



# Enticing Little Omega (Twisted Little Tales #5)

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**Category:** Romance

**Description:** Freedom is all I ever really wanted.

As an Omega, everyone expected me to be meek, obedient, eager to bond. But I refused to be a pawn in my stepmother's power-hungry schemes. When she arranged my mating to a pack of powerful Alphas, I did the only thing I could. I ran.

For years, I built a life on my terms—no packs, no bonds, no cage. But fate has a twisted sense of humor, because now my fated mates have found me again.

They say they never stopped searching. That they still want me. But trusting them means risking everything, and when my past comes back to haunt me, I may not have a choice.

Because no matter how far you run, fate always catches up.

**Total Pages (Source):** 30

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

## Prologue

### Three Years Ago

My dress was the colour of sunrise. A soft pink with a shimmer that caught the light every time I moved. I spun slowly in front of the mirror, fingers brushing down the fluffy skirt like I was touching magic. Dad said it made me look like a fairy princess.

I liked hearing that. But to me? The dress just made me feel special. Hopeful.

Today, everything changed.

Today, my dad, my hero, was marrying Ms Tracy Welch. An Alpha.

Like a real Alpha.

She's fierce, elegant, and so composed she made everything around her seem sharper and more efficient.

I've only met her a few times, but she always spoke to me with a calm voice and a perfect smile.

She smelled like the whiskey Dad liked to sneak when he thought I wasn't looking, and something even sharper underneath. .. It's probably an Alpha thing.

Honestly? I didn't care.

I liked her. And I hoped, even against my stupid cynical nature, that I might grow to love her.

I'd grown up so alone. Just me and Dad.

My kind, sweet, dependable Beta father, who did his best to navigate raising a girl alone. He learned how to braid my hair from videos, held my hand through my heart break, and whispered bedtime stories when the world felt too big.

But no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't give me everything.

He couldn't give me the mom I lost.

Until now.

Now I'm getting a great step mom, along with two step brothers. Twins. Alphas. Andrew and Antonio.

I hadn't met them yet. They were older, already in university, but Tracy had shown me pictures. Andrew, or Drew as she referred to him, looked like he was filled with mischief, whereas Antonio, or Anton as he preferred to be called, looked super serious like Tracy.

I'm not ashamed to admit that I stared at their photos way longer than I should have, imagining what it might have been like having big brothers who'd have teased me and protected me growing up.

Now, I'm not an idiot. I know that they won't be like real big brothers now, and I'll probably be nothing more than the annoying stepsister that they have to put up with from time to time, but with one easy step, my family is growing by three people, and I can't help but feel at least a little bit hopeful.

My fingers closed around the beaded bracelet I'd made Tracy last night. It was nothing fancy, just a bunch of wooden beads in the colours she'd chosen for the wedding. Childish, maybe, but made with all the fragile hope.

I hope she would accept it, and me. Hope that she would finally be the mom I've always wanted. Needed.

"Stop being a baby, Cindy," I admonished myself quietly. "Give her the damn thing and move on."

With my verbal slap back in the back of my mind, I padded quietly through the hallway of the venue, careful not to wrinkle or mess up my dress. The bridal suite door was cracked open, and Tracy's voice slipped through, her tone irritated. I slowed, meaning to knock, so she knew I was coming in.

But then I heard it.

She was fighting.

"Don't give me that crap, Drew," Tracy snapped, her voice sharper than I'd ever heard it. "You and your brother should be here. This isn't just some backyard bonding ceremony, this is a calculated move. I need the family image sealed with a nice, neat bow."

There was a pause, then a faint echo of a male voice on speaker—low, dismissive. I couldn't make out what he said, but it didn't matter.

I felt my heart crack as Tracy let out a tight laugh, the kind that didn't sound amused at all.

"Of course he's a Beta. That's the point.

You think I'd mate another Alpha after your father?

Please. This isn't about a scent or love match.

This is business. And the man's so desperate for a mate, for a mother for his orphan Annie daughter, he practically bowed when I suggested we blend our families. "

My throat tightened. I bit the inside of my cheek to stop the tears from falling.

Another pause as she listened to Drew bite back.

"What about the girl?" Tracy laughed. "She's an annoyance who's practically begging for attention at every corner.

You know how I feel about that. It's pathetic.

But I need her soft, shiny little smiling face in the pictures, and I needed you two at my side to make this look real.

I can't believe you two would risk your inheritance like this.

I warned you both, you needed to be here, or I'd cut you off. "

Something broke. Inside me, that small hopeful seed cracked straight down the middle.

I stared at the bracelet in my hand. The heart bead gleamed up at me, innocent and pink.

I didn't knock.

I didn't move.

I just stood there for a long moment, too stunned to breathe, before my fingers clenched tight. After a moment I dropped the bracelet on the floor.

Then I turned and walked away from the door, the broken heart, from the fantasy.

From the fake mom I'll never ever have.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Cindy

The necklace gleamed like a secret at the base of my throat.

It was delicate. Silver with a single teardrop-shaped opal that caught the light and shimmered with pinks and blues. My fingers brushed over it, the metal warm from my skin. It was the only thing I had left from my mom.

I remembered little about her; she died when I was just a toddler, but Dad said she wore this necklace every single day.

He gave it to me on my fifteenth birthday, tucked into a velvet box with trembling hands and glassy eyes. Just before he told me he was marrying someone else.

Her.

Now, three years later, I stood in front of the mirror, finally having the courage to wear it.

I'm almost eighteen.

Only one more day.

My reflection stared back. Older, sharper and even more jaded than the girl who once believed in birthday cake wishes and happily-ever-afters.

The wild watercolour of rainbow my hair sported this week was mostly a mix of soft

lilac, cotton candy pink, and turquoise at the ends. A defiant choice, one I'll probably pay for later, but it's the armour I needed.

Tracy would hate it, which only made me love it more.

She believed young Beta women should look natural, soft and pretty in an unforgettable way.

But I yearned to be seen .

Heard.

I tilted my head, trying to see myself through my dad's eyes. He would've smiled at me, chuckled at the hair, but he always said I reminded him of my mother when I laughed.

Goddess, I missed him.

A full year had passed since he'd died. A year of aching silence and polite lies.

A year of living under the same roof as Tracy, who hadn't even cried at his funeral.

And after we put my hero in the ground? She kept me. But not out of kindness. No. Out of convenience.

She'd inherited everything. His business, his properties. I still couldn't believe that he'd not made any provisions for me.

And Tracy had made it real clear I owed her for every meal, every item of clothing, every ounce of generosity she showed me.



Translation?

I worked like a dog in one of her restaurants, sometimes open to close, and I would be grateful for it.

But today, all that changed

Tomorrow, I will be free.

Eighteen meant my freedom. I could finally leave. Walk out that door and never look back.

I just had to make it through one more night.

"Cindy!" Tracy's voice snapped through the old house, sharp as a whip. "Why aren't you downstairs yet? They will be here any minute!"

They .

The twins.

Drew and Anton. Her precious Alpha sons were finally visiting. The first time since she married Dad.

In all this time I'd never met them. The closest I'd ever come were those dismissive voices over the phone years ago.

And now, suddenly, they were coming.

And I was expected to smile and serve hors d'ouvres while pretending this wasn't the most twisted thing ever. Serving guests in my home like an unpaid servant.

I turned from the mirror, the necklace cool against my skin.

"Coming," I called back, smoothing down my thrifted dress as my eyes landed on my packed bag.

Just one more night.

Just a few more hours.

Then I'd be gone, and they could have each other.

I'd take my mother's necklace, my dad's memory, and the money I'd been saving in secret, and carve out a life of my own.

The music was already thumping by the time I reached the bottom of the stairs, something vaguely jazzy and definitely expensive.

Tracy didn't do anything by halves.

Except parenting, it seems.

The house had been transformed for the night. It has been turned into some kind of winter wonderland. According to the gossip running amongst the staff, she'd convinced—more like blackmailed—the twins into coming back for a party.

A celebration of the formal Pack paperwork for the twins being finalised.

They were yet to find their Omega but for a group of influential Alphas to settle on a formal pack was a big deal. And Tracy wanted to show off her boys along with letting them meet a few single Omegas that would help her new political ambitions.

I tugged my jersey tighter over my arms. It wasn't cold, not really. In fact... it was the opposite. My skin felt too tight, my blood too warm. I swallowed and tried to shake it off.

Just jitters about finally meeting the twins and their pack mates.

And fear of being caught out in my escape plans.

Only one more night, I reminded myself.

I slipped behind the temporary bar and grabbed a tray of mini crab cakes on delicate glass spoons, and balanced it on my palm.

My skin prickled, my heart thudded in an odd, irregular beat.

Dammit. I couldn't afford to get sick right then.

I plastered on my patented fake smile and wove through the crowd, offering food to a few people who barely looked at me.

As I turned toward the next table, the world tilted sideways. A heat curled low in my belly. My knees wobbled for a split second—and then I crashed into a wall.

No.

Not a wall.

A man.

An Alpha. All hard, solid and broad.

The tray clattered between us, and I fumbled with it, horrified that I might drop it. Strong hands shot out, gripping my elbows to steady me.

My head snapped up, and I stared into a face I'd only ever seen in those smug family portraits hanging in Tracy's office.

Thick dark hair, buzzed at the sides. A square jaw. Sharp cheekbones. Eyes like amber fire.

And he was huge . Taller than I expected. Wider too. His grip was strong but careful, and his scent...

Oh no.

No. No. No. No.

It hit me like a freight train. Musk and leather and home. Even though for the last three years I've not really known what home could really possibly look or feel like.

A flush surged through me, and my knees buckled again.

He steadied me, one brow quirking as he studied my face. "You okay?" His voice was low, rough velvet with a low, almost-purr that instantly settled my rattled nerves.

I blinked. "You're in my way."

He blinked back, clearly startled.

"I'm trying to work," I added, straightening my back and pretending I didn't feel like my entire body was about to combust. "But by all means, stand in the middle of the damn room like you own the place."

The corner of his mouth twitched. "Charming."

"Don't let Tracy hear you say that. She'll have a fit if someone thinks I have a personality."

That earned me a full grin, and dammit if that didn't just make things worse. He smelled good, and the heat in my body was climbing again.

"You're Cindy," he said. It wasn't a question.

"Wow. You must be the smart twin."

"I'm Drew."

Right. I knew that. The fun-looking one. The one who ran his own company already.

I stepped back, breaking his hold on me and forced myself to smile through the heat fogging my brain. "Sure, sure. Now would you mind, I've got a job to do."

And with that, I turned and marched toward the food table, heart racing, thighs aching and heat pooling low in my belly.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Cindy

Something was wrong.

So very very wrong.

Something weird was happening.

And I had a very bad feeling it was only the beginning.

I barely made it back to the bar before Tracy descended like a wasp in stilettos.

"What the hell was that?" she hissed, snatching the tray from my hands like I'd offended the gods. "What did you say to him?"

I blinked, sweat clinging to the back of my neck. My vision shimmered slightly at the edges. "You mean, what did I say to the son you haven't seen in more than three years when he ran into me? Nothing. I told him I had to get to work."

Her jaw twitched. "Don't start with me tonight, Cindy. Do you know who's here?"

"Fancy pants assholes, that have more money than sense?" I deadpanned trying to keep control of my expression. It would not do to have Tracy notice something was wrong with me.

Wrong move.

Her grip on my arm tightened and long nails bit into my skin. "You're lucky I didn't dump you into foster care the second your father croaked."

The words punched the air from my lungs. I flinched, then bit down hard on the pain.

"Maybe you should have," I muttered. "You would have done us both a favour."

She leaned in, her breath hot and bitter against my flushed face. "You're right. I can just as quickly remedy that. Don't think I don't know what tomorrow is for you, you little rat. You might just find yourself out on the street if you're not careful."

The rest of her words faded as something cracked open inside me.

My knees buckled. Heat surged too fast, so violently, it made my head spin. The world tilted. My skin prickled, hypersensitive, and my breath came in quick pants.

"Oh goddess, no," I whispered. "This can't be happening."

I stumbled back from her, my entire body trembling.

And then perfume hit the air.

My perfume.

Floral. Sweet. Thick and unmistakable.

Tracy froze, her eyes wide with horror. "No!" She actually staggered a step back. "You're... No!"

"Omega," Drew said behind me, his voice low with something I couldn't name. Shock? Awe? Lust?

I turned slowly, catching his eyes, before noticing the other brother standing right behind him.

They were staring like they'd seen a ghost.

Or like they'd just caught a whiff of their favourite drug.

"I'm not—" My voice cracked. "This can't be happening. I'm a Beta. My mom and dad were both Betas."

"Maybe not," came a new voice—smooth, accented and full of barely leashed interest. "You're presenting sweetheart. No mistaking that."

Another Alpha.

A different one this time. His suit was immaculate, but his tie had been tugged loose and his sleeves rolled up. Dirty blond hair, perfectly tousled. A hint of stubble. He looked like a wall street wolf, all dangerous charm and Alpha authority.

Drew shifted, subtly stepping between us. "Easy, William."

The man—William—smirked. "What? It's nothing but the truth. And she smells heavenly. She smells like ours. "

"No," I choked out, stepping back. "No, no, no. I'm not yours. I don't belong to anyone. Not anymore."

But the heat under my skin, the coiling pressure low in my belly, the way my heart kept trying to break its way out of my chest... it all screamed otherwise.

And the worst part?



They were all staring at me like I was prey they'd been hunting for years. And now, finally they'd caught my scent.

I turned and fled.

Through the crowd, passed the confused staff and oblivious guests, straight into the kitchen.

The air inside was thick with steam and spice and the clatter of trays.

Sounds I used to cherish and found comforting were suddenly grating on my frayed nerves.

At least a dozen staff members moved around the large space, but as I stumbled in, they all froze.

I must have looked wild. Sweating, panting, my skin flushed and feverish.

"Cindy?" one of the dishwashers called.

But I didn't stop. I pressed myself into the corner near the industrial sink, wrapping my arms around myself.

Too hot.

Too tight.

Too much.

The door swung open again behind me, and I whirled just as they came in.

Drew first. Then Anton—brooding, dark eyed, slightly more intimidating than his brother.

William followed, and behind them came another man in a white dress shirt and grey vest. He was the only one who didn't immediately give off crazy Alpha energy.

He moved slower, more cautiously. His hair was neat, brown with a slight curl, and his eyes were warm hazel behind wire-rimmed glasses. He had to be a Beta. Thank the goddess.

"Hi, Cindy? I'm Annerly," he said, his voice gentle and calm. "You must be freaking out right about now, all those emotions and hormones suddenly flooding your body. Can I... A hug would really help ground you right now."

A hug?

No.

I didn't want a damned hug.

I didn't want to be touched at all.

I didn't want any of this to be happening at all.

But my body, my damn traitorous body craved it. My newfound instincts screamed for comfort, for grounding, for safety.

"I..." My voice broke again, hoarse now. "I don't—"

But he was already moving slowly toward me, arms open. "I won't hurt you, I promise."

And stupidly, stupidly , I stepped into him. Just enough for his arms to come around me, careful but firm, like a warm safety blanket.

And for one second, I almost believed I was okay.

Until the scent hit me again. He was saturated in it. In them.

Mine.

My perfume bloomed again, fresh and floral against the Beta's skin and I snapped.

"No!"

I shoved him back, stumbling away from his embrace.

He reached for me in reflex, fingers catching on the chain around my neck as I twisted away.

It snapped.

My mother's necklace.

I felt it go, and I couldn't do anything but let it fall as I rushed out of the kitchen and up to my room. I could hear them chase me, but I was in fight-or-flight mode, and this girl had to fly away. Now.

My bedroom door slammed shut behind me, in their faces, and I quickly hit the lock.

I wasn't stupid enough to think a flimsy lock would stop three Alphas from barging in and claiming what they thought of as theirs, but I was damned if I would give up my freedom as soon as I finally had it in my grasp.

Grabbing my bag from under my bed, I head for the small window I'd been using to sneak out for the last three years.

There was enough money to get me out of town and settled into a new place.

And hopefully, along the way, I could figure out a way to get my hands on some damn suppressants. No way was I going to let biology fuck up everything I've been working for.

It was time for this girl to flee the nest.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Cindy

I didn't know where I was going.

Didn't know what I was running to. All I knew was that I needed to get away from Tracy. Tracy and... the pack.

The world outside the windshield blurred into streaks of shadow and highway. Every road sign passed unread, every mile a smudge behind me. I didn't care. Just needed distance.

From them.

From the truth.

From what my body had become.

The gas gauge blinked its warning light at me, reminding me of my meagre funds suddenly made even more desperate because I'd need to get my hands on a new identity and black market suppressants. Not to mention, I wouldn't know the first thing about getting either of those things!

I pulled off at the next exit, a narrow off-ramp that fed into a mostly abandoned stretch of rural nothing. Trees loomed on either side like silent sentinels. An abandoned looking gas station sat on one corner. It didn't even seem to have a name.

With a sinking heart, I coasted into the gravel lot anyway and killed the engine.

I was shaking.

That initial burst of heat had faded, but the memory of it, the feeling of all those scents, all those things overwhelming me, was still so present I shuddered.

I shoved open the door and stumbled into the night air.

Cool.

Damp and quiet.

So amazing.

There was no cell service, and I couldn't see anyone behind the counter in the small convenience store, but there were lights, so I had that hope at least.

"She's on an extended break," a voice said to me out of the dark.

"Fuck!" I cried out, jumping around to face where the voice had come from. "Warn a girl, why don't you?" I admonish before I finally make out the person walking from the shadows.

It's a girl around my age, maybe a bit older.

Tall and lean, with long limbs and dark, glowing skin.

Her braids were twisted up into a high knot, loose curls escaping around her face.

She wore a patched denim jacket over a silky shirt that shimmered when she moved.

And boots. Badass boots, I felt immediate envy over.

Our eyes met.

She hesitated, then offered a lopsided smile. "The attendant. She's on a break. But she has been on one for like... over an hour now."

"Oh," I respond, wondering what the hell this girl is doing standing in the dark in a creepy-looking gas station.

"You look like hell," she told me.

I blinked. "Uh... thanks?"

She walked over casually, hands in her pockets. "Didn't mean to be rude... Just... I've been there."

I stepped back a little. "I'm fine."

"No, you're not," she said gently. "But it's okay. I wasn't either when I first ran away."

The word hit me square in the chest.

I froze.

Is she one too? Fuck. What if she... no... she wouldn't, right?

"Don't worry," she adds quickly, almost soothingly. "I'm an Omega on the run, too."

My knees nearly buckled. I grabbed the side of the car and sucked in much needed air. She stood there patiently, not coming closer or pressing.

"And you're okay now?" I asked before I could stop myself.

"Yeah. More than good. Free."

The silence stretched between us after that. Thick and strange, but not uncomfortable.

"What's your name?" I eventually asked.

She hesitated just a moment too long. "Marigold."

"Like the flower?"

"Exactly like the flower." Her grin returned, slow and sharp.

"I'm Cindy."

Her eyes flicked to my face like she was cataloguing something. "Well, Cindy, you got a plan?"

I shook my head. "Just driving for now. My escape did not go as planned."

This morning I woke up a Beta, getting ready to flee the nest as soon as my eighteenth birthday hit.

Throw in an unplanned Omega presentation, followed by meeting a scent match to the worst possible pack, and you got the makings of a crazy story. "

She hummed softly. "First things first, you'll probably need to get rid of the name. And some meds to help with those... hormones."

I shrugged. "Yeah. I used to be a waitress. I don't really have the skills or knowledge of where to get either of those."



She turned her back on me and grabbed a bag from the shadows and tossed it to me.

"What's this?"

She shrugged. "It's a start. Some money, a contact number for someone to help you with the stuff you might need."

I stared at her, my heart beating in my ears. "Why are you helping me?"

Marigold shrugged again. "Because I'm in the position to help you. Because someone helped me once."

There was something in her tone I couldn't quite place.

"And one day, I might come calling for a favour of my own."

Then she turned around to go.

"Wait... where are you going?"

"Wherever I want," she said with a wink. "That's the point."

I watched her walk away, that strange ache tugging at my chest.

Marigold had stepped back into the shadows near the side of the station, already half-swallowed by the dark leaving so many damn questions in her wake.

I went into the store and found a self service option for the gas, quickly paying for enough to nearly fill the tank. I was just finishing up and getting ready to leave when I heard it.

Not a bang. Not a shout. Just this... wet crack, followed by a sharp gasp. Then silence.

My heart stopped. I froze, every hair on my arms rising.

"Marigold?" I called out, voice breaking on the edges.

Nothing.

I took a hesitant step forward. Then another.

The shadows felt darker now. Colder.

When I rounded the side of the building, I saw her. Slumped against the wall, body twisted unnaturally, one hand reaching toward me. Blood bloomed across the front of her shimmering shirt, too dark in the moonlight to be real. Too much.

No! No! No! No!

