



# New Year with the Cartel (Nightshade Wolves #8)

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**Category:** LGBT+

**Description:** Gustall never expected his heat to hit on the coldest night of winter.

Cast out by his family for being an omega, hes alone and vulnerable on the dangerous streets of New Vale. With his sweet omega scent attracting all kinds of danger, he struggles to keep his instincts under control. To make matters worse, hes caught the attention of Fendwyr, the most feared alpha in the city. Their initial interaction sets his omega needs on fire. Despite his fears, Gustall cant ignore the vivid visions he has about their shared past lives—or the way his body responds to Fendwyr's imposing presence.

Fendwyr always gets what he wants.

The moment he scents Gustall, he knows the omega will be his. The need to claim, to possess, to make him round with his child consumes him like nothing before. He doesnt just want Gustall—he needs him. The fact that theyre fated mates only fuels his obsession. A rival cartel leader and a mysterious necklace might threaten his plans, but Fendwyr didnt become the most feared alpha in New Vale by letting others take whats his.

**Total Pages (Source):** 21

# Page 1

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Gustall

I huddled deeper into my thin jacket, trying to ignore the biting wind that seemed to pierce right through to my bones. As expected, it wasn't something easy to do.

The snow crunched beneath my worn boots as I trudged through the alleyways, my breath misting in the frigid air. I couldn't help but think back to that fateful day, the day my parents had cast me out like some piece of garbage. I would never forget it.

They had never truly accepted me, not from the moment they first scented that I was an omega. A disappointment, they called me, shaking their heads in shame. I could still see the disgust etched on their faces as they kicked me out into the unforgiving streets of New Vale, nothing but a tattered backpack with a few meager belongings to my name. If I died, they wouldn't care. They didn't want to know what happened or was happening to me.

Hot tears pricked at the corners of my eyes, but I blinked them back. Crying wouldn't change a damn thing. It was a lesson I'd learned all too well in the months since I'd been on my own.

Still, I couldn't help but think that there were so many lucky omegas, people who had good and loving parents. I was never that lucky. I would never even be lucky enough to have a relationship that made me feel whole.

I had to be strong, had to keep moving forward. But some days, like today, the weight of my loneliness and the sting of my parents' rejection felt like a physical ache in my chest. It didn't help that it was so cold, too. It was almost the new year, but I wasn't

happy or in a celebratory mood.

I was a grown man, but out here, out in the cold and the dark, I felt like a lost little pup again. An omega without a pack, without even a scrap of family to call my own. I didn't know if I would ever truly be able to heal from the damage they had inflicted upon me. All I knew was that I had to survive, no matter the cost. Because no one else was going to save me. I was utterly, hopelessly alone.

Taking a few steps forward, I tried to push away the painful memories of my parents, focusing instead on the bitter cold that seemed to seep into my very bones. And just like so many other things in my life, it wasn't easy to do it. Nothing came easy to me anymore.

I wrapped my arms around myself, as if that could somehow ward off the chill that came not just from the winter night, but from the emptiness inside me. Yeah, I knew it wasn't going to make much difference.

I also knew I had to be realistic, had to face the truth of my situation. I was an omega, and a flawed one at that. Who would ever want me for a lasting relationship? The idea of a fated mate, a perfect alpha who was destined to be mine... it felt like a distant dream, something that could never be real for someone like me.

I had been alone for so long, these past months stretching out into an endless expanse of solitude. I couldn't even remember the last time I had had a real conversation with someone, something meaningful that went beyond just the barest of necessities. It was always just me, wandering the streets, trying to find a temporary refuge from the cold and the hunger. This country was perpetually cold. Snow wasn't constant, but the wind always cut to the bone.

I had long given up on the idea of finding someone who would truly care for me, who would want to be with me in more than just the physical sense. I was a liability, a

burden. No alpha would ever want to saddle themselves with an omega like me, one without a pack, without even the faintest hope of a future.

As I trudged through the snow, I reaffirmed my belief in my own inherent loneliness. I would never have a lasting relationship, not with anyone. Not even with the mythical figure of my fated alpha, if such a being even existed. I didn't think he did. Even if by some miracle he did, he wouldn't want me.

I had to accept that, had to come to terms with the fact that I was destined to be alone, forever and always.

It was a painful truth, but it was the truth nonetheless. And I had to face it head-on, had to steel myself against the ache in my chest that threatened to overwhelm me. I wouldn't let myself hope for something more, not again. I had learned my lesson, and I would not forget it.

Still walking while hoping something better would happen soon, lost in my morose thoughts, a sudden movement in my peripheral vision startled me. I turned to see a haggard stranger emerging from the shadows of a nearby alley, his eyes wild and desperate. He was younger than me, probably barely out of his teenage years, with a gaunt face and twitchy movements that spoke of a severe addiction. I didn't even want to know what he was addicted to.

"Hey, pretty omega," he called out, his voice cracking. "You look like you could use a little pick-me-up, yeah? I've got just the thing."

He held out a small baggie to me, the contents unknown but clearly illicit. I hesitated, a part of me tempted by the prospect of numbing the constant ache of loneliness and despair that consumed me. It had been so long since I'd felt anything but cold and exhaustion... I wanted to feel something different, even though it wasn't a good choice.

But even as the temptation tugged at me, I knew I couldn't give in. Not now, not ever. Because despite everything, a small part of me still held onto a fragile dream—the dream of one day having a family of my own. And for that, I needed to preserve my body, to keep it healthy and untainted by chemicals. Otherwise, if my children ended up having defects because of my choices, I would never forgive myself.

"No, thanks," I said, trying to keep my voice steady. "I'm not interested."

The stranger's face contorted in anger, his eyes narrowing to dangerous slits. "What do you mean, you're not interested? You think you're too good for this, omega?" He took a step closer, his posture aggressive.

I took a step back, my heart beginning to race. "I just don't want any, okay? I'm not trying to insult you."

But my words seemed to enrage him further. He lunged forward, grabbing my arm in a bruising grip. "You ungrateful bitch! You think you can just walk away from me? I can see you're hurting. I'm offering you a way out, and you're turning your nose up at it?"

It wasn't anything like that. Why did he have to take it so personally? Reasoning with him was pointless—he was too far gone, lost in the drugs he kept consuming.

I tried to pull away, but his hold was too strong. I didn't work out or eat well, and I didn't have the strength to fight him off, even though he was an addict. Surprisingly, he was strong for someone in his condition.

Fear coursed through me as I realized I was in serious trouble. This stranger was volatile and unpredictable. I had to get away, had to run...

Seizing my chance as he momentarily loosened his grip to shake me, I wrenched my

arm free and bolted. I ran as fast as my legs could carry me, not daring to look back to see if he was chasing me. My heart pounded in my ears as I wove through the narrow alleyways, my breath coming in ragged gasps.

My thoughts were answered faster than I thought they would be. I could hear the stranger shouting obscenities, his footsteps pounding the pavement as he chased after me. I could feel the adrenaline surging through my veins, the fear of being caught, of being hurt, or worse...

But I refused to let it overwhelm me. I focused on the burn in my lungs, on the ache in my muscles as I ran. I thought of the tiny life I might one day carry inside me, the chance to be a parent, to love and protect a child as I had never been loved or protected.

That thought spurred me on, giving me the strength to push myself even harder. I could not give in, could not let that dream be shattered before it even had a chance to come to life. I had to survive, had to keep going.

My lungs burned and my legs ached as I ran, the sound of the stranger's footsteps growing closer and closer behind me. I thought he wasn't going to chase me, but he was. He was right behind me, and he was actually pretty fast.

I could hear his ragged breaths, and could almost feel the heat of his body as he gained on me. Panic clawed at my throat, my mind reeling as I tried to think of a way out of this nightmare. The only way I could see was running as fast as possible.

Just as his fingers brushed against the back of my coat, a dark figure seemed to materialize from the shadows of a nearby alley. Who was that person? I asked myself before realizing I didn't even have enough time to know if it was a man or a woman.

Before I could process what was happening, the figure moved with a speed and

strength that belied its vague outline, slamming into the stranger and sending him crashing to the ground. I should be thankful, but I wasn't, and mostly because I didn't know who was saving me.

I stumbled to a halt, panting and terrified, as the figure loomed over the addict. The stranger scrambled to his feet, his eyes wide with a mix of fear and belligerence. "This is between me and the omega, man! Back off!"

But the figure said nothing, their face obscured by the gloom. Something about their stance, their sheer size compared to the scrawny addict, made the stranger think twice about trying to fight back. It just wasn't a good choice.

He took a step back, then another, until he was nearly pressed against the wall of the alley.

"You're not going to touch him again," the figure said, their voice a low, threatening rumble. "You're going to turn around and walk away, forget this ever happened. Because if I see you near him again..."

The implied threat hung heavy in the air. They also talked as though they knew me, even though I didn't think they did. It just didn't make sense. Why would that person know me?

The stranger's eyes darted between me and the shadowy figure, his foot tapping nervously. Then, with a muttered curse, he turned and slunk away, disappearing into the night as quickly as he had appeared. Just like that, he was gone, and maybe I was safe.

I stood there frozen, my heart still racing, as the figure slowly turned to face me. Even in the dim light of the alley, I could see the cold, hard anger in their eyes. They looked me up and down, assessing me with a critical gaze.

"You should be more careful, omega," they said, their voice still low but no longer threatening. "Walking these streets alone, looking like that... it's asking for trouble."

Even though they were talking to me, I still couldn't figure out whether they were a man or a woman. My mind wasn't quite working properly.

I swallowed hard, my mouth suddenly dry. "I... thank you," I managed to get out. "For saving me. But who are you? Why did you help me?"

The figure stepped closer, and I found myself pressing back against the wall, feeling trapped and vulnerable.



## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Fendwyr

As the omega pressed himself against the wall, I could see the fear in his eyes, the way his body trembled. I knew why he was feeling that way, but still wished I could do something about it.

It made a surge of protective instinct rise up inside me, an unfamiliar but not unwelcome feeling. I had acted on impulse, seeing a threat to a seemingly innocent person, and intervened. I didn't plan on it or knew him, but I couldn't just stand there and let that addict hurt him. It wouldn't have been like me to remain passive.

I stepped closer, letting the dim light of the alley illuminate my features. The omega's eyes widened as he took in my appearance. I was a large alpha, muscular and imposing, and I could see the apprehension in his green eyes.

"It's alright, I'm not going to hurt you," I said, keeping my voice low and soothing despite the adrenaline still pumping through my veins. "You don't need to know who I am. What matters is that you're safe now."

And he was, for sure. As long as I was around, nobody could hurt him.

I extended a hand towards him, offering to help him up. I could see the hesitation in his eyes, and the internal struggle as he weighed the risks. Again, I couldn't blame him; in this part of the city, trusting a stranger could be deadly. But I had no ulterior motives, no hidden agenda. I had just been in the right place at the right time. Nothing more than that.

"I found you by pure chance," I explained, my gaze holding his. "I heard raised voices and came to investigate. I saw a young omega being accosted by a dangerous-looking addict and acted accordingly. Simple as that."

He still didn't take my hand, so I slowly withdrew it, not wanting to pressure him. "I know you have no reason to trust me," I said, a note of understanding in my voice. "But please, believe me when I say that I only want to help you, if you'll let me."

The omega eyed my outstretched hand warily, suspicion etched into every line of his delicate features. He had every right to be suspicious of me. After all, I was a stranger to him.

He made no move to take my hand, instead wrapping his arms around himself in a protective gesture that spoke volumes about his guarded state of mind.

"I... I don't know," he stammered, his voice barely above a whisper. "Last time I trusted someone, they...they betrayed me. I can't just assume you're any different."

His words were laced with a deep-seated hurt, a vulnerability that tugged at something in my chest. I knew all too well how much betrayal could sting, how it could leave scars that never fully healed. I'd experienced the same.

I let my hand drop to my side, respecting his hesitation even as a part of me yearned to reach out, to offer comfort and reassurance. But I knew that would be overstepping, especially given how skittish he was.

I didn't have to do this. Didn't have to keep talking to him, but still wanted to. I wanted to find out what exactly I was feeling and why it was causing it.

"Listen, I understand your hesitation," I said, keeping my voice low and calm. "I truly

do. It takes courage to trust someone, and you have no reason to extend that trust to me. But please believe me when I say that I have no intention of betraying you."

I paused, letting my words sink in. "I'm not going to force you to come with me or anything like that. But if you need a place to stay tonight, somewhere safe and warm, I can offer that to you. No strings attached."

It wasn't much, but it was a starting point. A chance for him to see that not all alphas were out to hurt him, that there were still people in this world willing to extend a helping hand.

The omega seemed to consider my words, his green eyes searching my face as if trying to discern any hint of deception. I met his gaze steadily, letting him see the sincerity in my own eyes. Perhaps, through that, he could understand I was being sincere.

I wasn't about to push him, but I was determined to make him understand that I was serious about my offer. I just wanted to help. Nothing more than that.

"You seem awfully eager to help a complete stranger," he said finally, his voice still cautious but with a hint of curiosity. "What's your angle here? You must want something in return."

I couldn't help but let out a short, amused chuckle. "You're a perceptive one, aren't you?" I mused. "Alright, I can see why you'd think that. But in this case, you're wrong. I don't want anything from you, not yet anyway."

He arched a slim brow at that, a hint of skepticism in his expression. "Not yet? What's that supposed to mean? You're already planning on asking for something later?"

I shook my head, holding up a hand in a placating gesture. "No, that's not what I

meant at all. I'm just saying that I'm not expecting anything in return for helping you tonight. But who knows? Maybe we'll find a mutually beneficial arrangement further down the line."

I leaned against the alley wall, crossing my arms over my broad chest. I could tell my casual posture was at odds with the intense way I was studying him, analyzing his reactions. I couldn't help it; I was naturally dominant, naturally inquisitive. It was just how I was wired.

"So, turnabout being fair play and all, I have a few questions for you," I said, tilting my head slightly. "What's a cute little thing like you doing out here all alone on a night like this? Don't you know how dangerous it can be, especially for an omega?"

My question was pertinent and I would only leave him be after getting the answer.

He flushed slightly at the 'cute' comment, but I could see the defensive set of his shoulders, the way he squared his jaw. He was stubborn, this one. I liked that.

"You don't think I know that?" He asked, a hint of bite in his voice. "You think I chose to be out here? I didn't exactly have a lot of options."

Ah, there it was. A hint of his story, of the difficulties he'd faced. I stored that away for later contemplation. For now, I just nodded, my expression solemn.

"I can imagine," I said, and I meant it. I knew all too well how harsh life could be for an omega without a pack, without protection. "But you have options now. A warm bed, a hot meal, safety. I can provide all of that for you."

He bit his lip, hesitation warring with longing in his eyes. I could practically see the wheels turning in his head as he weighed his choices.

"And in return?" He asked softly, almost reluctantly.

I smiled, a slow, meaningful curve of my lips. "Like I said, we'll figure that out later. For now, just focus on staying alive. The rest...we can worry about the rest tomorrow."

The omega took a step back, pressing himself further against the cold brick wall as if trying to disappear into it. His eyes narrowed, suspicion written plainly in their green depths. Again, he had every right to be wary, given the circumstances. I was a stranger, a large and imposing alpha, offering him help out of the blue. It was understandable that he would be suspicious. Very, very understandable.

"Listen, I don't know what your game is, but I'm not interested," he said, his voice firm despite the tremor that betrayed his fear. "I don't need your help, and I certainly don't want it. So just... just leave me alone."

I raised a brow at his words, a smirk tugging at the corner of my mouth. He was feisty, this one. I liked that. Most omegas would have been falling over themselves to accept my offer, grateful for any scrap of kindness. But not him. He was defiant, unwilling to just roll over and accept my help. I really liked that about him.

"That's not very nice," I chided, stepping closer. I could see the way he flinched, the way he tried to shrink into himself. It was almost amusing. Almost. "Here I am, trying to do something good for a pretty little omega like you, and you're throwing it back in my face."

He flushed at my words, his cheeks turning a delightful shade of pink. "I'm not some 'little omega' you can just pat on the head and send on your way," he snapped, his eyes flashing with anger. "I'm a person, with my own mind and my own choices. And I choose not to accept your help."

I let out a low chuckle, shaking my head. "Oh, sweetheart, you really don't have a choice," I said, my tone gentle but firm. I decided enough was enough. "It's either come with me willingly, or I'll have to make you. And trust me, you don't want that."

His eyes widened at my threat, fear flickering across his delicate features. He hadn't expected my behavior to change so suddenly. After all, I had been trying to be respectful.

And he still didn't back down, still didn't cower as I expected him to. It was admirable, in a way.

"Why are you being so weird about this?" He asked, his voice tinged with frustration. "Most alphas wouldn't give a shit about me, let alone offer me help. So, what's your deal? What are you really after?"

I couldn't help but grin at his words, at the way he was so openly challenging me. It was rare to find an omega who wasn't immediately submissive to an alpha, especially one of my standing. It was...refreshing.

"Who says I'm after anything?" I asked, tilting my head. "Maybe I just like helping lost little lambs like you. Maybe I get off on the thrill of it."

He scoffed at that, rolling his eyes. "Please. I'm not buying it. You're up to something, I just can't figure out what yet."

And so, maybe he should come with me to figure it out.

I shrugged, unconcerned. "Believe what you want, little omega. It doesn't change the fact that I'm trying to help you. And you'd be a fool to refuse."

He glared at me, his fists clenching at his sides. I could practically see the gears

turning in his head as he tried to decide what to do. It was a tough choice, I knew. To trust a stranger, or to try to make it on his own in a world that was harsh and unforgiving.

But I also knew which choice he would make, in the end. He was smart and resourceful. He would take the easy way out, even if it meant being indebted to me. It was just shifter nature.

"Fine," he bit out, his voice tight with resignation. "I'll come with you. But only because I need a place to sleep tonight. That's it. I'm not going to owe you anything."

I grinned, triumphant. "We'll see about that," I said. "Now come on, let's get out of here. It's cold, and I have a nice, warm place waiting for you."

And so, as we stepped out of the alley and into the main street, I turned to the omega, extending a hand towards him. "By the way, I'm Fendwyr," I said, my voice low and serious. "And you are?"

He hesitated for a moment before taking my hand, his palm small and cold against my much larger one. "Gustall," he replied. And it didn't seem he was going to tell me what his last name was. Smart.

There was also something in that moment, in the simple exchange of names, that felt significant, almost momentous. It was as if we were both acknowledging that this was more than just a casual encounter, more than just two strangers crossing paths in the night.

I found myself wondering about him, about the life that had led him to this point. What were his dreams, his fears, his hopes? And why, in that moment, did it matter so much to me?

Good question. I had no idea what the answer to it was. I also didn't have time to seek it. Whatever it was, when it was important, it would be revealed.

I pushed those thoughts aside, focusing instead on the present. "Come on, Gustall, " I said, my voice gentle. "Let's get you somewhere warm and safe. We can talk more later."



## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Gustall

I followed Fendwyr through the snowy streets, my mind racing as I tried to make sense of the situation I found myself in. One moment I was living my life just like everybody else, the next an addict was trying to get me to buy his drugs, and then a man saved me, and I didn't know anything about him, other than his name and that he couldn't be trusted.

He led me to a grand, imposing building, the kind of place I had never set foot in before. I never would have come here if it weren't for him.

It was clear, even from the outside, that this was no ordinary dwelling.

As we stepped inside, the warmth enveloped me, a stark contrast to the bitter cold outside. The foyer was opulent, with rich carpets and gleaming furniture. But it was the people inside that caught my attention, that made me stop in my tracks.

The place was filled with men, all of them large and imposing like Fendwyr. They lounged on the plush sofas, their eyes watchful as they took in our arrival. I could sense the power emanating from them, the raw dominance that was inherent to all alphas, and it wasn't a good feeling.

They all seemed to defer to Fendwyr, standing up straighter as he entered, their eyes filled with respect, even reverence. It was clear that he was the leader here, the alpha of alphas. The realization made my stomach twist with apprehension.

Fendwyr seemed to sense my unease, placing a reassuring hand on my lower back as

he guided me further inside. "Don't mind them. They're friends."

His reassurance was enough to make me feel calmer, but not enough to feel entirely comfortable.

His fingers sent a jolt of awareness through me, a sensation that I tried desperately to ignore. I didn't want to feel anything for this man, didn't want to be drawn to him in any way. He was dangerous, a predator, and I was nothing more than prey to him.

In fact, the only reason he took me here was because he wanted to take advantage of me. It couldn't be anything different from that.

But as I looked up at him, taking in the strong lines of his face, the way his blue eyes seemed to see right through me, I couldn't deny the attraction that sparked between us. It was wrong, inappropriate, and yet I couldn't seem to quell the desire that simmered beneath my skin. It was wrong and made me feel dirty.

I swallowed hard, trying to push away the traitorous thoughts. I couldn't afford to let my guard down, not here, not with him. I needed to keep my wits about me, to remember that I was in the den of a wolf. And I was nothing more than a lamb, brought in from the cold.

