Lars."

"My brother has a way of leaving destruction in his wake," Griffin said. "It's served him well in his career."

Griffin poured a glass of water from a steel pitcher and brought it to Lars, sitting down at his bedside. When Lars tried to drink from it, he spilled water down his front. He was flabbergasted—the Alpha had used his name.

There was a knock on the door. "Enter," Griffin said.

Lars immediately recognized the man who entered, though he didn't know his name.

He was tall and lean, with a handsome angular face with a smooth, manicured appearance that suggested aristocracy. "Good day, Colonel. I heard some commotion from my room and wanted to make sure everything was alright." He took notice of the shattered glass on the floor. Then his eyes moved up to Lars, and he brightened. "Ah! Lars. You're awake. I'm relieved to know that you're recovering well. It was bad when I brought you back here. You were in a bad state."

"Ambassador Longfang," Griffin said, nodding. "Good day."

"You stopped those soldiers," Lars said, struggling to sit further upright.

"Please," he replied, holding up his hand. "Don't exert yourself. My name is Pym Longfang. I'm an ambassador from Ete."

"Ete," Lars said repeated.

"Mm. Are you familiar with it?"

"Yes. You've come a long way. Thank you for saving my life, Mr. Longfang."

"I'm relieved that I was in the right place at the right time, I only wish I could've I'd been there sooner. I recognized you as the good Commander and Colonel's mate. You see, I'm staying in the room two doors down. I caught the tail end of your heroics with young boy. Admirable stuff, sir, for you to stick your neck out for these people."

"Well, they're my people," Lars said. He caught a flash of Griffin's eyes and wished that he'd held his tongue, but it'd just slipped out.

"Oh. You're Ekdolian?" He didn't sound surprised. "Perhaps it's not my place to ask, but where did you meet the Commander and Colonel? A dual mating is quite rare, is it not?"

"You're right," Griffin said. "It's not your place to ask."

Pym nodded. "Apologies, I meant no offense." He took Lars's hand and shook it. "I'm very pleased to see that you are alright, Lars. Good day to you both."

Lars watched the man leave. With his gregarious charisma, Pym was the complete opposite of the two brothers. He reminded Lars of the Alphas he'd read about during his younger days, the charming princes from storybooks who had occupied his fantasies during quiet evenings in the royal residence's expansive library, and in his bedroom later at night.

Could Griffin detect his straying thoughts? The Alpha stared at him, his smoldering glare capturing Lars like a magnet. He could feel his body reacting, his skin growing clammy and tingly as thoughts of Griffin's touch filled his mind. It was hypnotic, the way everything seemed to become a shade darker except for his eyes. Those eyes...Both brothers had a way of looking at him that could instantly cause the darkest, most lascivious thoughts to grip his imagination. It was happening now, like he was using some silent power to remind Lars who owned his body and soul, that they were his Alphas and always would be.

He felt enraptured. He couldn't look away, even if he wanted to. His heart raced, causing his breath to quicken. He felt blood rushing down below, swelling his cock and making him drip. There was nothing but pain when he tried to move his beaten body, but that didn't stop him from wanting Griffin and Phoenix to be inside of him.

Griffin looked away and his grip on Lars lifted, leaving Lars sweating.

Bright sunlight filled the room when Griffin pulled back the curtains. "Are you hungry?" he asked.

Lars swallowed the lump in his throat. The humming had begun again.

He did hunger, but not for food. How could the Alpha do that to him and then just pretend like nothing had occurred?

"No," Lars replied.

"You should eat. You need to recover."

"You know I don't want food."

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"What do you want?" The bastard was teasing him.

Lars chewed on the inside of his mouth in frustration, not wanting to speak the words.

The door opened. It was Phoenix, back with an attendant in tow to clean up the mess. "Colonel," he said.

"Sir," Griffin replied, standing at attention. The tone had changed—military ranking had taken precedence again.

"We're needed downstairs."

Griffin nodded, and the brothers moved to leave. "Get some rest," Phoenix told Lars. "Someone will be here to periodically check on you." Then they disappeared from the room.

Lars sat in the bed and stared blankly at the door as it pulled shut. The room was silent, save for the tinkling of glass as the attendant swept the shards into a wooden dustpan.

No, it wasn't affection they felt for him. It was just their lust for control.

\* \* \*

He was sore and bruised but nothing had been broken in the attack, so the following day Lars was already able to get out of bed and move around. He sat by the window and watched the warbler prune itself. It was younger than the one his mother had



once kept in the aviary; it still bore some of the luminescent down feathering of a juvenile. He opened the little door on the cage and slowly stuck his hand in. To his surprise and delight, the bird hopped onto his palm. It weighed almost nothing, its little claws pricking into his skin.

Griffin and Phoenix were occupied by their military duties and had hardly returned to the room, but they'd both told Lars he was free to leave the building if he desired. This took Lars by surprise; he'd fully expected Phoenix to want to keep him under lock and key, or at least under supervision. But even with the ability to move freely, Lars was hesitant to do so. His first steps into the world without someone handling him had ended up in disaster, and it'd frightened him. Was this his fate? Was he not meant to live free?

But after gathering up some courage, Lars decided to try again.

He left the room and walked out to the balcony overlooking the center atrium of the building. He peered over the railing, down five stories to the bottom floor. A collection of people milled about in the lobby, some kind of official gathering by the way they were all dressed. Were Phoenix and Griffin down there among them? He couldn't imagine them suffering the company of bureaucrats and dignitaries.

Lars walked down the stairs to the next floor, the walls of which were adorned with large and exquisite oil paintings of epic scenes from ancient history and common shifter mythology. He walked around, looking at all of the artwork, when he came to an empty space at the far end of the room. He could see that a painting was missing—the wall was discolored in the shape of the frame that once hung there.

"By the order of the Empire, all imagery of the former ruling party must be destroyed."

Lars spun around in surprise. Pym Longfang stood behind him, rubbing his chin as he

gazed at the blank space on the wall. "Mr. Longfang," Lars said.

"I'm sorry. Did I startle you?"

"No," Lars said, shaking his head. He turned back to the wall. "So, you mean to say that the painting once here was of..."

"Indeed. The king and queen of Ekdol, Their Royal Highnesses Anthy and Lionel Lyandri."

His mother and father. Lars stared at the wall, trying to will their faces in his mind. Maybe it was better the painting had been removed. He didn't know if he could've dealt with seeing them. But he did want to. He missed them, especially his mother.

"So, all the paintings of the Ekdolian royalty were destroyed?" Lars asked.

"That's what the order says. It's been that way since the beginning, since this madness started half a century ago. Wash the memory of the past from the minds of the people and assimilate them as quickly as possible. Thankfully, my country is in a position to ally with the Empire. Far too remote for an invasion to be desirable."

"You don't like the Empire," Lars said.

Pym smiled. "Can you tell?" He held his finger to his lips. "Shh. Don't tell your mates."

Lars laughed—perhaps for the first time since the Empire crossed into Ekdolian lands. "Don't worry. Your secret is safe with me."

"I've been on assignment here for the past week and a half," said Pym. "Being stuck in this building for so many days made me restless. There are many rooms here, some

more obscured than others, but I indulged myself and explored what I could find." He leaned in conspiratorially. "And I have another secret to tell you. Would you like to know?"

Lars felt his heart jump. "I don't know. Do I want to know?"

"I think you do."

"Then tell me."

"The painting wasn't destroyed. Not yet, at least. I found it in one of the rooms here."

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Lars tried to hide his reaction. "Is it?"

"Would you like to see it?"