"Marigold!" I dropped to my knees beside her, grabbing her wrist, shaking her gently.  
"Come on! What happened?"

Her eyes fluttered open just a sliver. Her lips moved, barely a breath.

"...run..."

And then she went still.

I choked on a sob. My fingers curled into her jacket, gripping tight like I could hold her by sheer will alone. I wanted to scream. I wanted to collapse.

But I didn't.

Because I heard footsteps.

Fast.

Approaching.

I scrambled to my feet and ran. Back to the car, slamming the door, locking it, gasping for breath. I turned the key with shaking fingers and floored it out of the lot, tires skidding over gravel.

I didn't look back.

I couldn't.

The bag Marigold had given me was on the passenger seat, untouched.

And somewhere deep inside it, I knew I would find my way forward.

But I couldn't stop the tears as I drove.

She saved me. And now she was gone.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Two Years Later

Christa

I stared at the reflection in the mirror, taking in the woman who I had become in the last two years.

Christa.

The name still felt foreign yet strangely fitting, a small nod to the past I couldn't quite escape and the future I was still learning to inhabit. My gaze lingered on the familiar, yet strange face in the mirror.

I leaned forward, palms braced on the tiny bathroom sink, and tried to find the girl I used to be in the face of the woman I was becoming.

"You've come a long way," I told my reflection. "Two years. You made it. You might not have lived as much as you wanted, but you damn sure survived."

It sounded hollow. Even in the silence.

I wanted that to be enough. It kind of had to be, because what were my other options, really? There was no way for me to do anything but what I have done.

So I might not have healed, and maybe I hadn't moved past all the baggage I was lugging around. And I certainly hadn't chased any of my dreams except finding something stable, something safe.

And I had that.

A roof over my head.

A name I could be proud of.

A great, dependable job, with people I enjoyed spending time with.

And more importantly, quiet, sure safety.

There were no big dreams waiting for me anymore. Just... a daily routine I didn't hate.  
And it was enough.

It was .

I straightened up, brushing a strand of hair behind my ear, and let my mind drift back—back to the night everything changed.

Back to the night I watched Marigold take her last breath.

The bag she gave me was old and soft, like it had lived a dozen lives before it ever landed in my lap. Inside it held a burner phone, cash, and a single torn napkin with the name of a biker gang scrawled across it in blue ink. No instructions. Just that.

I didn't know who they were. I didn't even really know who Marigold was, but it was the only option I had.

So I took a chance, and I dialed the number.

Someone answered on the first ring and helped me. No questions asked. Just like that.

They told me they'd leave me a new identity, a good supply of suppressants and directions to a place where I could disappear for a while if I chose to. Somewhere where people didn't ask questions.

And that's how Christa was born.

I didn't ask anymore questions. I wasn't stupid enough to question my one opportunity.

I settled in Mystery Falls because it was small and quiet and nobody cared who I used to be. I worked at the local diner. Got a nice place that I rented from the diner owner for cash. Kept my head down. Laughed when I had to and smiled when it would look weird for me not to.

But after a while, it got lonely.

I was a newly presented Omega with no pack, no family, no friends.

Nothing.

Then... six months into my self-imposed exile, Honey arrived.

I knew what she was even before she did. Another Omega, like me, on the run.

And I knew, just knew, I had to help her like Marigold had helped me. Pay it forward, if you will.

She was so pretty, so sweet and innocent. And so incredibly naïve that it sometimes felt like I was raising a damn toddler.

She moved in that same day and soon became my best friend. My sister.

Honey never asked questions I didn't want to answer, and I think that was because she had her own secrets and she was very grateful that I didn't ask her anything either.

We talked about everything but our backstories.

For eighteen months, she was everything I'd been missing since my dad passed. Even before that, if I was being honest.

And then they came.

The same damn motorcycle club that gave me my start.

Her fated match. Scent matched.

Her pack.

At first, I thought I'd lost her completely, but they came back to town. Honey with her own story to tell, but no matter what adventure she'd been on, she was back, and now I had my friend back.

One who was going to skin me alive if I didn't get a move on.

"Christa! You here?" The same sweet Omega called out, pushing into the apartment we once shared as if she still lived in it.

"Coming, babe!" I shouted back at her and quickly finished putting on my lip gloss. "What's the rush?" I teased as I shucked on my favourite leather jacket.

Rolling her eyes at me, she smiled as she responded. "Not much. Only that we're finally going to meet the super secretive Tigress, and William is here for a visit."

This time, I rolled my eyes at her as she pushed me out the door so she could lock up behind us.

The Tigress, William and his hotty doctor was all she'd been able to talk about for ages, so really it was a relief that they were finally coming by so Honey could chill the fuck out.

"Is William bringing his Beta doctor with him?" I asked Honey.

"Uh-huh. He finally convinced the cutie that they were better together. I can't wait for you to meet them."

"And the illusive mastermind behind all the drama everyone had been experiencing," I remarked, and she laughed in response.

She'd nearly dragged me all the way to the diner when my heart stopped at the sound of a familiar voice stopping us in our tracks.

"Tut, tut, tut. What are two pretty little Omegas like you doing alone out here?"

My heart stopped. And kind of started again, but at double time, at what I saw.

It couldn't be.

It was impossible.

"T!" Honey cried out and jumped forward, grabbing the impossible stranger into a hug. "Oh, my goddess! I am so happy to finally meet you."

T or the Tigress looked out of place and uncomfortable with the affection Honey bestowed on her.



I couldn't even laugh at it, because my world had just been turned upside down. There was a buzzing in my ears and I couldn't keep up with their conversation over it. Not until Honey looked at me questioningly.

Like she was waiting for me to say something.

"Marigold?" I pushed the name out past the knot in my throat, working hard to keep the tears from falling. I would not show this weakness right now. "What the fuck? I watched you die!"

T or Marigold, or whoever the fuck she was, just looked at me with no expression. None.

Because obviously she didn't care that she'd completely rocked my world two years ago.

And apparently the universe wasn't done messing with me.

Because that's when someone cleared their throat.

And when I looked to see who was interrupting us, I nearly passed the fuck out.

William? And his beta hotty doctor?

They were two of the pack members I ran away from two years ago.

Because of course they were.

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

I 'm not ashamed of how I reacted.

I could have fainted.

Screamed.

Thrown my damn handbag at them.

All of those would have been acceptable, yet a smidge more than mildly embarrassing.

So I opted for the option any sane Omega would take.

I ran like I was being chased by a monster from my nightmares.

Boots pounding pavement.

Breath hitching.

Heart roaring in my ears louder than the sound of Honey calling my name behind me.

I didn't care where I was going—I just needed to get away. Away from her. Away from them.

Away from everything.

By the time I stumbled into my apartment, I could barely breathe. My keys slipped once, twice, before I finally got the door open and slammed it shut behind me. I didn't bother locking it. If they could find me here in my safe haven, then no locked door would stop them.

I collapsed onto the bed, face-first, into the soft quilt Honey and I had made together last winter. My throat ached with unshed sobs, my limbs trembling from the effort it took to keep them inside.

I barely registered the sound of the front door swinging open again, or the soft pad of what could only be Honey's footsteps in the hallway.

But I heard her voice. All firm and furious.

"Look, I don't know how she knows you or why she looked like you climbed out of the bowels of hell, but now isn't the time. Get. Both of you."

Then the door clicked shut, and Honey was beside me, curling up behind me like she used to during storms. She didn't ask questions, didn't demand explanations.

She just... held on.

And when I finally turned over, eyes swollen, throat dry, heart shattered, I told her.

Everything.

Maybe not in perfect order, maybe not even in full sentences, but in starts and stops I shared my story.

The words tumbled out in a rush of jagged memories, old wounds and heartbreak.

And most importantly, the overwhelming loneliness of knowing I had a pack out there, a scent matched pack, and I'd run from them because nothing scared me more than being trapped by them.

Honey listened. Wide-eyed and silent, with tears sliding down her cheeks.

I didn't even realise I'd stopped talking until the silence became too loud to ignore.

I looked at her, not sure what to expect.

But as always, Honey surpassed all expectations.

"So? Want me to get my Daddies, and we'll get you out of here?"

And as she always did, Honey drew warm laughter from me when I thought everything inside me was dead and buried.

As my laughter died down, I stared at our joined hands, then let my eyes drift to the ceiling. My chest still ached, but the sharp panic had dulled to something slower, heavier.

Grief? Regret? Guilt?

"I can't avoid them forever," I said finally, the words tasting like sour in my mouth. "Marigold... the pack... I have to face them sometime."

Honey shifted beside me, propping herself up on one elbow. "Fine. But not tonight."

I blinked over at her, startled. "What?"

She gave me a look. One I was not used to getting from my soft, sweet friend.

"Christa, lovely, you don't owe any of them anything, let alone your presence. Especially tonight. They're nothing but a bunch of clueless men and a possibly resurrected woman who owe you a few explanations."

I let out a half-hearted laugh. "You're very passionate about my avoidance issues."

"I'm passionate about you," she said simply, then stood and stretched with a groan. "Now. We're going to lock this door, draw the curtains, build a mini-nest and hibernate like the emotionally damaged Omegas we are. Time for backup."

I sat up, confused. "Backup?"

A wicked grin curled across her face as she grabbed her phone from her back pocket and tapped out a quick message. "What's the point of having a pack full of Alpha Daddies if I can't call on them for some Pizza when a girlfriend needs a night in?"

I didn't even have time to protest before she was pacing toward the kitchen, phone to her ear. "Daddy? Hey... Change of plans... Can I ask you a huge favour? Christa needs a night in, and I am gonna stick around and cuddle with her. Can you get me all my usuals pretty please?"

They exchange a few more words before she kisses into the phone like a damn loon and hangs up on the man. You know, the big ass, scary biker.

"Fifteen minutes," she told me, her smile smitten as hell.

Sure enough, Scratch arrived fifteen minutes later, holding a huge pizza box, a couple of huge milkshakes, and a paper bag full of goodies.

Every time I saw him, he gave me a jolt.

Massive—all tall and broad with skin like polished obsidian—yet he still treated Honey like she was made of the finest china.

"Ladies," he greeted, stepping inside without hesitation. "I have the requested goods. The only payment I will require is one kiss from my princess."

Honey jumped up to greet him, waiting for him to put down his haul. When he was done he grabbed her in his arms and at first just placed a soft kiss on top of her head before she pulled away just enough so she could look up at him like a love-sick puppy.

She melted against him, sighing as he claimed her mouth in a deeper, much less chaste kiss.

I looked away quickly, pretending to fuss with the TV remote. But the ache in my chest wasn't just the remnants of panic anymore.

It was the same feeling I got whenever I saw Honey with one of her Alphas.

Longing.

Not for her Alphas, obviously. But I wanted something like that for myself.

After Scratch said his farewells, Honey and I curled up into our makeshift nest, enjoying our greasy pizza, thick shakes, and incredibly unhealthy snacks.

I might still be single, freaking out about the confrontations I had to face tomorrow, but for now, everything was as freaking amazing as I could make it.

As Honey could make it.

I'd worry about tomorrow... tomorrow.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Annerly

I didn't even realise the other woman with Honey and Cindy, had vanished until Honey had slammed the door in our faces.

William stood beside me, still staring at the closed door like he could will it open. His expression was unreadable, but I knew him too well not to see the turmoil brewing under the surface.

"Well, she ran from us. Again," He said, more to himself than me. "At least she's consistent."

"She was scared," I replied, my voice lower, calmer. I didn't add what we both knew—that Cindy had every right to be scared.

No. Not Cindy. Christa. That's what Honey called her best friend. That must be the name she'd taken after she ran away from her stepmother.

From us.

Although, after everything she'd been through and how it turned out, Tracy, the wicked witch as William liked to refer to her, had been treating Christa, I don't really blame her for running.

William turned on me then, eyes wild. "After all this time... she's here, just on the other side of the door." He rubs a hand over his face, taking a deep breath, and I rub my hands over his chest, trying to calm his baser, more aggressive Alpha tendencies.



Everything in me aches to help soothe his worries. But I'm no Omega. I'm not his Omega.

I shake off the feelings of inadequacy and focus on him instead.

With my hand still rubbing soothing circles on my Alpha's chest, he took another deep breath before looking at me. "We need to call the twins."

I blinked.

No.

"Now?" They're hot heads. They'd... Fuck. They're pack, no matter what's been happening the last few years.

"They need to know she's here. That we've found her. That she..." He broke off, jaw clenched.

"I get it," I said gently. "I do. But maybe... maybe we take a second. Breathe. Give Christa a moment to catch up."

"We've been breathing for two years, An." The nickname spoke to me in a way that only he could do. "Almost two whole years without our pack. Without her. I'm tired of waiting and breathing."

I exhaled, dragging a hand through my hair. "Look, I'm not saying we don't tell them. They deserve to know. I just think we need to be smart about it. We don't need to scare her off."

His shoulders dropped, the weight of the past two years pressing down on both of us. He pulled me into his arms, and as messed up as my emotions were right then, I had

to appreciate how much I loved this.

Almost four years ago we met. Six months after that we found the twins, and after testing out the waters for a year, we decided to formalise the pack bond. Throughout all that time, he was my best friend.

Turns out he was more than that.

Now, finally, after years of searching for our Omega we'd finally given in to feelings neither of us knew the other was hiding.

"An," William whispered against my head. "I know you're scared. I am too. But she's just on the other side of the door. We won't lose her again. Call them."

"Fuck," I muttered before giving in.

I pulled out my phone and dialed Drew's number. Of the two, he was the one more likely to answer. And sure enough, after two rings, his voice came through the speaker.

"Annerly?" His voice was cautious, like he half-expected me to fight with him. To be fair, the last time we spoke, things did not go well.

"Hey. Yeah. It's me."

A pause. "Is everything okay?"

I swallowed down the apprehension at sharing the news with them. They deserved to know. We could trust them with her. They weren't the problem. It was their damn mother.

A mother they hadn't seen in three years before the disastrous party, and if they could be believed, not again since.

Man the fuck up, Annerly.

"We found her."

Silence. Then a sharp inhale. "You're kidding."

"No. She's here. Alive, well."

"Where are you?" he asked, his voice barely more than a croak.

"A small town called Mystery Falls."

"And you're sure she—" Drew's voice cracked again. "She's safe, right?"

"She's safe," I blurted. "Skittish as hell, but safe. She ran when she saw us, but she's in her apartment." I ran a hand down my face. "Listen... It's a long story. We've a lot to catch up on."

Another silence. Longer this time. I pictured Drew looking at Anton—which was insane because I didn't even know if his grumpier brother was with him—and doing that whole twin mind meld thing that annoyed the crap out of me at times.

"Can we... I mean, do you think it's okay if we came?"

"I don't know," I told him. "She wasn't very happy to see us as it is, and we have no clue what she's been through in the last two years. I'm worried if you two show up too, she might bolt again."

Drew was quiet again. "Anton's not going to like this."

Which answered the question of whether or not his brother was with him.

"I don't like this," I said dryly. "We found our Omega, one that's been on the run for two years. We're a pack, fractured so badly that we're not even close to being worthy of her, and I can't tell whether it would hurt her more or less if you two were here."

There was a heavy beat, and then Drew's voice softened. "Are you two okay?"

That one question went a long way toward making me feel like we had a halfway decent chance of mending what was very badly broken between us. I glanced sideways at William, who was resting his head on my shoulder.

"I don't know," I said honestly. "But we found her. So that counts for something, right?"

"Yeah," Drew responded. "Listen, I'm going to call Anton. He's at work. He can come home, and we can phone you two together, and we can come up with a plan. Okay?"

"Okay, yeah. That works."

"Let us know if anything changes," he begged me.

"I will."

We ended the call, and I slipped the phone back into my pocket. William hadn't moved.

"What if she runs again?" he asked quietly.

"What if she doesn't?" I returned. "What if this time she gives us a chance?"

He sighed before giving me a long, lingering kiss. "Then we do the work to prove we deserve her."

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

I woke to the scent of coffee. Not the diner kind either, burnt and acidic. No—this was fancy. The sort of brew that made you feel you could take on any challenge the day presented.

My eyes blinked open, slow and gritty, the morning light cutting through the curtains in thin gold ribbons.

Our homemade nest was a mess of blankets and pillows, our half-eaten pizza, cold in the box, an empty milkshake cup overturned on the side table.

Honey was padding across the floor in her ridiculous bunny slippers, a tray balanced in her hands.

“Morning, sunshine,” she said, chipper in that dangerous way people were when they knew something you didn’t.

I pushed myself up, groaning softly as my body reminded me of the emotional storm I’d weathered last night. “You’re a saint,” I rasped. “An honest-to-goddess saint.”

She laughed and set the tray down on the bed. “I’m many things, love. But the breakfast? That wasn’t me, or my Daddies.”

I blinked. “What?” Well, now that she mentioned it, it made sense. Honey is not the kind of girl that should ever be allowed in the kitchen. She once lit a fire inside our oven thinking it was an old wood burning stove. That’s a story for another day.

“The coffee, either.” She sat beside me, tucking one leg under her. “I was woken with a knock this morning, and Doc Annerly handed it to me, along with a gift. For you.”

She reached into the pocket of her robe and pulled out a small, velvet jewellery box.

My chest clenched.

Wordlessly, she placed it in my hands.

My fingers fumbled with the clasp before I flipped it open—and everything inside me shattered like glass.

Nestled inside was a delicate gold chain. Simple, elegant. My mother’s necklace. The one I hadn’t thought about in ages, because remembering it meant remembering that night. The rushed escape. The door I hadn’t dared go back through.

“Why...?” I whispered, voice cracking.

“I’m guessing from the look on your face, that necklace is more important than your usual courting gift.” Honey’s voice was softer now, careful.

My hands trembled as I picked it up, holding it like it might vanish. The little moonstone pendant caught the light and winked at me like it had missed me too.

Everything hurt.

The necklace. The coffee. The fact that they figured out what I liked, gave it to me without any strings attached and didn’t try to corner me with it. That they just... gave. Freely.

“What the hell am I supposed to do with this?” I asked, more to myself than to her.

Honey didn't answer right away. Just sipped her coffee, watched me with those big, kind eyes that had always seen too much.

"I can tell you what I think," she said at last.

I looked up, brow furrowing in question. Last night she'd been resolute in not sharing her thoughts or opinions with me.

"You should talk to them," she said. "You don't owe them your heart. Not after what you've been through. But you do owe yourself a chance to see what could happen if you stop running."

I looked down again, at the necklace resting in my palm. I couldn't figure out if it felt like a lifeline or a noose.

"I'm scared," I whispered. Scared didn't even begin to cover the terror building inside me, but it was a start.

"I know." Honey reached over and squeezed my hand. "But you're brave too. Brave enough to start over. Brave enough to love again, if that's what you want."

I didn't know what I wanted.

But for the first time, I didn't want to run.

I turned the necklace over in my fingers once more, then looked at Honey. My voice barely a whisper. "Would you... would you call them? Annerly and William?"

Honey didn't smile, didn't tease. As always she was the best of friends that read the room, and gave me what I needed. With a nod she pulled out her phone and stepped out of the room.



I stared at the necklace the whole time, willing my hands to stop shaking.

There was a soft knock at the door about twenty minutes later.

What? Were they waiting down the damn road or something?

Honey answered the door, and I soon heard murmured voices. Low, careful and restrained.

When she led them inside, I stood, fingers clenched around the necklace, the butterflies running rampant in my stomach.

William and Annerly stepped into the living room like they were entering a sacred space. Neither pushed forward. Neither said a word at first.

William's gaze locked onto mine, his sharp Alpha intensity somehow dulled by a gentler expression I wasn't used to seeing on someone of his designation.

Annerly's eyes flicked down to the necklace around my neck before flicking back up, like he didn't want me to think he was staring at my cleavage for too long or something.

It drew a small smile from me.

"Thank you for the necklace," I said, voice tight. "You've no idea how much it meant to me."

William cleared his throat. "It's nothing, little Omega. It was yours to begin with so it was the easiest thing in the world to keep it safe for you."

Annerly added, "I saw your expression when it came loose. I'm sorry you haven't had

it with you all this time. I hope one day you'll tell us why it's so special to you."

I swallowed the lump forming in my throat. "It was my mother's."

William stepped forward, just a bit. "Oh, little one," he murmured, the strange pet name doing something to me. His hand reached out as if he wished to touch me, or hold me, and the Omega in me ached to move into his embrace.

I blinked fast, then sat down to avoid the urge.

I couldn't just give in. Not that easily.

Right?

"Can we sit, pretty girl?" Annerly asked me, indicating the other chairs in the living room.

When I nodded in response they both sat down, close next to each other and William instantly claimed a spot on Annerly's thigh with his large hand.

Oh yes.

They were together .

Why was that so freaking hot?

"So..." I said, trying to break through the awkward silence that just seemed to stretch and stretch and stretch between us.

"I guess you want to know what we've been doing the last couple of years, because we're sure as hell curious about you." William started up.