"Come on. This way," he said as if I had another choice, but I didn't. After agreeing to come with him, I couldn't turn back.

Fendwyr led me to a room, shutting the door behind us. It was a bedroom, large and luxurious, with a grand four-poster bed dominating the space. I couldn't help but imagine him there, sprawled across the sheets, his body naked and on display...

I shook my head, trying to dispel the inappropriate thoughts. What was wrong with me? I had just met this man, and already I was fantasizing about him? It was

ridiculous, insane... Unless... No, it couldn't be that. It just wouldn't make any sense.

But as I looked at him, taking in the way his dark hair fell across his forehead, the way his broad shoulders filled out his coat, I knew that I was in trouble. I was drawn to him, inexplicably, helplessly. And I had a feeling that he knew it too.

After all, he wasn't stupid or blind; he could sense what others were feeling. That was one of the reasons he knew I had a miserable life.

Fendwyr studied me for a long moment, his eyes searching mine as if trying to read my every thought. I couldn't meet his gaze, couldn't let him see the desire that was surely written plainly on my face.

But did that make such a difference? I didn't think so. Again, I was pretty sure he could understand what exactly I was thinking.

"You're safe here, Gustall," he said, his voice low and soothing. "I promise you that. No one will hurt you, not while you're under my protection."

I nodded, not trusting myself to speak. I couldn't form the words, couldn't articulate the confused, conflicting emotions that were swirling inside me. All I could do was stand there, mute and frozen, as I tried to make sense of the situation I found myself in.

I was in the heart of Fendwyr's territory, surrounded by his people, his pack. I was at his mercy, completely and utterly. And yet, instead of feeling fear, I felt... excitement. Anticipation. A strange, undeniable heat that had nothing to do with the roaring fire in the hearth.

I didn't understand it, couldn't explain it. All I knew was that I was in deep, deep trouble. And I had a feeling that it was only going to get worse from here.

As Fendwyr stepped further into the room, I couldn't help but feel trapped, like a rabbit caught in a snare. My eyes darted around, taking in every detail, every possible escape route. But there was none. I was well and truly stuck.

It felt as though he had prepared this place just for me, even though that didn't make sense. He couldn't have known he was going to meet me, right? At least, that was what I thought.

Fendwyr turned to face me, a smirk playing at the corner of his lips. He seemed to enjoy the fact that he had me at his mercy, that I was powerless to resist him. It annoyed me, infuriated me, and yet there was that traitorous heat, simmering just beneath the surface, and I hated it even more than everything else combined.

"What exactly is this place?" I asked, my voice coming out harsher than I intended. "And who are you, really? I deserve to know, after you brought me here."

Fendwyr chuckled, a low, rumbling sound that seemed to vibrate through his chest. He leaned against the doorframe, crossing his arms over his broad chest. He looked every inch the cocky alpha, the kind of man who was used to getting what he wanted, and who never doubted his own abilities.

"It's just a compound," he said, his tone casual. "And I'm just a humble businessman, making my way in the world. Nothing special."

I scoffed, rolling my eyes. "A humble businessman? That's not what your little display out there suggested."

He shrugged, unconcerned. "My boys just like to show their respect, that's all. It doesn't mean anything."

But I wasn't buying it, not for a second. There was something more to him, something

dangerous and powerful. I could feel it in the way the other men deferred to him, in the way they looked at him with a mix of fear and respect. He was no ordinary alpha, no ordinary man.

"So, what are you, then?" I persisted, determined to get to the truth. "What do you do here, in this place? Tell me everything."

Fendwyr smiled then, a slow, predatory curve of his lips that sent a shiver down my spine. "I protect what's mine," he answered. "Nothing more than that."

His words, his tone, sent a thrill of fear and excitement through me. I reaffirmed, in that moment, that I was in trouble. Real, serious trouble. I had gotten myself entangled with an alpha like no other, a man who was used to getting his way, no matter the cost.

Fendwyr seemed to sense my inner turmoil, his eyes narrowing as he studied me. "You really are a feisty one, aren't you?" He said, pushing off from the doorframe. "I like that. Most omegas just roll over and submit, but you... you've got fight in you."

I couldn't help but scoff at his words, even as a part of me still thrilled at the idea of being desired by him. "Most omegas? What, are you some kind of expert on omegas now?" I asked, my voice dripping with sarcasm. "I doubt you know anything about us."

He laughed, a rich, deep sound that sent a shiver down my spine. "Oh, sweetheart, I know more than you think. I've spent a lot of time around omegas, and I can tell you with certainty, you're not like most of them."

I rolled my eyes, trying to hide the way my body reacted to his words. "Whatever you say. But let me make one thing clear — if you try to hurt me, or force me to do anything I don't want to do, I'll call the cops. I mean it."

Fendwyr just smiled. "The cops? You think they can help you here? I hate to break it to you, but they're on my payroll. They always turn a blind eye to what happens in my territory."

I couldn't hide the disbelief on my face, even as a small part of me wondered if he was telling the truth. It wouldn't be the first time the police had been bought off by a powerful alpha, but still... it was hard to believe. And I didn't want to.

"I don't believe you," I said, lifting my chin. "You're just trying to scare me, to make me think I'm trapped here with no way out. But I'm not stupid. I'll find a way to get out, to get help if I need it, if necessary."

Fendwyr shrugged, unconcerned by my threat. "Believe what you want. But for now, you're here, and you're safe. No one will hurt you, not while you're under my protection. I won't hurt you, either."

I wanted to argue, to insist that I didn't need his protection, but the truth was... I did. I was in over my head, and I knew it. I just had to hope that he was being honest, that I could trust him not to hurt me.

As if sensing my inner turmoil again, Fendwyr stepped closer, his eyes searching mine. "I mean it, Gustall," he reaffirmed. "No one will touch you. You have my word."

And for some inexplicable reason, I believed him. I didn't know why, but I did. And that scared me more than anything else.

I swallowed hard, trying to keep my composure. "Fine. But I'm still not staying here with you for long. I'm going to stay here only tonight, and then I'll find somewhere else to go."

Fendwyr just smiled, a knowing look in his eyes. "We'll see about that. For now, why don't you get some rest? You look exhausted."

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Fendwyr

I settled myself into a plush armchair, steeping my fingers as I regarded Gustall with a thoughtful expression. He was a puzzle, this one, a delicate little omega with a core of steel beneath that soft exterior. I found myself wanting to unravel the mysteries surrounding him, to understand what had brought him to my territory on a night like tonight, and I wouldn't stop until I had the answers I sought.

"Alright, Gustall," I began. "Let's talk. I've been thinking about this since seeing you. What's your story? What's a pretty little omega like you doing out on the streets alone on New Year's Eve?"

Gustall shifted uncomfortably, his eyes darting away. "I... I don't want to talk about it," he mumbled, wrapping his arms around himself as if trying to physically close himself off. But it wasn't going to work, and especially not against me.

I leaned forward, fixing him with a piercing stare. "Come on now, don't be like that. You can't expect me to just take you in without knowing anything about you. I need to understand what I'm dealing with here."

He was silent for a long moment, his jaw clenched stubbornly. But I could see the struggle in his eyes, the war between wanting to maintain his privacy and knowing he had no choice.

"Fine," he said finally, his voice tight. "But it's not a pretty story. My parents... they kicked me out, said they couldn't handle having an omega son. I've been on my own ever since."



A pang of sympathy shot through me, but I kept my expression neutral. "I see. That's rough. But it doesn't explain why you were out on the streets tonight, of all nights."

Gustall hesitated, and I could see him considering lying. But I could also tell he was exhausted, drained from the night's events. He was going to crack soon.

"I... I was just trying to get to a shelter," he admitted finally. "But it was too far, and I got lost. And then that man started following me, and..." He trailed off, shuddering.

I nodded, pieces falling into place. A homeless omega, alone and vulnerable, was a ripe target for the scum that prowled the streets, looking to exploit the desperate and weak. He was lucky I showed up when I did.

"Well, you're safe now," I reminded him, my voice gentling. "But Gustall... why didn't you use the resources available to omegas in your position? There are organizations that could have helped you, that could have kept you off the streets."

He flushed, looking embarrassed. He knew the truth, obviously, but didn't want to share it with me, also obviously. He didn't want to tell me everything for his own safety.

"I... I didn't want to go to them," he muttered. "I didn't want to be just another charity case, another mouth to feed. I thought I could handle things on my own. I prefer being independent. "

I sighed, shaking my head. "And how's that working out for you so far? You were minutes away from being hurt, from being forced into God knows what. You're not equipped to handle this world alone, Gustall."

He glared at me, his eyes flashing with anger and humiliation. "You don't know anything about me!" He snapped. "You don't know what I've been through, what I'm

capable of!"

"Maybe not," I agreed, holding his gaze. "But I know enough. I know that you're an omega, and omegas are inherently submissive. You're not built to fight, to survive on your own in a world full of dangerous alphas. You need protection, guidance, a pack to call your own."

The underlying message in my words caught him by surprise. He didn't expect me to say something like that.

I watched as he struggled with my words, saw the way his expression crumpled slightly. He was close to breaking, to accepting the truth of his situation.

"What about tomorrow?" I pressed, relentless. I wanted to know everything, and I really meant it. "What's your plan, when you leave here? Are you just going to keep trying to go it alone, keep putting yourself in danger? It's not a very smart thing to do."

Gustall opened his mouth, closed it again, seemingly at a loss for words. I could practically see the wheels turning in his head as he tried to come up with a feasible answer. And again, he wasn't going to tell me the entire truth. Only a fraction of it, if that.

"I... I don't know," he said finally, his voice small. "I hadn't really thought that far ahead. I just... I wanted to survive the night, I guess. Tomorrow seemed... too far away."

I could understand that sentiment all too well. When you were living day to day, focused solely on surviving, it was hard to think about anything else. But that was no way to live, especially not for an omega. I couldn't ignore the problem presented right in front of me.

"Well, I think it's time you started thinking about it," I said firmly. "Because Gustall... I can't in good conscience let you leave here and go back out there. You need help, and I'm willing to provide it. But you have to be willing to accept it, to trust me."

It was a tall order. He wasn't going to start trusting me just because I wanted him to. It was going to take time, and I didn't know if we could be patient about it.

His eyes widened at my offer, a mix of hope and trepidation warring in their green depths. "What are you saying?" He asked. "What kind of help are you talking about?"

I smiled, slow and deliberate. "The kind that will keep you safe, keep you fed and clothed and warm. The kind that will give you a purpose, a reason to keep going when things get tough. The kind that will... give you a future, if you'll let it."

That was a lot, especially considering that not too long ago, he was fighting tooth and nail just to stay alive. Now, I was offering him much more, but of course, I was a stranger, and he wasn't going to trust me simply because I wanted him to.

I could be patient, though. I had to be. I was already eager for the reward I would reap if I played my cards right.

I could see him considering it, could practically hear the thoughts rushing through his head. He wanted to accept, wanted desperately to be free of the constant fear and struggle of living on the streets. But he was still wary, still uncertain of my motives.

And, well, he wasn't the only one who was suspicious; I was too. He was vague in his answers to my questions, not revealing the whole truth. I needed to change that.

"What's in it for you?" He asked, his gaze sharpening. "Why do you want to help me so much? You must want something in return."

I shrugged, a mischievous glint in my eye as I leaned back in my chair, folding my arms behind my head. Did he think it was going to be so easy?

"Me? I'm just a guy who likes to help out a fellow in need. It's what, I don't know, keeps me warm at night." I winked, letting the innuendo hang in the air between us. I wasn't about to admit my true thoughts just yet, not until I had him more off-balance. When that happened, I would strike.

"And besides, it gets boring around here with just my boys to talk to. A pretty little omega like you..." I let my gaze rove appreciatively over his body, "... well, let's just say you're a breath of fresh air, to say the least."

Gustall flushed and crossed his arms, clearly uncomfortable with the scrutiny. "I'm not some 'pretty little omega' you can just... just look at." He stammered, but I could see the way his pupils dilated, the slight hitch in his breathing. He wasn't as unaffected as he wanted to pretend. In fact, I could say he was feeling something similar to what I was.

I chuckled, leaning forward to brace my elbows on my knees, bringing us closer. "Oh, I know you're not. But you are a beautiful creature, Gustall. Any man or woman with eyes can see that."

I reached out, intending to tuck a strand of blond hair behind his ear, but 'accidentally' brushed my fingers along his cheek in the process. I felt the warmth of his skin, the slight rasp of his breath, and I had to suppress a shudder of want. Dios mío, the way he responded to even the slightest touch...

Gustall jerked back as if burned, his eyes wide with shock and a confusing mix of emotions. "Don't... don't touch me like that," he warned, but his voice came out breathless, betraying his true reaction. He couldn't lie to me.

I held up my hands in mock surrender, a wicked smile playing on my lips. "My apologies, I didn't mean it. It won't happen again. Unless..." I let the suggestion hang, enjoying the way his gaze darted around the room, looking for an escape route that wasn't there.

"Unless what?" He asked, his voice tight. I could practically see the struggle in his head, trying to decipher my true intent. But as usual, it wasn't going to be so easy.

I stood then, slowly, letting him drink in my towering height, the predatory set of my shoulders. I circled the room, like a wolf eyeing cornered prey. "Unless you ask me to touch you. To kiss you. To make you feel things you've never felt before." I paused behind his chair, leaning down to growl in his ear. "All you have to do is say the word, Gustall. I'm very open to negotiation, especially when it comes to things like that."

He shivered, his hands clenching on the arms of the chair. I could smell his arousal, see the way his body was tense with it, even as he struggled to maintain his composure. This cat-and-mouse game was thrilling and infuriating. I couldn't wait to flip the script, to pin him down and show him just how a real alpha claimed what was his.

"Why would I do that?" Gustall asked, but the breathiness of his voice undermined the bravado. "I don't need to be touched. Again, I'm not some... some plaything for you to amuse yourself with." Oh, he wasn't?

I chuckled darkly at his weak protest, leaning down to invade his space further. He didn't like that, obviously.

My breath ghosted over the shell of his ear as I murmured, "Plaything? Oh no, dear, I don't want to play with you. I want to make you my whole focus, my sole obsession. I want to map every inch of your body until I know it better than you know yourself."

Gustall's breath hitched, a choked noise escaping his throat. His fingers dug into the upholstery of the chair, knuckles turning white. I could practically feel the heat radiating off his body and could smell the way his arousal spiked at my words. He was so responsive...

I straightened up, slowly, letting the cool air of the room replace the warmth of my body. But I didn't move away entirely. My hands found purchase on the armrests of his chair, caging him in. Gustall had to crane his neck back to keep his gaze on mine, and I could see the way his throat bobbed with a hard swallow.

"What's the matter, little omega?" I purred softly, drinking in his flushed face, the way his chest heaved with staccato breaths. "A big, strong alpha like me offering to worship your body, and you look terrified. I thought you'd be pleased at the prospect. Most omegas would be."

His mouth opened and closed a few times, no sound emerging. He looked trapped, a rabbit in the headlights of an oncoming car. I could almost see the thoughts racing through his head—panic, confusion, shame, and the faintest hint of grudging desire. Poor boy, so out of his depth.

"I... you..." He licked his lips, the action drawing my gaze like a magnet to a metal shaving. "You're not really offering to... to do that. You just want... want to use me."

His voice was barely above a whisper, his gaze dropping to his lap. Accusation hung heavy in the air between us, but also the faintest, most reluctant hint of interest. Maybe he didn't want to admit it yet, but his body was catching on.

I sighed, shaking my head in mock sadness. "Use you? Gustall, if I wanted to use you, it would be so much more intense and pleasurable than any of these teasing little touches. I would have you screaming my name, begging so sweetly for my cock, for me to fill you up and breed you full of my pups. That's not using, that's claiming."

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Gustall

I stared at Fendwyr, utterly shocked and outraged by his crude words. Those words reflected his nature and the kind of person he was. I hated him for being that way, yet I couldn't deny how much my body craved him.

How dare he speak to me that way, as if I was nothing more than a willing hole for him to use? I opened my mouth to give him a piece of my mind, but he held up a hand, silencing me.

"I think I've said quite enough for now," he said, his voice low and rough, causing something in me to become warmer all of a sudden. "You look exhausted, Gustall. Why don't you take some time to rest, to reflect on... everything that's happened tonight. We can continue this conversation later, if you don't mind."

With that, he turned and strode to the door, leaving me alone in the spacious bedroom. I gaped after him, my mouth open, unable to believe he was really going to give me space after all that... I thought he would never leave.

But the door clicked shut behind him, the sound echoing in the sudden silence. I was alone, my heart pounding, my body flushed and aching with a confusing mix of anger, embarrassment... and a shameful, traitorous heat. I hated my mind for feeling that way.

Rest? How could I possibly rest after that? Fendwyr's parting words echoed in my head, his rough promise hanging in the air like a challenge. Claiming me, filling me, breeding me... Oh god, the images his filthy words painted were enough to make me

shudder, even as I told myself I wasn't some cheap omega slut. He would never change me to be like that.

And yet... I was still helpless against the way my body responded, the way my cock strained against my pants, my hole clenching needily around nothing. Fendwyr had barely touched me, had only spoken a few darkly suggestive sentences, and I was already wound up tighter than a live wire. What would happen if he actually put his hands on me, if he kissed me, if he...

No, I didn't want to continue down that line of thinking. It wouldn't help me; if anything, it would only make my situation worse.

Frustrated, I leaped to my feet and rushed to the door, twisting the handle. Did I think this was going to work? No, I didn't, but still had to try it.

The door was locked. Of course it was locked. Fendwyr wouldn't have left me alone if there was a way out.

I turned, my gaze sweeping the room for any other means of escape. The large window caught my eye, but when I approached and tried to heave it open, it refused to budge. Nailed shut tight, no give at all. Yet another nonsurprise.

Growling in frustration, I slammed my fist against the unyielding glass, ignoring the sting of pain. This had to be a mistake, a misunderstanding. I couldn't be trapped here, at the mercy of a dominant alpha with God only knew what intentions.

But as I spun in a circle, taking in the plush furnishings, the thick curtains, and the heavy wooden furniture, no other viable exits presented themselves. No other doors, no other windows. Just the one I'd already tried, and a bathroom that would only lead me back to the bedroom.



No, no, this couldn't be happening. I had to get out, had to find a way... But as I tore through the room, overturning chairs, searching under the bed, and even checking the fireplace for a hidden passage (yes, I was that desperate), the grim truth sank in. There was no escape, no way out. Not unless Fendwyr allowed it, and I didn't think his mind could be changed anytime soon.

Trapped, I slumped to the floor, my back against the bed, head in my hands. This was... this was awful, terrifying. The worst moment in my life since getting kicked out of my house. Fendwyr was a stranger, a powerful alpha with a reputation that hinted at dark deeds. And I was utterly at his mercy, with no idea what he planned to do with me. I didn't know if I wanted to know, either.

A shudder wracked my frame as I thought of his parting words, the filthy promise in his voice. Jesus, what if... what if he meant what he said? What if he wanted to... to do those things to me, to use my body for his pleasure? But at the same time, even though I didn't want to admit it, I kind of wanted it.

No, I couldn't think like that, couldn't let my mind go there. I had to stay focused, had to find a way out. Surely, someone would notice I was missing, would come looking for me?

But deep down, I knew the truth. I had no one, no one who would come looking for me. My parents had disowned me, and my so-called friends... I didn't have any. Not anyone that would care about me if I disappeared, anyway.

I was on my own, as I always had been. And now, I was at the mercy of an alpha who made no secret of his desire for me. A shudder worked through my frame as I hugged my knees to my chest, resting my forehead on them. What was I going to do?

The lock on the door was no match for a standard key, too ornate and well-maintained. The window, while large, was securely fastened from the outside, no

opening or breaking no matter how hard I tried. Even the fireplace, while charming, offered no hidden passages or means of escape. I was well and truly trapped, just like Fendwyr wanted me to be.

For a long moment, I sat there on the floor, my heart racing as I tried to process everything that had just happened with Fendwyr. His parting words echoed in my head, his rough promises sending a confusing mix of fear and shameful heat through my veins.

I was so lost in thought that I almost didn't register the sound of raised voices coming from somewhere beyond the bedroom door. Almost missed the opportunity to overhear a conversation that made my blood run cold. Every bad thing I thought was turning out to be true.

They were speaking in hushed tones, but the compound's thick walls did little to muffle their words. I felt thankful for that. If the place was soundproof, I would have only my bodily noises to keep me company, and that terrified me.

"...a big score, that bank job," one voice said, a note of satisfaction underlying the words.

"Fendwyr's going to be rolling in the dough, as usual. Enough to keep the pack in luxuries for a while." That was a second voice, tinged with a hint of envy. I couldn't imagine feeling envious of someone for robbing a bank. I couldn't fathom feeling that way about something wrong another person did.