"Yes," he replied, without hesitation. "Yes, I would like to see it."

Pym jerked his head. "Come with me."

He led Lars down another floor, passing by a duo of soldiers in the hallway. They didn't acknowledge Pym, but both stopped and straightened to attention as Lars walked by them, giving him the same respect they would a superior officer. Lars stared at them, puzzled.

"This way," Pym said, opening a door.

Lars realized why the soldiers had acted the way they did. They knew who he was, and they were afraid of him. Or rather, they were afraid of what would happen if they did something to upset him, the Commander and Colonel's mate. Three men were dead because of him.

Again, that strange feeling welled up inside of him, of dark and righteous power. Three men were dead, and he felt they deserved it. That was what happened when you harmed a prince. And that was what happened when you harmed the mate of two powerful alphas.

The room they'd entered seemed to once have been a meeting hall that had been appropriated as a general storage area. Wooden chairs were strewn about, and there

were lines of crates of military rations and supplies.

"Through here." Pym opened another door that led into a small, dark room. He flicked a switch, and a dim chandelier flickered on. The inside was scattered with books dumped across the floor, stacks of papers, and piles of damaged artwork.

The painting stood out immediately, like it was glowing amongst the chaos. Lars crossed the room to where it sat against the wall and crouched down to look at the image of his mother and father. He covered his mouth, trying to hold back a sob. He reached out and touched the canvas. His mother's pale skin looked exactly how it had in life and in his memories, but her hair was without the streaks of white that'd been there before she'd died. His father also looked younger, his forehead lacking the many wrinkles and creases he remembered him having. It was a beautiful painting, probably done before Lars was born. Or...

He drew in an astonished breath as he saw what was clasped in his mother's hand. The pendant—his pendant, one and the same.

It was him. At least, it was meant to symbolize him. Because he was hidden away from birth, kept secret, he couldn't physically appear in any of the royal portraits and images. But his parents had always tried to include some kind of symbolic reference to him—a bird, a white stone, or in this case, the pendant that he would always wear, the symbol of his royal lineage.

The pendant that had been taken from him.

Before Pym could see it, Lars quickly wiped away a tear from the corner of his eye and stood up. "This is a beautiful painting. They were beautiful people. Thank you for showing it to me."

"Of course."

"I think I'll... I think I'll return to my room, now."

"Certainly. I'll walk you to the hallway."

Lars took one more look over his shoulder at the painting before Pym turned off the lights.

He sat alone in his room, his heart pounding as the faces of his parents burned brightly in his mind. He remembered his charge, his family duty, and felt cold tendrils creeping inside of his chest, pulling him down into a deep ocean of helplessness.

When the two Alphas returned to the room, Lars did something he'd never done before. He didn't wait for them to cast their spells on him, to seduce him with their commands and their mesmerism. He went to them.

Phoenix's eyes glowed with the usual fire, but the flames from his tongue were doused before they even had a chance to spout. Lars approached him, quietly removing the Alpha's coat. Now it was his look that guided and directed, his hands that moved their bodies and brought their lips to his. His feelings towards his captors had not changed, but at least he could take back some control over his fate.

They filled him over and over again, burying their cocks deep into him, leaving him gasping for breath and for more.

More.

More.

He pushed Griffin onto the bed, eating the pain that shocked through his bruised bones, and mounted the Alpha. He squeezed Phoenix's cock with his hand, tugging it

greedily to his lips.

He was going to decide how this would happen.

Griffin bellowed out, his muscles rippling as another orgasm gripped his body and Lars wrung every drop from his cock. Phoenix nabbed him around the waist and hauled him off Griffin, flipping him over onto all fours. When he attempted to mount him, Lars let out a feral snarl, kicked back with his leg, and struck him in the thigh. It'd been a completely reflexive reaction, and for a second, he expected Phoenix's response to be violent. But the Alpha seemed to be aroused by it. He grinned and hung back like a predator waiting for the right moment to strike.

And Lars, like perfect prey, presented his belly for the attack. He flipped onto his back and spread himself open for Phoenix, who charged forward and sank himself deep inside.

Lars growled for more. He was descending into an animalistic frenzy wilder and more unrestrained than anything he'd experienced before.

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Phoenix roared as he came, slamming in for one last thrust. When he pulled out, his knot rolled against Lars's inner spot and triggered his own explosive climax. Lars's cock heaved, spurting a line of come into the air that spattered across his own chest and onto Phoenix's cheek. The Alpha wiped it off with two fingers and held them to Lars's mouth. He opened and licked them clean.

He told himself that this enthusiasm wasn't from affection for the Alphas. It came from letting down his guard, of finally allowing himself fully give in to their primal connection.

Afterwards, they shifted into wolf form and nested into the bed, the two Alphas curling around him to form a protective den with their bodies. The warmth of their fur surrounded him, bathing him in washes of their pheromone-saturated scent.

\* \* \*

Over the following days, Lars found the courage to leave the building and explore Estria again. Being a checkpoint town, there wasn't much to see, just a few small businesses, official buildings, and small cafes that catered to the passing traffic of travelers heading in and out of the capital.

Lars found himself looking for Ekdolian things—the artwork and symbols that the Empire had missed removing in their hasty takeover of the place. He hoped to find more hidden paintings of his mother and father, more little hints of the things that were. As long as he could still find pieces of his old life, whether in the world around him or in his heart, then perhaps he could fully accept this existence.



The soldiers still reacted to him with fear. It seemed that every single one of them knew his face. But he also noticed that the people around town, the Ekdolian citizens, also recognized him. People whispered about him, nodded to him, looked at him with awe. Word had spread about him, an Ekdolian Omega taken by the demon dogs of the Empire who had defended a starving boy. Were people walking taller now? Did they seem to have a glimmer of self-assurance restored in their eyes? He wished there were more he could do, but if his presence inspired any sort of confidence in his people, then he was happy with that.

He occasionally crossed paths with Pym Longfang on his daily outings, oftentimes not exchanging more than a smile as they passed each other in the banquet hall's lobby.

One day, Lars left the room a little later in the morning than usual. The brothers had ravaged him from the moment they'd risen, killing their morning erections through the use of his holes. He'd been completely worn out and had to take a few hours to rest after they'd left. His body no longer suffered from the intense withdrawal symptoms it had weeks back, but he did find himself actually missing the Alphas. He missed when they'd taken him everywhere, kept them under their watch like he was their pet. He simply missed their presence.

But he refused to make that request of them. He wouldn't give in that far. If they filled him every night in the bedroom and always left him dripping with so much of their seed that it was a constant presence inside of his belly, then that would be enough to satisfy him.

When he stepped out of the room, he found Pym in the hallway unlocking his door. "Good afternoon, Mr. Longfang," he said, passing by him. He didn't know if it was his imagination, but he thought he could feel the man's eyes on him as he walked by—or did he want Pym to look at him? Was he hoping to draw his attention?

"Oh, Lars," Pym called after him. "I was just about to go for lunch. Are you busy? Would you care to join me?"

Lars stopped and turned. He wondered if the man could smell his Alpha's scent on him. Could he tell that he'd been freshly fucked? That Phoenix and Griffin's finish still dripped from his body?

"Is that such a good idea?" Lars asked.

"Why wouldn't it be? We both need to eat, it might as well be with each other." He smiled. "Don't worry, I know who your Alphas are. I can take care of myself. Besides, there's nothing wrong with a casual meal."

Lars thought about it for a moment and then nodded. "I'll wait right here for you."

After washing up in his room, Pym returned and the two of them went upstairs together to the cafeteria.