"Uh. Yeah. You don't smell mated, so I guess you haven't found another Omega?"

Annerly cringed, and William moved to pull him closer, wrapping his arm around the Beta's shoulders.

Worry and confusion filled me at Annerly's expression. What was there to cringe about? Why did he need to be soothed by his Alpha?

And why the fuckity fuck wasn't I jealous of him for being cuddled by my Alpha?

Not your Alpha, Christa!

I cleared my throat to push away the unwanted thoughts. "Uh... so what happened after I ran?" This time, I cringed at the harsh words.

"You were right to run," Annerly said gently. "We know what your stepmother put you through. We don't blame you, considering your history."

I stared at them. "You don't?" Confusion filled me at Annerly's calm words.

"No, little one," William soothed with that damn sweet pet name again. "We don't blame you, but we do wish you'd given us just a few minutes because after you ran, we kind of fell apart."

Annerly looked up at his Alpha before sitting forward and holding out his hand to me in offer. I could see the hope in his expression, and something inside me wished to answer it, so I grabbed his hand, interlacing our fingers.

"When we met you the first time, we weren't ready for you. To be honest, Omega, I'm not sure we're ready for you now, but we want to be. Our pack is fractured, but we hope you will still give us a chance. Give us a chance and help us rebuild it."

Well.

What the fuck am I supposed to say to that?

## Page 9

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Drew

I nearly dropped the paint brush I was holding when my phone buzzed in my back pocket. The screen lit up with Annerly's name, and I didn't even think before answering.

"Well?" I asked, breath caught somewhere between my ribs and my throat.

Annerly's voice was calm, measured. Typical Doc. But even he couldn't hide the weight of what he told me.

"She said yes, Drew. You and Anton can come to Mystery Falls. She's open to the idea of being courted... under a few conditions."

My knees went weak. I leaned against the stool I used while painting, unsure of my footing. "Holy shit. You're for real? Of course you're for real. You're Doc. Just. Holy shit."

I held my hand over the phone and called out. "Yo! Anton! Come here." And then into the phone I said, "I'm just waiting for Anton, okay. Give me a second."

While I waited for my twin to make his way to the sunroom where I'd been painting away my frustration, I stared at the canvas in front of me.

It was Cindy... or well I guess Christa. As I'd seen her that night in her server outfit, with all of that crazy hair surrounding her.

Anton came storming into the sunroom, his eyes large. "What? Did they call? Is she okay?"

I held up the phone and put the call on speaker while saying, "Annerly is on the phone, Christa agreed to let us court her, but she has conditions," And to Annerly I said, "Anton's here, phone's on speaker."

Anton glanced from me to the phone, his eyes growing large. He hadn't spoken to either the Beta or William in a long time, choosing to let all communication go through me because every time he did talk to them they ended up fighting.

"What conditions?" he asked, hesitantly.

Annerly cleared his throat before laying them out. "First, you can't tell Tracy that we've found her. At all. Second, she's staying on suppressants. As long as she needs to. Even after we've mated her."

I didn't even have to think about those. "Done."

Anton's jaw ticked. Not with resistance. I was glad that no one could actually see us, but to them it would look like he was annoyed by the conditions.

I knew him better than that. His problem wasn't with what our Omega wanted. His struggle was with wondering if it would be enough. Hoping that this would be it, and we would have the chance to be with our Omega.

He cleared his throat before speaking up again.

"We haven't spoken with... Tracy in years.

" He hesitated at her name, not wanting to refer to her as our mother.

"I know you and William thought we chose her side on some things, but that was never the case.

Regardless, she won't be a problem. And I really hope you'll convey that to Christa.

Make sure she knows she's safe from that particular Alpha. "

"I will," Annerly assured us. "I just needed your verbal consent, so I could tell her. And remind you both that we will need to be patient. She's flighty. Understandably so. She's been through a lot, and is still very scared."

"She has every right to be," Anton said quietly.

They were both right.

She did.

But me? I was vibrating with a kind of joy I can't remember ever feeling before.

"Annerly," I called out to the man that used to be one of my best friends. "Tell her thank you. Please. For giving us this trust."

"I will," he said, and the call ended with a soft click.

I turned to Anton, grinning so wide my face hurt. "She said yes. Bro, she said yes."

Anton crossed his arms and gave me the kind of look he usually reserved for our serious conversations. "Don't scare her off before we even get started, Drew."

"I won't!" I laughed. "But come on. This is good news. Amazing news. It deserves to be celebrated!"

"I'm not saying it isn't. Just..." He looked out the large windows, his eyes distant. "Be careful, okay? Keep hold of that hope and protect yourself." He tapped me on the shoulder before continuing. "And remember, she's scared. If we come in too hot, we might burn everything down."

That sobered me. I nodded. "Okay, yeah. Gentle. Respectful. Quiet and calm Alphas."

Anton arched a brow. "You? Quiet and calm? I didn't ask you to get a personality transplant." He snorted.

I slugged his arm in response. "I can try."

He didn't smile this time, not really. But his eyes did soften. Just a bit. "I'm serious, Drew. Don't change who you are. But go slow. Follow her lead."

I nodded, more serious now. "No pushing, I know."

Anton exhaled and finally moved to sit on the edge of the old armchair I kept in the corner of the sunroom. He glanced at the painting.

"Do you think she's changed a lot?" I asked, my tone wistful.

"I don't think it matters all that much what she looks like now," he responded.

We sat in silence for a while. The kind of silence I used to think I could only share with my twin, until we found the rest of our pack.

A silence I missed sharing with them.

Finally, after some time, Anton spoke up. "Do you think we're ready?"



"For her?" I looked at him and let the answer rise from my chest. "Yeah. I do."

He leaned back and closed his eyes for a moment. "I'm not so sure. I don't think we could ever really be ready. But I'm for damned sure done with waiting."

"Then I guess we pack," I told him with a smile.

He jumped up and headed out of the sunroom without another word, but I wouldn't be me if I didn't get a few more in...

"And shave... and shower... and—"

"Goddess, Drew." He bit out, looking back at me with that exasperated expression on his face that only I could ever draw from him.

"What? If we're going to be courting our Omega we can't show up smelling like paint, and looking like a bunch of mountain men."

He laughed softly, finally, and shook his head. "You're probably right, little brother. So let's get cleaned up and on our way. It's time to go claim our girl."

I followed him out of the sunroom, eager to get where we were headed.

"I wonder if she's ever heard of Ageplay?" he asked as we walked up the stairs of our pack house. A pack house I might add that hasn't housed a pack in far too long.

"I think that once we've met her, tested the waters and spent some time with her, you and William can certainly introduce her to it."

He nodded in response. "Now I have another question for you," he told me. "What if she doesn't have any interest in Ageplay?"

I shoved him good naturedly. "Then you'll find something she is interested in, and join her in that."

And that was that.

It was time to get ready, get on the road, and go join our pack.

And our girl.

## Page 10

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

William

I felt it before I even saw him.

Annerly's presence, steady and calm in our bond, pressed up against the edges of my panic like a balm. I'm supposed to be the Alpha. The protector. But instead, my Beta, my lover, my best friend serves as the calm in the storm.

My heart hadn't stopped racing since Drew called last night to say they were on the road.

I shouldn't have been surprised.

It certainly shouldn't have come as a surprise that they agreed to Christa's conditions. I knew they were done with their mom as much as I knew I loved Annerly with every fiber of my being. But because of Tracy there was this poison in our bond, a poison that was too hard to get rid of.

But I needed to work on it.

Because they were coming.

Today.

I stood in the doorway of our borrowed cabin, arms folded, gaze fixed on the road leading into town like it might grow fangs and bite me. My Alpha paced beneath my skin, uncertain and restless.

"Won't be long now," Annerly said behind me, voice warm, soothing. He didn't need to say it aloud. He already felt the tension coming from me. The dread curled up tight in my chest like a snake waiting to strike.

I didn't turn around. "What if this is a mistake? Them coming?"

"It's not a mistake," he said simply. "This is how it's meant to be. You know it, love."

He wasn't wrong. I knew that. And his simple reassurances should have been enough. Our shared bond pulsed between us, real and undeniable. I could feel his confidence shining through.

Our bond was still fragile, still new. I'd only marked him a fucking week ago! And now we were putting everything on the line.

"What the fuck is wrong with me, An?" I pulled at my hair as I turned around and stared at him. "Why am I this freaked out about our pack, our goddess-given pack showing up?"

He opened his mouth to respond, but before he could get a word in, I carried on with my rant.

"I'll tell you why. They'll stumble in here, two bumbling idiots and we'll be right back where we were before we left. Tearing at each other's throats and fighting so much that we won't give our Omega the attention she deserves." I swallow hard. "Then we'll lose her. And them. Again."

He took hold of my hand and pulled me into his embrace. "Hey," he soothed, resting his head on my shoulder. "You have to show a bit of trust."

"I don't know if I'm ready for this, An," I muttered into his hair.

"You don't have to be ready, Will," Annerly said. His hands slid up and down my back, slowly stroking. "We just have to be honest, and open."

I let out a breath and stood up straight. "I spent the last two years thinking we lost our chance at this. That we'd never be able to fix our pack."

"And now we get to try." He pressed a kiss to my shoulder through my shirt, soft and careful. "But we have to really give it our all. Give them a chance to prove themselves, too. Okay?"

I nodded, but it didn't settle the storm in my gut. Because I remembered the last fight with Anton. The shouting. The way he looked at me like I was betraying our pack, when it was them... them and their mother.

No.

That wasn't fair.

It never has been fair.

They had no choice in who sired them. And if we hadn't gone to that damned bonding party their mother had thrown us we wouldn't even have met our Omega.

Drew and Anton were pack. They were pack even before I met Annerly. We were friends once. Brothers. We could get back to that.

We would get back to that.

For us.

And for Christa.

The thought of her stirred something low and aching in me. She's giving us a chance to court her. To get to know her and show her we were worthy of her. I could only hope that she fell for us, agreed to mate us before she realised what a mess we were.

A pair of headlights crested the hill, drawing me from my troubled thoughts.

Fuck.

They're here.

As the car drew up into the driveway, I took a steadying breath and grabbed hold of Annerly's hand in mine.

They didn't know we'd formalised a bond between just the two of us, and it wouldn't serve anyone if we hid it from them.

No more damned secrets.

Together we stepped to the front door and opened it, heading out to greet our pack mates.

The car hadn't even fully stopped before Drew spilled out of the passenger side, practically vibrating with excitement. Anton was slower, more composed as usual, but I could see the tightness in his jaw, the tension in his shoulders.

I stood taller, keeping Annerly's hand clasped firmly in mine.

Drew's eyes immediately dropped to the connection between us, and I braced myself for... I don't even know what. Judgement? Disappointment? Annoyance?

But his face cracked into a grin so wide it nearly split his face in two.

"Well, isn't this great fucking news," he said, voice full of that familiar teasing warmth that used to drive me up the wall. "It's about time you two admitted what the rest of us knew ages ago."

I blinked. "You... knew?"

"You two were the only ones in denial." He scoffed and stepped closer.

"I'm glad you two figured it out. There was a time where I thought I might have to lock you two in a cabin together and force some kind of mating heat to get you to just kiss.

"He clapped my shoulder, then surprised the hell out of me by pulling me into a hug. "I really fucking missed you, Will."

Annerly chuckled beside me, and when I glanced his way, he was smiling too. His usual, quiet peaceful smile.

Anton stepped out and closed the car door behind him. He stood there a moment, looking between the three of us, and then his gaze landed on our hands. His brow furrowed—just a flicker of something unreadable in his eyes—but then he nodded once and stepped closer.

"That's one less thing to figure out," he said, voice low. "I'm pleased."

It wasn't effusive or a floral blessing, but coming from Anton, it was a huge fucking deal.

"Thanks," I managed. "It's still new, though."

"I mean, yeah. That figures," Anton murmured, his eyes lifting to scan the cabin, the

woods beyond before taking a deep breath. "Fuck man. It feels good being around you two again."

And it did.

It felt right. Now I felt like a bit of an idiot that I was worried to start off with. They were pack. They were family.

As much as we were missing a piece after we lost our Omega on the same damn night we found her, being a pack split in two was like having a limb removed.

We still had a lot of issues to sort out between us, a lot of nasty words thrown around and things that couldn't be taken back. But maybe... just maybe, we could get past it.

A beat of silence passed between us.

Then Drew, never one to let a moment hang too long, clapped his hands. "So. When do we get to see her? I'm ready to win our Omega's heart."

Annerly snorted. "Pace yourself, Romeo."

And with that, the tension in the air eased off.

"She's working today and asked us to steer clear of the diner for now. I thought we could give her a few days before we drop by and formally present ourselves and offer to court her," I told them.

"Huh. A few days. So what will we do with ourselves until then?" Drew asked.

"There's always day drinking?" Annerly offered, and all four of us laughed together for the first time in what felt like decades.



## Page 11

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

The bell above the diner door jingled as it always did, a familiar chime that rang like background music to the clatter of plates and the low hum of the morning regulars nursing their third cups of coffee.

I wiped my hands on a dish towel and leaned against the counter, watching Honey move with practiced grace between the booths.

I was trying really hard to pretend it was just another Wednesday in Mystery Falls.

But I knew better.

It wouldn't be long before Honey's pack insisted she stop working at the diner.

She already didn't live with me anymore.

And now they were here. Have been.

For days.

And they haven't even been to see me!

Everything was changing, and I wasn't ready for it, or okay with it.

"Did you hear about the newcomers?" old Earl asked from his usual spot at the counter, voice low.

A shiver raced up my spine at his casual gossip, as if my thoughts of them brought up the gossip.

Earl leaned toward his buddy, Mason, eager to dig into new gossip.

Mason arched a brow. "No? What newcomers?"

"A pack. Three Alphas and a Beta. Moved into one of those rental cabins outside of town. The first two showed up a about a week ago. Last two pitched up a few days later."

I continued my careful wiping of the counter as if they're discussion meant nothing to me. I couldn't afford to show any reaction because it would only add fuel to whatever fire was already burning.

Forcing myself to move to the coffee machine to grab the full pot I picked it up and started warming up the cups on the counter.

It took everything in me not to show the turmoil bubbling inside me. The hair at the back of my neck stood on end.

I was being stupid. I knew they were here. It was only a matter of time before everyone started discussing them.

"They're not just renting for a week-long trip either. Molly told me they paid upfront for a couple of months," Earl continued, getting into the groove now that he had an avid audience in his friend.

"That's not just passing through," Mason muttered. "You think they're looking to move to town? What on earth could they want in a small town like ours?"

Earl's grin turned positively gleeful at his friend's question. "Rumor has it, there's an Omega hiding in town."

At this, Mason guffawed.

"Of course, there's an Omega hiding in town. But she's been found, hasn't she?" The toothless patron pointed at Honey, where she was smiling at a family seated at a corner booth.

Earl bumped Mason's shoulder with his own before cuffing him behind the head. "No, you idiot! Another one. Apparently, our small corner of the world is Omega Mecca."

I forced a smile as I refilled Earl's mug, careful not to spill a drop. My hand was steady, but only because I'd spent the last two years mastering the art of pretending.

Pretending I wasn't terrified of being found.

Pretending I didn't miss my old life, my dad, my home, like a phantom limb.

Pretending I wasn't still looking over my shoulder every time a stranger—which was every damn day—walked into the diner.

But more than anything else... pretending that I wasn't missing the biggest part of myself by hiding my very nature.

Once again, Earl didn't notice a thing, too wrapped up in the sound of his own voice. "They say this Omega's been here a while too. Living all quiet like. Under the radar. I guess someone must have sniffed her out if there's a pack looking to court her."

"You think the pack came all the way out here for that?" Mason asked, scratching at

his stubbled chin. "Seems like a stretch, don't you think. Omega's aren't that rare. They could just get themselves one in the city."

Earl shrugged, not pleased with his audience for not playing along with him. "Alphas get real strange when fate gets involved. I bet she's their scent match, and they hunted her down."

I nearly dropped the fucking coffee pot.

The weight of the words hit me square in the chest, sharp and sudden.

He was too close to the damned truth.

"Christa?" Honey's voice cut through the rising buzz in my ears. She stood by the pass through window, holding a fresh plate of eggs and toast, her eyes searching mine. "You okay?"

I blinked and cleared my throat. "Fine, fine."

She didn't look convinced.

I wasn't altogether surprised.

"Have they—" she began to ask, but I shook my head to stop her from completing the sentence.

"I'll just take this to table four," I offered quickly, taking the plate from her hands before she could do me in with any more of her concern.

I needed distance.

I waved through the booths, smiling and nodding at familiar and new faces.

This was normal.

Routine.

I could do this.

Then the bell rang again, and as was my habit, I looked up at the door to greet the new guests.

The very four guests that had Earl and Mason gossiping like a bunch of biddies with nothing better to do.

The pack.

My pack.

Fuck.

I dropped the plate on table four without a word to the startled trucker sitting there and stormed to the door that led to the kitchen.

It didn't take long for Honey to follow me. "Do you want me to chase them away?"

Goddess, I loved my friend. She was tiny, smaller than most Omegas. Na?ve as a newborn doe. And protective like a mama lion with her cubs.

I shook my head in response to her question before taking a deep breath. Jo, our Beta boss, and the owner of the diner loomed over me with a fierce scowl on his face.

"What the fuck now? Things were just settling down after Honey and her drama." His voice was filled with concern.

"Uh..." I looked at him, biting my lip in uncharacteristic fashion. I wasn't this nervous mess. Dammit, I needed to get hold of myself. "So. You know how I'm an Omega right? Running from my... stepmother?"

He squinted at me, but nodded for me to continue.

"Well, I guess I never told you how I met my pack on the same night I ran away, huh?"

Jo swore up a storm before storming into the walk-in freezer. When he came back out, he was holding his favored shotgun and was heading toward the front.

"No!" I cried out in alarm. "You don't need to chase them, Jo. They did nothing wrong."

The old man looked at me, his face clearly transmitting that I needed to convince him—and soon—before he was gonna pepper some men with buckshot.

I rushed to explain my situation and by the time I was done, Jo was sitting down on the stool we all used to take our breaks.

"You two girls are both gonna leave me, aren't ya?"

Oh boy. Honey's eyes instantly filled with tears, and before I knew it, I was in the middle of a damn cuddle pile with our Beta boss and my best friend.

I didn't know how long we stood like that, before we jumped apart when someone cleared their throat at the pass-through window to get our attention.

Back to the real world we go, I guess.

## Page 12

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Anton

The diner smelled like coffee and sugar and too many people crammed into too small a space.

I hated it on principle.

Our Omega, our mate, has been working here, slaving away here for the last two years. Not to mention the years she slaved away for my damn, fucking mother before that.

The bell above the door jingled as we stepped inside, and my hackles went up instantly. Not from aggression, but anticipation. The kind that sat low in your gut and wound tight the longer it was ignored.

Cindy—no Christa—was here.

I knew it the second we crossed the threshold.

Her floral, sweet scent, faint beneath the strong notes of grease and coffee, still hit me like a punch to the gut.

But the moment we stepped in and she made eye contact, she bolted.

No fanfare, no shouting, no confrontation.

Just one terrified look in our direction and then she was gone, disappearing into the



back like we were the damn plague.

"Well, that went well," I muttered, sliding into a booth near the window.

A blonde waitress raced into the back after Christa and I took a deep breath that was meant to steady me.

It didn't work.

William didn't sit. Of course he didn't. He just stood there like a statue, staring at the swinging kitchen door like it might swing back open on its own, gifting us our prize. "We shouldn't have come so soon," he said, his voice tight.

"No shit," Drew added, crossing his arms. "I said it should just be two of us. You two had, what, one calm conversation with her. We should have given her some space."

Annerly sighed, already rubbing his temples. "We talked about this. She said she was open to us courting her. Christa agreed to this. We didn't just show up uninvited—"

"Except we kind of did," Drew interrupted. "Showing up at her workplace like this? What did you think she'd do? Hug us and give us each a kiss hello?"

"This is exactly why we fell apart the first time," I muttered under my breath.

That shut them all up for a blessed second.

I didn't bother elaborating.

They all knew what I meant. Too many strong wills and opinions pulling us all in different directions. Not one of us bothering to stop and listen. We'd lost each other in the chaos after she ran.

We didn't just lose her; we lost ourselves. And we weren't getting her back until we got us back to where we should be.

I stood, ignoring William's confused glance.

"Where are you going?" Annerly asked.

I didn't answer. I just rounded the counter and headed toward the kitchen.

If Christa didn't want to see us, fine. But I wasn't going to sit around while my pack picked themselves apart again.

I made my way behind the counter to the pass-through window. I could have gone into the kitchen, but I didn't want her to feel like we were invading her space anymore than we already were. What I saw when I looked through the window was a scene I hadn't expected.