And remembering what the man said... A bank job? Luxuries? I felt the blood drain from my face, a chill running down my spine. These weren't just dangerous men... they were criminals. And Fendwyr, the man who held my fate in his hands, was their leader. What had I gotten myself into, agreeing to come here with him? He didn't even have to force me. I just agreed with him as if it was the most normal thing in the

world.

The conversation continued, the men discussing the logistics of moving the stolen money, of laying low until the heat died down. All business as usual, they said, like this was just another day's work.

But the worst part was when they started talking about me, their voices lowering as if they were thinking I could be hearing.

"He brought in some omega, didn't he?" The first voice said, a hint of amusement in his tone. "Probably wants to keep him for himself, like his last one."

Like his last one? I asked myself. He had someone else before me? Even though I didn't want to admit it, that thought made me angry. I felt possessive. I didn't want Fendwyr to have had someone before me; I wanted to believe I was his first.

"Ha, I bet," the second voice agreed. "But he'll probably try to offload him soon enough, get a good price for his pretty face overseas. Fendwyr's not one to keep his pets around for too long, not when there's money to be made."

Offload me? Over to some unknown buyer overseas? My stomach turned, a wave of nausea hitting me hard. I couldn't let that happen, couldn't be sold off like some kind of property. I was a person, not a thing to be bartered and traded. I had to get out of here, had to...

The men moved away then, their voices fading down the hallway. I was left alone with my racing thoughts, my heart pounding wildly. I couldn't let Fendwyr do this to me, couldn't let him treat me like some commodity to be bought and sold off. I had to find a way out of this compound, had to... Do something, even though I didn't even know where to start. All I knew was that I couldn't be passive.

I stumbled to my feet, the room spinning around me as I tried to think. I had to search again, had to find a way, even if it meant...

Pacing the room again, I ran my hands frustrated through my hair. I still couldn't believe this was happening, that I was truly trapped with no means of escape. I was living in hell.

The window, the door, even the fireplace—I had checked them all multiple times, growing more desperate with each dead end. And still, nothing. No way out, no hope of freedom.

I collapsed onto the bed, my body deflating as the gravity of my situation further sank in. What was I going to do? I couldn't stay here, not with Fendwyr and his men outside the door, plotting god knows what. The way they talked about me, like I was a piece of livestock to be sold off...

A shudder wracked through me at the thought. I had to find a way, had to think of something, anything. I couldn't let my mind go down this path of despair, of imagining the worst... As long as I stayed here, that was exactly what would happen.

The scrape of a key in the lock jolted me upright, my heart leaping into my throat. Oh god, it was him, Fendwyr, back so soon. I wasn't ready for another round with him, not with my emotions in such turmoil. I needed time to...

The door swung open, and he strode in, two large boxes tucked under his arms. He looked... almost domestic like this, in a way I wouldn't have guessed. It would have been almost charming, if I wasn't so terrified of him. He could have been someone I became friends with if we hadn't met under such circumstances.

"I brought us some food," he said, his voice casual as he set the boxes down on the dresser. "I figured you could use a proper meal after the night you've had."

He gestured to the larger box. "That one's for you. I know you're half-starved, Gustall. An omega in your condition needs to keep his strength up."

I gaped at him, stunned by the mundane conversation, the casual way he acted as if this was perfectly normal. As if he didn't have me trapped, as if he wasn't planning to... use me in the filthiest ways. My stomach churned at the thought.

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*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Fendwyr

I watched Gustall's reaction with a mix of amusement and satisfaction. He looked like he wanted to bolt, like a skittish deer caught in a hunter's sights. But he held himself back, forcing a tight smile onto his face. "Thank you," he said. "That's very... thoughtful of you."

He picked up the box meant for him, turning it over in his hands as if examining the packaging. "You didn't have to do this, you know. I can take care of myself."

Oh, if only that was true. If only he wasn't a lost little omega, so clearly out of his depth in this new situation. I could see the way he was biting his tongue, holding back words he desperately wanted to voice.

But he was being polite, playing along with my charade. It was almost... endearing. To have him in my compound, at my mercy, acting like everything was perfectly normal. As if he wasn't mentally scrambling to find a way out, as if my offer of food and shelter was enough to quell his fears.

Almost. But not quite. I could smell his apprehension, see the way his body remained tense, ready to flee at any sudden move. He was a long way from truly relaxing in my presence, no matter how I tried to put him at ease. Again, it was going to take time. A lot of it.

"I know I didn't have to," I agreed, taking a step closer to him. "But I wanted to. A beautiful omega like you deserves to be taken care of, to be... pampered." I let my gaze rove over his delicate features, lingering on his plush lips, his slender throat...

I wanted to touch him, to feel the softness of his skin, to hear his sweet cries of pleasure as I mapped every inch of his body. But I held myself back, not wanting to scare him off. Not yet, anyway. It was too soon for that.

"I insist you take the food," I said instead, my voice low and persuasive. "You'll need your strength for... what lies ahead." It was a loaded statement, filled with all the unspoken implications of what I had in store for him.

Gustall's eyes widened slightly at my loaded statement, a flicker of fear passing through their green depths. He knew I was hinting at something more, something dark and potentially terrifying. But he didn't call me out on it, instead nodding and clutching the food box to his chest.

"Okay, I will," he said. "I... appreciate the meal. And the place to rest." He glanced around the room, lingering on the plush furnishings, and the large bed. Then his gaze darted back to me, wary but trying to be polite. He was quite good at that.

We stood there for a moment, an unspoken tension stretching between us. I could almost hear the questions he was biting back. He wanted to know what I meant by my loaded comment, and wanted to understand the true nature of the 'lies ahead' comment. But he didn't voice them, not yet. He was still trying to pretend this was a normal encounter, that I was just a gracious host and not... something more.

"So, um..." He cleared his throat, the sound loud in the quiet room. "What do you like to do for fun around here? Besides, you know, what you've been doing" His tone was casual, but I could hear the underlying tightness, the way he was fishing for information.

I chuckled, amused by his attempt at nonchalance. He thought he could play this game, could act like he wasn't desperately curious about my true intentions. It was almost cute. Almost.

"Oh, I have my ways," I said, moving closer to him. "Hunting, poker, the occasional fight to keep my men in line. The usual fare for an alpha in my position." I let my gaze drift meaningfully over his body, lingering on the delicate curve of his lips. "But I have to say, the most enjoyable diversions have been few and far between lately. Until now, that is."

I reached out, letting my fingers brush lightly down his arm. Gustall shivered at the contact, his muscles tensing beneath my touch. I could feel the way he was trying not to recoil, to maintain his pretense of calm interest. It was... intriguing and interesting.

"And you, Gustall? What do you like to do for fun?" I murmured, letting the question hang in the air between us. "Besides trying to find ways out of locked rooms, of course." I smiled wryly, letting him know I had overheard his frantic attempts to escape. Everybody had, to be honest.

Gustall blushed, his face flushing with a mixture of embarrassment and outrage. I could imagine the cutting retorts he was biting back. He was stuck, and he knew it, knew he was completely at my mercy. It was a heady position for him, and he was handling it with surprising composure... so far.

"I..." he started, then paused, his jaw working as he struggled for a response. "I'm not really the party type, to be honest. I prefer quiet things, books, and learning. Things like that." He shrugged, as if deprecating his own tastes.

But I could see the way his eyes darted to the bed, the way his tongue moistened his lips. He might prefer quiet things, but he wasn't immune to the idea of other diversions. Not that I was surprised. Even the most bookish omega had needs and desires. And Gustall was still young, his body primed to crave touch, intimacy...

"But I'm sure we could find some... mutual activities to enjoy," I said, my voice low and suggestive. I let my gaze drift over him, taking in the way his thin frame



trembled, the flush high on his cheekbones. "Things that would help pass the time, keep you... entertained." I smiled, slow and deliberate. "While you're here with me."

I let the unsaid implications hang heavy in the air. I wanted him to know what I was offering, wanted him to understand that I could give him pleasure beyond his wildest dreams. If he would let me, if he would stop fighting his true nature. The omega in him was crying out for attention, and I was more than willing to provide it.

But I would make him ask for it, make him beg so sweetly for me.

I watched as Gustall gingerly opened the box, as he peeked inside, his brow furrowing slightly at the sight of the hearty meal within. I thought he was going to respond to what I said last, but he didn't. Maybe he was just so hungry he didn't want to eat his food later.

"This looks..." he trailed off, looking up at me questioningly. "It really is for me?"

I chuckled at his uncertainty. "Of course it is. I know you're half-starved. An omega in your condition needs to keep his strength up."

He nodded slowly, as if absorbing that truth. Then his gaze dropped to the meal again, and I saw his shoulders relax almost imperceptibly. The aroma of the food, the promise of sustenance, was too tempting for him to refuse. He had been on his own for so long, without proper nourishment, that the offer of a hot meal was enough to quiet some of his fears. Even if he still didn't trust me entirely, he couldn't resist the lure of food after so many nights of hunger.

He tore open the container, letting steam rise up to his face as he took his first tentative bite. "Mmm..." he hummed, his eyes widening in surprise. "This is really good."

I smiled at the compliment, pleased that my men had provided well. "Of course it is. I may be many things, but I'm not cruel enough to starve an omega under my protection."

We ate in comfortable silence for a few minutes, our earlier conversation fading as we focused on the simple pleasure of consuming a satisfying meal. But even as we ate, I could feel the tension coiled between us, a tangle of anticipation and unease. We were still strangers, in some fundamental way, and yet the attraction between us was palpable. We both couldn't deny it, which made me wonder if one particular thing wasn't true.

I took a bite of my own food, then reached across Gustall to grab a napkin, dabbing at my mouth with it. His arm brushed against mine in the process, and I couldn't help the way my skin prickled with awareness at the contact. I was hyper-aware of his presence, hyper-aware of the omega scent that clung to his skin, and the way it drew me in. He felt the same way, too.

"I should warn you," I said, setting down the napkin and turning to face him fully. My voice was low, serious. "Things may get... intense, once the New Year arrives. The... celebrations can get a bit rough around here. I thought it best to make sure you had your strength before then."

Gustall tensed at my words, his hand tightening around his fork. He was still learning that my words held double-meanings, and he was too inexperienced to catch them, to understand what I meant. And he didn't know I could see how his eyes widened in fear.

"I see," he said, trying to keep his voice light. "Well, as long as I'm not in the way, I'm sure I'll be alright." But I saw the way his hand shook as he brought the fork to his mouth, the way he tried to hide behind his hair as I moved closer to him.

"In the way?" I chuckled, leaning back in my chair and taking a sip of my drink. "Oh, you won't be in the way at all, I can assure you. In fact, I'm counting on you to be right in the middle of the action." I smiled, letting the implications of my words sink in. "We could use a little omega entertainment to liven up the festivities."

Gustall's fork clattered onto his plate, his face paling. "I-I don't know what you mean," he stammered, looking like he wanted to bolt out of his chair. "I'm not some sort of entertainer, and I don't plan on being around for any of that. I'll be gone before then."

I raised an eyebrow. "Oh, really? And how exactly do you plan to do that, when you can't even find your way out of a locked bedroom? I'm afraid you'll be finding it much more difficult to escape than you think, Gustall."

He glared at me, his green eyes flashing with anger. "You can't keep me here against my will," he said, his voice shaking slightly. "I have rights, you know. You can't just hold me prisoner."

I leaned forward, my expression serious. "Oh, I wouldn't dream of it," I promised. "I don't need to keep you here against your will, not when I can make you want to stay." I let my gaze drift down his body, lingering on the way his jacket clung to his slender frame. "You're an omega, after all. It's in your nature to do what an alpha desires."

Gustall shuddered, but I could see the way his pupils dilated, the way his breath hitched slightly. He was trying to deny it, trying to resist his own instincts, but his body was telling a different story. He wanted me, wanted me to claim him, to make him mine... And of course, when the time was right, I would do it.

"Just admit it," I murmured, reaching across the table to trace my fingers along his wrist. "You're drawn to me, just as I am to you. You can't resist the pull, the scent of my alpha blood calling to your omega nature." I leaned in closer, my lips brushing

against his ear. "You need me, Gustall. More than you can even comprehend."

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Gustall

I was about to snap back, to tell him that he didn't know anything about who I really was, when Fendwyr's lips crashed against mine. The kiss was sudden, forceful, like a physical impact that stole the air from my lungs. I had no time to react, no chance to draw back or protest.

His mouth moved against mine, demanding and insistent, as he plundered my lips. My mind went blank, overwhelmed by the intensity of his movements, the sheer heat of his desire. It was a kiss that left no room for resistance, that tried to overwhelm my senses and consume me utterly.

Fendwyr's hands came up to grip my hair, wrenching my head back to give him better access. He groaned into the kiss, the sound reverberating through his chest, vibrating against my own body. It was a desperate, needy sound, the sort of sound an alpha made when he was truly claiming his omega, when he knew he had to have his mate, consequences be damned.

And oh god, it was too much, too intense, too... everything. I was overwhelmed, lost in a haze of sensation that threatened to swallow me whole. His lips were hot against mine, demanding a response, a reaction. I didn't know what to do, how to handle such overwhelming passion. I couldn't think, couldn't breathe, couldn't...

When he finally pulled back, I was gasping, my chest heaving. I was trembling, my skin heated and flushed, my body alight with a confusing mix of want and apprehension. The kiss had left me wanting more, even as I knew I couldn't trust him, that he was using me for his own selfish needs.

"You taste even sweeter than I imagined," Fendwyr rasped, his eyes dark with desire. "I don't know how I'm going to keep my hands off you once the New Year arrives. It's going to be pure torture." He chuckled, but there was no humor in it. It was a low, predatory sound, full of promise and warning.

I sat there, still reeling from the force of Fendwyr's kiss. My lips tingled, my heart pounding in my chest like a trapped bird. I couldn't believe he had done that. But most of all, I couldn't believe how... How good it had felt. How much I had wanted it, even as I was angry and humiliated.

Ashamed, I lifted a hand to touch my lips, tracing the swollen flesh where his mouth had been. I felt a pang of want at the memory, a traitorous heat that pooled in my belly. It was infuriating, the way my body reacted to him, the way it betrayed me even as my mind railed against him.

It wasn't the first time it happened. My body had betrayed me several times before.

I glared at him, my cheeks flushing. "What the hell was that?" I hissed, my voice shaking with emotion. "You can't just kiss someone like that!"

Fendwyr leaned back in his chair, a smug smile playing at the corners of his mouth. "Oh, I thought I had your consent," he drawled, his eyes gleaming with a wicked light. "You didn't exactly push me away, did you?" And as much as I didn't want to admit it, he was right about that.

I scoffed, crossing my arms over my chest. "That doesn't mean anything," I argued. "You took me by surprise, and you know it. That's not the same as giving consent."

He shrugged, unconcerned. "Semantics," he said, waving a hand. "The point is, you didn't stop me. And that tells me something very interesting about you, Gustall. It's something I've been thinking about. You could say that it's become like an

obsession."

I felt a chill run down my spine at his words, at the way he was looking at me. I could see the hunger in his eyes, the dark desire that simmered just beneath the surface. And it made me wonder what he thought he knew about me, what secrets he thought he had uncovered. It was possible he already knew too much about me. And if that was the case, I was at a disadvantage even more than I thought I was.

"You don't know anything about me," I snapped. "You don't know what I like, what I want, what I'll allow. You can't just assume that because I didn't push you away, that I wanted you to kiss me."

Fendwyr laughed, the sound reverberating in my ears. "Oh, Gustall," he murmured, shaking his head. "I may not know your likes and dislikes yet. But I know omegas. I know what makes them tick, what they crave. And you... you just want to be wanted. You're hungry for it, even if you won't admit it."

I felt a surge of anger at his words, at the way he was trying to reduce me to nothing more than an animal, driven solely by instinct and desire. But as much as I hated to admit it, there was a kernel of truth in what he said. I did want to be wanted, but I also wanted control, wanted to be in the driver's seat of my own body, my own life.

"And what if I do?" I challenged. "What does that mean, exactly? That I'm some kind of easy omega, ready to spread my legs for any alpha who happens to show me a little attention?"

Fendwyr's eyes darkened at the crude words, but he didn't seem angry, not exactly. Instead, he seemed... intrigued, like a cat watching a mouse that dared to stand up to him.

"Oh, Gustall," he said, his voice a low rumble. "You have no idea what you're playing

at, teasing an alpha like that. But I'll tell you one thing—it makes me want you even more." He leaned forward, his gaze intense. "I like a challenge. It makes the victory all the sweeter."

Then, I felt my face flush with embarrassment as Fendwyr's gaze drifted downwards, lingering on the obvious bulge in my pants. I couldn't do anything about this humiliating situation, and he was fully taking advantage of it. He didn't show any hint of shame. If anything, he was loving it.

I knew he could see it, could see the evidence of my body's desire for him, no matter how much I tried to deny it. Fucking hell, I hated myself for being like this. I just couldn't control myself. It felt like my body was actively working against me, which was probably not too far from the truth. I needed to tame it, somehow.

"That's quite a... impressive reaction you're having there," he murmured, his voice low and thick with amusement. Of course he was enjoying this. Enjoying it a little too much. "It's hard to hide your true feelings when your cock is straining against your zipper like that."

I wanted to snap back at him, to tell him that he was just imagining things, that I wasn't really aroused by him at all. But the words died on my tongue as he reached out, his fingers brushing lightly over the prominent outline of my erection.

I didn't even know why I thought that there was any way to lie about how I was truly feeling. The evidence was literally palpable. He could see it, evident as the suffocating walls around us.

I gasped at the sudden contact inflicted by him, my hips jerking involuntarily into his touch. Once again, my body betraying me. It was a constant thing. It was born with me.



"Mmm, you're so hard already," Fendwyr purred, his hand cupping me through the fabric of my pants. "And so sensitive too. You must be aching for me to make you come, Gustall. It's written all over your face."

I couldn't deny it any longer, not with him touching me like this, not when every nerve in my body was screaming for more. I was hard and needy, my cock throbbing with a desperate hunger that I couldn't seem to sate.

And yet, at the same time, I was still too proud. I wasn't going to admit anything out loud. He would kill me before I said the words he wanted to hear.

"It doesn't mean anything," I said weakly, even as I arched into his touch. "I'm just... I'm just horny. It has nothing to do with you. Sometimes, I get horny. There's nothing special about that." Gosh, the lie felt sour on my tongue, and I wanted to rip it out.

Fendwyr chuckled, the sound vibrating through my core. "Keep telling yourself that if it makes you feel better," he said, his voice a low rumble. "But we both know the truth. You want me, Gustall. Your body is screaming for me to touch you in all the best ways I can."

As he spoke, he began to slowly stroke my length through my pants, his movements firm and deliberate. I moaned at the sensation, my head falling back as I gave myself over to the pleasure. He was so good at that. He was making me feel so sensitive, even though the fabric still separated us.

"You see?" Fendwyr murmured, his thumb pressing against the sensitive head of my cock. "You can't resist me, not when your body is crying out for it. And I'm going to give you exactly what you need. I wouldn't forgive myself otherwise."

I knew I should protest, should push him away and insist that this wasn't right. But I was too far gone, too lost in the haze of lust that Fendwyr had created with his words

and his hand. All I could do was whimper as he continued to stroke me, my hips rocking into his hand as I chased more of that delicious friction.

"Hmm, yeah, like that," Fendwyr encouraged, his voice rough with his own desire. "Let go, Gustall. Stop fighting what you want, what we both know you need. You're a young and fertile omega, after all."

And with those words, he released me, leaving me gasping and shaking with the force of my need. I stared up at him, my eyes wide and confused as he sat back in his chair, a wicked grin playing about his lips. What? What was he doing and why? I couldn't make sense of it.

"What... what's going on?" I asked, my voice ragged. "Why did you stop?" And why did I even ask that question? I should be furious, ready to lash out like a bear, clawing at his throat until blood poured out. But that wasn't going to happen—not now, not ever. I wasn't a bear shifter, and he was much stronger than me.

Fendwyr shrugged, a slow, deliberate movement of his broad shoulders. "Because we're not going to do this here," he said simply. "When I take you, when I claim you as mine, it's going to be in my bed, with no interruptions, no distractions. I want you to spread out beneath me, begging for my cock, and for it to split you open."

I shuddered at his words, a fresh wave of heat washing over me at the image he painted. He was right—we couldn't do this here, not like this. But god, the thought of being in his bed, of being taken by him... it made my head spin with need.

"Then what..." I started to ask, but Fendwyr cut me off with a swift shake of his head.

"Not now," he said firmly. "Later, when you're ready to admit the truth—That's when we'll take this further."

I nodded, even as a part of me wanted to scream in frustration. He was leaving me aching and empty, my body crying out for completion that he refused to give me. It was cruel, almost torturous.

But I still wanted to see what was going to happen at the end.

## Page 8

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Fendwyr

I lounged on my bed, one arm propped behind my head as I waited for Gustall to enter the room. He should be coming here anytime now, that fiery and brave omega. The guard I had sent to fetch him had reported back that he was being cooperative, if still wary. It was a start, at least. A start until he was mine, from head to toe.