The banquet hall was so named because of the building's large auditorium on the first floor in which official banquets, meetings and rallies were held. Outside of those special events, the guests staying at the hall were served meals from a small cafeteria and restaurant on the top floor.

The room was mostly empty save for a few Xyletian officials sat at a table who were grumbling over some issue as they guzzled down glasses of red wine. Lars and Pym took a seat at a table and ate a modest meal of roasted game hen with a side of boiled and salted potatoes. Even the food had all been replaced to suit Xyletian taste, cutting out the potent spices that Ekdol cuisine was known for.

"Your Alphas are certainly renowned men in Xyletia," Pym said. "I see the respect they command."

"Is it respect or is it fear?" Lars asked.

"Perhaps both. Their men are extraordinarily loyal. There's been an influx of high-ranking officers here over the last few days, I imagine in preparation for when the Emperor makes his official visit to the capital city."

"The Emperor? He's coming to Ekdol?"

"You didn't know? I would've thought they'd have told you. Yes, of course, he's coming to inspect his new prize. Soon the last conflicts of the invasion will be over and Ekdol will be entirely his. He'll no doubt come through Estria for an inspection." Pym took out a silver cigarette case. "Do you mind?"

Lars shook his head, and Pym lit a cigarette with a small, silver lighter. He drew in a long breath and then blew the smoke from the corner of his mouth.

"Thankfully I'll be long gone from here before that happens," he said.

"Where will you be going?" Lars asked.

"Back to home, to Ete. My commission in your fine country is coming to an end. In fact, I intend on retiring. I've seen enough from this war and Ete's indifference in its involvement." He drew another drag from the cigarette.

"You're lucky that you can just walk away from it."

"Would you walk away from it?" Pym asked.

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Lars laughed. The question just seemed so absurd that at first, he thought he was joking. "The thought hadn't even crossed my mind." he said. "I'm afraid that I'll never be able to walk away from this. The war will be with me for my entire life."

"I apologize. I didn't intend to come off as insensitive."

"My father used to tell me that even the strongest tree will break if it fights the wind. It's those which bend that weather the storm." He smiled. "So, I'm learning how to bend."

"You're a prisoner here, I know that," Pym said quietly. "You didn't come to these men on your own accord. Were you... Are you highborn?"

Lars looked up, startled. He felt his heart pounding. "What are you talking about?"

"I've spent my life around nobles and I know that you weren't just some common Omega they found and mated. You're someone important. Or at least, you come from a high family. Am I right?"

Now fear crept in. Lars looked around, worried that someone might overhear. "You're mistaken," he said. He wasn't afraid for himself, he was afraid for Pym. If the way he was speaking somehow made it back to the Griffin and Phoenix, they'd probably kill him.

"An Omega should have the freedom to choose their mate. What's happening here, what the Empire is doing across the world, is unconscionable. What has happened to you is unconscionable."

"And what would you do about it, Mr. Longfang?"

"I'd give you the power to choose."

"I don't understand why you would say something like that. There's no choice here. They're my mates. I am their Omega. My body will only ever respond to them. I'm sure you must know all this; you're an Alpha." He stood up. "Thank you for your company, Mr. Longfang."

"Wait," Pym said.

Lars paused.

"If you could choose, would you?"

"I need to go," Lars said. "Good day, Mr. Longfang."

Pym said nothing. He sat back in his chair, pale smoke curling from his nostrils as he watched Lars leave the room.

Lars hurried back downstairs, agitated. Why would he speak like that to him? What was the point of reminding him of his circumstances? It was infuriating. He slammed the door behind him. Back to his sanctuary. His prison.

Suddenly, Lars was hit with an intense wave of nausea, like the food he'd just eaten had turned sour in his stomach. He drank a glass of water but it didn't help. He covered his mouth as he felt the contents of his stomach shift. He retched. Ran to the bathroom. Vomited.

Something felt different, and it took him a while to realize what it was. He'd grown so accustomed to the constant hum that droned deep inside his body that it'd simply

become a part of his existence, a constant reminder of his need. But now the hum had silenced. In its wake was a feeling like the glow from a distant sun concentrated somewhere inside of his core.

He was sweating, dizzy. He made his way to a chair and sat, clutching his belly. When he closed his eyes, he could almost see it; a dim ball of light floating in darkness.

Lars didn't need to have this feeling explained to him; he understood it instinctively. He could feel it in his bones, in his very being. A part of him had remained convinced that it couldn't possibly happen. Pregnancy was something so foreign and strange that it was almost unfathomable to imagine. He'd tried to prepare himself for how he might feel when he learned that a child belonging to one of the brothers was growing inside of him, but he'd found it impossible. Maybe it was to protect himself—armor to preserve his sanity.

Now Lars felt an overwhelming sense of calm. He went around the room, responding to an urging compulsion to tidy it up. He fastidiously repositioned the items on the table, making sure they were properly placed. The warbler chirped frantically as Lars moved its cage three inches to the right. He stood back, examined its position relative to the bed, and moved it another inch.

Then he went to the bed and ripped the sheets away. He did this work with a singular focus; everything else had vanished. The things Pym had said no longer mattered—in fact he hardly remembered them at all. Carefully, he replaced the sheets so that they were crumpled and piled up. He crawled into them, inhaling deeply as he did. Then he shifted into his wolf form and used his snout to further adjust the fabric, but it still wasn't right. He dug at the mattress with his paws and tore at the pillows with his fangs until feathers fluttered through the air. He sniffed, studied, prodded, adjusted and readjusted again.

When Griffin and Phoenix returned, they found the room dark, a gap in the drawn curtains casting a lance of evening sunlight across a trail of pillow feathers on the floor to the nest of blankets on the bed where Lars was sleeping. He was mostly hidden by the nest, just a peek of the pale fur on his back rising and falling with his breathing. Then, hearing their arrival, he stirred. His head rose, and for a moment the light flashed across his irises and set them ablaze, like those of a wild creature in the night.

Phoenix closed the door slowly and carefully. Animal instinct had kicked in—they knew instantly what this was and what this meant. For the first time, the two Alphas were treading softly. Lars was in a vulnerable and volatile bestial state. A wrong move and he could lash out, potentially harming himself and the child now inside of him. Only they could get close to him, and they would need to in order to bring him back.

They shifted. Heads low, tails flat, they cautiously made their way across the room towards the nest. Lars let out a low growl, his lips pulling back to reveal his fangs. The two of them slowed but did not stop moving. Griffin moved ahead of his brother, his powerful nose tasting the heavy scent that hung in the room. They stayed in view of Lars, making sure that he could see them both at all times.

Griffin climbed the bed, two paws only at first, waiting for permission to enter the space. Lars's snarl quieted, and then finally stopped. Griffin offered his snout for Lars to smell. The Omega licked him, and Griffin rose to join him in the nest. Phoenix approached next—too quickly and too aggressively. Lars snarled suddenly and snapped, drawing blood on the side of the Alpha's face.

Phoenix pulled back, his fangs bared. Lars rose, fur bristling across his entire body. Griffin only watched—he could not interfere. Alpha and Omega stared each other down. Lars was ready to attack, a wild frenzy set into his eyes. After a long moment Phoenix was able to regather his self-control. He kept his head down and slowly

presented himself to his Omega.

Lars calmed and settled. He then licked the Alpha, cleaning his wound. Phoenix huffed and curled up beside Lars. Then he and Griffin began to groom Lars, licking his face, his ears, his eyes, everything. This was not something they'd been taught to do, it was complete instinct. And as his Alphas groomed him, Lars returned to himself. For a while he said nothing and simply took in the moment.