Christa was huddled between a tall, broad-shouldered man who looked like he could punch a wall for fun, and the petite blonde girl that had followed Christa into the kitchen. She had to be Honey, the Omega William and Annerly had saved.

The Beta's arms were around both of the women like they were the most precious things in the world, and maybe they were.

It hit me then.

This was her life now. The one she built after us. After running from us.

I cleared my throat. Not to get their attention, but to push away the sudden onset of fear.

Fear that we were the monsters after all.

Wouldn't we be exactly that if we expected her to just pack up her life and come with us?

Christa looked up when she heard me, regardless, and her eyes widened, panic rippling across her expression like a struck chord. That abject fear made me feel even more like a monster.

The older man also pulled back, fixing me with a narrowed glare. "You lost, son?" he asked.

"No," I said flatly, refusing to show any weakness. All those lessons Tracy taught us were impossible to shake. "I'm here to speak with Christa. Alone."

Honey bristled immediately, the angry emotion looking out of place on the small Omega's face.

"It's okay," Christa said, voice quiet but firm.

I felt my chest warm with pride for her.

"Just give us a minute, please?" she asked both the Omega and older Beta male.

The older man looked like he wanted to argue, but with a grunt and a muttered curse, he gave a nod and led Honey away.

I waited until they were gone before I spoke again.

"You don't have to talk if you don't want to," I said. "But I needed to see you."

She crossed her arms, protecting herself and breaking my heart just a bit more.  
"You're seeing me now."

I winced, because now that we were alone, her tone was... off. Cold somehow.

Silence stretched between us, taut and fragile. I needed to move past this, past the fear, past the conditioning that my damn mother fostered in me.

Drew had always done so much better with emotion than I did.

"I..." I took a deep, steadying breath. "I just wanted to see you, and tell you.

.. Well, tell you I'm glad we found you again, I guess.

And—" I started pacing the small open space in the cramped kitchen while running my hands through my carefully styled hair, completely messing it up and, for once, not giving a fuck.

"Fuck. Shit. Okay, Christa, I'm sorry. So incredibly sorry that we never went back home to meet you and protect you from her. "

Christa's eyes grew large at my outburst. Not scared, just shocked.

The silence was so incredibly loud after that, I had to force myself to remain where I was and not run away from all the word vomit I'd just spilt.

"What the fuck are you talking about?" she finally asked incredulously. "You... you're sorry you didn't come back home, so you could what? Stop your mom from abusing me?"

I shrugged.

"You're kidding, right? In what world would you have known?"

Unable to control myself, I started pacing again. The Alpha in me wanted—no, needed—to go to her, hold her, feel her against me, to soothe myself, and that was a purely selfish action. One I could not allow myself.

"We grew up with her, little Omega. I know exactly the horrors you were subjected to under her thumb."

"Oh."

That's it. That's all she had to say.

Oh.

I didn't know what I had expected, but 'oh' definitely wasn't it.

The word landed harder than any punch ever could.

Because it wasn't indifference.

It was understanding.

And that was somehow worse.

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

Having Anton pacing around the kitchen like a caged animal, hair wild, words falling out of him like broken glass... is not what I expected when I agreed to let him speak to me alone.

I also wasn't expecting an apology.

I mean, what the heck? They hadn't done anything to me. I was the one that had run away without even talking to them.

But he was sorry.

Sorry they hadn't come back for me.

Sorry they'd left me with her .

And he sounded like he meant it. It sounded like it had been eating him alive for years.

I'd come into this confrontation ready to stand strong, to defend my independence and my decision to run off. I'd even rehearsed a little speech about how I wasn't some frightened girl anymore and I was ready to move forward. Forget the past.

But then he called me his little Omega. And showed me that raw, deep hurt.

Shared his pain with me.

It gutted me.

And it made no goddess damned sense. Anton and Drew were Tracy's sons. Her Alpha sons.

But Anton's voice, his face... he wasn't lying. He knew what she was like.

"Oh," I finally managed to push out the only word I could find.

He stood there. Stiff and silent. Like he couldn't speak or move any more.

I didn't know what to do. What to say. There was no box to put this big revelation into.

This big, strong Alpha had survived her too. And now he was looking at me like he'd failed me .

Like he needed my forgiveness.

How couldn't he see I could never blame him? I understood better than anyone. He and his brother had obviously gotten out as soon as they could and refused to look back.

And why would they look back for a random girl they'd never met before?

His agony made my chest ache.

And it stirred something deeper. Something I've ignored for way too long.

My Omega was pushing at me.

Anton was mine.

And he was hurting.

I couldn't let that stand.

My feet moved before I even realised it. One step. Two. and then my arms were around him, sliding under his broad shoulders, tucking myself into the space he made like I'd never left it.

Anton froze, completely. His whole body stiffened like he didn't know what the hell to do with the comfort.

And then... he just melted.

His arms came around me in a fierce, almost desperate grip, and his body rumbled with a purr so low and deep it vibrated through my ribs.

I closed my eyes and breathed him in, letting myself be held just for a second. Letting myself hold him back .

This wouldn't fix anything. Not even close to it.

But it was a start.

"Christa," a voice called, pulling us apart. "Unless you're planning on spoon feeding these customers yourself, I've got orders backing up and a grumpy pack out front wondering where their missing Alpha disappeared to."

I stepped back like I'd been caught making out behind the bleachers. Jo was standing in the doorway, hands on his hips, eyebrow arched so high it practically reached his



hairline.

"Can I... take my break?" I asked, wiping my hands on my apron and not quite meeting his eyes.

He gave me the longest, most dramatic sigh I'd ever heard. "Yeah, yeah. Take it. Not like I wasn't expecting to lose you soon anyway. Might as well get used to it."

I choked on a laugh. "Jo—"

"Just go," he grumbled, waving me off. "But if they try to claim you before the next rush, I'm charging them for the lost labour."

I suppressed the snort that threatened. Mostly because I didn't know if I wanted to laugh or cry.

Would they expect me to pack up and leave with them if I agreed to become theirs?

Anton held the kitchen door open for me, his hand ghosting against my back as I stepped past him into the diner. My heart was pounding for reasons I didn't even fully understand. Everything felt too loud. The clatter of plates. The murmur of voices. My own thoughts screaming over one another.

The other members of the pack were in a corner booth by the window. William stood when he saw me, but didn't move any closer. Just watched with steady, soul-searching eyes like he was worried I might bolt at any second.

I didn't.

Instead, I slid into the booth opposite them. Anton followed, sitting beside me. Close, but not touching. And strangely, I didn't feel caged in.

It felt... comforting.

Yet another awkward silence settled over us. Honestly, I was getting kind of tired of not knowing what the fuck to say and how to act.

Then, all at once:

"We're sorry—" Annerly said.

"I didn't think you'd actually come out—" This from Drew.

"Do you want something to eat—" I blurted automatically, defaulting to server mode.

"We shouldn't have—" Anton spoke up from next to me.

"Stop!" William's voice cut through the overlapping words, calm but commanding. The Alpha in him showing without even trying. "One at a time," he said. Then he turned to me. "Thank you for sitting down with us."

I nodded once, unsure of what to say. My emotions were still tangled, like headphone wires left in a pocket too long. I glanced at Anton, then back at the rest of them. My pack.

Or what could be my pack.

If I was brave enough to give them, and us, a chance.

William cleared his throat. "We wanted to thank you for letting us have a chance. For agreeing to us courting you," he said gently. "And apologise for just showing up here today. That was... a mistake."

"I told you it was a stupid idea," Drew muttered, arms crossed.

William ignored him, but I couldn't help but wonder at the tension I was now very aware of running between them.

"We want to take you out on dates. Real ones. Give you the chance to get to know us," William continued to explain.

Annerly nodded. "One-on-one, at first. So you don't feel overwhelmed. You choose the pace. Whatever you need."

"And then maybe," Drew added with a crooked smile, "When you're ready, a group date. All of us, together. Show you how good we are when we're not being idiots."

I blinked at them. "Oh, when you said courting... you meant courting ." The thought felt strange. Old-fashioned. Formal. Sweet.

All four men nodded in agreement.

I stared down at my hands. I didn't know what to say. What the right thing here was.

My head and heart were a mess. My instincts were even worse. But under all of it, deep and steady and quiet, was the part of me that had always belonged to them.

The Omega inside me wanted this. Wanted them.

And maybe... maybe I did too.

"Okay," I said, voice barely above a whisper. It wasn't a promise. It wasn't forever. But it was a start. A step.

Four smiles bloomed in response. Not triumphant. Just hopeful.

William

I'd faced down assholes in the boardrooms and braved the deepest, darkest cesspool of humanity to track down and save our Omega. But standing outside Christa's front door, hands sweating like I was eighteen and about to ask my crush to prom.

Next to me, Annerly was fidgeting with the strap of the adorable suspenders I liked so much. His composure was better than mine. Slightly. He offered me a shaky smile, and I caught the faint tremor of nerves through our bond.

We had a wicker basket with hand-picked picnic foods and an insulated pack with different drinks waiting for us in the car.

"You're sure this isn't too much?" he whispered.

"No," I said, though I wasn't sure either. "But we're here now, so let's show our girl what we've got for her."

Annerly nodded once, and I raised my hand to knock.

When the door opened, Christa stood barefoot in the doorway, dressed in a soft sundress that made my breath catch. Her wild, colourful hair was pulled back into a messy top knot that had some soft tendrils escaping at her temples.

She was temptation in the flesh.

"You're here," she said, a tentative smile on her face. "Fuck. You're here. I'm late.

Give me five. Am I dressed alright? I'm fine, right?" she rambled, and I instantly felt a bit more at ease knowing our Omega was just as nervous as we were.

"You're perfect," I responded, unable to keep the awe out of my voice.

She blushed a beautiful shade of pink before tucking a strand of hair behind her ear.

"We're just having a picnic," Annerly rushed to tell her. "Honey told us about a place."

Christa's brows lifted. "Of course she did."

"She's very invested in our success," Annerly responded with a more confident grin now.

He wasn't wrong.

We both had grown quite fond of the blonde-haired Omega we'd ended up rescuing while looking for our own princess. I was almost sure she was even more overjoyed about Annerly and I bonding than we ourselves were.

Annerly's comment earned the smallest smile from Christa. She stepped back, opening the door wider. "Give me five minutes?"

"Take your time," I said, and meant it.

We waited while she disappeared into the small apartment, and I tried not to think about how cozy the space felt. It was bright, warm, and welcoming.

Even while on the run, living under a fake identity, she'd made herself a home.

She came back out with a light-weight sweater and an old Nikon camera tucked into her bag. "Okay," she said, still tentative. "Let's get going."

We grabbed the picnic basket and the cooler from the car, and I held out my hand to Christa.

And when she accepted my offer? My damn heart nearly exploded with pride.

The walk wasn't long. And Honey hadn't been exaggerating. This small town had its share of hidden magic. The picnic spot was tucked into a low hill behind the diner, with a patch of wildflowers and a lazy stream cutting through the trees.

We set up under a tree. Annerly laid out the blanket while I unpacked the basket.

Fresh sandwiches, cut fruit, and some delicious-smelling muffins from a bakery Honey had recommended. Even though I wanted nothing more than to spoil our Omega and show her exactly how well we could provide for her as a pack, I'd tried to keep it sweet, simple and low-key. Nothing fancy.

Our sweet, slightly sassy Omega sat between us, legs tucked under her. I couldn't stop watching her. The way the sunlight kissed her skin highlighted the slight smattering of freckles I ached to trace with my fingers, my tongue, my lips.

"So," Christa said eventually, "I think... from what Honey told me... you two are dating, right?"

It was Annerly who answered. "Yes," he said simply. "Although, it's a bit more than dating, as we've bonded. He bit me a short while ago."

Her expression was unreadable, and I ached to pull her closer into my lap so I could at least feel her even if I couldn't feel her emotions.

"We hope that's okay with you," I added, voice softer. "We'd kind of given up hope of ever finding you, and I didn't think it was fair to either of us to wait anymore."

She looked down, tracing patterns on her thigh. "I don't mind. As long as both of you don't mind... me..." She cleared her throat, that delicious blush spreading again. "Ugh, I mean. As long as you guys don't think I'll be trying to get between the two of you."

Annerly coughed, and I could feel his arousal simmering in our bond. "I wouldn't mind feeling you between us," he muttered almost too softly to hear.

Christa snorted, so she'd clearly heard his remark, but instead of making it turn things even more awkward, she smiled at us, a mischievous glint in her eyes.

"Well... now that I've sufficiently embarrassed myself, I think it's time for you to return the favour. Tell me something. Something... scary to share."

She stared at me, as if daring me to try to shock her.

"I'm a Daddy Dom."

Her eyebrows shot up, her eyes bright with curiosity. "Like you enjoy spanking your partners?"

"It's a bit more than that," I confirmed. "It's not just about sex and stuff happening in the bedroom. I enjoy taking care of people I love. I thrive on the structure, and I love knowing my partner feels safe and cared for."

Her lips parted like she wanted to ask more, so I waited.

"And you?" she asked, glancing at Annerly.



He shrugged, but I recognised his faked nonchalance. "I'm a switch," he said. "It depends on the person, the dynamic, or the mood. But I've enjoyed taking control, and giving it up. But with Mister Bossy Boots over here, it's hard to get him to give over those reins."

"I don't want you to think we're telling you this because we expect something from you," I added quickly. "If it's not something you're interested in, we can get that from each other. We're just sharing about who we are."

Christa was quiet for a beat, chewing her lip. "I don't know that I won't like that," she said finally.

"You don't have to know," I said gently. "You just have to be honest with us. We can try it if you'd like. And if it's not for you, you tell us. No matter what, it will be okay."

I reached for her hand, slowly, giving her every chance to pull away.

She didn't.

"Little Omega," I crooned softly, watching her reaction.

Her breath hitched.

"Come to Daddy," I told her.

That tiny flicker in her eyes. Hunger, hope and confusion. It was all the answer I needed.

She blinked up at me, her cheeks pink. "Say it again?"

I smiled. "Come to Daddy."

She leaned forward, and I closed the distance between us. Our lips met in a soft, tentative kiss. Her fingers curled around mine, and I felt the tremble in her body like a spark jumping skin to skin.

When we pulled apart, Annerly was watching us with warmth in his eyes.

"You can kiss me too, you know," Christa told him, a cheeky glint to her eye.

He laughed in response. "Permission noted, little one."

And then he kissed her, sweet and slow and sure. She made a soft noise against his mouth, a sound that hit me right in the chest. Then her beautiful floral perfume filled the surrounding air, her need making itself known in the most honest, natural way.

We spent the rest of the meal feeding her small bites, brushing shoulders, letting her lean against one or the other of us whenever the mood struck.

She never pulled away.

And not once did she balk at our protective actions.

Her inner Omega had made its choice, even if her mind hadn't caught up yet.

And I'd wait. She would be my Little girl.

She would be ours.

If we could just stay out of our own way.

## Page 15

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

By the time we got back to my apartment, I was floating.

Not in the dreamy, disassociated way I sometimes got when I was overwhelmed, but warm and weightless.

Like all the tension I carried in my shoulders had been gently lifted away by soft touches, sweet kisses, and the kind of attention that felt as nourishing as it was dangerous. And delicious.

And the best part?

They didn't push.

Not even once.

Even when I'd practically melted between them after the second kiss.

My body betrayed me and bloomed with my lusty perfume, slick filling my panties in a way that would have had me embarrassed if I wasn't wearing the special underwear Honey had gifted me with a grin.

But even then, they didn't rush me or make me feel pressured in any way.

They just held me, fed me and made me feel cherished.

In a way, I hadn't felt since before my mom passed away.

Now, back inside my apartment I stood awkwardly in the center of the room, unsure what to do with my hands or my racing pulse. "Can I get you something? Water? Tea?"

My voice came out too high, too breathy. William's brows lifted slightly, amused. Annerly leaned against my kitchen counter, and the way he stood there made it look like he belonged there.

"We're fine, Little Omega," William said, voice low and smooth like velvet.

A shiver ran through me at the pet name again.

Little Omega.

Goddess.

I didn't know what it was about the way he said it, like it was a gift instead of a nickname, but I wanted to hear it again. And again.

Maybe even whispered against my neck before he bit me, claimed me, made me his.

It was time to be brave.

"I like it when you call me that," I admitted softly.

William stepped closer, eyes dark and golden. "Yeah?" He reached for my wrist, slowly, and pulled me gently into his arms. "It suits you perfectly." His hand moved to the small of my back, anchoring me to him. I didn't fight the pull. I didn't want to.

Annerly appeared on my other side, his hand skimming up my bare arm. "We had a good day today," he murmured, brushing a kiss against my temple. "We don't want to push, take things too far. But we do want to just hold you for a bit more."

The way they talked, it was reverent, almost indulgent. Like I was something precious instead of something broken.

I craved more of that feeling and my body buzzed from all the attention, warmth pooling low in my belly. I felt soft, needy, and exposed. But safe.

That was the dangerous part.

"I'd..." I paused, licking my lips. "I'd like that. If you stayed a little longer."

William's gaze sharpened. "Are you sure, baby? And what would you like us to do if we stayed longer?"

"I don't know," I whispered. "But after spending the afternoon with you, I don't want to be alone tonight. I want to be held. Touched."

Annerly's smile turned wicked-sweet. "Well, would you look at that little princess. That just so happens to be our specialty."

They led me to the couch, and I was thankful for it, because I wasn't sure if I'd be able to stop myself from taking things even further in the bedroom.

William settled behind me first, drawing me against his chest, his hands wrapping around my waist. I could feel the strength of him, solid and unyielding.

Annerly kneeled in front of me on the floor, cupping my face between his hands.

"Still doing okay, princess?"

I nodded, and he kissed me silly.

There was absolutely nothing tentative about this one. His mouth was warm and sure, and when he licked softly at my lower lip, I whimpered and opened for him.

I felt more than heard William's growl behind me, a possessive sound that only made the ache in my core deepen.

"You taste... sinful," Annerly murmured against my lips.

"Sinful enough to tempt you?" I asked, my voice breathy and thready.

He grinned. "Sinful enough to sell my soul for just one more taste."

William's hands roamed gently up my thighs now, beneath the hem of my sundress. Not high enough to cross any lines... but more than enough to make me wish he would be just a smidge less gentlemanly.

"Colour, baby?" he asked against my ear, his voice like warm honey.

We'd gone over a few things while talking on our picnic, as I was open to trying things out with them. And as such we'd discussed a few limits, some safewords and just general safety guidelines.

"Green," I paused, hesitating on the one word he'd mentioned I could use when ready, "Daddy."

He purred, the rumble hitting me in a way that was indescribable. His fingers traced slow, delicious circles against the backs of my knees, drawing tiny sounds from my

throat that I barely recognized as my own.

Annerly leaned in and kissed my shoulder, then lower, dragging the strap of my dress down slowly with his teeth. "We'll stop whenever you need, princess," he murmured. "We're just going to explore and show you how precious you are."

And when William called me his girl again, and Annerly kissed his way down my neck, I let go of every ounce of hesitation I'd been carrying.

Strong, sure fingers travelled up, up, up higher until they reached the hem of my soft cotton underwear. They teased at the elastic, their touch so light at times I felt like I was imagining it.

At the same time, Annerly's lips moved over every bit of naked skin it could find from my neck to my shoulder.

It was pure torture.

I never wanted it to end.

Unless they took it further.

Dear goddess, I hoped they would just take it further.

A low whine escaped me when I felt like I would fall apart with the need building up inside me. A fierce need that made no bloody sense because they hadn't even touched me in any real naughty way.

"What's wrong, princess?" Annerly asked, smirking at me.

I threw my head back, resting it against William's shoulder and scowled at him. "You

know what's wrong." I pouted.

William chuckled before asking. "What's your colour, little one?"

Ugh. "Green," I said petulantly. And oh my goodness... Was I actually pouting?

Both men chuckled again before Annerly's lips moved back to its slow torture again.

This time, though, he focused his attention on the hem of my sundress right above my cleavage. His wet, warm tongue traced the edges, drawing a soft moan from me.

"Do you like that? When our Beta licks those pretty tits of yours?" William asked in my ear, his words a soft whisper, causing a shiver to run through me. "Do you want him to take them out and suck on your perfect nipples, little one?"

I pushed my chest out, arching my back in response.

The combination of Annerly's tongue and William's fingers hovering on the edges of what was 'appropriate' was driving me insane. My body was catching flame, and my Omega wanted more.

I felt needy.

Empty.

Ready for more.

But the knowledge that it wasn't up to me, that for once I didn't have to make the choice was so freeing that I couldn't even ask them for more.

And then I didn't need to because William's fingers slipped into my panties, heading



straight for my little nub right as Annerly's mouth covered my nipple over my sundress.

The sudden onslaught of sensation was so overwhelming that I lost it completely, my core clenching around nothingness as I came, slick pouring out.

## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Drew

They weren't coming home tonight.

William's message had been polite, even warm, but the sting behind the words still lingered long after I read them.