I was almost there. I didn't want to take him earlier. That wouldn't have felt natural.

After claiming him, it would be time to truly get to know him—his family, his likes and dislikes, and all those little details. It might sound strange to most people, considering we'd only just met, but I couldn't help thinking about it. After all, we were destined to spend the rest of our lives together.

I'd never felt so sure with other omegas I had in the past. This was different. This was intoxicating and so much stronger.

This bedroom I was in was nothing special, just a large space with a king-sized bed dominating the center, flanked by two nightstands. A dresser stood against one wall, and a small sitting area with a couch and armchair occupied another corner. The decor was minimalist, functional rather than luxurious. It was a place to sleep and fuck, not to entertain guests.

Mostly, I just slept here. I didn't invite many people over—I couldn't. I had to keep the place as hidden from the world as possible. Gustall was lucky to have made it here. Lucky that I couldn't resist the urge to devour him entirely.

I heard the door open behind me, and I turned my head to watch as Gustall stepped inside. He hesitated on the threshold, his eyes darting around the room before settling on me.

He was probably wondering what I had planned. He didn't need to worry—I was going to make sure he took the first step when the time was right. I wasn't going to force myself on him. I didn't need to.

His scent was already changing, after all. His entire body craved every part of me.

I could see the wariness in his gaze too, the way he tensed as if preparing to flee at any moment. It was understandable, given that he didn't know much about me. But that, just like everything else in our lives, would change soon.

"Come in," I said, my voice low and commanding. "Don't be shy now."

He took a tentative step forward, then another, until he was fully inside the room. The door closed behind him with a soft click, sealing us in together. I could practically feel the tension in the air, the way it seemed to crackle between us. I loved it.

"I... I don't know what you want from me," Gustall said, his voice barely above a whisper. "You keep saying things, hinting at things, but you never come out and say it outright. I don't know why you want me here. If you want to force yourself on me, just do it already and get it over with."

I smiled slowly, pushing myself up into a sitting position. "Oh, Gustall," I murmured, shaking my head. "You know exactly what I want from you. You just don't want to admit it to yourself yet. And, don't worry. I'm not going to force anything on anyone. I don't do that."

He flushed, his cheeks turning a pretty shade of pink. "I don't know what you're

talking about," he insisted, but there was no real conviction in his words.

I rose from the bed and crossed the room to him, my movements slow and deliberate. I could see the way his eyes widened as I approached, the way his breath hitched in his throat. He was nervous, but also excited, his body responding to my proximity even as his mind tried to deny it.

"You're trembling," I noted, reaching out to brush a strand of hair away from his face. "Is it because you're afraid of me? Or is it because you want me so badly that you can't stand it?"

Gustall shuddered at my touch, his eyes fluttering closed for a moment. When he opened them again, they were dark with desire, his pupils blown wide. "I'm not trembling," he said, but his voice wavered slightly. The lie was perceptible. "And I don't want you. Not like that. Whatever I said before, it was in the heat of the moment. I wasn't really thinking straight."

I chuckled, amused by his continued denial. "Keep telling yourself that, little omega," I purred, leaning in closer. "But we both know the truth. You're aching for me to devour you whole, for my kiss, for my cock buried deep inside you. And I'm going to give it to you, over and over again, until you're screaming my name and begging me not to stop."

Gustall whimpered, his body arching into mine as if he couldn't help himself. I could feel the heat radiating off him, the way his skin seemed to burn where we touched. He was so responsive, so eager for my attention. It was intoxicating and maddening.

"You're playing with fire," he gasped, even as he pressed closer. "You don't know what you're getting into."

I grinned wickedly, my hand sliding down to grip his hip, pulling him flush against

me. "Oh, I know exactly what I'm getting into," I growled. "And I can't wait to see you burn."

And then Gustall was looking around and, sometimes, at me too. He was thinking something. He was pondering what he should do next. Most of all, he was afraid of what I might do. Smart omega, I thought.

He cleared his throat. "Tell me the truth," Gustall said, his voice gaining a hint of steel. "What are you really doing here, in this compound? Who are you, and what is this place?"

I smirked, taking a moment to consider my response. I wasn't about to reveal everything just yet, not when the game was just getting interesting. I could give him a little truth, some breadcrumbs to keep him interested, but not enough to satisfy his curiosity entirely.

I didn't want him to know the entire truth just yet. He would, though, in time.

"Let's just say, I'm in the... protection business," I said, keeping it vague. "I provide sanctuary to those who need it, those who can't find help elsewhere. This compound, it's just a place where people can come, where they can feel safe."

Gustall's brow furrowed, skepticism written plainly on his face. "And who are these 'people' you're protecting? Why do they need protection? And why would they come to you for it?"

I sighed, running a hand through my hair. "They're just... ordinary folks, down on their luck. I help them out, give them a place to stay, food, and clothes. Anything they need to get back on their feet."

Gustall scoffed, clearly not buying it. "And what do you get out of it? Why would

you do all that, just out of the goodness of your heart? There has to be more to it." He was sharp, I'd give him that. Too sharp for his own good, I thought.

I shrugged, trying to keep my expression casual. "I just like helping people, okay? It makes me feel... useful. Important."

He rolled his eyes, crossing his arms over his chest. "I don't believe you. You're not some selfless saint, Fendwyr. There's more to it than that. Tell me the truth, or else, whatever you're thinking is gonna happen, won't actually happen."

I sighed, realizing that I couldn't keep stringing him along forever. He was too perceptive, too eager to uncover the truth. And if I wanted to gain his trust, if I wanted to make him truly mine, I had to give him something real to hold onto.

"Alright, Gustall," I said, my voice serious, narrowing my eyes slightly. "I'll tell you the truth, but it's probably not what you want to hear, and it's going to change what you think about me."

He nodded, his eyes wide with anticipation, clearing his throat. I took a deep breath, steeling myself for the revelation. It was time to let him see the true face of the alpha he was so desperate to know.

"I am the leader of the Nightshade Wolves cartel," I said, watching his reaction carefully. "We're a pack, a family, bound together by blood and loyalty. I keep this compound running, provide for my people, and make sure they're safe and taken care of. And in return, they follow me, they obey me without question. Because that's the way of our world, Gustall. The strong protect the weak, and those who can't protect themselves deserve our pity."

His jaw dropped, shock and fear flashing across his face. "The Nightshade Wolves?" He echoed, his voice barely above a whisper. "But... but you're criminals! You're



dangerous, evil!"

I held up a hand, silencing him. "We may not follow the laws of the humans, but we have our own code, our own moral compass. We protect our own, provide for our community, and keep those who would do us harm at bay. Is that so different from the alphas you've known in the past?"

He looked taken aback, as if he hadn't considered that there might be another way to live, another way to be an alpha. It was eye-opening, I could see that. And I hoped, as time went on, that he would see the truth in my words, that he would come to understand the depth of my devotion to my pack, and now to him as well.

"But... but what about me?" He asked, his voice small. "Why did you bring me here, if you're so dangerous? Are you going to use me, hurt me, like the others?"

I smiled softly, reaching out to cup his cheek in my hand. "I brought you here because I knew you were meant to be mine," I said, my voice low and sincere. "You're different, special. I can't explain it, but I knew, from the moment I saw you, that you were meant to be a part of this pack, a part of me. And I promise you, Gustall, I will never hurt you, not unless you ask me to. Your safety, your happiness, they are my top priority."

I watched as Gustall processed my words, his expression fluctuating between shock, fear, and a strange sort of hope.

Even though he wasn't going to admit it, deep inside, he was hoping that I could be so much more to him. And given the right amount of time, that just might happen.

I could see the wheels turning in his head, the way he was trying to reconcile the image of the dangerous criminal with the alpha who had brought him to safety, who had kissed him with such passion.

"I... I don't know what to say," he finally whispered, his gaze darting down to my lips before quickly returning to meet my eyes. I knew what he wanted, and soon, I'd give it to him. "I mean, you're not what I expected, not at all. But... but you say such nice things, like I matter, like I'm special..."

I smiled, tracing my thumb along his soft cheek. "I guess I can say that you are indeed special, Gustall. To me, at least. And I want to show you just how much you mean to me."

Before he could respond, I leaned in, capturing his lips in a slow, sensual kiss. He tensed at first, his body stiffening against mine, but then he melted into me, his lips parting to allow me access.

This kiss was different from the last one, more deliberate, more intimate. I explored his mouth with my tongue, mapping every inch, savoring the sweetness of his flavor. He moaned softly, his fingers clutching at my shirt, pulling me closer.

I wrapped my arms around him, holding him tight, reveling in the way his body fit so perfectly against mine. He was slender and soft, his delicate frame a stark contrast to my own muscular form. But it felt right, like he was made to be held by me, protected by me.

I broke the kiss after a long moment, panting as I rested my forehead against his. "The biggest truth I can tell you right now is how much I want you. That's how my entire body feels," I murmured. "I want to feel your naked body pressed against mine, want to explore every inch of your skin with my hands, my mouth."

Gustall shuddered, his cheeks flushing with a beautiful pink hue. "I... I want that too," he admitted. "I want to feel you, all of you. I want to be yours."

And there it was—the part of the admission I had been eagerly anticipating. I had

sensed he was thinking it, but hearing it come from his mouth was something entirely different—much better, too.

The words sent a bolt of lust through me, and I couldn't resist capturing his lips in another searing kiss. This time, I let my hands roam freely, sliding under his shirt to trace the smooth skin of his back.

He gasped into my mouth, his body arching against me. I could feel the heat of his skin, the way his muscles trembled beneath my fingertips. It was intoxicating, maddening.

I slipped my hands lower, gripping his ass and pulling him flush against me. He could feel the hard length of my cock pressing against his stomach, and I couldn't help the groan that escaped me.

"Gustall," I growled against his mouth. "I'm going to take you now, right here on the floor if I have to. I can't wait any longer to be inside you."

He nodded, his eyes glazed with desire. "This is kinda scary, but God, do I want that. Every part of me is screaming for it."

And I knew why he was feeling that way. He was in heat. The perfect moment to take him.

I didn't need to hear anything more. With a swift move, I lifted him up, wrapping his legs around my waist as I carried him to the bed. I laid him down gently, taking a moment to admire the way his body sprawled across the sheets.

He looked up at me, his eyes dark and trusting. I knew then, without a doubt, that he was mine, and that I would never let anyone else hurt him or make him feel anything less than cherished.

Leaning down, I kissed him again, slowly, savoring every second.

Gustall

I lay back on the bed, my body trembling with anticipation as Fendwyr loomed over me. The heat in his eyes was palpable, the way he looked at me like I was a delicacy to be savored. And that just might be the case.

It made me feel precious and desired in a way I had never experienced before. I had never experienced anything even remotely similar.

"You're so beautiful," he murmured, his voice low and rough. "I can't believe you're real, that you're here with me."

I could hardly believe he had said those words and that we were here, doing this. It didn't make sense. I had never felt anything as strong as what I felt for him. It was as if we were truly destined to be together, even though I had never believed in that sort of thing.

His words sent a shiver down my spine, a thrill of excitement and trepidation mingling together in my veins. I wanted to believe him, wanted to trust in the sincerity of his gaze. But a part of me was still wary, still unsure if this was real or just another trick of an alpha trying to take advantage.

For as long as I could remember, I had always been wary of others and what they might do to me.

Fendwyr seemed to sense my hesitation, his expression softening slightly as he stroked a hand down my cheek. "I know you're scared," he said gently. "And I

understand that. But I promise you, Gustall, I'm not going to hurt you. I would sooner cut off my own arm than cause you pain."

His words were so earnest, so heartfelt, that I found myself wanting to believe him. And as his lips met mine in a tender kiss, I let myself surrender to the moment, to the feeling of his strong body pressed against me, and it felt so right to be doing that.

He kissed me deeply, thoroughly, his tongue delving into my mouth to tangle with mine. I moaned, my fingers curling into the fabric of his shirt as I arched up into him. He was so warm, so solid, and I craved the feeling of his skin against mine.

As if reading my mind, Fendwyr broke the kiss and sat back slightly, pulling his shirt over his head in one smooth motion. I drank in the sight of his naked torso, my gaze tracing the hard planes of his chest, the ripple of muscles down his abdomen. He was breathtaking, a work of art carved from stone. I just couldn't stop looking at him.

"Don't be afraid of touching me," he said. "I want to feel your hands on my skin."

I hesitated for only a moment before reaching out, my fingers trembling slightly as I brushed them over the hot expanse of his chest. He shuddered beneath my touch, his eyes fluttering closed as he let out a low groan.

"More," he growled, and I complied, letting my hands explore the firm contours of his body. I could feel the heat radiating off him, the way his muscles bunched and flexed under my fingertips.

A moment later, he captured my wrists in his large hands, pinning them above my head as he settled his weight over me. The pressure of his body against mine was delicious, an addictive ache that made me squirm beneath him.

"Fendwyr," I gasped, arching up into him. "Please, are you..."

I didn't even know what I was asking for, but he seemed to understand. His lips found my neck, my throat, trailing hot kisses along the sensitive skin. I tilted my head back, baring myself to him fully as a needy moan escaped me.

"Yes, just like that," he purred, his voice vibrating against my flesh. "You're so responsive, so perfect for me."

His words sent a fresh wave of heat rushing through me, and I could feel the evidence of my arousal growing, pressing urgently against the confines of my pants. Fendwyr chuckled darkly, his hand sliding down to palm me through the fabric.

"You're dripping already," he observed, his fingers stroking along my length. "So wet for me, so eager. Just the way I like it."

I whimpered, my hips bucking up. I couldn't help it, couldn't control the way my body reacted to him. He was igniting a fire inside me, a hunger that demanded to be sated, and it needed to happen now.

"Please," I begged again, not even caring how needy I sounded. And, yes, it sounded ridiculous, but I couldn't control it. "I can't believe I'm going to say this, but I really need to feel you inside me."

He groaned, his eyes darkening with lust. "And you will," he promised. "But first, I want to taste you. I want to worship every inch of your body with my mouth."

I gasped as he pushed my shirt up and off, baring my torso to his hungry gaze. He paused for a moment, drinking in the sight of me laid out before him like a feast.

"Magnificent," he breathed, his hands trailing over my skin, mapping every contour. "I can't wait to feel you wrapped around my cock, squeezing me so tight."

His words made me shudder, my body clenching with anticipation. But then his mouth was on me, hot and demanding as he licked a stripe up my chest, pausing to swirl his tongue around my nipple.

I cried out, my back arching off the bed as pleasure shot through me. He chuckled, the sound vibrating against my skin as he lavished attention on the sensitive peak. It was too much, too intense, and I could feel myself spiraling towards the edge already.

"Fendwyr," I gasped, my fingers tangling in his hair. "I'm going to... I'm so close already." And I couldn't believe I was so close despite this having started no more than a few minutes ago.

He lifted his head, his eyes blazing with triumph. "Hmm, no shame in that. Just do what feels natural to you."

And after saying that, he moved lower, his mouth trailing down my stomach, his teeth nipping at the sensitive skin just above my hip bones. I was panting now, my body trembling with the force of my impending release.

When his hand slid into my pants, wrapping around my aching cock, I nearly screamed. The sensation was overwhelming, the feel of his calloused palm against my most intimate flesh. He stroked me firmly, his thumb rubbing over the weeping tip in a way that had me seeing stars.

"So, come for me," he commanded, his voice low and demanding. "Show me how much you want this, how much you need me."

I couldn't hold back any longer. With a ragged cry, I tumbled over the edge, my release crashing through me like a tidal wave. I convulsed beneath him, my body wracked with pleasure as I spilled myself into his hand.



Fendwyr groaned, his eyes darkening with lust as he watched me come undone. "It's a beautiful thing to be experiencing," he praised, pumping my cock through the aftershocks. "You're so beautiful when you let go like that."

I collapsed back onto the bed, boneless and sated in the aftermath of my climax. But even as I drifted into the haze of pleasure, I could feel a renewed ache beginning to build deep inside me.

Because as good as that had been, it wasn't enough. Not when Fendwyr was still hard and heavy against me, his desire evident in every line of his body.

"I still need you to do one thing for me," I whispered, my throat feeling like it was clogged with sand. "Please, Fendwyr. I want to feel you inside me."

He shuddered, his eyes flaring with a predatory light. "And you will," he promised darkly. "I'm going to fill you up so deep, you'll feel me for days."

I moaned at the thought, my body already beginning to respond, to ache for him once more. He kissed me then, hard and deep, swallowing my cries as he ground his hips against mine.

I could feel the thick length of his cock pressing insistently against my entrance, and I knew it wouldn't be long before he took me, before he claimed me in the most primal way possible.

And I couldn't wait. I wanted it, craved it with a ferocity that shocked even me. I needed to be his, needed to feel him moving inside me, filling me up so completely that there would be no doubt about who I belonged to.

"I'm yours," I breathed against his lips, my voice trembling with need. "Take me, Fendwyr. Make me yours."

He groaned, the sound rough and guttural as he captured my mouth in another searing kiss. And then, finally, blessedly, he was pushing inside me, his thick cock parting my flesh and sinking deep into my waiting heat.

I cried out, my body arching up to meet him, to take him even deeper. He was so big, so hard, and I could feel every inch of him as he stretched me open, filling me up so completely that I felt like I might split in two.

But it wasn't painful, not really. It was intense, overwhelming, but in the best possible way. And as he began to move, thrusting into me with deep, steady strokes, I found myself drowning in sensation, lost in the feel of him moving inside me.

"Fuck, you're so tight," he groaned, his voice strained with pleasure. "So perfect around my cock."

I could only moan in response, my fingers digging into his shoulders as I clung to him. Each thrust sent a jolt of electricity through me, winding the coil of pleasure tighter and tighter inside my core.

He angled his hips, hitting that special spot deep within me that made me see stars. I screamed, my back bowing off the bed as ecstasy crashed over me like a tsunami.

"You've done well so far," Fendwyr growled, his rhythm growing faster, harder. "Let me feel you come apart on my cock. I want to watch you fall apart for me again."

And I did, my body shaking and shuddering as I tumbled over the edge once more, my release crashing through me with the force of a hurricane. Fendwyr followed me a moment later, his hips slamming into mine as he spilled himself deep inside me, flooding my channel with his hot seed.

We clung to each other as we rode out the aftershocks, our bodies trembling and

twitching in the aftermath of our climax. I could feel him pulsing inside me, the sensation prolonging my pleasure even as it slowly began to ebb.

Eventually, he slipped free from my body, his softening cock sliding out of me with a wet sound. I whimpered at the loss, my body feeling empty and aching already.

Fendwyr gathered me into his arms, cradling me against his chest as he stroked my hair. "Shh, I've got you," he murmured, pressing a kiss to my temple. "You did so well, baby. You took me so perfectly."

I smiled weakly, snuggling into his embrace. I still couldn't believe we had gone from being strangers to... this, whatever it was.

I was utterly spent, my body deliciously sore in the best possible way. But even as I drifted in the haze of post-coital bliss, I knew one thing for certain.

I was his now, irrevocably and completely. And I had never felt so safe, so cherished, as I did in this moment, wrapped in the strong arms of my alpha.

Fendwyr

I woke with a start, my heart pounding in my chest as I found myself in an unfamiliar bed, surrounded by strangers in an unfamiliar room. The air was thick with smoke, the scent of expensive cigars and perfume hanging heavy around me. I blinked, trying to make sense of my surroundings, but everything was hazy, distorted, like a reflection seen through rippling water. What was going on here? I asked myself.

The room was dimly lit, filled with shadows that danced and flickered as candlelight cast its glow upon them. I could make out the shapes of people moving about, their faces obscured by the gloom. I heard muffled conversations, laughter, and the clinking of glassware - a party, perhaps? It was possible, but I couldn't know for sure. Not without checking it out in person.

I pushed myself upright, my body protesting at the sudden movement. My head spun, and I had to grip the edge of the mattress to steady myself. What had happened? How did I get here? I didn't know. And perhaps the most striking thing about this was that I was aware there was something odd about it.

As my vision cleared, I took in the opulent decor of the room. The four-poster bed I lay in was draped in rich velvet curtains, the sheets beneath me soft and silken. The walls were papered in an intricate pattern, and the floor was covered in plush rugs. This was no ordinary place; it was a palace, a mansion... But whose? The question remained in my mind, and I didn't know if I would get the answer anytime soon.

I swung my legs over the side of the bed, my feet sinking into the luxurious carpet. I stood, wavering slightly before gaining my balance. I was dressed in clothes that

didn't belong to me - a waistcoat, a cravat, and breeches, all made of fine materials that felt foreign against my skin. I looked down at myself, running a hand along the front of the waistcoat, tracing the embroidered patterns.

What was going on? Where was I? And why couldn't I remember anything?

A noise caught my attention - footsteps approaching the door. I turned just as it opened, revealing a young woman carrying a tray laden with food and drink. She paused when she saw me, her eyes widening in surprise. And her shock was understandable.