When was the last time he felt this safe?



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He turned to his Alphas and murmured blearily to them. "I think I'm pregnant." Then his body shifted back into its human form. He lay naked, curled up in the nest between the two wolves.

They lay quietly together for some time. Griffin broke the silence. "Tomorrow night you will accompany us to a meeting. You will keep this a secret. Telling anyone about this gathering and what you will learn there will mean certain death."

"Death?" Lars asked.

"Yes. For all of us. And many others."

"What is this about?"

"Don't ask so many questions," Phoenix grunted. "You wanted to know what your purpose is here. You'll learn."

"My purpose? To bear you heirs. I already know this."

"You'll understand," Griffin said.

The brothers shifted back to their human forms. Lars found that although the hum had subsided, his desires had not. The cravings for their sex had only grown more potent—his body still belonged to them. So, he indulged and submitted to them.

Something seemed different about the way they took him. Was Griffin's gentler than before? Did he feel more than just need for carnal release in Phoenix's touch? He

didn't want to believe that could be the case. Even though they made him moan and beg for more, even though they could tap into his deepest needs and leave him gasping and his body quivering with pleasure, they were still his captors.

## Chapter 7

Griffin and Phoenix were gone the next morning when he woke. He opened the curtains and had the first good look at the nest he'd built. It felt slightly foreign, like something from a dream. Slowly, he tidied it up. He knew this one was temporary—this wasn't home, after all. Inevitably, there would be many others.

He remembered what they'd told him.

A secret meeting.

Griffin had said that telling anyone about it would mean certain death for all of them, and others as well. He couldn't imagine what this could mean.

He uncovered the bird cage and the warbler bounced around in the sunlight, chirping excitedly. He wondered if the little creature was lonely. When he'd kept birds, they'd been in the aviary with plenty of room to fly and many other birds to be around.

But then, wasn't an aviary just another cage?

A knock at the door surprised him; the room was still a mess and a nest wasn't something to share with the world. He hurried around trying to brush the feathers into a pile and straighten out the ragged pile of sheets on the bed. Then a folded piece of paper slid underneath the door. When he looked outside, the hall was empty.

Lars unfolded the note, which had his first name scrawled on the outside in a fine script.

"Allow me to help you choose," the note read. "Meet me at the painting at sundown."

He frowned and crumpled the paper in his hand. Pym Longfang. Lars had thought he was a gentleman. Did Pym not understand how awful he'd made him feel with what he'd said? And putting a note like this under the door where anyone could find it?

Lars stewed. At first, he threw the note into the trash, but then decided it would be better torn to shreds and scattered from the window.

What was that man trying to achieve? More than that, who did he think he was? Speaking to him like that, and then making such a direct request. He hardly knew him.

Perhaps that was just how Alphas operated. When they saw something they wanted, they took it. Wasn't that how he came to be in this situation? His Alphas had simply taken him because they wanted an Omega. Was there no honor in this world?

And yet, Lars was curious.

He couldn't stop thinking about it the entire day, just as he couldn't stop thinking about the secret meeting.

Meet me at the painting.

He knew what this was referring to, and perhaps if Pym had asked him to meet anywhere else he would've been able to control his curiosity. But it was too much, and at sundown Lars left the room and hurried downstairs to the room where the painting of his parents was stored, hoping he could make it back before Griffin and Phoenix returned.

When he opened the door, Pym was waiting inside for him.

"You came," he said, sounding pleasantly surprised.

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

"Please explain why you've asked me to come here," Lars said.

"I apologize for yesterday," Pym said. "I should not have spoken such things to you so openly."

"No... And yet you ask me to meet you secretly? So, please explain."

"I asked you here because I have a confession to make."

"What do you mean?"

"You see, in my youth before I moved into foreign relations with the Ete government, I worked for many years as an agent of information. A spy, for lack of better terms. During my time as an agent I was assigned to Ekdol. I made many visits to the country, moved in and out of hidden places collecting information, including the royal household. During that time, I became aware of whispers of a hidden royal, an Omega who the king and queen had kept secret and protected."

Sweat prickled on the back of Lars's neck. He felt his heart quicken.

"Not unusual for a royal family to protect knowledge of an Omega heir," Pym continued. "What was unusual was the depth of the secret. I could never penetrate it, only glean shadows of it that convinced me it was not just a rumor. The closest I came to the truth was a name. Your name."

"So, you're suggesting that I'm this royal Omega?" Lars asked.

"I know it's you. So, tell me. What is your full name?"

Lars's heart pounded so furiously that he could hear every beat as loud as if it were sitting in the palm of his hand. All this time he'd been dying to reclaim the title that had been taken from him, and now he couldn't bring himself to speak it. Had his Alphas managed to take it from him that easily? Had they been that successful in transforming him?

He felt the glow of the child inside of him, an ember of heat that was a constant reminder of who he belonged to.

"You can say it," Pym urged. "It's alright."

"Lars... Liandri. Crown Prince of Ekdol." He felt like he'd just removed something heavy from his shoulders, and let out a sigh. "Congratulations. You know the secret. For your own safety, it's probably for the best that you don't tell anyone. Not that it matters anymore. My title is forfeit. I've come to accept that there's nothing that can be done."

"There is always something."

"I'm mated to Phoenix and Griffin Greer," Lars said, feeling anger rising inside of him. "And I'm pregnant with their child."

"Yes, I know. But what if I were to tell you there was a way to break the mate bond? That you could be freed from all of it? You could keep the child, or not. There is a way."

Lars was more taken aback by this than by Pym knowing his true identity. "What do you mean?"

"I leave Ekdol tomorrow," Pym said. "Back for Ete. We have a serum which can eliminate a mate bond. Your body will no longer crave them. And they won't be able to track you. If you come with me, there would be no way they'd be able to find you. You could live in Ete where the war will never come. A new beginning."

"Why would you do this for me?"

Pym smiled. "Because I've fallen for you. And I want to help you."

"Don't be ridiculous."

"It's true. I'm in love with you, Lars. Since the moment I met you."

Lars shook his head. "I... I need to go."

Pym reached out and grabbed his wrist, stopping him. "Stop running. I'm serious."

He pulled away. "So am I. My Alphas are expecting me."

"Your Alphas," Pym repeated. "Listen to yourself, Lars. They kidnapped you. You've been blinded by the mate bond. Don't you understand? Break the bond and you can be free from all of this. Please. Think about my offer. I'm not asking you to become my mate. I'm only offering a choice to live your own life."

Lars lingered, uncertainty gripping him for a moment before he turned to leave. "I have to go," he said.

"The checkpoint," Pym called after him. "Please consider my offer. I'll wait an hour there at midnight tomorrow for your answer."

\* \* \*

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

He sat alone by the window, unable to slow his racing heart.

Should this not have been a simple decision? Perhaps some time ago, it would've been.

How long had it been since he'd been taken? The burning of the royal grounds seemed like ancient history. Memories of the escape and his capture felt like a dream. Was it only a month ago that it'd all happened? Or had it been longer?

When he tried to imagine leaving he felt a painful tug in his body, like he was anchored in place. He felt Phoenix's raw energy and Griffin's incredible intensity, and he wanted them. He just couldn't imagine stepping away from them. It felt like it would devastate him and leave him with a gaping hole in his soul that could only be filled by their presence and what they had to give him. But was that just in his mind?

He couldn't say. His old life, his oldself, felt like a fading ghost. He could barely see it anymore. Everything was obscured by them, and now by the child they had put into him.