I wasn't surprised. Not really. If I had a date with her, and she gave even the slightest inclination that she was open to me spending the night I would jump on it.

Still, it ate at something inside me, the same raw place I'd been nursing since we got her back into our lives. She wasn't mine. She wasn't ours. Not yet.

But I could imagine what it would be like when she would be.

I swallowed the bitterness, a bitterness that neither Annerly nor William even deserved, and stepped outside. The night was cool, the kind of gentle summer dark that was just this side of perfect.

I grabbed my sketchbook and a pencil, needing something to do with my hands before my Alpha's need to pace drove me crazy.

The night outside the cabin was quiet, barely even nightlife letting itself be known. Anton was somewhere inside, probably brooding just like I was, but in his own way.

Either way, I was grateful for the peace. I sank into the old wooden porch swing by the railing and cracked the spine of my sketchbook. My fingers moved before my

thoughts did. Line after line, I let her come to life on the page.

Christa, as I remembered her the first time I saw her, the same way I painted her every single time since then, in the years that passed.

Christa as she smiled shyly at us in the booth in that rickety old diner.

Christa looking unsure as she agreed to see us again.

I needed more.

More inspiration.

More images of our pretty Omega.

"You're talented."

The voice came from nowhere, low and smooth. I jolted, heart kicking against my ribs, eyes snapping up.

A woman stood near the edge of the clearing.

Tall. Dark. Striking. Her frame was draped in black leather, and even from a distance I could sense the disdain she held for me.

"Who the hell—" I started, half-rising.

She stepped closer, unbothered by my tension. Her lips quirked. "You can call me The Tigress."

My heart stalled.

Fuck. This was the woman William and Annerly had told me about.

"What do you want?" I asked carefully, body still but ready to move if I had to.

"I'm a... friend of Christa's," she said. "I have information that could be of importance to her and your pack."

"What kind of information?" Worry instantly roared alive in me.

Her smile was cool, calculating. "The kind that your mother would probably pay to keep hidden."

I stared at her. "Is that supposed to mean something to me?"

She shrugged. "I don't know where your loyalties lie, Alpha."

I exhaled, slow and sharp. "If you're asking me if I would choose my mother over Christa, the answer is no, a thousand times no. I don't give one flying fuck about my mother. I haven't in ages."

Something flickered in her expression. Amusement perhaps. But disbelief above all else. "Is that so?"

"Yes," I said flatly. "Our mother burned her bridges a long time ago. After the way she treated Christa, she killed the last of the loyalty we had towards her."

"Hmmm." She tilted her head, clearly unconvinced. "I suppose time will tell."

I tensed again, fingers tightening around the pencil. "You could just give me the information and move along."

"I could," she agreed. "But I want to see how you treat her first. Christa deserves only the best. I need to know that you will care for her in the way she should be. I will be watching... and if I like what I see, you'll get your answers. If I don't..."

Her gaze sharpened, glinting like a blade.

"You'll hear from me again."

I stood then, anger rising fast and hot. "Are you threatening me?"

She smirked. "I don't need to, big guy. You'll know if I ever really do."

A sound echoed through the trees, sharp, loud. I turned my head instinctively.

But there was nothing to be seen, and by the time I looked back, she was gone.

I was still standing there when the door creaked open behind me.

Anton stepped onto the porch, shirt rumpled, brow furrowed. He stopped when he saw me, eyes scanning the trees like he could still feel the tension hanging in the air.

"You okay?" he asked.

I hesitated. "We had a visitor."

His eyes sharpened. "What? Who?"

I motioned to the sketchbook, flipping to a blank page and quickly sketching the shape of her. Sharp cheekbones, the twist of her lips, the feral grace of her posture. And there was no doubt about it, that woman was feral.

"She called herself The Tigress."

Anton froze. "No shit."

"No shit."

He looked down at the drawing, then back at me. "She was here? You met the mysterious Omega saviour?"

"Just now. Called herself a friend of Christa's. Claimed to have information for us. About Christa. And Mom."

Anton blinked, then scoffed. "Of course. Because this wasn't complicated enough already."

I leaned against the railing, rubbing the back of my neck. "She didn't say what kind of information, though. Just that it could hurt Mom. And that she's watching us, waiting to see how we treat our Omega before she decides if she's willing to share it."

"What the fuck?" Anton blurted.

I met his eyes. "I know, man. I'm just as freaked out, and frankly quite a bit pissed off at the inferred threats."

A long silence passed between us. Then Anton exhaled hard, dragging a hand through his hair. "So what now? We're just supposed to wait and hope she decides we're worthy of her breadcrumbs?"

"I don't want to wait," I said. "She's got leverage, but we've been blind to too much for too long. And if there's something else we need to know about Mom and Christa, then maybe it's time we looked."

Anton nodded slowly, thoughtfully. "Yeah, it's time to be more proactive."

I flipped the sketchbook shut. "Fuck, I can't take it if I find out she screwed over Christa even more."

Anton's jaw flexed. "I can't either, little brother. But denial's not going to protect her. Not anymore. I know a guy. Discreet PI. Works fast."

I raised a brow. "You trust him?"

"I trust he's expensive, and comes highly recommended," Anton said with a shrug. He turned to go back inside, already dialling.

And I stayed on the porch, watching the trees, heart still pounding with the echo of something that felt like a storm warning.

Whatever we found... it would not be good. I just knew it.

But no matter what, if it helped Christa, we needed to get our hands on it.

She was worth everything.

## Page 17

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

I was nervous. Again.

You couldn't really blame me.

I had this amazing date with William and Annerly, and a night I would never forget after.

And every day since then the entire pack has been in the diner for every meal, sitting in my section, tipping me huge and flirting with me mercilessly.

But we've not done anything else, because they didn't want to push .

I never thought I'd want a bunch of Alphas to be more pushy, yet here we were.

Only after I'd made a snarky comment about feeling a little neglected did Anton kind of... snapped and demanded that they be allowed to pick me up for a date with them.

I clutched my camera bag a little tighter as I stepped out onto the gravel driveway, my Nikon bumping softly against my hip.

The evening air was crisp and carried the scent of pine and something smoky from a fire pit I couldn't yet see.

The sun was beginning to dip, casting gold over everything like the world itself was on fire.



Drew's smile hit me like a warm breeze when I finally saw him. "Hey, pretty Omega."

I flushed at the easy compliment and how easy it rolled from his tongue. Even more at the fact that I actually believed him when he called me pretty.

It was heady.

"Hi."

Anton stood behind him, hands in his jacket pockets. His nod was subtle, his expression unreadable. But there was something warm in his eyes, and it steadied my nerves.

We set off on foot, the camera bouncing softly against my hip with each step.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"Bonfire," Anton responded gruffly.

"You always bring that thing with you?" Drew asked, tipping his chin at the strap across my body.

My grip tightened. "Um. Yeah. Kind of."

His brow lifted, but he didn't push.

"I'm not like a professional or anything... obviously." I bit the inside of my cheek.

"It's just a hobby. I used to spend hours in a darkroom my dad had built for me. I was actually thinking of converting Honey's old room into one. I enjoy working with film."

Drew looked completely taken in, his smile wide and eager. "Oh, it shoots film? You're a badass, aren't you pretty girl."

I laughed, surprised. "Yeah?"

He nodded. "Absolutely. That's art. Real patience and vision. Will you show me your stuff sometime?"

I hesitated. "Maybe. But only if you show me yours."

His expression shifted.

I pointed to the sketchbook rolled up and tucked in his back pocket. "That thing's never far away from you. It only feels fair."

Anton made a soft snorting noise behind us, and Drew rubbed the back of his neck. "Okay, yeah. Deal."

We finally made it to the lakeside beach, where a huge fire pit was set up with a bunch of blankets and a cooler. Drew offered me a seat, and I lowered myself onto the log beside him. He instantly grabbed one of the blankets and wrapped it around me.

Even if it wasn't really cool enough for one, I tucked it close because it smelled like him.

When he cracked open the book, I leaned in and immediately forgot how to breathe.

Each drawing was of me.

Sketch after sketch.

Charcoal. Pencil. Colour. Some of them were loose and light, others painfully detailed. My face turned in profile. My hands wrapped around a coffee mug. The curve of my back as I reached for a plate at the pass-through window.

And then, more intimate somehow, my smile, the crease between my brows, my expression when I bit my bottom lip.

I blinked, throat tightening. "It's me."

"What else would I draw, pretty girl?" Drew asked quietly. "It's all I've been able to paint and draw for years now. You stayed under my skin, even after only meeting once."

Goddess.

I had no words. Only a strange, aching warmth that spread from my chest all the way to my fingertips.

Anton, silent until now, shifted beside us. I glanced over, found him watching me. Not with jealousy, but with something more like hunger.

Hope.

I didn't want him to feel left out. I didn't want him to be the third wheel on a two-person date.

So I leaned toward him, nudging him gently. "What about you?" I teased. "What secret art form do you keep hidden away? I bet you knit. You look like a hardcore knitter."

His brow lifted, clearly trying to pretend to be unimpressed, but I saw the twitch of

his lips.

"I play poker. And enjoy weapons training."

"Oh! Dangerous and broody. Should have guessed."

"I'm not broody," he muttered.

"Oh, Alpha... I have news for you. You're so broody. You've been doing nothing but brood since I met you."

Anton turned fully then, eyes narrowing just a fraction. "Careful, little girl."

My breath caught.

Not because he looked angry. He didn't.

No. I'd poked something that stirred and rose in him like a bear rearing its head. And I loved it.

And obviously he shared something else in common with his pack mates. It really shouldn't have surprised me.

Anton leaned in just enough to brush his thigh against mine, his voice low. "You think you can brat with no consequences, sweetheart?"

I flushed. "Maybe. Especially as we've not discussed limits yet."

Drew laughed low beside us, clearly delighted. "Oh, she has you there, brother."

I giggled in response before Drew draped an arm around me.

"I wouldn't suggest poking the bear, pretty girl. He has a mean spanking hand."

"I like poking bears," I said defiantly, even as my breath went a little breathy.

Anton reached out then, not to touch, but to hover his fingers just beneath my chin, not quite making contact but the near touch doing way more to my insides than it would have if he'd actually gripped me. "Keep going and you might find yourself bent over that log over there."

I swallowed. My thighs squeezed together.

Message received, Sir.

He pulled back, like nothing had happened, calmly opening the cooler and handing me a bag of marshmallows before taking out a couple of long sticks.

I took it with trembling fingers, my heart thudding like a drum.

And yet. I felt safe.

Seen.

This was the closest I've come to feeling like I belonged in a very long time, and I was starting to hope that maybe, this pack business was everything it promised to be.

"So," I ventured after taking a deep breath. "Does that mean I have to call you Daddy too?"

Anton growled, Drew laughed, and I giggled so hard I nearly fell off the log.

I wouldn't have had it any other way.

## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Anton

She said it so casually, like it wasn't the kind of word that could undo a man.

I growled as I froze mid-reach for the marshmallow bag, the sentence landing with the precision of a sniper shot. Straight to the chest, right through the armor I'd worn around it for as long as I could remember.

And straight to my aching cock.

Christa didn't even look at me. She sat between me and Drew, legs tucked up, eyes on the firelight flickering through the trees, but I saw the smirk playing at the corner of her mouth. She knew what she was doing.

Drew made a sound like he was trying, and failing, not to laugh. "Oh damn, Omega. You've broken him."

"It doesn't take much," she replied tartly. "Plus, I didn't mean to."

Liar.

I looked at her, and she finally turned her head toward me. Her smile was soft but cheeky. That dangerous kind of pretty. Like a flame you knew would burn you, and you still leaned closer.

"You keep teasing me like that," I drawled, "and I'll show you exactly what it means when you call someone Daddy."

Her breath hitched. Just a little. But she didn't look away.

Oh, she was going to be my good, good girl.

I moved before I thought better of it, reaching out and wrapping my arm around her waist. She let out a delighted squeal as I pulled her into my lap, one hand splayed across her lower back, the other tangling gently in the hair at the nape of her neck.

"You like teasing your Alphas, little girl?" I asked against her ear.

She squirmed in my arms, breathless. "Maybe?"

"She definitely does," Drew said, far too entertained. "But I gotta say, it's nice seeing you flustered for once."

I'm not fucking flustered. I scowled at him even as Christa giggled and buried her face in my neck.

"I like knowing I can fluster you, Daddy," she teased, her lips brushing my skin.

I growled. "I'm not fucking flustered."

She giggled again, and the beautiful sound of her laughter made it worth all the teasing.

This time when I growled again it was a soft warning instead. And then I kissed her.

Not soft.

Not tentative.

I kissed her like I'd been starving for it, like I had dreamed of this exact moment every night since we met her and lost her.

She gasped into it, hands gripping the front of my shirt, and then she melted, her body pressing fully into mine. Her perfume filled the air around us, her scent tantalizing and tempting in a way I found impossible to describe.

Sweet little Omega.

Mine.

When I finally pulled back, she blinked up at me, dazed and pink and perfect. I ran my thumb over her cheekbone, savoring the way she leaned into the touch.

"Such a good girl for your Daddy," I breathed.

Her whole body shivered.

Beside us, Drew coughed dramatically. "Okay, okay. I get it. I'll just sit here. Third wheeling. Burning the marshmallows."

Christa giggled again, and turned, reaching for the roasting sticks. "No, no. We're making smores. Come on Daddy Grump. You gotta help a girl out."

Drew snorted. "That name is never going away."

I frowned at him while helping her thread the marshmallows. Drew prepared the chocolate and graham crackers with exaggerated flair as Christa leaned into me, her warmth sinking into my chest like sunlight, and I let myself relax.

Just a little.



For just a moment, I let myself enjoy this with our Omega.

The fire crackled. The scent of sugar and smoke drifted through the air. Christa's fingers were sticky, her laughter easy, and Drew—dammit—made her laugh louder than I ever could.

But that was alright.

He could give her the joy I had trouble with, and I would be there to protect her, cherish her, and care for her.

Not that he couldn't do all those things, too.

She fed Drew a lopsided smore and smeared marshmallow on his cheek on purpose, then gasped in fake innocence when he retaliated by tapping melted chocolate on her nose.

Christa turned to me with a mischievous glint again.

"Help, Daddy Grump. The big bad Alpha is being mean."

I grabbed a graham cracker, swiped a bit of marshmallow from her thumb and popped it in my mouth. Then I leaned in and kissed the chocolate from her nose.

"You started it Little bit," I murmured.

Drew howled with laughter and my pretty Omega pouted at me until I kissed the pout off her face, quickly replacing it with a dazed smile.

We stayed like that for a while, warm and soft and wrapped in firelight, exchanging kisses, barbs and cuddles.

Christa cuddled up between us, sticky fingers tangled with mine, her cheek against Drew's shoulder, and her breath slow and steady. She was content.

And with her in my arms, I finally was too.

I hadn't known if I'd ever feel this again. This contentment. This peace. Not without our Omega. Not without my little naughty girl.

But if we did things right, we wouldn't need to try again.

After a while, her body relaxed completely in my embrace, and she gave me her full weight. When a quiet snore filled the air, I had to suppress the urge to chuckle.

"I think we tired her out."

"Not quite how I pictured us tiring her out, but I'll take it," Drew returned with a rueful chuckle.

"Do we let her sleep or wake her to go back?" I was torn in two, because having her cuddled up to me like this was the answer to every prayer I've ever had.

"I think, brother-mine, you're supposed to pick up our girl, cradle her against your chest and carry her off into the moonlight."

Well, I suppose he wasn't wrong. We could do that.

We would do that.

We did do that.

I held our girl, keeping her warm and safe as Drew banked and killed the fire, and

then packed up all our stuff. With slow careful steps we made our way back to the cabin where both Annerly and William were waiting on the porch to say goodnight.

When they saw the sleeping Omega, they opened up the front door without a word and led the way inside.

There really was no question.

No way were we going to give up the chance to hold her close.

The cabin we'd rented came with a small nest, nothing fancy, and very basic, but the bed was big enough for all five of us to get into. I gently placed Christa down in the middle before taking off my shoes, jeans and shirt so I could curl up next to her again in my boxers.

When I pulled her against me, she turned around, digging her face into my chest, her nose rooting around for my scent, and the feeling of our Omega tucked against me had a purr rumbling through my chest almost instantly.

I was out before the others even joined us in the bed.

## Page 19

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

I woke slowly, surfacing through warmth and comfort like drifting up from a deep, sweet dream. My body was heavy with sleep, but not in a bad way.

It was safe.

Comforting.

Everything I didn't know I was missing.

Okay, who was I kidding? I knew I was missing it, I just ignored how much I craved it.

The room was dim, the curtains drawn against the light, but it was warm and quiet. We were in a nest.

I've never been in one.

Never even thought this would be in the cards for me.

Someone was breathing softly against the back of my neck, and another arm was thrown across my waist. My legs were tangled with someone else's, and the slow rise and fall of deep breaths surrounded me like waves.

Their scents were everywhere, surrounding me, settling into me, in a way that I hoped I would never get rid of.

I opened my eyes to take a peek at the man holding me.

Anton.

He had one arm under my head and the other across my stomach, holding me close, but not too tight. Just enough to make sure I knew I belonged there. Drew was behind me, his leg tossed carelessly over mine, his hand resting on my hip.

Holy shit. Was this real?

It certainly felt like a dream. A fantasy of some kind.

I'd always been a Beta, so I never had wishes for packs and pack life.

Now here I was. In a nest. With my pack.

I could really have a fucking pack.

I blinked against the soft morning light filtering through the edges of the curtains. William and Annerly were curled together on the other side of the bed, still asleep, their hands linked where they rested between them. My heart gave a strange, aching flutter.

This could really all be mine.

Anton stirred as I shifted slightly. His breath warmed the back of my neck, and then he nuzzled into me, half asleep but still instinctively scent marking me.

"Morning, Little bit," he murmured, voice rough with sleep.

I smiled, my eyes fluttering shut again. I hummed before muttering only one word.

"Daddy."

That earned me a low, satisfied purr from his chest. I felt it right in my belly and maybe in a certain other part of my anatomy too.

Drew stretched behind me with a groan. "Mmm. Morning pretty. Did you sleep well?"

I hummed in response, still too warm and floaty to really think about responding.

"She looks all rumped and sleepy. Perfect little Omega," came Annerly's voice, gentle and amused.

And filled with so much awe, I could feel my cheeks redden with a blush.

I turned my head and found him propped up on one elbow, his dark eyes soft as he looked at me. William was still half asleep, face buried in Annerly's shoulder.

"Hmmm," I responded, not quite ready to go verbal yet.

They didn't press. Just smiled at me, and slowly, the morning began to move around me while I stayed still, safe, comfortable.

Daddy Grump shifted to kiss my shoulder, then my temple. Drew nuzzled into my hair and Annerly stretched and murmured something to William, who only grunted and pulled him closer.

No one asked anything of me.

No one expected me to do or be anything other than what I was in that moment.

Safe and happy.

For a few long peaceful minutes, I just enjoyed it. I was cared for.

And then it hit me.

This is what Honey had spoken about. Being... little. Not regressed exactly, not the way I imagined it happened when Daddies and littles had a scene. But quiet. Floaty. Peaceful. I had no cares, no worries. All the problems and stresses were someone else's.

Eventually, Anton gently pushed my hair back from my face. "You doing okay, Little bit?"

I nodded slowly. Hummed again.

Drew brushed his knuckles over my cheek. "She's beautiful, isn't she? The most perfect Omega in the world. Exactly right for us.

"You've got that right," Daddy William rumbled, finally awake. His voice was hoarse, heavy with sleep. " Our Omega."

A wave of affection rushed through me so strongly I nearly teared up. But the big emotions ran over me, not overwhelming me like it might have in the past.

Eventually, someone's stomach growled, and a few low chuckles rolled through the room.

I realised it was mine, but couldn't find it in me to be embarrassed.

"Does our girl want some breakfast?"

I snuggled in closer to Daddy Grump in response to his question before nodding against his chest.

"How about some waffles?" Drew asked, and I wiggled in excitement.

"Waffles," Annerly agreed.

We all stirred slowly, each man in the pack spoiling me with soft touches, kisses, and whispered words as they got up.

I stayed a moment longer, wrapping the blanket covered in their scents around myself.

When I couldn't hide out any longer I padded out to the kitchen, still wrapped in the blanket, my body loose and soft with sleep. I dropped into the chair they offered me without thinking, letting my bare toes curl against the warm wood floor.

William set a plate of waffles down in front of me. Steam curled up in the golden morning light.

"Eat, sweetheart. You need something in your belly."

I blinked down at the food for a moment, the realness of it all finally landing. The comfort. The safety.

I picked up my fork, took a bite, and finally found my voice. "What now?"

The pack stilled. Four pairs of eyes turned toward me with varying degrees of tenderness and surprise.

Annerly leaned forward, hand warm over mine. "Now we talk. About what you want."



What we want. How we make this work as a pack."