"Sir," she said, curtsying. "You're awake. I'll inform Master that you've risen."

Before I could ask who 'Master' was, she hurried off, leaving me alone once more. I sighed, rubbing my temples as I tried to force my mind to work, to remember something, anything...

All of a sudden, a loud commotion erupted outside the room. Voices raised, glasses shattered, and I could hear the distinct sound of flesh hitting flesh. A fight, perhaps? Intrigued, I moved towards the door, throwing it open to reveal chaos unfolding in the hallway beyond.

People were shouting, pushing, shoving one another as they tried to escape the fray. In the middle of it all, I saw him—a blond-haired man with green eyes, struggling to keep his footing amidst the pandemonium. He was slight, almost delicate, and yet there was a fierce determination in his gaze as he fought to maintain his ground. He was biting off more than he could chew, yet his determination never wavered.

Without thinking, I stepped forward, grabbing hold of his arm and pulling him away from the crowd. His eyes widened in shock, but he didn't struggle against my hold.

It was as though he had kind of expected it.

Instead, he allowed himself to be led to safety, his gaze locked onto mine with an intensity that sent a shiver down my spine.

"What's your name?" I asked, releasing my grip on his arm only after we'd put some distance between ourselves and the brawl. And I would surely ask him about the fight.

He hesitated for a moment before answering, "Gustall. And yours?"

"Fendwyr," I replied right away, my mind still racing. Why did this stranger feel so familiar? Why did saying our names aloud seem to solidify something between us? It didn't make any sense.

We stared at each other in silence, the cacophony of the fighting fading into background noise as we became lost in each other's gaze. There was something undeniable passing between us, a connection that transcended words, that spoke of a shared history, of destiny intertwined.

"Are you alright?" Gustall asked finally, breaking the spell. "You look... confused."

"That's because I am," I admitted, running a hand through my hair. "I don't know how I got here, or what's happening. Everything feels strange, surreal... It's like I'm in some sort of dream, but that can't be true."

His expression softened, and he reached out, placing a comforting hand on my shoulder. "It's probably just the drink," he said gently. "You've been asleep for hours, and you were drinking so much before."

I was drinking too much? I thought, frowning. Or was there something else at play

here?

But before I could voice my doubts, Gustall continued, "Come on, let's find somewhere quiet to sit down. You need to rest." He smiled, guiding me back inside the room I'd awakened in earlier.

We settled ourselves onto the plush chairs near the window, the faint light of the moon casting long shadows across the room. I leaned back, closing my eyes briefly as I tried to gather my thoughts, to make sense of the whirlwind of events.

"You mentioned I've been asleep for hours," I began, opening my eyes to look at Gustall. "How long have I been here? Do you know what brought me to this place?"

Gustall shifted in his seat, looking down at his hands folded in his lap. "Well, you arrived earlier today," he said slowly. "You were... not yourself, if you understand my meaning. Confused, disoriented. You kept rambling about seeing things, knowing people from another time."

My brows furrowed as I processed his words. So, I had been like this since this morning? That explained the strange clothing, and the unfamiliar surroundings. But it didn't explain why I felt such a deep connection to this man, or why my dreams seemed so real, so vivid. Or why, in some way, this also felt like a dream.

"And you've been taking care of me all this time?" I asked, my voice softening as I took in his delicate features, the way his blond hair complemented his face. He radiated an aura of gentleness, of kindness that seemed at odds with the opulence surrounding us.

He blushed slightly at my question, looking up at me through lowered lashes. "Yes, well, someone had to," he murmured. "Besides, it wasn't any trouble. You're... interesting company, Fendwyr."

Interesting company? I wanted to laugh at the understatement, but something held me back. Perhaps it was the sincerity in his voice, the way his eyes shone with genuine curiosity as he looked at me.

"But why do you think I was acting that way?" I pressed, needing to understand, to grasp at some explanation for the strangeness of my behavior. "Do you know what caused it?"

Gustall hesitated, biting his lower lip as he considered his response. "I can't say for certain," he admitted. "But I believe it might have something to do with the necklace you were wearing when you first arrived."

Necklace? I touched my throat, finding nothing but bare skin. "What necklace?" I asked, my frown deepening. What was he talking about?

"It was beautiful," Gustall said. "A silver chain with a locket pendant, inscribed with symbols I couldn't decipher. When I tried to take it off you, you became agitated, aggressive even. So, I left it alone, hoping that once you woke up, you'd tell me more about it."

I nodded, trying to remember anything about a necklace, but coming up blank. Whatever had triggered these visions, whatever had led me to this place, it was clear that I had no memory of it.

"Do you think it's important?" I asked, leaning forward in my chair. "The necklace, I mean. Could it be connected to why I keep having these... dreams?"

Gustall shrugged, his eyes darting away from mine. "I honestly don't know," he said. "But maybe if we found it, we could figure out what's going on. Wherever you hid it, perhaps?"



I glanced around the room, my gaze landing on the bed where I had awoken earlier. On a hunch, I walked over to it, lifting the mattress to reveal a small, hidden compartment beneath. I wasn't as surprised about the finding as I thought I was going to be.

Inside, nestled among dusty blankets, lay the very necklace Gustall had described—a delicate silver chain with a locket pendant, adorned with intricate symbols that seemed to dance and shift in the moonlight.

"Here it is," I murmured, holding it up for him to see. The metal was cool against my fingers, the weight familiar somehow, as if I had held it a thousand times before.

Gustall stood, moving closer to examine the piece. His eyes widened as he took in the details, tracing the patterns etched into the surface. "These symbols..." he whispered. "I'm not sure, but maybe they remind me of something, something ancient, almost forgotten..."

Gustall

I woke to Fendwyr's agitated movements beside me, his massive frame twitching and turning in a way that seemed completely at odds with his usual composed demeanor. What was going on? I asked myself. I was worried. It was unlike him to behave like that.

Soft grunts escaped his lips, his face contorted in what looked like confusion rather than distress. Strange—I'd really never seen him like this before.

"Fendwyr," I called out, placing a hesitant hand on his shoulder. Though we'd already spent more time together, I didn't know how he was going to react. He remained a dangerous person, after all.

His skin burned hot beneath my touch. "Wake up."

His eyes snapped open, instantly alert in that unnerving way alphas had. For a moment, he stared at the ceiling, processing something I couldn't see. Then his gaze shifted to me, carrying an odd weight I couldn't quite interpret.

"Well," he drawled, his voice rough from sleep but already regaining its usual smugness, "if you wanted my attention so badly, little omega, you could have found more creative ways to wake me."

I rolled my eyes. "You were having a dream. A rather intense one, from the looks of it."

"Observant, aren't you?" He propped himself up on one elbow, studying me with that predatory gaze that still made my skin prickle. "It was... unusual. I was in some grand manor, dressed in clothes that belonged in one of those period dramas you pretend not to watch."

"I don't-"

"The strangest part," he continued, ignoring my protest, just as I thought he would, "was how real it felt. The weight of the fabric, the smell of leather and old wood. There were servants, and they kept referring to someone called 'Master.' And then there was you."

My breath caught. "Me?" What was I doing in his dream?

"A version of you. Same golden hair, same defiant look in your eyes. But you were different somehow. You knew things about me—about some necklace I was supposedly wearing when I arrived there. Silver, with a locket bearing strange symbols."

Something stirred in my memory—my mother's voice, sharp and dismissive as always, lecturing me about the 'curse' of omega biology. "Fated mates," she'd said, "are nothing but a fairy tale. Though some say they share dreams of past lives, memories that transcend time itself. Ridiculous notion, of course. As if anyone would want to be bound to an omega through multiple lifetimes. I know I wouldn't want that."

As if triggered by the memory, images began flooding my mind: elaborate tapestries hanging from stone walls, the click of boots on marble floors, and the weight of formal clothing from another era. The vision was fragmented but vivid—I could smell the burning wood from massive fireplaces, and feel the tension in the air as servants whispered about their mysterious new guest.

Why were those thoughts surfacing in my mind?

"I don't know what's going on, but whatever you dreamed, I'm starting to remember something similar," I whispered, my voice sounding distant to my own ears. "The manor, the servants... you appeared out of nowhere, confused and agitated. You were wearing-" Why was I only remembering this now? I should have remembered it before, when I met Fendwyr for the first time.

"A silver necklace," Fendwyr finished, his expression darkening with interest. "How fascinating." He reached out, trailing a finger along my jaw. "It seems the universe has quite the sense of humor, binding us together not just in this life, but in others as well."

I drew back slightly, processing the implications. What he was talking about was a first. I never thought something like that was even possible.

"You're saying we're-"

"Fated mates?" His laugh was low and dangerous. "Oh, I've known that since the moment I found you in that alley, little omega. I was simply waiting for you to catch up."

"You knew?" Anger flared in my chest. "And you didn't think to mention it?"

"Would you have believed me?" His thumb brushed against my lower lip, the touch both possessive and calculating. "You could barely trust me to feed you, let alone accept that we're destined for each other across time and space." And one of the most striking things about this was how he was taking it. He wasn't as surprised as I was. It was more like a confirmation to him of what he already knew was true.

I wanted to argue, but he had a point. Instead, I focused on the lingering images from

the shared vision. "What happened to us in that life? Why were you there, wearing that necklace?"

"And so, that life..." Fendwyr's fingers continued their lazy exploration of my face as he spoke, "was far more complicated than our current situation. I remember arriving at that manor with no memories, just the necklace and an overwhelming sense of purpose. It was different, and I couldn't quite make sense of it."

"The necklace had symbols," I added, the memory becoming clearer. "They kept changing, shifting like smoke. When I tried to touch it-" I flinched at the sudden sharp recollection. "You grabbed my wrist so hard it bruised."

Fendwyr's lips curved into that infuriating smirk. "Protective of my possessions even then, it seems. Somethings never change."

"I wasn't your possession," I snapped, though I wasn't sure which lifetime I was defending.

"No?" His hand slid to the back of my neck, firm and controlling. "Then why do I now remember you following me around that manor like a shadow, insisting on helping me recover my memories? Always so concerned about my wellbeing, little omega, across every lifetime."

More fragments surfaced—hushed conversations in candlelit corridors, the rustle of expensive fabric, the weight of secrets pressing down on both of us. "There was something we were both concerned about," I said slowly. "Someone was looking for you. The 'Master' everyone kept mentioning..."

"Yes." Fendwyr's expression hardened. "A collector of sorts. He wanted the necklace, and by extension, me. But you..." His grip tightened slightly. "Now, I'm beginning to remember more. You helped me escape. Quite the rebellious little thing you were,

organizing a distraction while I slipped away through the servants' quarters."

"I died." The words came out before I fully processed the memory. "He found out I helped you, and he-" My hand instinctively went to my throat, remembering the phantom sensation of steel against skin. I never wanted to remember it again.

"Which is precisely why," Fendwyr's voice dropped, "I won't let anyone touch you in this lifetime. History has a way of repeating itself, but not that part. Never that part."

"The necklace," I pressed, trying to ignore how his possessiveness made my omega instincts purr. "What happened to it?"

"That's what's been troubling me." He sat up fully now, his massive frame looming over me. "In the vision, I knew its importance. It wasn't just jewelry—it was a key of sorts, meant to unlock something significant. But I woke up before I could remember what."

I frowned. "You think it still exists? In this time?"

"Oh, I know it does." His confidence was unnerving. "And I have a fairly good idea where to find it. The question is..." His thumb traced my bottom lip again, more demanding this time. "Are you ready to help me recover it, knowing how the last attempt ended for you?"

The smart answer would have been no. But as I looked into his eyes, dark with centuries of accumulated purpose, I knew I'd follow him into danger again. Who would have thought that waking up when I did would change my life so dramatically?

Maybe that was the curse of fated mates—or maybe it was just who we were, in every lifetime.

"Tell me what you need me to do," I said, even as part of me wondered if I was making the same mistake that had gotten my past self killed.

Fendwyr's smile was all predator. "That's my good omega. First, we need to visit an old acquaintance of mine who deals in ancient artifacts. And this time," his grip became possessive, "I'll make sure no harm comes to you."

As Fendwyr's words hung heavy in the air between us, I felt a shiver run down my spine. There was an intensity to his gaze, a promise that sent heat rushing to places I tried to ignore but couldn't. I licked my dry lips, tasting something I wished wasn't there.

"What's the rush?" I asked, trying to keep my voice steady despite the turmoil inside me. "If we've got eternity together, surely we can take our time figuring this out."

Fendwyr chuckled, the sound rumbling through his broad chest. "Eager to savor every moment, are we?" His hand drifted lower, tracing the line of my collarbone, dipping into the hollow of my throat. "I suppose I can indulge that desire... for now."

He understood exactly what I wanted. I didn't have to say anything else.

And so, he leaned in closer, his breath hot against my ear. "But make no mistake, Gustall. Once I have that necklace, once I've unlocked whatever secret it holds... The next thing I'm going to do is make you happy. In every way imaginable."

My heart stuttered at the blatant hunger in his tone. I swallowed, trying to formulate some witty retort, but coherent thought eluded me under his scorching fingers. Instead, I arched into him, craving more contact even as my mind screamed at me to pull away.

It kept telling me that we should be sleeping, but I didn't want to. This was exactly

what I wanted.

Sensing my surrender, Fendwyr took full advantage. Strong hands gripped my hips, pulling me flush against him until I could feel every hard inch of his body pressed against mine. He nipped sharply at my earlobe, growling softly as he ground himself against me.

"You respond so beautifully," he purred, his fingers splaying across my stomach. "Your body knows you've always belonged to me, and now you do too. There is not a single part of you that denies it."

And as much as I didn't want to say it, I knew he was right about that.

Shame heated my cheeks at how easily he read my reactions, but arousal chased it away. I clenched my teeth, forcing myself to maintain some semblance of control, even though it wasn't working so well. "Don't get cocky," I gritted out. "Just because we might be fated doesn't mean I'm going to roll over and submit whenever you snap your fingers. It's not going to be like that."

Fendwyr laughed, the sound dark and sinful. "Oh, Gustall. If only you knew how much that defiance turns me on." To punctuate his point, he rolled his hips, letting me feel exactly what effect my resistance had on him. And I wasn't surprised. I knew he was going to react this way.

Desperate for some leverage, I tangled my fingers in his hair and tugged, forcing his head back. Golden eyes flashed with surprise and lust, a wicked grin spreading across his face. Good, I thought. Let him see that I wouldn't be so easily dominated. It wasn't going to be like the other times.

"Less talking, more touching," I demanded, channeling every haughty omega archetype I'd ever seen. "Unless you're all bark and no bite?"



Challenge accepted, apparently. With a feral snarl, Fendwyr flipped us over, pinning me beneath his bulk. He attacked my neck with lips and teeth, marking me as his own personal conquest. Pleasure spiked through me like lightning, drawing a choked moan from my throat.

"There we go," Fendwyr rasped against my skin. "Let me hear you. I want everyone to know who makes you sing like that."

His mouth trailed lower, lavishing attention on every sensitive spot he seemed to magically map. I writhed beneath him, overwhelmed by sensation, drowning in the heat building between us. And deep in my mind, I registered the wet sounds he was making, the filthy praise falling from his lips...

Lost in the heat of the moment, it took me a moment to realize he'd maneuvered us such that he loomed above me, knees bracketing my hips, pupils blown wide with unchecked lust. My dick strained urgently against his abs, smearing sticky trails of pre-cum on his skin.

"I'm going to ruin you even more than you've already been," Fendwyr promised, one large hand wrapping around both our lengths and squeezing. "By the time I'm done, you won't remember anything but the feeling of my knot splitting you open."

The vulgar words should have disgusted me. But trapped in the intense heat of the moment, I found myself aching for the depravity he described. I needed him inside me, filling me, claiming me until I couldn't think anymore. The rest of the world faded away until there was nothing left but the two of us, lost in rutting.

"Please..." I keened, too far gone to care about pride or dignity anymore. "Need you... please..."

With a triumphant roar, Fendwyr surged forward, sheathing himself fully inside me in

one brutal thrust. Pain and pleasure exploded behind my eyelids, stealing my breath. I convulsed around him, inner muscles clenching as if to hold him deep.

"Fuck!" Fendwyr barked, still buried to the hilt. "I never get tired of how tight you are."

And then, I thought that maybe this was where I was meant to end up all along—split open on my alpha's cock, begging shamelessly for more.

As if hearing my thoughts, Fendwyr began to move, setting a relentless pace that rocked me to my core. Each powerful thrust struck something deep within me, sending shockwaves of ecstasy radiating outward. I clung to him, nails scoring down his back, urging him harder, faster...

Our coupling turned frantic then, a desperate race towards completion. Sweat-slicked skin slapped against sweat-slicked skin, our mingled cries echoing off the bedroom walls. Pressure built steadily at the base of my spine, coiling tighter and tighter until I swore I would scream from the intensity.

"Perfect," Fendwyr grunted, angling his hips to hit that perfect spot inside me dead-on. "Come for me, Gustall. Now!"

I shattered without making much noise, vision whiting out as rapture crashed through me like the biggest wave that there had ever been. Then, I felt Fendwyr swell impossibly thicker before erupting, flooding my insides with his seed. We shuddered together, riding out the aftershocks.

Fendwyr

I watched Gustall from across my office as he dozed on the leather couch, his golden hair falling across his face. The sight of him there, vulnerable and mine, stirred something possessive in my chest again. It was far from the first time I felt something like that.

Since the vision I had three nights ago, I'd kept him within arm's reach, unwilling to let him wander too far. The memory of his death in our past life—the feeling of losing him—had awakened something in me. And it was a feeling almost impossible to control.

The door opened, and Marcus slipped in silently, his eyes darting to Gustall before settling on me. Smart man—he knew better than to stare too long at my omega. Otherwise, he knew what would happen.

"Report," I commanded right away. I didn't have time to waste, considering the last revelations.

"The antiquities dealer made contact," Marcus said, keeping his voice low. "He's trying to authenticate something that matches your description. Silver necklace, ancient symbols that seem to shift and change."

I leaned forward. "Location?"

"That's where it gets complicated, boss." Marcus shifted. He wasn't feeling comfortable talking about our current topic. "He's been meeting with Rodriguez's

people. Three meetings in the past two days, all at different locations."

Rodriguez. That complicated things, as much as I didn't want to admit it. The rival cartel leader had been pushing against my territory's boundaries for months now, testing my patience and my power. If he had the necklace...

A soft noise from the couch drew my attention. Gustall was stirring, his scent shifting as he woke. There was something different about it lately—sweeter, more enticing. I couldn't help but wonder why. It made my alpha instincts surge with an almost overwhelming need to protect and possess, as usual.

"Keep watching the dealer," I told Marcus. "I want to know everyone he talks to, everywhere he goes. And get me everything we have on Rodriguez's recent movements."

"Already done." Marcus placed a thick file on my desk. "He's been recruiting a lot. At least thirty new men in the past week, all armed. Word is he's preparing for something big. We are trying to find out what it is."

"Or maybe he's protecting something valuable," I mused, thinking of the necklace's power. In my vision, I'd known its importance right away—it wasn't just jewelry, but a key to unlocking something significant.

The door opened again, this time admitting Jake, one of my lieutenants, followed by an unfamiliar alpha. The stranger's gaze locked onto Gustall, who was now sitting up on the couch, and I felt my muscles tense. This didn't feel right.

"Boss," Jake started, "this is Chen from the Hong Kong syndicate. He's here about the weapons shipment, but—"

I cut him off with a low growl as Chen took a step toward the couch, his nostrils

flaring as he caught Gustall's scent. "The weapons can wait."

Chen seemed to realize his mistake, but not quickly enough. I was already moving, positioning myself between him and my omega. The air grew thick with dominant pheromones as I stared him down. I was going to protect my omega no matter what.

"My apologies," Chen said in a flash, though his eyes kept drifting to Gustall. "I wasn't aware your... companion was spoken for. His scent is quite... unusual."

"Choose your next words carefully," I warned, letting my power flood the room. Behind me, I heard Gustall's sharp intake of breath. He still wasn't accustomed to how possessive I could be sometimes.

Chen backed away, finally showing proper submission. "The weapons deal. Shall we discuss it now?"

"Later." I dismissed him with a wave. "Jake will show you to the guest quarters. And Chen?" I lowered the tone of my voice. "If I catch you looking at my omega again, you won't leave those quarters alive."

He looked at me as if he wanted to say something but didn't know what. Slowly, he moved toward the door. I noticed his hand was shaking. Good, I thought. I wanted him to feel that way. As long as he did, he understood that Gustall was mine.

And then the door closed, silence falling into the room.

After they left, I turned to find Gustall standing, his face flushed with either anger or arousal—possibly both. "I can handle myself, you know."

"Can you?" I crossed the room in three long strides, backing him against the wall. "Your scent is different lately. Stronger. More appealing to other alphas." I buried my

nose in his neck, inhaling deeply. Yes, definitely sweeter, with an underlying change I couldn't quite place, but soon I would figure it out. "You're drawing attention you can't handle, and you know how much I hate that."