Perhaps Pym was right, and perhaps he had to act without thought. To follow him out, to trust that he was correct and that once he was released from the bond, he would know he had made the right decision.

A full moon had risen in a clear sky blanketed with stars. From somewhere far away, low rumbles echoed like a coming thunderstorm. Lars knew it wasn't the weather. Artillery was raining down on some distant battlefield. The country had been captured but the war still went on, flaring up like hot spots in a fire.



Lars heard boots out in the hallway and knew his Alphas were finally here. He rose.

"Good," said Phoenix. "You're ready. We're going."

"Wait," Lars said.

Phoenix stopped and looked back over his shoulder at him. "What?" he asked. It was obvious that he was not happy with being told to do something by his Omega.

Griffin stood in the hallway, arms folded over his chest. His uniform was clean and pressed, his golden collar polished to a mirror sheen. Phoenix, too—both their uniforms were in perfect order today, and Lars found himself admiring them. Had he always felt the two of them were this gorgeous? No, of course not. He used to be terrified of them. Disgusted, even. They'd been monsters...

"Do you... care for me?" Lars found himself asking.

Phoenix threw his head back and laughed, like it was the most ridiculous thing he'd ever heard. "We leave now," he said. "Follow."

"Answer me," Lars said.

"There is nothing to be answered," Phoenix shot, walking away.

Griffin jerked his head, silently gesturing for Lars to follow them.

He felt like a fool. Just what had he been expecting to hear them say?

The building was lifeless—everyone had gone home or went to sleep. They descended the stairs to the first floor and entered the large banquet room, which was dark and empty. There was a light on inside the kitchen, and Lars followed the

Alphas there.

The kitchen was equally vast, with lines of stove ranges and steel-topped counters necessary for preparing the kinds of massive feasts held at the hall. In the back of the room was a service elevator that was being guarded by two soldiers whose uniforms were emblazoned with the emblem of the Feral Fangs unit. They saluted and used a key to unlock and call the elevator.

He and the Alphas descended and emerged into a dank basement level, the cramped hallway lined with exposed piping and wet concrete floors. Four more Feral Fangs soldiers stood guard along the hallway, including two wolves. Those in human form were heavily armed and looked as if they were prepared to jump into a full-on battle at any moment. The soldiers saluted.

"They're waiting for you, gentlemen," one of them said. Lars recognized him—he was the man who Griffin had promoted to captain on the day he was captured. He unlocked and opened a door for the three of them to enter.

Inside was a storage room that had been transformed into a makeshift conference room. A group of around a dozen men and women all around the same age as the brothers sat around a table in the center of the room, and they all rose to their feet when Phoenix and Griffin entered. There were all high ranking Xyletian military officers—Lars could tell from the ranking badges on their collars. He noticed something else, too. All wore armbands with the crescent moon over mountain peaks sigil—the symbol of Adosh. He recognized two of the men—Captain Luna, and another whose name he didn't know. They were who Phoenix and Griffin had given secret messages to.

"We've all taken great risks," Phoenix said. His domineering voice filled the room, demanding the respect and attention of everyone present. "And we've made great sacrifices to protect our cause. A moment of silence for the fallen, the sacrificed, and

all those who deserve vengeance."

Lars watched as all bowed their heads. Just what was this?

"Let us commence the meeting." Phoenix took a step back and bowed deeply. "My elder brother, Crown Prince Griffin Greer of Adosh. Restore honor, return to order!"

"Restore honor, return to order," they all shouted, bowing as Griffin took the seat at the head of the table.

Lars stood in stunned silence. Elder brother. Crown Prince of Adosh.

"Sit," Griffin said to him, gesturing to the seat next to him. Lars fell into the chair, and Phoenix took the seat on the opposite side of his brother.

Griffin looked around the table at the faces of those who were gathered. "Brothers and sisters. Children of the conquered. We've worked and suffered and fought to rise to our positions within the Empire. Now, the time we've dreamed of our entire lives has finally presented itself. My brother and I have taken an Omega—the prince of Ekdol himself, Lars Lyandri. And he is with child."

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:00 am*

Murmurs went up around the room. "A prince? Ekdol had a prince?"

Lars suddenly understood, though it was hard for him to believe. This was a gathering of rebels. This was a resistance force, grown from deep within the Xyletian military by children of the nation of Adosh, which had been conquered by the Empire a generation ago. Charged with energy, he stood from his chair, rising to meet the call for his creed. "I am Prince Lars Lyandri of Ekdol, son of Anthy and Lionel. I am the heir to the throne of Ekdol." He expected the brothers to silence him like they had so many times before, but they didn't. Instead, all in the room bowed their heads respectfully towards Lars—a gesture of deference that was custom to be shown towards royals.

"Ekdol had a secret heir? This is better than we could've expected," a thin man with circular glasses said. He removed them and polished the lenses on his sleeve. "The hold on the throne will be strong. With another royal as a mate, there will be less trouble down the road."

"But if he was kept hidden, how will his lineage be proven?" a woman with striking red hair asked. Her military collar bore a commander's ranking, just like Phoenix's.

"Once the mission is completed and Prince Griffin is in control, who would question his word?" the man with the glasses replied.

"It would be wise to ensure that everything has been covered," Captain Luna said. "We've come this far, after all."

The room murmured in agreement.

Then Phoenix stood from his chair, his hand plunging into his coat's breast pocket. When he brought it out, he was clutching a gold chain from which hung an opalescent stone pendant. Lars's eyes widened—it was his.

"This should silence the doubt of any naysayer," Phoenix boomed. "The royal medallion of Ekdol." He held it out so that all could see it before slipping it back into his pocket.

"Well, it's settled," the man with the glasses said. "I think we can agree that we are ready to proceed."

"What do you intend to do?" Lars asked.

Griffin turned to him. An energy burned in his eyes, different from the smoldering fire Lars knew so well. For a moment, he looked like a much younger version of himself, one who was charged with impossible dreams and ambition. The dark severity was momentarily gone, replaced by what seemed to almost be an excited glee.

"We will take back Adosh," he said. "Avenge our families. Restore our honor. We will kill the Emperor."

## Chapter 8

"The seed was planted almost thirty years ago," Griffin said. "Every man and woman in this room was the son or daughter of the former court of Adosh, members who bowed their heads to the Empire and therefore gained places in the new government of Maitran. The King and Queen, our parents, accepted the shame of being stripped of title in exchange for their lives and were cast to common status. They became nothing more than peasants. None forgot or forgave, despite submitting. The traditions remained in secret, and each one of us had this mission tasked to us from

birth. Rise through the ranks of the Empire's military. Amass a following of loyal soldiers who would follow their leaders into death. And when the time came, strike back at Xyletia from within."

Lars was stunned. "And... our children will be heir to the new throne," he said, the pieces coming together. "Of Adosh?"

"The New Adosh Empire," Griffin said proudly. "We will liberate the countries under Xyletian control. Restore them to their former rule or induct them into the New Adosh Empire. And through our control, Ekdol will be yours again."

It felt like the world had tilted on its side. Lars could hardly believe what he'd just heard.

"This all depends on the operation being a success," Phoenix said. "The pieces must be set. If everything is not in place, we can easily be overpowered by loyalist forces. What we lack in number, we make up for in skill. We must be surgical—cut off all the heads so that the serpents cannot strike."

"My troops are in place," the red-haired woman said.

The rest of the room chimed in, each man and woman announcing that their end was covered. They all had their forces positioned in key cities throughout the Empire, ready to move in and take control the moment the Emperor was assassinated.

"But how will you kill the Emperor?" Lars asked.