Drew grinned. "Hopefully, after we're all filled with our waffles."

Anton just gave me a soft grunt and kept piling bacon on my plate while William leaned against the counter, watching me with steady eyes.

I looked around at all of them, at this warm kitchen filled with a pack that was everything I could have ever wanted.

I've never been so scared in my life.

"Okay," I whispered. "Let's talk."

Drew

The cabin smelled like her.

Warm syrup. Sweet skin. Sleep mussed hair and the soft, clean scent that made my Alpha settle every time she got near.

Christa moved like she belonged now. Almost like something inside her had finally clicked and she knew where she belonged.

It made something tight in my chest loosen every time I saw her glance at one of us and smile like it was safe to do so.

"We need to figure out what comes next," William said, leaning forward to rest his elbows on his knees. "As much as I love being here, and getting to know you, Christa, we can't stay here forever."

Anton gave a quiet grunt of agreement from the other end of the table. "The cabin is comfortable for short term living, and the nest is passable for a night or two, but not for an Omega in full heat."

My cock perked up at the mention of an Omega in heat, but now wasn't the time for it.

Christa glanced between us, then down at the coffee cup she held with both hands. She didn't speak right away, and that silence felt loud.

Annerly cleared his throat. "It's not about rushing anything, sweetheart. But we've all got jobs, a home, back in Wondersburg."

"And we're not asking you to give up what matters to you," I added quickly. I leaned in a little, just enough to brush her knee with mine and grab her hand. "We'll stay and start new lives here if that's what you need. No question."

She looked up at me then, eyes wide and honest. "You'd really do that?"

"Of course," I said, knowing I didn't need to double check with the rest of the pack. They'd agree.

And they did.

"But..." she started, then paused, her lips twitching like she wasn't sure whether to smile or cry. "I think it's time to move on."

"You don't have to," Annerly said gently.

"I know," she replied. "But it's not just about me."

I love Jo. And Honey. But I'm not the girl who ran into this town two years ago.

Honey's claimed and settled in with her pack.

In a way I think that means she'll stick around and keep an eye on Jo.

It's time to make space for the next lost girl who stumbles in, scared and alone. "

My throat tightened, pride, love, and sadness warring inside me. I hate knowing Christa was once that scared, lonely Omega, but she's come so far, and she's survived

so much.

"So, we go home?" William asked.

"Yeah. We go home," I agreed.

Together, we cleaned up the last of the breakfast dishes and headed down the road toward town. The diner was quiet from the outside, and we'd obviously missed the breakfast rush.

In our time here, I'd grown used to the small space, the people inside it.

What I'd not grown used to was the scent of my fucking mother filling the space, almost drowning out the smell of grease, eggs and coffee.

"Fuck," I muttered.

"Fuck indeed," Christa returned, her scowl focused on the female Alpha sitting in a booth, her arms carefully folded in front of her.

The clink of plates and indistinct murmur of conversation dropped to silence the moment we stepped in.

Tracy didn't even blink.

She just sat there, one painted nail carefully tapping on her arm, like she hadn't just shattered years of distance with one uninvited appearance.

"Boys," she drawled, lips pursed like she'd smelt something sour. "You don't write, you don't call... What's a mom to do but come and hunt down her sons?"

William stiffened beside me. Anton's jaw clenched so hard I heard his teeth grind.

Me?

I've never wanted to punch my own fucking mother as much as I did right then.

"Cindy," Tracy added, smile sharpening even more. "Or should I call you Christa now? You've caused a lot of trouble, little girl."

Christa shrank back instinctively. I stepped in front of her.

"You don't call her anything," I snapped. "You don't even fucking speak to her."

Tracy arched a brow. "I don't need your permission, Alpha . She's not yet twenty-one. Therefore we have an underage Omega, unclaimed... and unregistered at that. And wouldn't you know... I'm the only Alpha with a legitimate claim."

"I'm not yours," Christa said, her voice low but steady. "I never was. Never will be."

She didn't reach for me, but I felt her fingers brush mine. A quiet anchor. I grabbed her hand and held on tight.

"Your hold on her is tenuous at best. She's mere months from being a legal adult," Anton said coldly.

Tracy tilted her head. "Now, now. Let's not pretend blood and law don't still matter in our world. And you..." she flicked her eyes toward Christa, "Ran away from a perfectly suitable Alpha who would have been willing to guide you and help you find the best pack possible."

"You mean you would have paraded me like livestock until someone offered you the

right price or alliance," Christa said, her voice flat now, edged with steel.

And the fuck of it was, she spoke nothing but the truth, because that's exactly the thing my mother has been trying to do with us since we presented as Alpha.

Tracy's lips curled. "You were always so dramatic.

I gave you everything after your father abandoned me with you.

A roof over your head, food in your belly and safety from all the feral Alphas out there who would have taken you even if you were nothing but a useless Beta.

Do you know how many orphans would have killed to be in your position? "

"I'm not some livestock for you to fatten up and sell to the highest bidder!" Christa's voice rose. Not overly loud, but clear. Steady. And it cut through the quiet diner like a blade. "I'm a damn person. And you don't get to decide what happens to me anymore."

The air in the room went still. All you could hear was the steady drip, drip, drip of the coffee.

Tracy's eyes narrowed. "I don't think you fully understand your situation, Cindy . I have all the required paperwork. Guardianship agreements. And luckily for you, when you presented at my sons' pack bonding ceremony, I had you registered as an Omega with the proper authorities."

She waved a dismissive hand towards us, like we were inconsequential to her and her plans.

"You'll gather your things, I'll take you home, and if my sons can come to heel in the

required manner, then I might consider allowing them to court you."

"No." William's voice was deadly and final.

"Fuck off," Anton growled out, grabbing hold of Christa and pulling her tightly against his side.

"Not a chance," I responded as I stepped closer and put my arm along her other side.

Annerly stepped up to William, intertwined their fingers and looked at Tracy with nothing but disdain on his face. "Tracy, I believe you've gotten about as much time from us as we're willing to give you. No one here will allow Christa to leave with you, so it's best you be on your way."

My chest puffed up with pride at the way our pack had stood up to my mother, but I couldn't help but worry about what we were going to do.

We all were successful in our own fields, and William was formidable, that was for sure, but we couldn't stand up to the law.

As my heart beat in my throat, and Christa shivered in our embrace, we watched together as Tracy lifted one disdainful eyebrow at us before leaving the diner without looking back.

Christa

The door clicked shut behind Tracy, but her presence clung to the air like stale perfume.

Bitter, choking, and hard to breathe through.

I didn't realize I was shaking until Anton pulled me tighter against his side, and even then, I couldn't stop. My pulse thrummed like it was trying to outrun itself, and my throat felt tight. Like I'd swallowed a scream and locked it behind my teeth.

She'd found me. After all this time. After everything. She'd walked right into my safe space and tried to pull me back into her world like I was still that powerless little Beta orphan with no options. No voice.

"I..." My voice cracked. I tried again. "I need to run—"

"Sit," Honey said, her tone even gentler than normal for her, which was saying a lot.

"You don't need to do anything, my sweet friend. You're just going to take a deep breath and give us a moment."

She turned to look at my pack... My pack, and then back at me. "You're not going to let her run alone this time, right?"

Annerly guided me into the booth like I might fall if he didn't, and maybe I would have. I felt like my knees were barely holding me up and as if I would explode into a



million little pieces at the slightest nudge.

Honey crossed her arms. "That witch can do whatever she wants. She can hop on over to the authorities with whatever paperwork she wants, it won't matter a bit. We have a plan."

I blinked at her. "Do you have a plan?"

She gave me a determined nod. "Sure. The same one I had. Take you on the run, long enough until you're all legal and that creepy as all heck woman can go fly to the moon with her damn paperwork."

I swallowed hard. The idea of disappearing again, of running... It made me sad. It was what I'd been doing for the last two years and I didn't want to run anymore. But it needed to happen.

I needed to stay safe.

"I can go," I whispered before looking up at my pack, hope blooming in my chest. "We could go."

William watched me with that quiet intensity that always made my skin feel warm.

"We could," he breathed. "We could run for a few months, but then she'd win."

"But if we stay, and she comes to take me away, she'd win too. She scares me," I said, my voice laced with the vulnerability I was showing them.

"I know little Omega," he replied. "But you don't need to be scared of her anymore. Believe me, I know exactly what Tracy is capable of. But babygirl, I'm not afraid of her. And you don't have to be either. Do you want to know why?"

I blinked up at him, trying to force down the tears that were threatening to come out. Tears that I hated she was getting from me. "Why, Daddy?" I asked.

His eyes flashed with something dark at the term before he rested his forehead against mine. "Because Daddy can protect you. All of us can."

"I've run before," I told him. Told them. "I know how to hide. I can do it again."

He took a deep steadying breath, his chest beginning to rumble with a purr, his inner Alpha trying to calm me. "We know you can, little Omega. But that's not what you want anymore, is it?"

My bottom lip trembled. He reached up and cradled my cheek, his thumb brushing over the curve like I was made of something precious.

William's fingers slid down to curl beneath my chin. "Look at me, little Omega."

I did.

"That big ball of fear in your chest you feel?" he murmured. "It's mine now. Give it to me. I'll take care of it. You don't have to do this alone anymore. We've got you."

Tears welled up and spilt before I could blink them away. But I didn't hide them. Not this time.

"What if she takes me away from you?"

"She won't," he said, his voice filled with so much calm certainty that it slipped beneath all my worries and warmed me from the inside out.

"We won't let her," Anton told me, as he crouched down in front of the booth, his big

looming presence helping to soothe some of the angst building up inside me. "You have us, little bit. We'll protect you no matter what. You're our Omega now. And no one, not even my mom, can take what's ours."

My breath hitched.

Both my Daddies pressed soft kisses to my forehead, then to the tip of my nose.

"Will you let us fix this for you?" William asked carefully.

My knees bent without thinking, and I slid from the booth to the floor, kneeling in front of him. My hands curled into his shirt, my forehead resting against his chest. Anton wrapped himself around my back, and with the two of them surrounding me I felt it.

Safe.

Their arms wrapped around me. "There's our brave girl," William cooed at me.

I sobbed once, then breathed in deep. Their scents were grounding. Exactly what I needed at that moment.

"I trust you," I told them, my voice muffled against William's chest.

They held me tighter.

I don't know how long we stayed like that, all tangled up on the floor of Jo's diner, but eventually, I felt my body settle. The tremors stopped and my lungs remembered how to take a normal breath.

I tilted my head up, my cheek still pressed to William's chest. "What happens next,

Daddy?"

William smoothed his hand down my back. "Nothing changes," he said. "We go home. To our pack house. You come with us, and we do the work to get you free and clear of Tracy legally."

My stomach twisted at the word home. I wasn't even sure what that meant anymore. Nothing has truly felt like home since my mom passed away.

But I was excited to find out if this new house could be it.

Still... my heart tugged in another direction, and I turned to look at Honey and Jo.

"I have to go," I told them, softly, not even sure if my words would carry to them.

Honey's eyes shimmered, but she didn't cry. She just gave me one of those brilliant smiles that somehow made everything okay, even when it wasn't. "Come on, we knew this might happen."

Jo nodded beside her, arms crossed over his chest like he might keep himself from storming forward to grab me. "You're still part of the family, Christa. That doesn't stop because you're moving."

"I love you, too, old man," I whispered, and it hit me then... maybe I had had a home here after all.

It made saying goodbye that much harder, yet leaving with the pack so much easier because I felt just a bit more hope that things with them would work out.

"I'm going to miss you both," I said. "So very much."

Honey stepped forward and pulled me in for a hug. "You have to actually leave first for us to start missing you back," she teased me.

We both laughed as we pulled out of the hug and I wiped at my tears, trying to pretend that they hadn't been running down my cheeks unchecked since I realised I'd have to say my farewells.

Drew reached for my hand, his thumb rubbing soft circles against my knuckles. "Let's go, pretty girl."

And this time, when I left the diner, it didn't so much feel like running away, but more like running to something.

And when Anton huffed an annoyed breath and picked me up, cradling me against his chest, I realised I'd probably not be doing much running at all... seeing as I was more than likely going to be carried everywhere I needed to be.

## Page 22

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Anton

The gravel crunched under the tires as we pulled into the driveway, the pack house rising behind the trees like something half-forgotten and half-sacred.

Home, I guessed. Or at least I had a hope it would be again.

If she chose to stay.

Christa had fallen asleep against my chest during the last bit of the drive, her breath warm at my collar, her scent... enticing. Dangerous after so long enclosed in the car with us. It was almost like it was more potent somehow.

I didn't want to move, but Drew cut the engine, and she slowly blinked up at me, disoriented and adorably soft. "Daddy Grump?"

"We're here," I told her before placing a careful kiss on the tip of her nose.

She stretched like a kitten, and the hem of her shirt lifted enough to show a peek of skin. I looked away because goddess help me; I had very little control left when it came to the tasty morsel that was our Omega.

"I fell asleep," she murmured. "And drooled," she grumped as she looked at the wet spot on my shirt. Her pout was so adorable I couldn't help myself and grabbed her chin to claim her mouth in a sleepy, languid, exploratory kiss.

We pulled away, both of us breathless, and my cock an aching, pulsing presence

between us.

"Are you going to let me see the house, Daddy Grump?" Christa asked, her pout still present.

The house loomed outside, a warm sunset highlighting the building from behind. I hated how suddenly unsure I felt about it. We hadn't prepared anything for her.

The Omega wing was untouched. After William and Annerly left, neither Drew nor I could stomach the thought of touching it.

And what if she hated the house? What if our home wasn't good enough?

Drew opened the back door of the car with a flourish and seemingly none of the angst I was feeling. "Welcome home, pretty."

Christa pushed me out of the car so she could follow suit, but unable to let go completely I picked her up the minute we she was out of the car.

"I can walk, you know?" she told me, a mock frown on her face.

I kissed it away before responding. "You can, but I'd much rather have you in my arms, so why should you walk?"

She frowned at me again, but I turned her face to look at the house, carefully keeping my attention on her. I needed to see what her reaction was.

I waited for the wrinkle of her nose. The cringe. The polite smile.

Instead, her eyes lit up with wonder as she whispered. "It's stunning. Now stop being silly and let me down or take me inside so I can see my new home, okay, Daddy

Grump?"

I was powerless to resist.

The second we stepped into the house, Christa took a deep breath. "It smells like... home."

Something cracked open in my chest.

After she once again insisted I put her down, we gave her the full tour.

Christa padded barefoot through the rooms, touching everything and carefully scent-marking it. When we reached the sunroom, she gasped. Not loudly, not theatrically. Just one of those quiet, stunned little sounds that felt more real than words.

"They're... all... me!" She turned around and looked at Drew with so much emotion that it took my breath away.

My twin blushed at her attention, and when she turned her attention back to all the paintings lined against the wall. All the paintings he's been doing nonstop for the last two years of our Omega.

Christa turned slowly, her face taking it all in.

I should have been jealous at the awe I saw directed at my brother, and maybe I would have been if she didn't turn that same expression on me.

We ended the tour in her wing in her room.

A blank canvas of space with a bare mattress and nothing else.



My stomach twisted. We didn't even have any blankets on the bed. And the nest was even more bare than this.

"It's not much," I pushed out. "Yet."

She turned in a slow circle, then smiled at me.

"It will be," she told us. "It already feels more like mine than anywhere I've ever lived, including my apartment with Honey."

We left her to unpack then, and I lingered in the hallway a bit longer than I should have, just listening to the sounds of her moving around.

After a while—a very non-creepy amount of time—I made my way down to the kitchen where I joined the others. Drew offered me an open beer.

"I forgot how bare her rooms were," I told them. "We need to fix it. And the nest. Fuck, the nest needs to be done, and soon."

All of my pack members agreed with me.

"And she needs a darkroom," I growled before downing half the beer.

William blinked. "A what now?"

"A darkroom. You know, for photography. Little bit prefers shooting with film. So she needs a place to develop it."

Drew leaned forward, intrigued. "There's a great space in the basement. The old storage room. No windows. It has great ventilation."

"I'll handle the nest and her room," Annerly said, already pulling out his phone. "I have someone that can come here, and consult with her, get her what she wants."

"Drew and I will handle the darkroom while you work on the legalities of keeping her here with us," I told William.

He responded with a look that was almost a smile. "Look at you, being all bossy boots. Being an Alpha Daddy looks good on you."

I ignored him. "I'll be whatever our Omega needs. And right now she needs someone that helps turn this house into her home."

And I'll be damned if I fail at this one singularly important job.

Annerly

Christa stood in the middle of the Omega wing, her fingers curling into the hem of her hoodie like she could shrink herself into the seams. Her bright, colourful hair was such a contrast to the leery expression on her face that I wanted to do nothing more than kiss it off her face.

It was so contrary to the vibrant, bratty personality she's shown us snippets of.

The room she was standing in had good bones. Large windows for light, thick carpeting that was begging for soft rugs, big bean bags and a warm fire. There was a little alcove perfect for a reading nook, if that was something she enjoyed and the walls were an empty canvas waiting to be filled.

But it was bare. Empty.

I leaned against the doorframe, watching her take a slow turn as if she wasn't sure whether she could really reach out to touch everything.

My heart tugged hard in my chest. As the Beta I've always counted myself lucky that I wasn't overruled by an overbearing Alpha nature, but I wanted nothing more than the ability to be able to pull her against my chest and purr for her so she could relax.

Christa was still carrying so much hesitation and I wanted to wipe it away.

But that wasn't something we could magically do with kisses and hugs in a few short days. It would take time.

"You know," I said lightly, stepping into the room. "it's almost offensive how plain this place is. It's begging for your touch."

She blinked up at me, those big eyes wide, wary. "It's fine. I don't need anything more. Maybe just some more blankets, pillows and an extra dresser for my clothes."

"It's your space," I said, dropping down to sit cross-legged in the middle of the carpet.

"This room and your nest is your safe place.

It's a sacred thing, princess." I tucked a stray hair behind her ear and she blessed me by curling herself around me, tucking her head under my chin.

"We all know you're tough, Christa. Only someone with a crazy backbone could have survived everything you have.

But that doesn't mean you should have to pretend to not like the softer things in life.

You need a room that's yours . You deserve a nest."

She sighed before rubbing her head against the warmth of my sweater, marking me with her scent.

When she looked up at me this time she smiled faintly.

"You've already done so much for me. I can't ask you for any more.

William is helping with Tracy. You're giving me a home. I don't... Annerly, I don't want to..."

"Be spoilt?" I offered, raising a brow when she trailed off, unable to complete her

sentence. "Tough luck, princess. It's part of the deal."

Her cheeks flushed a delicious shade of pink. I grinned and patted the carpet beside me. "Come on. Sit with me. We're going to make a list."

She frowned at me, her lips pulling into a pout. "A list?"

"Mmhmm," I said, already pulling out my phone. "Of everything you like. Favourite colours, textures, scents. And then we're going shopping."

She sat slowly, folding herself into the space beside me like she wasn't sure. "Seriously?"

"Yes, ma'am," I said, grinning at her. "We're making it a game now. A type of scavenger hunt if you will. We're going to hunt down every last thing that makes your Omega heart happy, and the person that gets the most of the items on the list at the end of the excursion wins."

Her nose scrunched adorably. "That's ridiculous."

"Ridiculous fun," I corrected. "Come on, princess. Play with me. You get new stuff, I get to spoil you. Everyone wins."

She hesitated. "What does the winner get?"

"Princess," I said gently, "If you win, you get whatever you want."

She looked at me, narrowing her gaze. "And if you win?"

"I get you to myself for an afternoon. Naked."

She shivered at my words and I felt my cock plump up at the smell of her perfume filling the air.

"Fuck, princess." The words were a low growl, pulled from my chest and she practically preened at them.

And then she blushed.

"I'm not used to this, you know," she told me as she looked down, her voice soft.

"I know," I said. "And it hurts me to know that you've not known any kind of care and affection in too long, but we're honoured to be the ones to give it to you. And I'm kind of hoping, you will get used to it from us."

She nodded, a tiny motion. "Okay. But I want violet. For the sheets."

"Violet sheets," I repeated, typing it into my notes. "Excellent choice. A brilliant purple for all the sexual frustration you cause in your pack by being so fucking sexy."

She giggled, the sound lighting me up. "You're a sap."

"Your sap," I said, without thinking, then felt my throat go a little dry at the truth of it, and worried she might think I was going too fast.

But Christa didn't pull away, didn't tease. She just looked at me for a long moment, something soft in her gaze. "Yes," she finally responded after what felt like ages. "Mine."

We spent the rest of the afternoon piecing together her world. She picked fuzzy blankets in dusky rose, a pile of pillows shaped like stars and moons, soft lighting in warm tones.

With each item purchased we made careful note of who found it so we could tally up the winner at the end of our shopping excursion.

No shop was left untouched, and no corner of our small corner of the world went unseen.

And we found something in almost every shop.