"I'm not some possession," he argued again, though he tilted his head, baring his throat to me. "And we have more important things to discuss. The necklace—"

"Is important," I agreed, nipping at his exposed skin. "But keeping you safe is more important." I pulled back to study his face. He looked tired, though he tried to hide it. "Tell me why you smell different, and don't try to lie. I'll know"

A flash of panic crossed his features before he masked it. "I don't know what you're talking about. What did your men find out about the necklace?"

I allowed the deflection, filing away his reaction for later consideration. Pulling him with me, I moved to my desk and the files Marcus had brought. "Rodriguez has been busy. New recruits, increased security, unusual meetings." I spread out several surveillance photos. "He's preparing for something."

Gustall leaned over the desk, and I noticed how he swayed slightly, as if dizzy. Before I could comment, another knock interrupted us.

"Enter," I called, keeping one hand on Gustall's lower back to make sure that whoever entered saw he was mine.

One of my younger recruits, David, hurried in with a tablet. "Boss, we've got movement. Rodriguez's men are escorting the antiquities dealer to the old warehouse district. They're carrying something that matches the necklace's description."

I studied the live feed on the tablet. "How many men?"

"Twenty visible, probably more hidden. They're heavily armed."

"Good." I smiled, though there was nothing warm about it. "Prepare the team. We move tonight."

"I'm coming with you," Gustall declared.

Both David and I turned to look at him—David with surprise, me with dark amusement. "No." Of course he couldn't. Was he crazy?

"When you told me about your dream, I remembered the necklace as well," he argued. "I might notice details you missed. Besides, if it's really connected to us as much as you think it is, shouldn't I be there?"

"What you should be," I growled, "is safe. David, leave us."

The young recruit bolted from the room. As soon as we were alone, I pulled Gustall against me, one hand gripping his chin. "You seem to be laboring under some misunderstanding about how this works. Maybe I should clarify that."

"How what works?" He challenged, though I could smell his arousal spiking. He loved challenging me as much as I did.

"Our relationship. This isn't a democracy, little omega. When it comes to your safety, I make the decisions." I tightened my grip when he tried to pull away. "You died in our last life because of this necklace. I won't risk that again. I can't."

"But—"

I silenced him with a bruising kiss, dominating his mouth until I felt his resistance crumble. When I pulled back, his lips were swollen, his eyes glazed. "You'll stay

here, where it's safe. That's not a request."

My phone buzzed—another message from Marcus. The information it contained made my blood run cold.

"What is it?" Gustall asked, still breathless.

"Rodriguez isn't just trying to authenticate the necklace," I answered. "He's been researching its history. Ancient texts, legends about fated mates, stories about its power to transfer abilities and memories across lifetimes." I met Gustall's worried gaze. "He knows what it is, what it can do. And now he has it. Fuck!"

"All the more reason—"

"No." I cut him off. "You're staying here, under guard. I've already lost you once to this necklace's power. I won't lose you again." I called out, and two of my most trusted men entered in a flash. "Watch him. If he tries to leave, stop him. If anyone tries to reach him, kill them."

As I prepared to leave, I couldn't shake the feeling that something was different about my omega. His scent, his behavior, the way other alphas reacted to him—something had changed. But with Rodriguez in possession of the necklace and its power, I had bigger concerns than Gustall's mysterious changes.

For now.



*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Gustall

I leaned against the cold wall of the clinic's bathroom, trying to steady my breathing as I stared at the doctor's results in my trembling hands. Pregnant. The word seemed to pulse on the paper, mocking my attempts to deny its reality.

I thought I had been careful, that I had taken all the necessary precautions, but in the end, what I feared happened. He claimed me in such a way I could never reverse it.

My first instinct was to call Fendwyr, though, but I stopped myself before reaching for my phone. It was in that moment I realized I didn't know what I was going to say.

His vision was still fresh in my mind, along with the dark intensity in his eyes when he spoke about the necklace and his plans. He was focused, driven by something that transcended lifetimes. How would this news affect that? I had no idea, though I suspected it wouldn't change his attitude much. He already knew I was his.

The memory of how possessive he was, the way he'd gripped my neck while talking about our past lives, made me shiver. Fendwyr was already protective to the point of suffocation— what would he be like if he knew I was carrying his child? But I already knew the answer. It would be much more amplified.

"Mister?" The doctor's voice came through the door. "Are you alright?"

"Yes," I called back, quickly folding the paper and shoving it into my pocket. "Just needed a moment."

When I emerged, she gave me a look that spoke at least 1000 words. "I understand this is overwhelming news, especially given your... unique situation." She'd been recommended by other omegas as someone who didn't ask too many questions about mate status or pack affiliations. I knew she was trustworthy, but it still didn't make this easier. "However, you need to start prenatal care as soon as possible. Your hormone levels are quite high, suggesting a strong alpha father."

Of course they were. Everything about Fendwyr was intense, why would his child be any different?

"I'll be careful," I promised, accepting the prescriptions she handed me. Vitamins, supplements—all things I'd need to hide from Fendwyr's sharp eyes. However, was it going to be enough? I couldn't help but think it wasn't going to be.

"And the father?" She pressed. "Will you be informing him?" She cared so much. I could feel it was genuine, but still wished she hadn't asked.

Then, I thought about Fendwyr's current state—obsessed with recovering the necklace, making plans that seemed to grow more dangerous by the day. Just this morning, he'd been on the phone discussing something about rival territories and necessary 'cleanup operations.' I didn't even want to know what that was about, but I knew I would, eventually. It wasn't something I could control.

"Not yet," I said. "It's complicated." And she didn't have to know, I thought again.

She frowned but nodded. "Just remember, omega pregnancies can be delicate, especially in the early stages. You'll need support."

Support. The word echoed hollowly as I left the clinic, pulling my coat tighter against the cold. The irony wasn't lost on me—I had finally found my fated mate, someone who was supposedly destined to be my perfect match across time itself, and I couldn't

even tell him about our child.

And she was right. I knew I needed his support, but it wasn't easy to ask for it. Nothing with him ever was.

My phone buzzed: a text from Fendwyr. "Where are you?"

Three simple words that made my heart race. He was already tracking my movements, growing suspicious of any time I spent away from him. How long could I really keep this secret? Not much longer, I answered myself.

"Had to pick up some medication for headaches," I typed back, hating how easily the lie flowed from my fingers. But then again, I wouldn't be where I was if I weren't good at it. "On my way back now."

His response was immediate: "I'll send someone to pick you up."

"No need," I replied. "I'm already walking. The fresh air helps."

There was a long pause before his next message appeared: "Don't make me wait too long, little omega. We have matters to discuss."

I closed my eyes, one hand moving to my still-flat stomach. The child within was barely more than a concept, yet already it was changing everything. Fendwyr needed to focus on whatever dangerous game he was playing with rival cartels and ancient artifacts. He needed his omega to be strong, capable, and ready to help with his plans—not compromised by pregnancy. But there was nothing I could do about that. I wouldn't opt for an abortion.

And for now, at least, this secret was mine to bear alone.

It was a few days later. Not much had changed. Things were about the same.

I wasn't in the same place. I was in a different one. It used to be a source of tranquility, but now, not anymore. My life had changed drastically. It would never be the same again.

I pressed my forehead against the cool bathroom tile, trying to steady my breathing after another bout of morning sickness. The tile felt colder than usual somehow.

The sound of running water would hopefully mask any noise from the meeting room next door, where Fendwyr was interrogating someone about the necklace's whereabouts. He was obsessed with it. I wanted to know the truth too, but I didn't think I'd ever do the things he'd been doing.

"Tell me again," Fendwyr's voice carried through the wall, deadly calm in a way that made my skin crawl, "about the dealer's new contact."

A whimper. Then: "I swear, I only heard rumors—"

A crash, followed by a cry of pain. I flinched, one hand moving to my stomach as though something was going to hurt my baby. Six weeks along, according to the doctor, and already this child was changing how I viewed everything—especially its father's darker nature.

I already knew that even before, but now, with someone to worry about, things were different and more complicated.

"Gustall?" Fendwyr's voice, closer now. "Are you ill?"

I quickly flushed the toilet and rinsed my mouth. Shit. He could sense what was going on with me? Then, I immediately thought that, of course, he knew. There was

very little that escaped him.

"Just a headache," I called back, the lie coming easily again. I'd felt weird when I lied to him for the first time, but I was getting used to it. "It's just the stress, probably." I wished it was just that.

A pause. I couldn't help but wonder if he was going to call me out on the lie. If he did, I didn't know how I would answer. "Take better care of yourself. I need you focused."

Need, not want. The distinction wasn't lost on me. Fendwyr's possessiveness had grown even stronger since discovering the necklace was in Rodriguez's possession. He kept me close, watching my every move, yet seemed blind to the real reason for my changing scent and behavior. Or maybe he just didn't want to say it out loud. Not yet, anyway.

A few seconds later, when I emerged from the bathroom, the scene before me made my blood run cold. The informant, a beta barely older than me, lay crumpled in a corner. Blood trickled from his nose, and his fingers were bent at unnatural angles. My goodness...

Fendwyr stood over him, not a hair out of place, adjusting his cufflinks as if he'd just finished a business meeting rather than a torture session. And to him, that was what he most likely thought.

"Did he talk?" I asked, trying to keep my voice steady, though it wasn't working.

"Eventually." Fendwyr's smile was all predator. "Rodriguez is moving the necklace tonight. We'll be ready." He turned to me, his expression softening. "You look pale. More so than usual."

"I'm fine." Another lie. The metallic smell of blood was making my stomach turn again. It was bad.

He crossed the room in three long strides, gripping my chin. "You've been 'fine' for days now. Perhaps I should have the doctor examine you."

Panic flared in my chest. What was I going to do?

"No! I mean... it's nothing serious. Just stress and lack of sleep." But those things, by themselves, could be worrisome.

His eyes narrowed, but before he could press further, one of his lieutenants burst in.

"Boss! Rodriguez's men were spotted at the south warehouse."

Fendwyr's grip tightened before releasing me. "Gather the team. We move now." He turned back to me. "Stay here."

"But—"

"That's an order." His voice dropped to a growl that made my omega instincts want to submit. "I won't risk you near Rodriguez."

I watched him leave, my hand moving to my stomach again. The beta in the corner groaned, drawing my attention. I couldn't do anything to help him.

"He'll kill them all," he mumbled through bloody lips. "Rodriguez's men, the dealer, anyone who gets in his way. That's what he does."

"Shut up," I snapped, but the words hit home. I knew he was right, even though I didn't want to admit it out loud.

What kind of world was I bringing this child into? A world of violence and power plays, where its father tortured people in meeting rooms and ordered executions as easily as others ordered coffee.

Yet even as these thoughts tormented me, I could hear gunfire in the distance. Despite Fendwyr's orders, I found myself moving toward the sound, drawn by an inexplicable need to know, to see, to understand what kind of alpha was fated to be my mate—and my child's father.

I wished I didn't have to know, but my mind didn't work that way.

From the second-floor window, I had a clear view of the warehouse yard. Fendwyr moved like a force of nature, his men falling in behind him with perfect precision. He only let people he trusted by his side.

When Rodriguez's people opened fire, the response was swift and merciless.

I watched, one hand pressed against the glass, the other protectively over my stomach, as Fendwyr executed three men who tried to surrender. His face showed no emotion, no hesitation—just cold, efficient violence, and I never expected any different.

"Beautiful, isn't he?"

I spun around to find Jake, one of Fendwyr's most trusted lieutenants, watching me. He almost worshiped my mate.

"He ordered you to stay inside," he continued, his tone carefully neutral. He didn't want any conflict with me.

"I needed to see," I whispered, turning back to the window. "I needed to know..."

"What kind of monster you're mated to?" Jake finished. "He does what's necessary to protect what's his. Including you."

Below, the gunfire had stopped. Fendwyr stood among the bodies, giving orders as calmly as if he were directing traffic. Blood stained his expensive suit, yet he seemed unbothered by it.

My stomach lurched again, though this time it wasn't morning sickness. This was the father of my child—a man who could order torture, execute surrendering enemies, and then come home to hold me like I was the most precious thing in his world.

And I knew he thought I was, but I didn't know if that was a positive thing or a negative one.

"You should get back to his office," Jake suggested. "Before he realizes you disobeyed. You don't want that to happen, do you?"

I nodded, unable to tear my eyes away from the scene below. As if sensing my gaze, Fendwyr looked up, his eyes meeting mine through the window. Even at this distance, I could see his expression darken.



Fendwyr

The blood on my suit had barely dried when I stormed into my office, rage simmering beneath my controlled exterior.

I didn't want to be angry. Not now, but I was.

Gustall stood by the window, exactly where I'd seen him during the firefight. He didn't turn around when I entered, but I could smell his anxiety mixing with that increasingly peculiar scent of his.

"I gave you an order," I said quietly, letting the door close behind me. The calm in my voice was deceptive—we both knew it.

"I needed to see," he replied, still not turning. "I needed to know what kind of—"

"Monster I am?" I finished, crossing the room in swift strides. I gripped his shoulders, forcing him to face me. "And what verdict did you reach, little omega?"

His eyes met mine, defiant despite his fear. "Rodriguez escaped with the necklace, didn't he?"

Clever deflection. Yes, Rodriguez had slipped away during the chaos, taking the necklace with him. The thought made my grip tighten, even though I didn't want to. "That's not what we're discussing."

"Isn't it?" Finally, a tremor in his voice. "Everything is about that necklace now. The

violence, the deaths—"

But everything was about the necklace because it was one of the most important things in our lives.

"The deaths of men who would have killed us without hesitation," I corrected. "This isn't a game, Gustall. Rodriguez knows what the necklace can do. He knows about fated mates, about its power to transfer abilities across lifetimes. If he figures out how to use it..."

I really wished Rodriguez didn't know so much, but there was a reason why he was so dangerous. He was smart.

"He could what? Steal this connection we have between us? Our past lives?" There was something else in his scent now—desperation? Fear? No matter what it was, I was going to deal with it.

I studied him closely. He'd been acting strange lately, more emotional, more unpredictable. Under normal circumstances, I would have investigated these changes, but Rodriguez's possession of the necklace demanded my immediate attention.

Then, looking at Gustall's worried face, an idea began to form. There was something I could do.

"No," I said slowly, releasing his shoulders to cup his face. "But he could use it to identify other fated pairs. To control them. Imagine having power over multiple alpha-omega bonds." I let my thumb brush his lower lip. "That's why we need to stop him as soon as possible. It has to be my focus."

His eyes widened. "And you mean we should do it together? But you said—"

"I said I wouldn't risk you in a firefight," I corrected, letting my voice soften. And of course, that remained unchanged. "But there are other ways you could help. Safer ways."

"What do you mean?"

Perfect. He was interested now, his earlier fear forgotten. I smiled, though part of me felt a twinge of... something. Guilt? No, impossible. This was for his own protection, after all.

"Rodriguez has a weakness for omegas," I explained, watching his reaction to gauge what he was thinking. "Especially unmated ones. If he were to hear about a particularly appealing omega showing interest in his protection..."

"You want me to pretend to be unmated?" Gustall stepped back, shock evident on his face. "To let him think—"

"I want you to help me protect what's ours," I growled, pulling him back against me. "Our bond, our future, our past lives—everything that necklace represents." I nuzzled his neck, right where my claiming bite marked him as mine. "You'll be perfectly safe. My men will be watching every moment. And Rodriguez won't be able to resist the opportunity."

I still didn't know if it would work, but it was a good idea.

"To do what? Steal an omega from you?"

"To prove he's more powerful than me." I smiled against his skin. "His pride will make him careless. And when he lets his guard down..."

Gustall shivered in my arms. "You'll kill him."

"Only after we have the necklace." I pulled back to look at him. "But I need you, little omega. Need your help, and I also need you to trust me."

He bit his lip, considering. I could see the conflict in his eyes—his desire to please me warring with his fear of Rodriguez, his need to protect our bond fighting against his horror at the violence he'd witnessed.

"I..." He swallowed hard. "I don't know if I can."

"You can," I assured him, letting my dominance seep into my voice. "You're stronger than you think. Braver." I kissed him then, gentle but possessive. "Let me prove it to you."

When I pulled back, his eyes were glazed, his scent heavy with arousal and that strange sweetness I still couldn't place. "What would I have to do?"

Got him.

"Just be seen in the right places," I explained. "Let the right people notice you. My men will ensure word gets back to Rodriguez." I stroked his cheek. "You won't be in any real danger. I promise."

He nodded slowly, though something like nausea flickered across his face. Probably just anxiety about the plan. I'd have to work on building his confidence. No big deal.

"Trust me," I whispered, kissing him again. "Everything will be fine." It was going to be because of me.

The next three days were an exercise in restraint. Watching Gustall move through securely selected locations, letting himself be seen by Rodriguez's people, was both fascinating and infuriating. My omega played his part to perfection—appearing

vulnerable yet desirable, casting furtive glances over his shoulder as if afraid of being followed. In that sense, I was proud of him but still wished that what we were doing didn't have to happen.

Every time another alpha's gaze lingered too long on him, my control threatened to snap. That was the problem. That was what I couldn't control.

"They're taking the bait," Marcus reported, standing in my office while I watched the surveillance feeds. "Rodriguez's men have been asking questions about the unmated omega in their territory."

I nodded, eyes fixed on the screen where Gustall sat alone in a café—one we knew Rodriguez's lieutenant frequented. My omega looked pale today, more tired than usual. That strange sweetness in his scent had only intensified, drawing unwanted attention. I still couldn't help but wonder what exactly was going on with him.

"Boss," Marcus hesitated, not sure how to say what he was thinking. "Are you sure about this? Gustall seems... different lately. Maybe we should—"

"Focus on the plan," I cut him off. Did he think I didn't know what my eyes were seeing? Something moved on the screen—Rodriguez's lieutenant had entered the café. "Get the team in position."

The lieutenant approached Gustall's table, and I had to force myself to remain seated. Every alpha instinct screamed at me to protect what was mine, to tear apart anyone who dared come near him. But this was necessary. This was part of the plan.

"Sir," Jake's voice crackled through my earpiece. "You should know that Rodriguez himself just arrived at the location."

Perfect. Sooner than expected, but perfect nonetheless. Everything was going

according to plan, except...

Except Gustall suddenly stood up, swaying slightly. Even through the grainy footage, I could see the color drain from his face. What the hell? Worry surged in me.

"Something's wrong," I growled, already moving. "Get him out of there."

But before my men could react, Rodriguez himself entered the café. He moved with deliberate purpose, heading straight for Gustall. This wasn't right. He wasn't supposed to make direct contact yet. What was happening?

"Boss, we've got movement on all sides," Jake reported urgently. "They're boxing us in. This was a—"

"Trap," I finished, watching as Rodriguez's men emerged from various positions, far more than our intelligence had indicated. They'd known. Somehow, they'd known this was a setup. Fuck. How come I didn't know?

On the screen, Rodriguez reached for Gustall, who tried to step back but stumbled. He was waiting for me to do something, waiting for me to help him.

The lieutenant caught his arm, preventing his escape. I was already running.

"Hold your positions," I ordered my men. "Wait for my signal." I wouldn't risk open warfare with Gustall in the crossfire.

I reached the café's back entrance just as Rodriguez was leading my omega through it, one hand gripping Gustall's upper arm. The necklace hung openly around Rodriguez's neck now, its symbols shifting and gleaming in the dim light.

And then, I was no more than a few feet from Rodriguez and Gustall.

"Quite the elaborate scheme, Fendwyr," Rodriguez called out, pulling Gustall closer as his men formed a barrier between us. He was reveling in my predicament, making me look like a fool, the motherfucker. "Using your own mate as bait? I'm almost impressed by your ruthlessness. I didn't think you had it in you."

Gustall's eyes met mine, wide with fear and something else—guilt? I didn't know.

"I'm sorry," he whispered. "I got dizzy, I couldn't—"

"Quiet," Rodriguez ordered, though not unkindly. "You know, when I first heard about an unmated omega wandering my territory, I was suspicious. But then I noticed something interesting." He inhaled deeply near Gustall's neck, making my vision go red. "A very particular scent. I couldn't have missed it."

I knew what he was talking about, and I didn't like it.

"Step away from him," I growled, calculating the odds. They weren't very good. Twenty of his men visible, probably more hidden. My team was in position, but Gustall was too close to Rodriguez. One wrong move... I didn't even like thinking about it. I had to be extremely careful. Otherwise, something bad would happen—something I would never forgive myself for.

"You don't even know, do you?" Rodriguez laughed. Whatever he was implying, it couldn't be anything good. "Too focused on this." He touched the necklace with his free hand. "Too blind to see what's right in front of you. Tell me, Fendwyr, when was the last time you really looked at your mate?"

I narrowed my eyes. What the hell was he going on about?