"He'll walk into our den," Griffin said.

Lars then remembered what Pym had told him—the Emperor was coming here, a stop on his way into the capital.

"Then all is in place," Phoenix said. "We can commence the operation."

There was a murmur of excited agreement.

"I will kill the Emperor," said Griffin. "The Feral Fangs and the Crescent Moon units will take control and our agents in the capital will eliminate any oppositional leaders. They will send word through broadcast if the mission is a success. At that point, the rest of you must act quickly to take control of Xyletian government. The dogs on the council will bow their heads to whoever is in power. They won't fight when they learn the Emperor is dead."

"We will succeed or die trying," Captain Luna said. "For you, your highness."

"Don't do it for me," Griffin said gravely. "Do it for those who were dishonored. For our families. For our mothers and fathers who had the strength to endure the humiliation put upon them. For Adosh and its people."

"Restore honor, return to order!" Phoenix shouted, and all those seated in room echoed his voice.

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:01 am*

Lars bit away tears as he thought of his parents, who had chosen death over prostrating to the Empire. Mother, Father, he thought. You'll be avenged. He felt a great release, like he was ascending through the clouds to the heavens above. "Restore honor, return to order," he repeated.

He looked at Griffin and Phoenix. His Alphas sat tall, powerful, regal. They were absolutely glowing. Or did he see them that way because something inside of him had changed? The impossible had happened—he was filled with pride to be their Omega. And something else had blossomed inside of him—a deep lust for the taste of vengeance. Death to Xyletia and all those who opposed his Alphas and their New Adosh Empire.

\* \* \*

"Do you now understand, Omega?" Phoenix said to Lars. The two of them were outside in the hallway waiting for Griffin to finish privately addressing some of the officers.

"Don't call me that."

Phoenix scowled and turned away. "...Lars," he grunted under his breath.

Everything felt different now. His connection to Phoenix and Griffin had extended beyond something purely primal. He understood them. They were no longer monsters. He knew why they were the way they were because he also knew the pain that they'd endured. They'd had to become wild beasts in order to survive and succeed.



With some hesitation, Lars reached out and placed a gentle hand on his back. Phoenix's muscles tensed, like an animal about to strike out. Lars didn't pull back. It was the first time he'd touched him this way, an offering of intimacy without any lust or primal need behind it. He felt Phoenix's crackling fury and intensity, and it didn't frighten him. He knew where it came from, and he couldn't blame him for it.

"Why didn't you just tell me from the beginning?" Lars asked.

"And risk everything? We didn't trust you."

"And you trust me now?"

Phoenix laughed in his harsh, deprecating way and pulled away from Lars's touch. "Don't get this wrong, Lars. You're our Omega because we need what you can provide us."

"I don't believe you," Lars said, and Phoenix looked like he'd just been slapped in the face. He wasn't accustomed to Lars speaking this way to him. "But I understand. You don't need to tell me, because I learned everything I needed to tonight. As long as you honor me as your Omega by giving me back my people and my crown, then I will always stand by both of you. I will give you strong heirs, as many as my body is able to. I will do everything I can to help you succeed in your mission."

Phoenix looked at him, his hardened scowl unreadable as usual. He exhaled sharply, like he was about to do the most difficult thing in his life, and reached into his coat pocket.

"Take it. It's yours," he said, thrusting his hand out in front of him. The stone pendant hung from his grip.

Lars took it from him and cradled it in his palms. He traced his thumbs across its

shape, feeling its familiar weight in his hand. Tears streaked his cheeks, and he quickly slipped the chain around his neck.

"Mind who you show that to." Griffin had emerged from the room and was walking towards them.

Lars nodded and tucked the pendant under his shirt collar.

They made their way back to the room, with Lars following behind them by a few steps like he always did. He touched his shirt, feeling the shape of the stone beneath, and hurried forward to walk between them. He was their Omega. He was no longer going to walk behind them with his head held down like some slave.

Phoenix glared down at him, but otherwise didn't protest. Griffin didn't react at all.

Lars could hardly believe it, but there was happiness in his heart. For the first time that he could remember, he felt happy.

"Understand something," Griffin said, back at the room. "Whatever you may expect from us, know that we cannot give it to you. Phoenix and I are cursed by this mission we've been tasked with. It's all we know. If you expect us to show you love, you will forever be disappointed."

"I don't require it," Lars said. "A king must only need enough room in his heart and his mind for his people. If you can give me a chance to save my people, that's all I need."

A smile spread on Griffin's lips—small, but it was the first genuine smile that Lars had ever seen from him.

"That, we can provide," he said.

"And I'll provide the support I can," Lars said, walking to Griffin and slipping his hands beneath his coat. He pushed it back, and it fell from his shoulders and tumbled to the ground. "To my kings."

Phoenix didn't wait for help to undress. He had his coat off and was already popping open his shirt. He approached Lars from the rear and began to remove his clothing.

Lars went erect immediately and his entrance grew wet with desire. Their touch was aggressive and forceful, but Lars knew how to dance with them now. He came at them with equal aggression and pushed Griffin onto the bed, straddling his waist and kissing him. Phoenix, not wanting to be left out, came behind and raked his teeth across the back of Lars's neck, scruffing him. Lars cried out in a half moan, half shout. He spun around and slammed Phoenix with his palms, knocking him backwards.

"Oh, Phoenix chuckled. "I like this."

Lars jumped to him and pushed him onto his back. He nipped at his nipple, playfully at first, and then clamped down on it. Phoenix roared but didn't stop him. His cock was rock hard, and Lars reached down and squeezed.

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:01 am*

"This whole time I thought you were the elder one," Lars said. "But you're the baby."

Phoenix grinned. "Surprised? Now suck my brother's cock. He's waiting."

Griffin rose to his feet, leveling his member with Lars's mouth. Lars opened, drawing him inside and swallowing him deep into his throat.

As they moved to share his entrance and fill him with their lengths, Lars found himself struck with a very different pleasure than he'd experienced previously. He was in control and he was fully engaged. He wanted this, and not just because of the way his bond responded to his Alphas. Without any doubts or reservations, he wanted their sex. He felt power with them, and the pleasure it brought him was mind-bending. Love? Who needed love when there was this? This was a true bond, and it would be quenched with blood.

He came, again and again, until his entire body ached. And they filled him with their seed, taking turns on him until they had nothing left to give.

They'd had his soul. Now they had his heart.

### Chapter 9

The following afternoon, Griffin summoned a healer to the room to check on Lars and the pregnancy. Initially, he'd called for someone from the Xyletian military, but relented to Lars's request that he be examined by an Ekdolian. So the town's local healer was called, an old woman who had a reputation for being able to perform incredible predictions on the child's gender and hierarchical rank.

When she arrived, it was obvious that she was not happy to be there. "The whole army is here and you need to take me away from my patients? Certainly Xyletia must have one competent healer. Ludicrous."

"Do what you're told, old woman," Phoenix snapped.

"Or what? You'll kill me?" She set her case of equipment on the floor and went over to the couch where Lars sat.

"I'm starting to think about it," Phoenix muttered.

"Brother." Griffin slowly shook his head at him.

"I apologize," Lars said. "I requested you see me."

She narrowed her eyes. "You're an Ekdolian."

Lars nodded. "How can you tell? That's why I wanted you to see me and not some Xyletian."

Her demeanor immediately changed. "Oh. Well, that's understandable." She shifted into wolf form. "We all carry different scents. Some are more sensitive to them than others. I could smell the forests of Ekdol on you. That's how I knew. Your shirt off, please, young Omega."