In a tiny thrift store there was a quilt that made her gasp when she touched it.

She told me, with tears brimming that it reminded her of something her mother used to have.

Through it all, though, she was true to her nature. Arguing over every price tag, and who would pay for it all. I overruled her every time with the confidence of a man with a pack credit card that had no limit.

By evening, we were back at the house, the car loaded with bags, and so many deliveries scheduled that we might have to just leave the front door open for the foreseeable future. William and Drew helped unload the SUV, but left us alone when we started unpacking all the bags.

And when it came to her nest I stepped back, letting her do her thing.

Our little Omega sat in the middle of her slowly forming nest, surrounded by softness, her own scent slowly starting to infuse the space.

"It's missing something," she told me, her eyes jumping from one corner of the room to the other.

"What, princess?"

"You," she muttered as she got up from the large sunken bed. "I need you in here. Can I have your shirt?" She held her hand out to me, fully expecting me to give it to her, and honestly, I was powerless to resist.

She quickly grabbed it from me, crawling back into her nest, digging my shirt into some of the pillows we'd purchased.

"I need more," she muttered to herself.

"Okay, baby. I'll get you some more."

"The Alphas too!" she called to me as I walked out.

As I stepped out into the hallway, I caught William heading down from the upstairs office, his sleeves rolled to the elbows, reading glasses perched on his nose. He paused when he saw me, then tilted his head, nostrils flaring just slightly.

"You smell that?" he asked, voice low.

I blinked. "No? What?"

He gave me a look. Worried, but laced with something else... something hopeful.

"Her scent," he murmured. "It's stronger."

I paused, turned back toward the door. Her soft, sweet scent still lingered in the air from where I'd just come, and I finally picked up what he was referring to.

It also explained her need for our scents in her nest.

Shit.



My heart did a little stutter. "You think it's..."

William nodded slowly. "I don't understand how, because from what aware she's on suppressants, but yes."

I ran a hand through my hair, feeling like the biggest fucking idiot in the world.

"William, she's been on those things for two years. They're not meant to be taken that long," I told my Alpha, resting my head on his shoulder.

He pulled me into his embrace and tucked me close. "What are you saying, An?"

"I'm saying, big guy, our Omega is going into what we in the medical industry call a 'breakthrough heat'."

"It's fine, we've got this," William told me as he squeezed me again. "You go tell her, in case she's not aware what's going on with her, and I'll go grab the twins."

"She wanted our scents. Bring blankets from the twins' bedrooms, and maybe some clothes from our bags, okay?"

He nodded before pulling away and walking down the hallway.

I turned around and went straight back into my Omega's nest to tell her what was happening.

And hopefully convince her to let us help her through her first heat.

## Page 24

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

It started like static. A tingle beneath my skin that wouldn't ease, a restless ache building between my thighs that made me want to climb out of myself.

The hoodie I wore felt too thick, too scratchy, the weight of my bra like a cage I needed to escape.

I kicked off my pants, practically ripped off the hoodie and took off the bra so quickly that I was worried I might have ripped it.

I curled into the soft haven I'd built for myself, my nose rooting into the shirt I'd hidden under one of the pillows. A needy whimper slipped from my lips, startling me as I pushed in deeper into my new safe space.

My nest.

The word should have felt foreign, but it didn't. It felt like something that had always belonged to me but had been hidden away for so long I'd nearly forgotten. Now, surrounded by plush blankets and pillows it was like a long lost memory surfacing. The feeling was so foreign.

Terrifying.

What the fuck was happening?

I was just trying to breathe when the door opened and Annerly stepped inside.

His eyes locked on me instantly, scanning the flush on my cheeks, the bare legs tangled in blankets, the way my fingers gripped the edge of his shirt like it was a lifeline.

“Oh, baby,” he said gently, crouching by the edge of the nest. “You’re feeling it, aren’t you?”

I stared at him, my throat dry. “I don’t know what’s wrong with me.”

He reached out, brushing hair back from my damp forehead. “There’s nothing wrong with you, Christa. It’s your heat.”

I stiffened. Every muscle in my body locked down and my breath caught in my chest.

“No,” I whispered. “No, it can’t be. I’m on suppressants. I’ve been on them for years. This isn’t—I can’t—”

“It’s okay,” Annerly said, his voice like velvet. Calm, warm. Reassuring. “It’s called a breakthrough heat. It happens when your body pushes past the meds. And it’s not your fault. Christa, look at me.”

I tried, but my vision was blurring. Shame burned hotter than the fire in my gut. “I didn’t mean to... I didn’t know. I’m sorry. I should go. I should get out of here before I make things worse.”

“Hey.” Annerly moved fast, sliding into the nest beside me, pulling me gently into his lap.

His arms were solid around me, anchoring me while my body tried to come apart.

“You’re not going anywhere. You hear me?”

This is your home. Your nest. And your pack is right here, ready to help you through this.

More than that, princess, we're excited to spend it with you."

Tears welled in my eyes. "But I'm a mess. I'm not ready. I've never had one before."

"Shhh, sweetheart." He rocked me slowly. "There's nothing to be scared of. We know how important this is and that it's your first. We're honoured that you're sharing it with us."

I blinked at him, stunned, his words finally penetrating. "Honoured?"

Annerly smiled, his hand stroking down my spine. "Of course. You think we don't understand what this means? An Omega's first heat is sacred. You're letting us be here for something intimate and powerful. That means everything, Christa."

I swallowed hard, the knot in my chest loosening just a little. I didn't know if I deserved that kind of reverence. But Annerly believed it, and I believed in him.

He pulled back just enough to look me in the eyes. "We'll go slow. You'll tell us what you need. Nothing happens without your consent, ever. Okay?"

I nodded, my throat tight. "Okay."

"And right now?" he asked, his nose brushing mine. "What do you need, princess?"

I didn't know how to say it. Didn't know how to admit that I needed touch. Skin. Warmth. Them.

So I just whispered, "Touch me. Please."

And he did.

He curled up behind me in the nest, one strong arm wrapped around my waist, his scent flooding the space. I felt his hand wrap around my waist, under my shirt, gently rubbing at a stomach that was starting to cramp more and more with each passing minute.

“The others are coming,” he murmured against my hair.

My heart beat faster. Not with fear. With want. A need so fierce a whine built in my chest.

And this time, I didn’t fight it.

When the door opened and three large, impossibly aroused Alphas fell into my nest. I couldn't do anything but giggle at the sight they made.

William was clutching arms full of clothes, and the twins each had another bundle of blankets that smelled like...

"Mine!" I growled as I jumped from the nest, grabbing the wonderful gifts they'd brought me.

I didn't wait for further permission. Letting my instincts take over I dropped to my knees in the middle of the room, tearing into the bundles like a wild thing.

Clothes were everywhere. Soft cotton shirts, flannels, a hoodie that smelled so delicious I could drown in it and a cornucopia of other clothing items.

I buried my face in all of it, dragging in a greedy breath that made my thighs clench and my nipples tighten.

"Oh, little Omega," William rumbled behind me, voice hoarse with restraint.

But I wasn't thinking right then, not really. Not yet.

All my focus was on my nest.

I moved on instinct, grabbing the best smelling items and tucking them into the blankets, layering and folding until their scent was woven through every thread.

I took Annerly's hoodie and lined the edge of the nest with it, then added William's soft black tee under some pillows next to Annerly's first shirt.

There was arousal, yes. My body was humming with it, buzzing like a live wire. But more than that, it was need . Deep and primal. This wasn't just about sex. It was about making this room mine .

They stood there, watching me, reverent and still, and I loved them even more for it.

Yes. Loved.

I would deal with that after all of this heat business.

Christa didn't exist right then. She couldn't. Her rules and reason brought panic and logic. I had to leave Christa behind so the Omega could for once have what she needed.

I crawled back into the middle of the nest once I was satisfied, and laid on my back, breathing hard, eyes fluttering shut as their scents soaked into me from every side.

"Goddess, she's beautiful," Drew whispered.

I cracked open one eye to find all four of them standing, frozen at the edge like they were afraid to move.

"Are you just going to stand there?" I rasped, voice rough and thick. "or are you going to come in here, and touch me?"

It was like a spell breaking.

Suddenly they were moving, rushed, quick, getting rid of their clothes.

Within moments I had four naked men standing in front of me, ready to show me exactly how cherished I was.

And for once, I actually thought I might believe it.

William

The moment she said it... 'Or are you going to come in here, and touch me?' Something shifted in the air. Not just the heat curling off her skin or the sweet, thick scent of her slick saturating the room. No, it was something deeper. Spiritual. Elemental.

Our Omega had called us to her nest.

I barely remembered getting undressed. Just the sound of fabric hitting the floor, the hitch in her breath as she looked at us—eyes heavy-lidded, cheeks flushed, thighs parted ever so slightly in invitation. She was the most breathtaking thing I'd ever seen, and she was mine.

Ours.

But goddess, I'd give anything to have her say it out loud. Or even better yet... lay claim to us.

She lay sprawled across the nest like a dream, her slight curves framed in soft fabric and our clothes, her skin glowing with need. Her usually floral scent was dizzying—warm, sexy and inviting. I swore I could taste it in the back of my throat.

And yet, we didn't dare rush her.

Drew and Anton hovered like statues, waiting for a cue. Annerly's hand brushed my arm as we exchanged a look. We'd talked about this—how it had to be her pace, her



choice, every step of the way.

Still, my body ached.

My cock was already hard, straining with need, my knot a pulsing entity on its own, begging for attention from our sweet girl, but I didn't move. Not until she reached for me.

She stretched her arms above her head, rolling slightly to one side to face me. "William?" Her voice was wrecked. Needy. Hopeful.

"Yes, little Omega?" I stepped forward slowly, sinking down beside her on the edge of the nest.

Her fingers grazed my chest, featherlight. "I ache."

That was all the permission I needed.

I leaned over her, one hand braced beside her head, the other cradling her cheek. She nuzzled into my palm, her lips parting on a sigh.

"You're sure?" I asked softly, my forehead touching hers. "You still get to change your mind."

"I don't want to." Her eyes searched mine, shining. "I want you. Please. Please, Daddy."

That word— Daddy —shattered what little restraint I had left. But I held it together. For her.

"Good girl," I whispered, pressing my lips to hers in the softest, slowest kiss I'd ever

given. Her whole body melted into mine with a whimper, one leg hooking around my hip like instinct had taken over completely.

I kissed her again, deeper this time. Let her taste my hunger, let her feel the depth of my reverence. She wasn't just a body, a heat, a rut waiting to happen. She was sacred. Ours to protect. Ours to worship.

My hand slid under her shirt—Annerly's shirt—and up her belly, feeling the heat of her skin. She arched into the touch, her breath catching when I cupped her breast and dragged my thumb across her nipple.

“Such a perfect little Omega,” I murmured, kissing down her throat. “So soft. So ready. Do you know how beautiful you are when you beg for me?”

She moaned, trembling.

I moved lower, worshipping every inch of her on the way. Kissing. Licking. Nipping. I wanted her marked with pleasure, soaked in love. Her legs fell open when I kissed the inside of her thigh, her hands sinking into my hair.

“Mine,” I growled, just before I tasted her for the first time.

And it was everything I ever imagined it would be... and so much more.

Annerly joined us in the nest, his naked body curling up next to our Omega, his hands cupping her delicate breasts, holding them, shaping them, worshipping them.

With the two most important people in the world in front of me, I felt like all my dreams had come true and I didn't know who to thank for it.

I slipped a finger into Christa's warm, wet heat, as my mouth latched onto clit,

sucking it into my mouth, drawing a mewling whine from my Omega.

"That's it, princess. Let your Daddy make you feel good," Annerly whispered to her just before he claimed her mouth in a soul-searing kiss.

My Omega cried out as I tasted her—sharp, sweet, and helpless. Her hips bucked, slick coating my lips, and I held her open, laving my tongue across her folds with a slow, thorough hunger that had her squirming.

“Daddy—!” she gasped, clutching the blankets with shaking fingers.

I groaned into her, drunk on her scent, on the way her body bowed for me like it had always known mine. Her thighs quivered as I sucked gently on her clit, slow pulses that had her whimpering my name between sobs of pleasure.

“You’re so good for me, little Omega,” I murmured, voice thick. “So perfect. I could eat you forever.”

She moaned, raw and needy, her head thrashing side to side in the nest. I slid one finger inside her, slow and careful, giving her time to adjust. She clenched down around me, tight and wet and so ready .

“William,” Annerly said quietly. “She needs you.”

I looked up at them—her flushed skin, trembling thighs, the way her hands reached blindly for something to hold.

She needed more.

She needed me .

"Hush, little one, Daddy's got you," I soothed her as I moved up the bed, thrusting into her in one smooth motion.

She was so fucking tight. So perfect. Wet, warm and welcoming.

"Fuck, yes, fuck," I ground out, using every ounce of my self control to not come in mere minutes like an inexperienced school boy.

"More," Christa cried out, head thrashing from side to side, her body flushed with heat, and before I could give any of the others instruction, Anton was there, cock in hand, kneeling next to our girl.

"I have what you need, Little bit. Open up that mouth for me, Omega. Let me fill it."

At his command, Christa zeroed in on him, turning her gaze on the big, hulking man. Without further instruction, she opened her mouth wide, and practically sucked him down her throat by the groan he let out.

"Such a good girl for Daddy," he praised her as I started slowly thrusting into the tightest pussy I've ever had.

"Fuck yes, the best little girl," I murmured as I bottomed out again. "Now you're going to be extra good and take a good pounding, because there's no way I'm going to be able to take things slow."

And I don't.

As Anton fucks Christa's throat, I lay claim to her cunt in a way that will hopefully leave a permanent mark on her soul.

We haven't talked about bonding yet, and I know we can't do it in a heat haze, but

fuck, I want nothing more than to feel her inside me, the way I do Annerly.

The man in question looks up at me and sends a pulse of love and lust through our bond before moving back to the tits he'd been praising with his mouth.

Christa's fingers dug into his hair, holding him there, and as I grabbed hold of her hips, wrapping her legs around my waist, Drew joined us in the nest, his own hard cock in his hand as he slowly jacked it to the vision in front of us.

My spine started tingling, and I flicked Christa's clit in time with my thrusts, desperate to have her clutch my cock with her pretty pussy.

My pack mate bent over us, his mouth replacing my finger, his mouth latching on her clit and she went off like fireworks.

Her orgasm had another rush of perfume filling the room around us, and I gave one last thrust, my knot slipping in, locking my cock and cum in her pussy.

Her cries filled the room, as Anton pulled out of her mouth, and gave his own erection a few more pumps before spilling his seed on Christa's chest.

## Page 26

*Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 1:44 pm*

Christa

The nest smelled like us.

Warm and musky, sweet and sharp. Slick, sweat and sex. The whole thing was soaked in it—sheets tangled, shirts rumped, skin pressed against skin. I could barely tell where I ended, and they began.

And I didn't want to.

Someone's chest was at my back. Annerly, I thought. His scent was softer than the others, like warm cuddles and safety. Anton's arms were around my waist, his knot still swollen, keeping us locked together while my thighs trembled in the aftermath.

I was full. Stretched. Slick dripping down my thighs, my lips swollen and used—but my body still hummed, still craved.

Still needed.

I whimpered and tried to shift, but even that small movement made my belly cramp and my cunt flutter.

“Easy Little bit,” Anton murmured against my neck, kissing behind my ear. His voice was gravel-rough, wrecked from groaning my name into every corner of this nest.

As his knot slipped out, William came into the nest with a tray of food.

I groaned in protest.

“You’ve got to eat something, little Omega. I know it’s hard, but we’ve got to take care of you.”

“Nooo,” I groaned, curling tighter into Anton. “Don't wanna.”

“You say that now,” Annerly’s voice came from behind me, teasing and gentle, “but give it ten minutes and you’ll be crying for cock again, but you won't have the energy to keep going.”

I flushed, equal parts mortified and achingly turned on. Because he wasn’t wrong.

“I can feed her,” Drew said from somewhere near the edge of the nest. I opened my eyes to find him shirtless, flushed, sitting cross-legged with a bowl in one hand and a water bottle in the other. “Come on, sweetheart. Just a few bites.”

I blinked at him, dazed. “You made soup?”

He grinned, sheepish and unbearably sweet. “Well. William heated it up. But I stirred it really good. And blew on it to cool it down for you.”

The laughter bubbled out of me before I could stop it. It hurt a little, but it also felt amazing. I felt held. Cared for. Worshipped.

Claimed.

“All right,” I whispered, reaching a trembling hand toward him. “But yes, you do have to feed me.”

“Deal,” Drew said immediately, crawling closer.

Anton growled playfully, nipping at my shoulder. “Spoiled little Omega.”

“Grumpy Daddy,” I mumbled through a smile.

Their growls rumbled in harmony around me and somewhere, deep in my belly, the next wave of heat began to stir.

I managed a few spoonfuls of soup before the hunger in my belly twisted from food to something deeper. Something primal.

Drew was spooning in another when I whimpered and pressed my thighs together. The bowl clattered softly as he set it aside, his eyes going dark with understanding.

“Looks like we're heading for the next round,” William murmured, his hand smoothing over my belly. “Good girl for eating first.”

I nodded, breath hitching. “Hot. I’m all hot and achy, Daddy.” I would have hated the whine in my voice if I didn't know that they were there for me, no matter what.

Annerly’s hands were already moving, gently stroking down my body. “That’s it, little one. Let us take care of you. Let us bring you through it.”

“I can’t—” My voice broke as the first cramp rolled through me, molten and sharp. “Too much.”

William’s voice went firm, his Alpha command coating every word. “No, baby. Not too much. We’ve got you. You’re not alone anymore.”

The reminder hit somewhere deep inside me, making my eyes sting. I still couldn't believe I had everything I’d ever longed for.



“I love you,” I gasped before I could stop myself. “I love you all so much.”

The silence that followed was thick and sacred.

Then William kissed me like I’d given him the stars.

“I love you too, little Omega,” he whispered against my lips. “So fucking much.”

Annerly pressed a kiss to my shoulder. “So do I, princess. And I’ll keep saying it every damn day until the day we all die.”

Drew’s fingers stroked my cheek, his gaze soft. “Forever, Christa. You’re not going anywhere. You’re ours.”

Another cramp stole my breath, and suddenly their hands were everywhere—stroking, soothing, worshipping. I was being lifted, laid flat against the nest, my thighs parted and pinned wide by warm, strong hands. My slick was already leaking again, hot and slippery as Drew settled between my legs.

“Can I?” he asked, voice cracking with restraint.

“Yes,” I whispered. “Please. I want you.”

He sank into me slowly, reverently, his big hands bracketing my hips as if I were something holy. His cock stretched me open all over again, delicious and devastating. I moaned, back arching, my fingers scrabbling for something to hold.

William took one hand. Annerly the other. Their warmth grounded me as Drew began to move.

It was different this time. Less desperation. More worship.

Drew kissed nose, cheek, eyes. He whispered things I couldn't make out, but his voice alone made me clench around him.

"I've dreamed about this," he confessed, his voice ragged. "Dreamed about you. The way you'd feel. The way you'd look when I made you come."

His thumb found my clit and I cried out, heat roaring through me like wildfire. He didn't stop. Just kept murmuring sweet, filthy praise until I shattered around him.

My orgasm hit like a wave breaking on the shore—relentless, cleansing, inevitable.

Drew groaned, burying himself deep with one final thrust his knot slipped in, and I felt the hot rush of his release coating my insides.

He held me like I might float away.

And when Anton climbed into the nest next to me, spooning my trembling body into his massive chest, I whimpered again—needy, wrung out, but not done.

Never done.

Not with them.

When Drew's knot finally slipped free and he left me aching and empty, Anton was quick to replace him.

Quick to fill me, fuck me and make me feel how much they loved me.

William

Christa was finally asleep.

Really asleep this time—not dozing between waves or slipping under for a few minutes before waking up needy and sweet and slick. Her body was limp, completely boneless where she lay between us, one arm flung across Anton’s chest, the other tangled with Annerly’s. Her face was soft. Peaceful.

She looked young like this.

In the last four days, I’d seen her wild. I’d seen her desperate. I’d seen her aching and begging and shaking apart in our arms. But this version, this sleepy, safe, and cuddly version, did something to me I couldn’t quite explain.

Made me feel like maybe we’d done something right after all.

“She’s beautiful,” Annerly whispered beside me, voice reverent.

Anton nodded, his hand stroking slowly up and down her bare back. “Strong, too.”

“I don’t know how she survived that long on her own,” I murmured, reaching over to brush a damp curl from her cheek. She didn’t stir. “But I’m glad she did. I’m glad she found her way to us.”

Drew shifted at the edge of the nest, legs crossed, arms loose around his knees. “Do we really get to keep her now?”

It wasn't said with doubt—just awe. Like the rest of us, he still couldn't quite believe she was real. That she wanted us back.

“We're not letting her go,” I said firmly. “Not again.”