Gustall then made a small, distressed sound, his hand moving to his stomach before dropping. Something clicked in my mind—the changed scent, the fatigue, the

dizziness...

No. It couldn't be. I would have known if that was the case.

"The necklace for your mate," Rodriguez offered, his smile knowing. "Though I suppose I should say mates, plural, given the circumstances."

The world seemed to tilt on its axis as understanding dawned. Gustall was...

"Choose before it's too late," Rodriguez continued, producing a knife. "The necklace's power, or your family's future? I'm not you, but to me, it's not such a tough choice."

Time seemed to freeze as I processed everything—Gustall's strange behavior, his hidden illness, the way other alphas had been reacting to him. How had I missed it? How had I been so blind?

I shook my head. I should have seen what was going on right in front of my nose.

The necklace's symbols swirled, promising power and knowledge across lifetimes, and I couldn't even blink. But Gustall... my omega... carrying my child...

My decision was beginning to form in my mind.

"Tick tock, Fendwyr," Rodriguez pressed the knife closer to Gustall's throat. He had a wicked smile on his face. "What's it going to be? Hmm?"

I met Gustall's terrified gaze, saw the truth written in his eyes. He'd been trying to protect our child while I'd been obsessing over the past. I'd used him as bait while he'd been carrying our future.

But it wasn't entirely my fault. He should've told me everything. I would've



understood.

"Let him go," I barked. "Let him go, and you can keep the damn necklace."

Rodriguez's smile widened. "Wise choice." He lowered the knife but didn't release Gustall. "Although... perhaps I'll keep both. An omega carrying a powerful alpha's child could be quite valuable. I'm sure you understand. In my position, you would be doing the same thing."

Before he could react, I gave the signal. Gunfire erupted from multiple positions as my hidden snipers took out Rodriguez's outer guard. In the chaos, I moved. I could only hope I was going to be fast enough.

The knife clattered to the ground as I separated Rodriguez from Gustall, shoving my omega behind me. But Rodriguez was already retreating, protected by his remaining men. Even when shit hit the fan for him, he was still planning his every move.

"Another time," he called back, disappearing into the shadows with the necklace still around his neck. Another time? Next time, I'd make sure he regretted everything he had already done.

I wanted to pursue him, to tear the necklace from his dead body, but Gustall's shaking form pressed against my back held me in place. I turned to him, my anger warring with concern.

"We need to talk," I growled, pulling him closer. "About several things, and it's going to take a lot of time."

His hand rested over his stomach, no longer trying to hide the gesture. Finally, he was beginning to understand that doing that was pointless. "I can explain..."

"Yes," I agreed. "You will."

Gustall

Fendwyr slammed the door of his office behind us, the sound making me flinch. I knew what was going to happen, and was afraid.

His rage was palpable, filling the room with dominant pheromones that made my omega instincts want to submit, to beg forgiveness. But I couldn't. Not about this. I would never forgive myself if it happened.

"How long?" He demanded, his voice deceptively calm. "How long have you known?"

"Six weeks," I admitted, forcing myself to meet his gaze. "I found out just after you told me about your dream and I remembered it was something that actually happened."

"Six weeks." He laughed, but there was no humor in it. I didn't think there was going to be, being honest with myself. "Six weeks of lies. Of watching you put yourself—and our child—in danger. And you talk about trust?"

"I trust you," I insisted, though his behavior was making me question everything. "I just—"

"You just what?" He moved closer, backing me against his desk. I couldn't impose myself, especially when he was this angry. "Just decided I didn't deserve to know about my own child? Just let me send you into dangerous tasks? Just—"

"Just needed time to figure out how to tell you!" I shouted back, surprising us both. I didn't think I had it in me, but maybe I shouldn't be so surprised, considering how hard he was pushing me. "Look at you now! Look at how you're reacting! This is exactly why I waited! I can't get any more stressed than I already am."

His eyes narrowed. "Because I care about your safety? About our child's safety?"

"Because you try to control everything! Because you—" I stopped, realizing I was shaking. "Because I knew nothing would change. You won't leave the cartel. You won't choose us over this life."

We hadn't talked much about that, but I knew what he thought. His mind was unchangeable; he wanted to remain the cartel boss he was, no matter what.

"Us?" His hand gripped my chin. "There is no 'us' separate from me, little omega. You're mine. This child is mine. And I protect what's mine. I always do. How many times do I have to tell you that?"

"Protect?" I pulled away. "Or possess?" There needed to be a proper distinction.

Something dark flashed in his eyes, but before he could respond, a knock interrupted us. "Boss? Rodriguez's men have been spotted..."

I sighed in relief. I thought there wasn't going to be an end to our heated argument.

"We're not done," Fendwyr growled before leaving, the door slamming again behind him.

No, I thought. We weren't done at all. I still had so much more to say, and he would hear it all.

Three days later, I sat in a small café twelve blocks from Fendwyr's territory, my heart pounding. He thought I was resting at home, monitored by his men—men I'd managed to slip away from using tricks I'd learned from watching other omegas in the compound.

"He hasn't changed at all, has he?"

I looked up at the man who'd just sat down across from me. Elias. Former omega of the Nightshade Wolves. It had taken days of careful questioning and secret messages to arrange this meeting. I thought he would never agree to it.

"Tell me," I said, not introducing myself or preparing for what was really important. I could tell he was happy with that. He also didn't want to spend any more time here than he had to.

He ran a hand through his graying hair, his expression heavy with regret. "How ridiculously possessive he can be. The way he says he's protecting you when really he's just keeping you trapped. Sound familiar?"

I nodded, one hand moving to my stomach. It sounded too familiar, I thought. It sent shivers down my entire body.

"I was pregnant too," he revealed, making my heart stop. Wait, what? I knew he was going to reveal something big, but I didn't think it was going to be of that magnitude. "That's when it got worse. He wouldn't let me leave the compound. Monitored everything I ate and everyone I talked to. Said it was all for the baby's safety, but of course, it was more than just that."

"What happened?" I asked right away. I needed to know everything, even more than before.

"I lost it. The stress..." Elias's voice cracked, and he paused to collect himself. "He was furious. Not at me, he said, but at whoever or whatever had 'taken' his child. Three people died before he accepted it was just nature. Yeah... he can be like that sometimes, and it's terrifying."

My phone buzzed—a text from Fendwyr asking where I was. I knew he would ask soon.

I quickly replied that I was napping, knowing his men would cover for me rather than admit they'd lost track of me. When it came down to it, they didn't want to disappoint him, and that was scarier than lying.

"But he's my fated mate," I whispered, more to myself than to Elias. "Shouldn't that mean something? Make him different?"

Elias leaned forward, resting his forearms on the table. "Being fated mates doesn't change who he is. It just means you're destined to deal with his darkness." He sighed. "I once thought that I was his destined one too, but then it turned out I wasn't. I'm so happy for that."

Another text from Fendwyr. He was coming home early. Shit. I had to leave before it was too late.

"I have to go," I stood up in a heartbeat, perhaps too quickly as dizziness hit me. "Thank you for—"

"Be careful," Elias warned, keeping the same tone with me, full of warning. "When I left, he hunted me for weeks. Only stopped because another omega caught his attention. If you run... make sure you run far enough."

I rushed back through careful routes I'd mapped out, making it home just minutes

before Fendwyr arrived. As he pulled me into his arms, scenting me possessively, I fought to keep my heart rate steady. I didn't want him to get suspicious. If he found out what I was doing... I didn't even want to think what would happen.

"You smell different," he murmured. "Anxious, like there's something troubling you more than usual."

"Just tired," I lied yet again. The lies just kept piling up with him. "Our baby..."

He hummed, his hand sliding to my stomach. "Rest then. I'll have dinner brought up. You need to eat better."

???

The package arrived three days after I met with Elias. I hadn't ordered anything, so I was curious, to say the least.

No return address, just my name written in elegant script. I knew I shouldn't open it—anything unexpected could be a threat—but something about it called to me. If I got rid of it, I'd still be thinking about it.

Inside, I found a USB drive and a handwritten note: "Thought you might want to know who you're really carrying a child for. Don't worry, it's nothing personal. It's actually very informative -R"

Rodriguez. Though it was just the initial, I knew it was him. He was still out there somewhere and now, apparently, also playing mind games with me.

My hands trembled as I stared at the drive. I should tell Fendwyr, should hand it over unopened. That's what a loyal mate would do. But Elias's words echoed in my mind, and I couldn't shake them away. Suffice it to say that I didn't trust my alpha anymore.

I waited until Fendwyr left for a meeting, then locked myself in our bedroom with my laptop. The drive contained folders, dozens of them, each labeled with an omega's name. Elias's was there, along with others I'd never heard of.

I thought I had been thorough in my search and had found all of Fendwyr's former loves, but it seemed that I hadn't.

There were also medical records, police reports, and surveillance photos. My stomach churned as I scrolled through them. There was Elias, obviously pregnant, being escorted everywhere by Fendwyr's men. The photo definitely reminded me of my current predicament.

Then, there was another omega, trying to leave the compound, being 'convinced' to stay. The revelation was beyond absurd.

Hospital records documenting stress-induced complications. I'd kind of expected that, but seeing it with my own eyes still surprised me.

"No," I whispered, one hand moving to my stomach. "This is terrible. Just how dangerous is Fendwyr?"

And then, there was more. Video footage showed Fendwyr's reaction after Elias's miscarriage—the cold, methodical way he'd hunted down anyone he thought might be responsible. The bodies he'd left during his pursuit. Just like Elias had said.

My phone buzzed: Fendwyr, checking in. "Everything okay?"

I stared at his message, tears blurring my vision. How many times had he sent similar messages to other omegas? How many times had he claimed it was for their protection while slowly suffocating them? Too many times, I immediately thought to myself.



"Fine," I typed back, the lie bitter on my tongue, as it always was. Lying was easy, but it didn't mean I liked doing it. "Just resting."

The next video showed Elias's escape attempt. The resources Fendwyr had mobilized to find him. The desperate measures Elias had taken to stay hidden. Only the appearance of another omega—the next folder in the sequence—had finally drawn Fendwyr's attention away.

A pattern emerged: find, claim, control, lose, repeat. Until me. Until fated mates and visions and a baby that bound us together more permanently than any of the others.

And in light of all that, I couldn't help but wonder if we were wrong. What if we weren't actually meant to be together forever? What if there wasn't truly such a thing as fated mates and it was all just made up? What if-

My laptop pinged with an incoming message from an encrypted source: "Now you know. The question is, what are you going to do? -R"

I closed the laptop, feeling sick. Rodriguez was my enemy, yes, but these weren't lies. The evidence was too detailed, too consistent with what Elias had told me. Too aligned with Fendwyr's recent behavior.

Photos and videos could be manipulated, but my research had indeed unearthed incontestable evidence, and Elias wasn't some kind of android. Technology was advanced, but not to that point. Not yet, anyway.

Another text from Fendwyr: "Coming home early. Miss you."

I looked at the message, then at the USB drive still plugged into my laptop. I had to make a decision. Had to choose between the fated mate I wanted to believe in and the truth staring me in the face.

Our baby kicked, as if sensing my distress. That was when I knew—this wasn't just about me anymore. Perhaps I'd always known that, but now the realization was much brighter in my mind.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Fendwyr

The afternoon sun cast long shadows across the golf course as I watched Gustall line up his shot. This should be a good moment in our lives, but I felt it was anything but. I didn't know why, and it was kind of making me mad about it.

Something was off about him—had been for weeks now. His movements were mechanical, his responses to my attempts at conversation clipped and distant. We also hadn't been intimate in a long time. I missed the feeling of his hands against me. Did he not think the same? Did he get tired of me?

Even now, as he adjusted his stance, I could sense his mind was elsewhere. He was thinking about something far distant from what was happening in this moment, and I had no idea what it was. He also refused to share it with me.

"Your form is improving," I commented, trying once again to engage him. He'd been resistant to learning golf at first, but I'd insisted. An alpha of my status needed a mate who could participate in social activities. Besides, the gentle exercise was good for the pregnancy.

There was nothing negative about it, except for how distant he felt from me. I wished he would just say what was bothering him. If he did, I'd be able to do something about it.

"Thanks," he muttered, not even looking at me. The ball sailed wide, missing the hole by several feet. He wasn't interested in the game; he couldn't care less about it. He was only playing because he felt forced to.

I approached him, fighting the urge to pull him against me, to demand answers about his increasingly withdrawn behavior. Instead, I retrieved another ball from my pocket. "Here, try again. This time, let me show you—"

"I can do it myself." His voice was flat, almost cold. He took the ball but didn't meet my eyes.

Something inside me twisted. This wasn't my omega, not the one who'd shared visions with me, who'd matched my passion with his own. This was someone else entirely, and I didn't like it one bit.

And I was getting tired of what he was doing. I had to do something about it. I had to tell him exactly what I was thinking.

"You've been distant lately," I said carefully, measuring his reaction. "Is it the pregnancy? Are you feeling unwell? You know you can tell me anything."

A bitter laugh escaped him. "Now you're concerned about my wellbeing? Now, of all times?"

"I'm always concerned about you." I moved closer, noting how he tensed. "You're carrying my child. Our first child." I couldn't help the pride that crept into my voice. And yes, I was planning on having more babies with him. "Do you know how long I've waited for this? A real chance at fatherhood, with my fated mate?"

Something flickered across his face—pain? Anger? Before I could decipher it, he turned away, gripping his golf club so tightly that his knuckles went white.

"Your first child," he repeated. "Is that what you really believe?"

Wait, what did he know that I didn't?

The air between us changed, filled with something dangerous. I didn't like it, but was going to confront it anyway.

"What do you mean?"

"I met Elias."

Two words. Just two words, but they hit me like physical blows. Memories flooded back—another omega, another pregnancy, and a loss that had driven me to violence. No. This couldn't be happening. Not now, when I thought I was having such a good moment with my omega.

"When?" I demanded, my voice dropping to a growl. "How?" He had to tell me everything.

"Does it matter?" Gustall finally turned to face me, and I saw tears in his eyes. "What matters is that I know. About him, about the others, about everything you did after he lost the baby."

"Lost the baby?" My laugh was harsh. "They killed my child. Of course I hunted them down. What alpha wouldn't?"

"No one killed your child, Fendwyr." His voice cracked. "The stress of being confined, of being controlled every minute of every day—that's what killed your baby. Just like it could kill ours, and I'm not going to allow that to happen. I can't. I would never forgive myself if it did."

I moved without thinking, gripping his arms. I didn't want to hurt him. I just wanted to show him that I was serious about this.

"Don't say that. Don't you dare—"

"What? Speak the truth?" He tried to pull away, but I held firm. "I've seen the evidence. Rodriguez sent me files—"

"Rodriguez?" Red tinged my vision. "You've been in contact with Rodriguez? Behind my back? Don't you remember what he did to you? How I had to save you?"

"He sent me proof of what you did. Medical records, police reports, surveillance footage. The way you hunted Elias after he escaped, the others you 'protected' until they couldn't take it anymore." His free hand moved to his stomach, protective. "I won't let that happen to my child."

Well, it was our child, actually. It wasn't only up to him. The decision was also mine.

"Our situation is different," I insisted, trying to make him understand. "We're fated mates. What we have is real, destined—"

"Being fated mates doesn't change who you are!" He finally wrenched free. "It doesn't excuse what you've done, what you're still doing. Look at you now, gripping me like I'm property, ready to lock me up just like you did to them. I'm not going to allow it. It's going to be different with me."

"I never—"

"Never what? Never meant to hurt them? Never intended to drive them away? But you did, and you will again, because you can't help yourself." He backed away, dropping the golf club. "I'm leaving, and you can't change my mind. I can't spend another day with you."

The words hit me like ice water. "No."

"Yes." His chin lifted in defiance. "I won't let our child grow up in this world,

surrounded by violence and your obsession with control. I won't become another Elias."

"You're not going anywhere." My voice was deadly calm now. Inside, my mind raced through options and contingencies. I'd learned from past mistakes. This time would be different. It had to be, and I was going to make sure of it.

"You can't stop me."

"Can't I?" I pulled out my phone, pressing a single button. Within moments, my security team emerged from discrete positions around the golf course. "I think you'll find I can."

Fear flashed across his face—real fear, of me. It should have made me pause, should have shown me I was proving his point. But all I could think about was another omega, another child, slipping away from me. Except that, this time, it wasn't going to happen. I was in control.

"Take him to the secure room," I ordered. "Careful with him. He's carrying something precious to me. If you hurt him, I'll kill you."

"Fendwyr, please," Gustall begged as my men approached. "Don't do this. Don't prove I was right about you."

"I'm protecting you," I insisted, even as part of me screamed that this was wrong. "Both of you. You'll understand one day."

They led him away, his final look of betrayal burning into my memory. I stood alone on the golf course, the setting sun painting everything blood-red. This was necessary, I told myself. This time would be different. This time, I wouldn't lose them.

This time, we would have a happy family. The family of my dreams...

But as I watched them escort my mate—my pregnant, terrified mate—into confinement, another memory surfaced: Elias, looking back at me with that same expression before his failed escape attempt. Before the stress and fear had taken our child.

No. This was different. Gustall was different. He was my fated mate, destined to be mine across lifetimes. And if keeping him safe meant keeping him locked away, then that's what I would do. Even if it meant becoming the monster he already thought I was.

I was no monster. I was only doing what was right.

I picked up the abandoned golf club, studying its weight in my hands. Such a civilized game, golf. All about control, precision, and maintaining the proper appearance. Just like everything else in my life.

My phone buzzed—a message from my security team confirming Gustall was secured in the room I'd prepared months ago, though I'd hoped never to use it. The room was comfortable, equipped with everything an omega might need. Everything except freedom.

He was going to hate me even more than he already did, but that was okay. Again, he would learn soon.

"Set up the medical equipment," I ordered, already planning ahead. "I want daily checkups on both him and the baby. No chances this time."

This was the right decision, I told myself. The necessary one. Gustall might despise me now even more than before, but again, he'd understand eventually. They all did, in



the end. Or at least, they learned to accept it.

But as I walked back toward the compound, leaving our unfinished game behind, I couldn't shake the feeling that I'd just made the biggest mistake of my life. This feeling surfaced before in similar situations.

I couldn't help but think that in trying to prevent history from repeating itself, I'd ensured exactly that outcome.

No. I shook off the doubt. This time would be different. This time, I wouldn't fail. This time, I'd keep what was mine, no matter the cost. I had to.

Even if that cost was Gustall's love.

The security feed on my phone showed him sitting on the bed in his new room, hands cradling our child. His lips moved in what looked like a prayer, or maybe a promise. I switched off the feed. I couldn't bear to watch, not now.

Plus, I knew he would be okay. I just needed to give him some time. Tempers were running high at the moment, but soon he would be calm and feeling better.

This was necessary, I repeated to myself. Necessary and temporary. Once the baby was born, once they were both safe, he'd understand. He'd forgive me.

He had to.

Because if he didn't, if this really was the mistake Gustall claimed it was, then I'd just proven everything he feared about me. And that was a truth I wasn't ready to face.

Not yet.

Maybe not ever.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Gustall

Three weeks had passed since the golf course. Three weeks in this cage that Fendwyr called protection. Protection, yeah right. He did that just to make himself feel better.

The room was luxurious, I had to admit—plush carpet, comfortable bed, even a small library. But it was still a prison, and I was still a prisoner. I hated staying in one place for long periods; it made me feel paranoid.

I pressed my forehead against the cool window, watching raindrops trace patterns on the bulletproof glass. My reflection showed how much I'd changed: dark circles under my eyes, hollow cheeks despite the carefully planned meals they brought me. The baby bump was more prominent now, a constant reminder of why I was here.

No matter what they tried doing to make me feel better here, it would never work.

"Your breakfast, sir." The daily routine began with Marcus, one of Fendwyr's most trusted men, bringing my morning meal. He was always polite, always careful, as if handling something fragile. I hated it.

I wanted him to treat me as the person I was, not as the person he thought I was.

"I'm not hungry." The morning sickness had mostly passed, but depression had taken its place. I went from bad to worse. Some days, I could barely get out of bed.

"The doctor insists you need to eat." Marcus set the tray down. "For the baby."

Always for the baby. Everything was for the baby now. Fendwyr visited daily, touching my stomach, talking about our future, and acting as if this was normal. As if keeping me locked up was an act of love rather than control. And in the meantime, I saw myself becoming like Elias more and more.

"Fine." I turned from the window, catching something odd in Marcus's movement as he arranged the plates. A small piece of paper, slipped under the napkin. My heart raced, but I kept my face neutral.

Whatever it was, it was important, and I didn't know if I was going to like it or not.

"The boss will visit after his morning meetings," Marcus informed me. "He wants to know if you need anything."

Freedom, I thought bitterly. Trust. A mate who understood the difference between love and possession, but I didn't think he would anytime soon.

"No," I said aloud. "Nothing."