He began unbuttoning his shirt. Phoenix stood next to him and kept his eyes on the old woman. Griffin was on the other side of the room, watching from a chair.

"Your Alphas are quite the watchdogs," she said.

Phoenix looked like he wanted to berate the old woman, but he held his tongue.

Lars folded the shirt and draped it over the side of the couch. The healer saw the pendant hanging around Lars's neck and paused, surprised.

"I know this symbol. It's a royal emblem. Who are you?"

Lars smiled. "Please, this child is important. I'd like to know what you can tell me about them."

"Yes," she said with wide eyes. "Right away."

Her wiry grey fur tickled his skin as she pressed her ear against his stomach, and she held it there for some time, listening intently.

"You've been with child for nearly a month now," she said.

Lars was surprised. "I only just felt it a few days ago."

"That's normal. Excuse me." She then began to sniff at him, moving her nose down to his crotch. Then she nodded and stepped away, shifting back to her human form. "Excellent."

"Well?" Phoenix asked. "What is it?"

Griffin stood, also looking impatient for the report.

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:01 am*

"This may come as a surprise... But there isn't just one in there. You're going to have twins. A boy and a girl."

Lars's jaw dropped. Phoenix looked shocked. Griffin was smiling.

"Twins," Phoenix repeated. He walked over to the bed and sat down, dazed.

"This is excellent news, indeed," Griffin said. "And? What will they be?"

"It's early," the healer said. "Difficult for me to say for sure, but I believe that they are both Alphas."

Phoenix clapped his hands together. "Fortune is with us."

Griffin came over to Lars and, to the Omega's surprise, rested his hand on his shoulder. It was hard to believe that this was the same man who Lars had once seen as a horrible monster. But he could see past the mask now. He could see the king who was there beneath it all, a man he knew would hold his word.

These children growing inside of him would eventually rule a new Ekdol.

The healer took her things and left, bowing deeply to Lars on her way out. She didn't outright say it, but it was clear she understood the honor she'd received by being invited there. Eventually she would be able to boast that she'd been the healer who'd first examined the royal children of the New Empire.

Lars sat in the middle of the two Alphas on the couch, their arms wrapped around

him. Griffin drew in deep breaths of him as he pressed his face against his neck, kissing him slowly down his chest towards his belly. He stopped there, lifted Lars's shirt and pressed his ear against his bare stomach.

"We've planned, trained, fought, killed and waited our entire lives for this." Lars felt the vibrations of Griffin's rough baritone voice rolling through him, like he was speaking to the twins inside. "We're so close now. So incredibly close. " He looked up at Lars. His gaze was hard and fearsome. It still managed to put butterflies into Lars's stomach, only now he fully welcomed the excitement. It no longer felt wrong.

"There's something I want to ask you," Lars said. "A request."

"What request?" Griffin asked.

"I want to be there when it happens. I want see you kill him."

"I'm afraid that's not possible," Griffin said.

"The Emperor ordered my parents' execution. I want to witness his."

Phoenix laughed. "Our Omega has a bloodlust. No, you'll remain at the bunker."

"I'll remain by your side."

"It will be too dangerous," Griffin said. "The fighting should be brief, but it will be intense. This building will be turned into a war zone. And if things get out of hand... it could become much bigger than that."

"You mean... if you fail?"

"We won't," Phoenix said.



"So I'm going to be locked away without any way of knowing what's happening? This is my fight, too."

"No," Phoenix snapped, furiously. "It's not your fight." He sighed. "The most important thing is that you are safe. And that our children are safe."

"If we do fail," said Griffin, his voice darkening, "There will still be a chance for you to live. And for the children to live. Then it will become your fight. We need you safe."

Lars bristled, but he understood. He was the future. He was the one who would birth this new empire and ensure that it could continue beyond them.

"When he had my parents executed, he ordered their deaths to be shown on every public viewscreen through the country. Do that for me. Make the whole world see that the Emperor has been slain. Show them it was vengeance from Adosh and from Ekdol. Can you do that?"

Griffin exchanged a glance with his brother.

"I can have this arranged," Phoenix said, grinning.

When they took him, Lars clung to their naked bodies and cast silent prayers into the void for their safety. He'd already lost too many things he loved.

And he did love them, just not in a way that he could've ever imagined loving a mate. He respected them. He was in awe of them. They were his Alphas, and he was their Omega.

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:01 am*

His fingers dug into their muscles as they thrust into him, touching the depths of his needs. He tasted their flesh, kissing and licking and begging for them to never stop.

He was no longer acting in a heat-driven frenzy like when they'd first taken him. That wild intoxication that had numbed his inhibitions was no longer what drove him. What he felt now was true uninhibited desire, and it was returned to him tenfold.

That night, Lars lay curled between the two sleeping wolves. The window was open, a cool breeze rustling the curtains. The wall clock ticked softly, and he watched the minute hand counting down from ten to midnight.

His heart beat a little faster. A door was about to close and forever lock him from a diverging path into a much different future. His choice was clear. Still, he found himself holding his breath as he watched the minutes slip by. Sixty ticks until the clock struck midnight.

He rose from the bed and silently moved across the room.

Thirty.

He went to the window and looked out across the peaceful town. Looking out across the horizon, he could see a pale orange glow in the sky, the lights from the capital city.

Ten.

He closed his eyes. I will have Ekdol returned to me, he thought. Or I'll die by their

side.

Three.

Two.

One.

The clock gonged. In his mind's eye Lars could see Pym Longfang waiting for him, checking the time again and again before finally relenting and slipping away into the night.

Everything will change.

Ekdol and its people would soon be returned to him. He knew that his land would heal quickly. The wounds were shallow. Adosh, however, would have a long way to go. The people there had forgotten its past. Many now only knew Maitran, the name it'd been given by its conquerors.

Could it ever be anything like the home their parents had told them stories of? Would the people welcome their leadership? Would they even remember who the Greers were?

Perhaps nothing could ever stay the same. Change was a natural part of life. It would be a new Adosh, and a new Ekdol. A new Empire.

He was new, too, no longer the same Omega who spent his days wandering the grounds of the royal estate, admiring the beautiful birds in his mother's aviary. He wasn't even the same Omega who had been captured and imprisoned by two ruthless Alphas.

Lars looked over his shoulder at the sleeping brothers, their warm fur touched by the light of the moon. He was certain they weren't the same either.

He uncovered the bird cage and peered in through the wiring at the beautiful blue warbler inside. The bird woke and pruned itself, and when he opened the door and put his hand inside, it hopped up onto his fingers. He gently stroked its head. Then he offered the bird to the sky, and it spread its sapphire wings and took flight, disappearing towards the forest.

## Chapter 10

Lars had come full circle. He was one story below the surface in Phoenix's quarters at the Feral Fangs base, the room where they'd first made him their mate. Returning there had felt like coming home—it still held significance in his mind as the first mating nest, and he could still detect their mixture of scents lingering in the bedsheets.

Hanging around his neck beside his royal pendant was a silver key. He removed it and turned it over in his fingertips.

"Here," Phoenix had told him before Lars had left the town with the Feral Fangs escort. "In my quarters there's a desk with a locked drawer. I put you in charge of the contents. At least until this is all over with."

Lars understood what he implied. If he and Griffin failed to complete the mission—if they were killed--then he was to protect whatever was inside that drawer.

Underneath the surface, it was impossible for him to know what might be happening above. It was silent as a grave. Posted outside the door and at the elevator were a guard of Feral Fangs elite, and Lars assumed that if anything went wrong they would tell him. The plan was that when they succeeded in capturing the Emperor, they

would tap into the public viewscreen system and cast the execution to every unit in the world. The viewscreen monitor sitting on the desk was tuned to the public broadcast, and Xyletian propaganda droned on.