Annerly leaned into my side. “No. I need her like I need my next breath. The same way I do you.”

My heart ached with how much I loved them. All of them. Even Anton, in his gruff, reserved way, had softened. Had kissed her forehead, whispered to her in the dark when he thought we weren't listening.

We were hers as much as she was ours.

A small sound interrupted my thoughts.

A soft, sleepy moan. Then: “Daddy?”

Christa blinked her eyes open slowly, her pupils clearer now, no longer blown wide from instinct or arousal. Her skin was flushed but not fevered. Her scent was calm. Settled.

The heat really was over.

I leaned in. “Hey, little one. You okay?”

She nodded, nuzzling closer. “Tired. Sore. Really, really tender.” Her smile was slow and lazy. “But...happy.”

My throat tightened. “You were incredible.”

She blinked up at me, then turned to take in the others. “Are you all okay?”

Anton made a quiet, amused sound. “We’re not the ones who took all our cocks over and over again, little Omega.”

She flushed, but didn’t hide her smile. “Just checking.”

A pause.

Then she looked at me. Really looked. Her fingers curled in the sheet, nervous. “Now that I’m not in heat anymore...”

I sat up a little straighter, watching her carefully.

Her voice was soft. Barely above a whisper. “Could we bond now?”

My heart stopped.

She licked her lips. “If you want to.”

If we want to?

I nearly laughed. Instead, I cupped her face gently and leaned in until our foreheads touched.

“There’s nothing I want more.”

Drew let out a shaky breath. “Fuck. I didn’t know how much I needed to hear that until now.”

Annerly kissed her shoulder. “We’ve been waiting, princess. For you.”

Anton didn't say anything. He didn't need to. His hand covered hers on the sheet and held it tight.

Christa looked at each of us ?her eyes shining.

"Okay," she whispered. "Then I'm ready."

And I knew deep in my bones, in the bond that hadn't even been made yet, that nothing had ever felt more right.

I took a breath. "Okay. We'll go slow, little one. You tell us if anything doesn't feel right."

Christa nodded, already tipping her head, offering her throat with so much trust it made my vision blur.

I leaned in first.

Her pulse fluttered beneath my lips, warm and steady and strong. I kissed her there once. Then again. Then sank my teeth in.

Her breath hitched—a soft, startled sound—and then she melted, her fingers gripping my arm as the bond snapped into place. A surge of love and belonging rushed through me like fire and sunlight and something older than both. My chest ached with how right it felt.

I licked the mark gently, sealing it, before resting my forehead against hers. "You're mine now," I whispered. "And I'm yours."

Her lashes fluttered. "Always."

Drew was next. He crawled in closer, cradling her like she was made of starlight, his voice shaking. “May I, pretty girl?”

She smiled and nodded, tilting her head for him too. He pressed a kiss to her jaw, then up to her lips, where he bit down.

Asshole.

That was a clever move.

She gasped, one hand flying to his back, holding him close.

He lingered a second longer than I had, his lips brushing her skin as the bond tethered into place between them. I felt it. Not just their joy, but the way my bond to him deepened too, like we were being stitched together through her.

Anton came last.

He didn’t speak. He didn’t need to. Christa turned to him like a tide pulled by gravity, and he bent over her slowly, his hand gentle on her cheek. He nuzzled her once, then bit low on her shoulder—hard enough she whimpered.

And then she exhaled. Sagged into the nest with a dazed, dreamy sound, all her bonds humming in the air like golden threads.

But there was one left. I could feel him in the bond I shared with him. His worry at being left behind. But he should have known better.

Christa blinked blearily at Annerly, then reached for him.

“Come here,” she whispered, a little hoarse. “I want you too.”

He laughed, choked and wet. “You sure? It’s a bit different with a Beta...”

“I know how it works,” she said, tugging him closer until he was kneeling beside her. “Silly Beta, thinking I wouldn't want to bite him and claim him for myself.”

A pause. He swallowed hard, eyes shining. “You're right. Such a silly Beta.”

She kissed the underside of his jaw, soft and sure, before she bit him on the opposite side of my claiming bite on him. Just deep enough to break skin and seal what was already there. Loyalty, love, something older than instinct.

Annerly let out a quiet sigh as the bond snapped into place.

And then she slumped back into the nest, surrounded by us, bound to us, glowing from the inside out.

It was done.

We were a pack.

I looked at the others. At my brothers, my partner, my mate. At her .

Christa, our brave, battered, beautiful girl, who had survived the fire and walked back into our arms with her chin lifted.

She was still glowing, eyes half-lidded, lips parted in a blissed-out smile. “Feels good,” she murmured. “Feels like...everything’s complete.”

“That's because it is,” I said, curling around her again.

Anton stroked her hair. Drew wrapped around her legs. Annerly held her hand.



And for the first time in years, the silence between us wasn't heavy with loss.

It was full of peace.

Christa

I woke up wrapped in them.

Drew's arm slung across my stomach, his leg tangled with mine.

William curled at my back, warm breath at my neck.

Annerly's hand tucked beneath my ribs, thumb brushing lazy circles over my skin.

And Anton, all his solid and steady muscles at my feet, one hand resting against my ankle like he couldn't bear not to touch.

But it wasn't just their bodies that held me. It was the bond.

Soft and warm, it hummed in my chest. I could feel them—really feel them. Their peace. Their love. The steady thrum of knowing I belonged. After everything, I was theirs. And they were mine.

It was overwhelming and quiet and perfect.

I smiled into the pillow, letting it sink in for another breath. Then another.

Eventually, my bladder won the war against my contentment.

I slipped out carefully, pressing a kiss to Drew's jaw and skimming my fingers over Annerly's wrist to keep from startling him.

William stirred but didn't wake and I had to suppress the urge to not giggle when I saw Anton grab William's ankle instead.

I padded to the bathroom, cleaned up, grabbed one of Anton's enormous T-shirts, and made my way downstairs, planning nothing more than tea, toast, and maybe the strawberry jam I'd noticed yesterday.

I didn't expect to find her .

Tracy was at the kitchen table, legs crossed, holding a porcelain mug like it was a damn crystal glass, sitting on the kitchen stool like it was her goddamn throne.

I froze.

"Good morning, Cindy," she said smoothly. "Sleep well?"

My heart jerked like a rabbit caught in a snare.

I forced my hands to relax. My scent to stay neutral. My voice to stay calm. "You're not supposed to be here."

She sipped the tea and smirked. "Neither were you, if I recall."

I didn't rise to it. Didn't scream. Didn't call for the others.

I stepped closer, pulling together all of my inner strength. "It's too late. I'm bonded. To all of them."

Tracy laughed. Laughed . A sharp, demented sound like glass breaking.

"Oh, sweetie," she cooed. "That's exactly what I wanted."

I blinked.

“You think you’re clever,” she said, rising from her chair like a panther stretching after the kill.

“Running away, hiding out in that stupid little town. Pretending you could escape the system. But the truth, darling girl, you escaped nothing. I might not have been able to find you without my idiot sons finding you first, but the fact of the matter is I did find you.”

No. Just no.

“And to make matters even better you all played right into my hands. You’re underage and courting without your legal guardian’s permission.

No one of importance even knows you're an Omega and now... now you’ve handed me the perfect scandal.

” She leaned in, voice gleaming with satisfaction.

“Do you know what it means, Christa, that they mated with you without formal courtship? Without even declaring intent through one of the Omega Centres?”

I clenched my teeth. “It means I chose them. And they chose me.”

“It means,” she said, lips curling, “they’ve broken half a dozen federal laws and Pack Court regulations. And I have it all, right here—” she tapped her long red nail on a folder on the table. “Enough to blackmail them back under my control. Back where they belong.”

My stomach turned.

“You think they’ll risk their careers for you?

Their reputations? You think their Beta will keep his medical license?

That William will keep his company? You’re an Omega.

Emotional, soft-hearted, naïve. The authorities will forgive you.

But them?” She clicked her tongue. “They’ll be ruined. Unless...”

I didn’t move. Didn’t speak.

She grinned. “Unless they do what I say.”

“You’re sick,” I whispered.

“I’m practical.” She tilted her head. “And you, dear girl, just made my job so much easier.”

She turned on her heel and strode to the door.

“I’ll give them the morning to realise what they’ve done.

Then I expect a call. Or I go public. And trust me, Cindy...

” She looked back over her shoulder, eyes gleaming with cruel amusement.

“The next time I come back, it won’t just be for tea and a chat. ”

The door clicked shut behind her.

I didn't move. Couldn't.

The bond hummed upstairs, full of warmth, still asleep. Unaware of the trap we'd all walked into.

I leaned against the counter. Trembling.

And I made a choice.

I wouldn't let her win. Not this time.

The second I heard the door shut, I moved.

My hands were shaking. My breath came too fast. But I moved . I had to.

I ran to the living room, grabbed my phone from the charger, and called the only person I could think of who might know what the hell to do.

Honey picked up on the second ring, voice rough with sleep. "Christa? What's wrong?"

"She was here," I whispered, pacing. "Tracy. She was here , in the kitchen, drinking tea like she lives here. She's got something on us. Something that can get the men into a lot of trouble. And she's going to use it to blackmail them. It's all my fault!"

Silence.

"Honey?"

More rustling. "I'm giving you a number," she said, voice sharper now. "I'm texting it to you. Call it now . And don't say anything to the pack until after. Not until you've

spoken to her.”

Her?

I didn’t ask. I just waited for the number. The second it popped up, I copied it and dialed.

The line clicked once. Then again.

Then... "Well, I have to say I didn't think I'd be hearing from you so soon. Thought you'd be shackled up with those lover boys of yours for a good long while to come before you came up for air."

My knees nearly gave out. “Marigold?”

A low, smoky chuckle. “Tigress, sweetheart. But I suppose I’ll allow it for you.”

I collapsed onto the couch, pressing a hand to my chest. “Fuck. Okay, give me a minute to process. I mean, I know you're alive. I saw you, but you disappeared again so quickly that I almost had myself convinced I had imagined it.”

Marigold chuckled through the line, the laughter sounding hollow and cold somehow. "What can I do for you little runaway Omega?"

"It's Tracy. She showed up. Says she has proof that the guys broke a bunch of laws... which I guess they did by mating an unregistered Omega. She’s threatening to ruin them.”

“She thinks she's going to.” Her tone turned razor-sharp. “And she's got quite the cheek blaming the guys for breaking the law when she herself isn't squeaky clean. At all.”

“I don’t know what to do,” I said honestly, not able to process Marigold's words.  
“But I can’t let her hurt them.”

“I didn’t think you’d call me just to cry,” Marigold said dryly. “Good. I’ve been holding onto something for just this kind of occasion.”

I sat straighter. “What is it?”

“A little insurance. My own bit of damning evidence if you will. I’ve been doing this kind of thing for quite some time Christa. She might think she's got you trapped... but she’s just walked into the perfect trap. Mine.”

My mouth opened, but nothing came out.

“Don’t let your pack do anything rash,” she warned. “No threats or counterattacks. No press conferences. You hear me?”

“I... yeah. I hear you.”

“Good. Keep them close. Keep them quiet. And keep an eye on the news.”

“What’s going to happen?”

Marigold sighed like a tiger just waking up. Lazy, lethal, and getting ready to pounce.  
“Justice, darling. It’s about time someone put the evil stepmother in her place.”

The line went dead.

I stared at the phone in my hand, heart pounding.

Upstairs, the floor creaked. One of my mates was stirring.



I looked toward the staircase, then back at the phone.

Whatever Marigold was about to do, it was already in motion.

All I had to do was wait.

William

I knew something was wrong the second I opened the bedroom door.

The bond, once a slow thrum of contentment, now buzzed with static. Christa was awake. Not just awake—distressed. Her emotions hadn't hit full panic, but it was close.

I followed the quiet tension down the stairs.

She was curled on the sectional, knees drawn up, one of my mugs cradled tight in her hands. Her eyes were locked on a manila folder spread open on the coffee table in front of her like it was a coiled snake, ready to strike.

“Christa?” My voice came out hoarse with sleep and worry.

She flinched, just a little. But then she looked up—and the moment our eyes met, the static in the bond shifted. Her walls dropped. I felt her fear like a punch to the chest.

“She was here,” she said, voice paper-thin. “Tracy. In the kitchen. Drinking tea like she owned the place.”

Every nerve in my body lit up.

I was at her side in two steps, crouching low to meet her gaze. “What did she do?” I demanded, while trying real fucking hard not to berate myself for not being there to protect our Omega in her time of need. “Did she hurt you, little one?”

Christa looked down at the folder. “She says she has proof. That you broke pack court laws by mating with an underage Omega. She’s going to blackmail you.

All of you. She thinks she’s got us trapped.

Or well... all of you. She was so..." Christa shuddered, “so gleeful at the thought of having the twins back under her control again.

" Her large eyes looked up at me, filled with unshed tears. "Daddy, what are we going to do?"

I didn’t say anything. Couldn’t. My thoughts were already racing—legal consequences, press fallout, how fast I could get Anton to prep a statement, whether Annerly could call in a favour at the Omega Centre after we helped them out with that undercover sting operation.

Upstairs, I heard Drew stir. Annerly’s mental touch snapped to full alert. Anton’s steady pulse flared hot with worry and pre-emptive anger.

I dragged in a breath and tried to calm the spike of panic in my chest, but it was too late.

Footsteps pounded down the stairs. Drew arrived first, hair wild, shirt askew. “What happened?”

Christa didn’t look away from me, didn’t move, didn’t flinch. She explained to him what happened. Steady. Controlled. Braver than I’d ever seen her. Then she said something that shook me to the core and surprised me.

“I called Marigold. Or I guess, considering the situation it's probably better to refer to her as The Tigress.”

That made the room go still.

Drew stopped halfway across the room. Annerly hovered just inside the doorway. Even Anton, silent as a ghost, stood frozen on the last step.

Christa set down the mug, folding her hands tightly in her lap. “Honey gave me her number. I called. Told her everything.” She swallowed. “Marigold said she’s been holding on to something. Evidence. She told me not to let you do anything rash. No press. No retaliation. Just... wait.”

“Wait?” Drew’s voice was sharp. “That’s her grand plan?”

Christa’s hands twitched. “She said to keep you close. Keep you quiet. And watch the news.”

I stood up slowly, walked to the far wall, and grabbed the remote. My hands weren’t shaking, but it was a near thing. Is this the thing she told the twins she had for us... the thing she wanted to share with us? If we proved ourselves? A small spark of hope built in my chest.

The TV powered on with a low click. The screen flickered, light spilling across the room. I flipped to the local news station—the one that always had a camera ready when politicians got cuffed or scandal broke.

Christa sat back on the sectional with a small, forced smile. “Boys and their giant TVs,” she muttered.

None of us laughed.

Anton came to sit on her left. Drew dropped down on her right. Annerly knelt on the floor near her feet, head bowed slightly like he was listening through the bond for any

flicker of distress.

I stayed standing, remote in hand, eyes locked on the screen.

The anchor was smiling, talking about the weather.

For now.

But it wouldn't last. I could feel it—like thunder rolling across a flat field.

Tracy had made a move. Marigold had made a counter.

Now all we could do was wait.

And hope the trap we'd walked into... wasn't tighter than the one Marigold had laid for her.

The weather segment faded into a headline stinger.

I felt Christa's emotions heighten at the same time as I saw her tense next to Drew.

“Breaking news this hour,” the anchor said, suddenly somber. “Tracy Welch—local philanthropist and former owner of Sugarly’s Family Steakhouse franchise—has been taken into custody this morning under suspicion of fraud and will tampering related to her late husband's estate.”

A video clip played: Tracy in a grey skirt suit, hair perfect, lipstick bold—being led in cuffs through the courthouse rotunda by two uniformed officers. She looked furious. No smug smirk, no cool mask. Just the thin, brittle fury of a woman who thought herself untouchable.

Christa gasped, one hand flying to her mouth.

The anchor's voice continued over the footage. "Investigators allege that Welch falsified documents and stole the inheritance of at least one heiress in order to seize control of multiple properties and financial accounts, including that of her late husband's estate."

My stomach turned to ice.

Drew muttered a curse under his breath.

Annerly leaned forward, hands clenched.

The screen cut to a live press conference. A clean-cut detective in a navy blazer stood behind a podium, flanked by two deputies. Behind them, the Omega Centre seal gleamed on the wall.

"We believe Tracy Welch acted alone, but we're currently seeking the cooperation of a young woman believed to be her stepdaughter," the detective announced.

"This individual was legally entitled to the inheritance that Ms. Welch attempted to claim through fraudulent means. We have reason to believe the stepdaughter may not be aware of the full extent of what was taken from her, and we urge her to come forward."

Christa stared at the screen, breath held.

The detective looked straight into the camera. "If anyone has information about the whereabouts of this young Omega, we ask that you contact us through the secure channels listed below. She is not under investigation. She is a victim in this case."

The screen shifted again, this time showing an old, blurry photo. A teenager, thin and pale, eyes downcast. Christa at maybe fifteen or sixteen, probably just after her dad had passed away. The image made my chest hurt.

The anchor returned, voice low. “Sources say the estate could be worth several billion in assets and holdings, including property currently under Tracy Welch’s name.”

Christa’s tea mug slipped from her fingers and hit the carpet with a soft thud. She didn’t seem to notice.

I looked around the room. No one moved. No one spoke. We were all frozen, trapped in the quiet shock of it.

Not just because Tracy had been arrested.

Not even because the detective had asked for Christa to come forward and claim what’s hers.

No, what held us breathless... was the scope of it. The validation of everything Christa had endured. The doors that were suddenly opening and the truth out there, finally, in daylight. On camera.

They weren’t hunting her. They were looking for her.

And maybe—just maybe—this was the beginning of the end of her being afraid.

### Epilogue

The living room floor was covered in glossy prints, photo corners curling slightly under the weight of late afternoon sunlight.

I sat barefoot in the middle of it all, my belly a soft, round curve beneath my oversized tee, one hand absently resting atop it while the other hovered over a shot of dandelions in a field at golden hour.

“No, left wall,” I muttered to myself, sliding it into a new pile.

Drew snorted behind me. “That’s the third time you’ve moved that one. At this rate, the baby’s going to be helping pick your layout.”

I stuck my tongue out at him. “She has excellent taste.”

“I’m sure he does,” he said, gently nudging a stack closer with his toe. “But you’re the one who has to be satisfied with it. This is your show.”

My show.

I still couldn’t quite believe it. A solo exhibit for me! Capturing the Quiet . All mine. Funded by a local arts grant, curated by the gallery two towns over, and set to open in less than two weeks.

I glanced at the far end of the display table, where the photo from our bonding ceremony stood framed and waiting.



The image was soft yet striking at the same time.

Done in grayscale. Me in a pale dress, curls pinned back, my hair the only pop of colour on the photo, lips trembling in a half-laugh as all four of my mates stood around me, each one proud and radiant, chests puffed out like the protective assholes they could be.

Just behind us, barely visible and out of focus near the treeline, was a shadowed figure. Watching. Protecting. The only photo I had of Marigold.

The moment I saw it in the proofs, I knew I had to include it.

I traced the edge of the print with one fingertip, thinking back to that day, and to the week that followed.

The Omega Centre had cleared my registration without so much as a fine, thanks to a few well-placed calls from William and Annerly.

Apparently, exposing a high-level Omega trafficking ring earned you a lot of goodwill.

After our ceremony everyone wanted me to get into the family business immediately. Lucky for me, I had two Daddies who very much liked boardroom battles and getting their hands dirty in the restaurant business so they'd quickly stepped in for me when I asked them to.

William's voice floated in from the hallway before he even entered.

“—tell Anton to hold the acquisition another quarter if the board needs time. We're not rushing just to beat Langston to the punch.

I'd rather we—” He stepped through the archway, phone pressed to one ear, eyes

scanning the room until they found me.

And softened.

He finished the call quickly, murmured something to his assistant, then hung up and crossed to me, stepping carefully over prints without breaking stride. He leaned down and kissed me slow, lingering, one large hand warm against my cheek.

“Mmm.” He rested his forehead against mine. “Are you sure you don’t want to weigh in on this deal? We’re talking full control of a multi-state distribution line. Big stuff.”

I smiled against his mouth. “No, thank you. I’m much happier barefoot, pregnant, and sorting photos while my very handsome pack makes all the money.”

Drew let out a laugh. “She says that like her art’s not about to outsell all our combined ventures.”

William looked genuinely thoughtful. “He’s not wrong.”

I rolled my eyes at their adorable and misplaced confidence and picked up another photo. This one was of Annerly asleep on the porch swing, William’s head in his lap, both of them lit by the early dawn. One of the quiet ones. One of my favourites.

I laid it beside the bonding photo, where it belonged.

Outside, a breeze stirred the wind chimes. Inside, our pack bond hummed soft and sweet. No static, no fear. Only love. Only peace.

This is what I’d been waiting for my whole life.

This was home.

The End