Lars looked at the clock. It was already late afternoon, which meant that the operation must've been underway. Not knowing anything was eating him up inside. He couldn't take it.

He went to the desk and pushed the key into the lock. He would just have a look. He had to distract himself with something or he'd go crazy. The drawer unlocked with a click.

Slowly, he pulled it open.

Inside were two identical necklaces made of shimmering amethyst gemstone, triangular in shape with an intricate wave pattern that spiraled into the center. Lars took them into the palm of his hand. He knew exactly what they were.

*Source Creation Date: July 11, 2025, 2:01 am*

Royal pendants of Adosh, just like the Ekdolian one he wore around his neck. They were Phoenix and Griffin's birthright, the symbols of their bloodline and claim to the throne of Adosh.

He held them close to his heart. Closing his eyes, Lars felt that warm glow emanating deep inside of him, the energy of his twin children. He felt the mate bond connection and it hummed through him, synchronizing with the pulse of light in his belly.

He could feel them. He could almost see them in his mind: Two wolves, their jaws dripping with the blood of their enemies. Their loyal men following them into battle, arms blazoned with the Adosh sigil. He pictured them hunting the Emperor as he fled from them like the coward he was, throwing his men in their way to slow their pursuit. He saw Phoenix shift to human form and aim his rifle at the man, who must've thought he'd managed to get away.

Flame erupted from the barrel as he squeezed the trigger, the bullet making a perfect arc across the expanse to meet its intended target. It burrowed into flesh and shattered the bones in the man's leg. The Emperor fell.

At that moment, the images on the viewscreen were replaced by static. Lars's heart leapt to his throat. Then they appeared on the screen, just as he'd seen them in his thoughts. They flanked the Empire of Xyletia, who was nothing but a weak old man. His leg was destroyed; he knelt at their feet, begging for his life.

Griffin held a pistol to the man's head and spoke to the camera. "Today, a new era begins. The New Adosh Empire will dismantle the reign of old Xyletia and liberate the conquered nations. King Griffin Greer of Adosh will insure it. Fly your flags

high. Freedom has come at last."

The room shook. Lars looked up at the ceiling. He could hear a commotion up on the ground level—there was fighting going on. He ran to the door and opened it—the two soldiers outside had their rifles aimed down the hallway towards the elevator.

"Get back into the room, sir," one of them said.

"What's going on?" Lars asked. "What's happening?"

"Controlling the loyalist threat," he replied. "Please go inside. We'll tell you when it's safe."

On the viewscreen, a crowd of Ekdolians had formed around them, many holding makeshift weapons.

"Take back your homes," Griffin continued. "Take back your countries! Take back your honor!"

Phoenix had unfurled Adosh and Ekdolian flags and raised them on a pole where they caught the wind and stretched to their full grandeur. The crowd erupted into cheers. Griffin holstered his weapon and he and Phoenix walked away from the Emperor, leaving him alone in the circle of the mob. It didn't take long for them to act. They rushed him and enclosed him, hundreds of hands clawing for a piece. It was impossible to see him any longer in the crush of people vying to taste their own personal vengeance.

Lars watched, but he didn't feel the satisfaction he thought he would, only relief that they were safe. It was over. They'd won.

But he knew that this was only the beginning. The Xyletian Empire stretched across

the entire world. It would not fall in a day. Loyalists would remain, especially in the most remote colonies of the Empire, and it would be up to his Alphas to lead the fight to eliminate them and free the nations that remained under their domination. It was a lifelong mission.

The image on the viewscreen blanked out and turned back to the hush of static.

Phoenix and Griffin returned to the base followed by a marching army of Feral Fangs guardsmen all bearing the Adosh sigil Armband. There were even Ekdolian civilians in tow. Word had come in from the capital—Ekdolian freedom fighters had joined with the New Adosh forces and taken back the city. Similar reports were flooding in from the other leaders. The Xyletian capital was also now in their hands.

They took Lars into their arms, and he kissed them. Then he pressed his palms into their hands. The brothers looked down at the two triangular pendants that Lars had transferred to them. A smile blossomed on Griffin's lips. They both put the pendants around their necks where they belonged.

The flags of Adosh and Ekdol were raised over the former Xyletian encampment. When Lars looked up to admire them, he watched as a fire-red royal warbler took flight from its perch on the top of the flagpole, ascending to a vast and infinite sky.

## Epilogue

The twins were coming, and Phoenix was nowhere to be found.

"Your highness, please try to relax," the healer told Lars.

"Where is he?" Lars groaned. "It's not that big of a ship."

"Who is looking for him?" Griffin roared.



"Keep your voice down," the healer said. "Your mate needs to relax."

"Iamrelaxed!" Lars said before cringing with pain. "Arghh!"

"I'll find him," Griffin said, standing.

Lars nodded, wincing. "Hurry."

Griffin had an idea of where his brother could be. He burst from the cabin and stormed up to the deck of the warship. A salty breeze rustled his hair, which quickly became fur as he shifted into wolf form. The ocean stretched out around their fleet. Three days to the north-east waited Adosh. After two and a half months of securing Xyeltia, they were finally returning home.

He sniffed at the air and sure enough, he caught his brother's scent drifting from exactly where he expected. He followed the trail, winding up stairways until he reached the command deck. The scent trail continued to the roof, and he shifted back to human form and ascended the access ladder.

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Phoenix stood at the railing, looking out over the bow of the ship and the open ocean.

"Phoenix," Griffin said. "It's time. What are you doing?"

It was a question he already knew the answer to. He knew his brother as well as he knew himself.

Phoenix didn't reply. He stared off at the horizon, his expression narrowed into an intense glare.

"Phoenix," Griffin repeated.

"I've looked death in the face and laughed," Phoenix said. "Killed without hesitation. Done things that would break a normal man. And yet... This has me terrified."

Griffin went to his brother's side and leaned against the railing. "I'm frightened as well," Griffin admitted.

Phoenix looked over at him, surprised.

"Don't look at me like that," Griffin said. "It's not that shocking."

"You've always had a much better handle on things than I."

"Our plans have come to fruition and I could see every step of the path along the way. But this is different. Raising children? It's a mystery."

Phoenix smirked. "I don't suppose any of the old traditions explained how to be a father."

"I'm afraid not," Griffin said. "I'm afraid we're on our own."

"We've got him." Phoenix straightened. "Our Omega."

Griffin nodded and smiled.

Phoenix looked over at him, and a shit-eating grin spread across his face. "You smile more now, Brother. Don't think I haven't noticed."

"There are many things to smile about." He punched Phoenix on the shoulder. "We do this together. Just like we always have. We won't fail."

Phoenix nodded slowly. "Yeah."

"Let's not keep him waiting any longer. Let's welcome our son and daughter into this world."

When they returned back to the cabin, Lars had shifted into wolf form. He was in the final stages of labor, groaning and growling and crying. The Alphas rushed to his side.

"Shift," the healer told them. "Your presence will comfort him."

They surrounded him with their bodies and encouraged him with whatever few gentle words they were able to muster. It wasn't long before the room was filled with the wailing cry of a baby boy, followed by his twin sister. Lars chose the names Lionel and Anthy in honor of his parents.

Back in human form, Lars nestled into the fur of his Alphas. They peered down at the

tiny faces of their children, licking them clean and nuzzling them with their noses.

In that moment, all doubts had faded and a new era had begun.