Only when the door locked behind him did I reach for the napkin, fingers trembling as I unfolded the hidden note. The handwriting was elegant, familiar from that USB drive that had started all this:

"The necklace isn't what he thinks. Its power comes from trust freely given, not taken by force. Look in the book 'Ancient Bonds' on your shelf, page 394. -R"

Rodriguez. Even now, he was moving pieces on this chessboard. But why help me? What did he gain? I had no idea, but he also had his own agenda, and it couldn't end well for me.

I found the book easily—it had appeared in the library collection a few days ago. Had

this been planned? How deep did Rodriguez's influence run in Fendwyr's organization?

The thought sent shivers down my spine. If he could do what I feared he was capable of, then I was in even greater danger than I already believed.

Page 394 contained a detailed illustration of the necklace, but with text I hadn't seen before. My hands shook as I read:

"The Binding Chain's power manifests only through mutual trust between true mates. Force negates its effects; control renders it dormant. Only when both parties choose to trust freely can its full potential be realized."

The words blurred as tears filled my eyes. All this time, Fendwyr's obsession with controlling the necklace's power had been ensuring it would never work. Just like his need to control me was destroying what we could have had.

But he didn't understand that, and even if presented with new information, he still wouldn't.

The baby kicked, strong and insistent. I rubbed my stomach, whispering, "I know, little one. I know. He needs to know too, but he's stubborn."

A sound at the door made me quickly hide the note and close the book. I was initially taken aback, but then I realized it was just the doctor.

He entered for my daily checkup, another part of Fendwyr's controlled routine for me. He wanted to make sure I was okay, even though he couldn't grasp the simplest truth: I needed time away from him to better reflect on everything happening in my life.

"How are you feeling today?" He asked, setting up his equipment.

"Fine." The same answer I always gave, though we both knew it was a lie. The confinement was taking its toll—my blood pressure had been elevated lately, causing concern about pre-eclampsia. And that was one of the reasons why I felt paranoid.

As he checked my vitals, I thought about the necklace's true nature. Trust freely given. How ironic that Fendwyr's attempts to possess its power were the very thing preventing him from accessing it. Just like his attempts to possess me were destroying our bond.

"Your blood pressure is still high," the doctor said with a frown. "The alpha won't be happy."

"The alpha is the cause," I muttered.

He pretended not to hear, but his expression softened slightly. "Try to rest today. Stress isn't good for the baby. I know it's difficult, but you can do it."

After he left, I returned to the window, mind racing. Rodriguez's message had to have a deeper purpose. Was he trying to help or setting up some larger scheme? And how many others in Fendwyr's organization were working with him? I had no idea, but the truth couldn't be anything good.

The baby kicked again, harder this time. I winced, remembering Elias's story. Would history repeat itself? Would the stress and confinement put my child at risk too?

No. I pressed my hand against the glass, watching another raindrop trail downward. Something had to change. If the necklace's power truly came from trust and free will, then perhaps that was the key to everything—not just the supernatural aspects, but our relationship too. It had to be and I had to be to do something. I just didn't know what yet.

And how could I make Fendwyr understand? How could I reach the mate I knew existed beneath the controlling alpha? The one who'd shared visions with me, who'd been destined for me across lifetimes?

The sound of footsteps in the hallway announced Fendwyr's approach. My heart raced as I quickly returned to the bed, sitting down just as the door opened. I had to find a way to make him understand about the necklace, about trust, about everything.

Before it was too late for all of us.

Fendwyr entered, his presence filling the room as it always did. I remained seated on the bed, one hand resting over our child. Our child. After everything that happened, it didn't feel right to remember that he was also one of the parents.

Despite everything, the baby responded to its father's proximity, kicking with greater strength. I couldn't help but think that it was a sign, but was it a good one?

"You look pale," he said, studying me with those calculating eyes. "The doctor mentioned your blood pressure... I'm worried."

"I know something about the necklace," I interrupted. No point in dancing around it anymore. "Something you need to hear, and it's important and it can't be delayed."

His expression shifted, interest warring with suspicion. "What could you possibly know about it from in here?"

I hated he didn't trust me, even now.

"It's about trust," I pressed on. "The necklace's power—it only works through mutual trust between mates. Not control. Not force. Trust, but only when it's fully given." I watched his face to find out what reaction he was going to have. "That's why you've

never been able to use it properly in your past lives. That's why—"

A burst of gunfire outside cut me off. Fendwyr moved almost like a flash of light, positioning himself between me and the door. His phone buzzed with multiple alerts.

"Stay behind me," he ordered, but for once, his commanding tone carried genuine fear. Not for himself, I realized, but for us.

The door burst open. Marcus entered, but not alone. Three other men followed, all with weapons trained on Fendwyr. The betrayal was clear on their faces.

"Sorry, boss," Marcus said, though he didn't sound sorry at all. "Change of management. I'm sure you're not going to take it personally."

Fendwyr's laugh was cold. "Rodriguez finally showed his hand. And you, Marcus? How long have you been his?"

"Long enough," Marcus smirked. "Long enough to see how you treat your allies. How you break them. Rodriguez offers a different way."

More gunfire echoed through the compound. I could hear fighting, screaming, chaos. This was Rodriguez's play—infiltrate from within, strike when Fendwyr was distracted by my confinement. And yet, somehow, I knew it wasn't going to work.

"Different way?" Fendwyr's voice dropped. "Like using my pregnant mate to get to me? Tell me, Marcus, how is that better?"

I saw it then—the slight shift in Fendwyr's stance, the way his hand moved incrementally toward his concealed weapon. He was going to fight, right here in this confined space, with me trapped in the middle.



"Don't," I said, surprising everyone, including myself. "This is what Rodriguez wants. Us fighting, destroying each other over control."

"Smart omega," Marcus commented. "Smarter than your alpha, apparently. Rodriguez is waiting. He'll treat you better than—"

He never finished. Fendwyr moved with supernatural speed, drawing and firing in one fluid motion. Marcus dropped, but his men responded in the same instant. The room erupted in gunfire.

Fendwyr tackled me off the bed as bullets shredded the headboard. We rolled behind a heavy dresser, his body covering mine protectively.

"Trust me," he whispered, and for the first time, it sounded like a request rather than a command.

More of Fendwyr's loyal men arrived, engaging Rodriguez's infiltrators in the hallway. The fighting was brutal, close-quarters. I could smell blood, gunpowder, and fear.

"The necklace," I gasped, clinging to him despite everything. "It's trying to tell us something. About trust, about choice. This isn't about control—it never was."

A grenade rolled into the room. Without hesitation, Fendwyr grabbed it and hurled it back through the door. The explosion rocked the building.

"I'm trying to protect you," he growled, firing at a shadow in the doorway. "Both of you."

"By keeping me prisoner? By controlling every aspect of my life?" I touched his face, forcing him to look at me. "That's not protection, Fendwyr. That's fear. Your fear, and

you need to be able to do something about it."

Something changed in his eyes then. Recognition, perhaps, or understanding. But before he could respond, more of Rodriguez's men pushed into the room.

The fighting became desperate. Fendwyr was incredible—lethal and precise, commanding his loyal men through the chaos while never leaving my side. But I could see the strain, the impossible choice he faced: maintain control or trust in something deeper.

"We need to move," he said finally, as the gunfire temporarily subsided. "There's a secure route—"

"No more secure rooms," I cut him off. "No more cages. Trust me, Fendwyr. Trust us."

He stared at me for a long moment, conflict clear on his face. Then, surprisingly, he handed me his backup weapon.

"Okay. I'm going to trust you," he whispered. "But stay close."

It wasn't perfect. It wasn't even close to resolving our deeper issues. But as we moved through the compound, fighting our way past Rodriguez's men, I felt something shift between us. Each time Fendwyr let me watch his back, each time he trusted my judgment instead of simply commanding me, the bond between us strengthened.

We ended up in his office, temporarily safe behind reinforced doors. I could hear his men regaining control of the compound, pushing back Rodriguez's infiltrators.

"You were right," Fendwyr said, touching my stomach where our active child kicked furiously. "About the trust. About everything."

"Does this mean—"

"It means we need to talk," he interrupted, but gently. "About everything, but most importantly, our future. And first..." He pulled me closer, protective but not possessive. "First, we need to deal with Rodriguez. You and me together this time. I want someone I can fully trust by my side."

I nodded, understanding that there was still a lot of progress to be made. We had a long way to go—trust wasn't built in a single firefight, and old habits wouldn't die easily. But for the first time since the golf course, since my confinement, I felt a shred of hope.

Our baby kicked again, strong and insistent, as if agreeing. Maybe that's what the necklace had been trying to tell us all along. True power, true bonds, couldn't be forced or controlled.

They had to be chosen, freely and with trust.

Now we just had to figure out how to do that while surviving Rodriguez's next move.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Fendwyr

The reports on my desk painted a grim picture, one I thought would never happen. Three more lieutenants had disappeared overnight, taking significant portions of our operation with them. Motherfuckers.

That made twelve in total since Rodriguez's attack. Twelve trusted men who'd apparently never been trustworthy at all. Who else was with him and betraying me?

I rubbed my temples, fighting a headache. Gustall sat across from me, reviewing personnel files. We'd moved him from the secure room to our actual bedroom, though my instincts screamed to lock him away somewhere safer. But I had promised to try. To trust.

Somethings about me would never change, but I was aware of them now. I was going to do things differently this time.

"Jake's clean," Gustall said, setting aside another file. I trusted his judgment. "He's been approached by Rodriguez's people three times and refused each offer."

"How can you be sure?" The words came out harsher than intended. Old habits.

Despite trusting his judgment, I still needed to understand his thought process. There was no such thing as being too cautious.

Instead of flinching, Gustall met my gaze steadily. "Because unlike you, I actually talk to the staff. They trust me because I don't treat them like possessions."

That stung, but he wasn't wrong. I'd spent years building walls, maintaining distance, exerting control. I'd always thought that was the right way to lead, but now...

"Boss." David, one of my few remaining trusted men, entered without knocking. His face was pale. "You need to see this."

He handed me a tablet. A video was already playing—security footage from one of our warehouses. I recognized Elena, an omega who'd worked for me five years ago. I'd kept her confined to the compound when she'd tried to leave, claiming it was for her protection. She'd eventually escaped, but not before...

"Turn it off," I growled, but Gustall reached across the desk and took the tablet. I really didn't want him to see the footage, but it was too late for that now.

"No," he said firmly. "We need to see this."

The footage continued. Elena spoke directly to the camera, detailing everything I'd done. The control, the manipulation, the psychological torture disguised as protection. Rodriguez stood beside her, playing the role of sympathetic listener.

He loved what was happening. He relished the fact that he could get under my skin and make me look like a fool. But once I had him pinned beneath me, all of that would come to an end.

"He'll do it again," Elena's voice cracked. "He's doing it right now, to his own mate. Because he can't help himself. It's who he is."

I wanted to deny it, to rage against the accusation. But the evidence was right there—Gustall's recent confinement proved her words true. Dammit. I needed to be better.

"There's more," David said quietly. "Rodriguez has been showing these testimonials to our people for months. Elena, Elias, others... They all tell similar stories."

"And our people believed them," I concluded. The betrayals made sense now. My own reputation, my past actions, had given Rodriguez the perfect weapon against me.

"They believed them because they're true." Gustall's voice was gentle but firm. "They've seen how you treat omegas. How you treated me, but you can change and be better."

I stood abruptly, needing to move, to think. The walls of my office felt suffocating. "I was protecting—"

"Stop." Gustall's command surprised us both. "Stop hiding behind that excuse. You weren't protecting anyone. You were controlling us because you were afraid. That's what was really happening and you need to admit it."

"Afraid?" I turned on him, anger flaring. "I'm not—"

"Afraid of losing control. Afraid of being vulnerable. Afraid of actually trusting someone enough to love them properly." He stood too, one hand resting on his swollen belly. "And now that fear is destroying everything you've built."

David cleared his throat. "There's something else. The men who left... they're not just joining Rodriguez. They're helping him establish a new kind of organization. One where omegas have equal voice, equal power."

I laughed. "Equal power? In our world? It's impossible. That's not how it works anywhere."

"Why?" Gustall challenged. "Because you can't imagine giving up control? Because

you think strength only comes from dominance?"

His words hit home, echoing what we'd learned about the necklace. True power came from trust freely given, not taken by force. I'd been doing everything wrong, for so long...

And despite learning what I did, I was still clinging to my old ways.

"What would you have me do?" I asked, and for the first time, it was a genuine question rather than a challenge.

Gustall approached me, taking my hand and placing it on his stomach. Our child kicked against my palm, showering me with a warm, fuzzy feeling.

"Start over," he said. "Not just with me, but with everything. Build something new, something better. Show them—show me—that you can change."

I looked at David, who nodded. He wanted to support me now, despite my past miscalculations.

"The men who've stayed... they're waiting to see what you'll do. If you'll be different than the alpha in those videos."

The empire I'd built through force and fear was crumbling. Rodriguez had found its weakness—not in our defenses or our operations, but in my own past, my own failures. He'd shown my people a truth I'd refused to see.

"It won't be easy," I warned, though I wasn't sure if I was talking to Gustall or myself. Maybe more to myself than him.

"Nothing worth having ever is," he replied, squeezing my hand. "But this time, you

don't have to do it alone."

I looked down at the tablet, at Elena's tear-stained face frozen on the screen. How many others had I hurt while claiming to protect them? How much damage had my fear caused?

"David," I said after careful ponderation, "call a meeting. Everyone who's left. It's time they heard the truth from me."

It was time to start dismantling the walls I'd built. Time to learn a different kind of strength.

Time to become someone worthy of the trust Gustall was offering.

???

The meeting room felt smaller than usual, though maybe that was because of the tension filling it. My remaining men—the loyal ones, or at least the ones who hadn't left yet—sat around the long table, their faces telling me everything I needed to know about how they felt. Gustall sat beside me, his presence both comforting and challenging. This wasn't going to be easy. I never thought it was going to be, so I was already prepared.

"I'm dismantling the cartel," I announced without preamble. The words felt foreign on my tongue, but they needed to be said. I needed to be direct with them. It was the only way they would respect me.

The reaction was immediate. Shouts of protest, demands for explanation. I never thought it would be different.

I let them vent for a moment, remembering my uncle in a similar situation years ago.



He'd chosen differently, had clung to power until it destroyed everything else in his life. I'd found him dead in his study, alone, with a bottle of whiskey and a gun. No one had even noticed he was gone for three days.

I wouldn't end up like that. I refused to.

"Boss, you can't be serious," Jake spoke up first. "The cartel is everything we have. It's all we know."

"It's all we've allowed ourselves to know," I corrected, feeling Gustall's hand squeeze mine under the table. "But it doesn't have to stay that way, and I know you can agree with me."

"This is about the omega, isn't it?" Someone muttered. "He's making you soft."

I stood slowly, letting my dominance fill the room. Some things hadn't changed—I was still their alpha and still commanded respect. "Watch your tone when speaking about my mate."

The room fell silent. Gustall's presence beside me felt stronger somehow, more assured.

"My uncle," I continued, "chose the cartel over everything else. Over love, over family, over life itself. He died alone, and no one cared." I paused, letting that sink in. "I won't make the same mistake."

"But Rodriguez—" Jake started.

"Will be dealt with," I cut him off. "The necklace, the territory disputes, all of it. But on my terms, in my way."

"And what way is that?" Another voice challenged.

"With minimal bloodshed," I replied, surprising them. "With strategy rather than force. And I'll be handling it personally."

Gustall tensed beside me, but didn't protest. The trust in his eyes when I glanced at him made something warm unfurl in my chest. His presence was comforting. I couldn't be doing this without him.

"You're all free to go," I continued. "Take whatever severance you need to start over. Those who want to stay can help rebuild something legitimate. Something better."

"Better?" Jake scoffed. "What's better than our cartel? This is like a family to me."

"Being alive," Gustall spoke up, his voice clear and strong. "Being free to love, to have families, to walk in the sun without looking over your shoulders."

I watched their faces as his words sank in. Some looked thoughtful, others resistant. Change was never easy, especially for men who'd known nothing but this life.

"The boss I knew wouldn't talk like this," someone said. "Wouldn't give up everything we've built."

"The boss you knew was wrong," I replied right away. "About many things, in fact." I looked at each of them in turn. "I'm not asking you to understand. I'm giving you a choice—something I haven't been very good at doing before."

"And Rodriguez?" Jake pressed. "You really think you can handle him alone?"

"I know I can do it," I answered, looking at Gustall. "With my mate, I know I can. The necklace's power comes from trust and partnership, not control. It's time I proved

I understand that."

The room fell silent again, but this time it was different. Contemplative rather than hostile.

"You're really doing this," Jake said finally. "Throwing everything away for... what? Love?"

"For my family," I corrected. "For a future that doesn't end in a lonely death. For the chance to be something more than just another crime lord who died for his pride. Even if you don't understand now, you will soon."

Gustall stood then, his pregnancy making the movement graceful rather than awkward. "Anyone who stays will be part of building something new. Something their own children can be proud of."

I watched as his words hit home, especially with the men who had families of their own. The ones who understood what I was finally beginning to learn.

"Take twenty-four hours," I told them. "Think about what you want your future to look like. Those who choose to leave will be taken care of. Those who stay..." I smiled slightly. "Well, we have work to do."

As they filed out, discussing among themselves, Gustall turned to me. "You're really going after Rodriguez alone?"

"It's the only way," I murmured. "To prove to myself, to everyone, that I can handle things differently. That I can be different."

"I trust you," he said, and the words meant more than any declaration of love. "Just... come back to us."

I pulled him close, feeling our child move between us. "I'm not my uncle," I promised. "I choose family. I choose you. Both of you. So, you can be damn sure I'm going to come back."

"I look at you and see you're telling me the truth. I know you're going to be back," he whispered.

Holding him with my eyes, feeling our child kick against my hand, I knew I'd made the right choice. The cartel, the power, the control—none of it meant anything compared to this. Compared to them.

Rodriguez and the necklace could wait until tomorrow. Tonight was for holding my mate, for feeling our child move, for knowing that, unlike my uncle, I wouldn't die alone.

I'd chosen differently. Chosen better.

And for the first time in my life, I wasn't afraid of the future.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Gustall

I stood in the nursery, adjusting the mobile of stars and moons above the dark wooden crib for what must have been the hundredth time. The room was perfect—or almost perfect. Something still felt off about the placement of the stuffed animals on the shelf. Maybe if I moved the gray wolf to the left...

"You've been in here for three hours," Fendwyr's voice came from the doorway. Despite dismantling most of the cartel, he still moved like a predator, silent and watchful.

"The room needs to be perfect and someone else might get it wrong," I muttered, reaching for the wolf. Our son would be here in less than two months, and nothing was ready enough. "Jake said the security system for this window needs upgrading, and the paint color—"

"Is exactly what we chose last week." He crossed the room, his hand settling on my shoulder. "You're nesting, little omega. More than usual."

And I knew he was right, even though I didn't want to admit it out loud.

I leaned back against him, taking in the room. Soft blues and grays dominated the space, with touches of silver in the fixtures and furniture. The government's protection money—earned through Fendwyr's extensive information about other criminal organizations—had allowed us to create something beautiful. It was only going to get better from here on out.

"Any word from our contacts?" I asked, knowing he'd been obsessing over his own project: finding a peaceful way to deal with Rodriguez. That was almost as hard as my obsession.

"Nothing new." His hand moved to my swollen belly, where our son kicked in greeting. "The legitimate business transition is going well, though. The shipping company will be fully operational next month."

I smiled, remembering how Jake and the others had adapted surprisingly well to legitimate work. Turns out their skills in moving illegal goods translated perfectly to legal logistics.

"And the protection detail?"

"Still in place. David's team is—"

A knock interrupted us. David himself entered, holding a thick cream envelope. "This just arrived. Hand-delivered to our front gate."

Fendwyr took the envelope, his body tensing as he read. I knew that look. "Rodriguez?"

"He wants to meet. Both of us." Fendwyr's jaw clenched. "Claims he has information about our past lives, about why the necklace chose us."

"When and where?"

"Tomorrow night. The old cathedral downtown." He crumpled the letter. "But you're not going."

Here we go again. "Yes, I am."

"You're eight months pregnant—"

"And your mate," I cut him off. "Your equal partner, remember? We agreed on that."

"This is different." He paced the nursery, passing the antique rocking chair we'd spent weeks searching for. "If anything happened to you or the baby..."

"Then we deal with it," I insisted. "Rodriguez specifically asked for both of us. Splitting up, not trusting each other fully—that's exactly what he wants."

David cleared his throat. "The cathedral's been abandoned for years. Easy to secure, multiple exit points. If we position our men correctly..."

"No," Fendwyr growled. "I won't risk it. The necklace isn't worth—"

"It's not just about the necklace," I moved to the window, looking out at the garden we'd planted together after leaving the compound. "It's about our past and this connection we have. Don't you want to know why we found each other? Why we keep finding each other across lifetimes?"

"Not at the cost of our family, and you're an important part of it." He gestured at the nursery, at all we'd built. "We're creating something real here, something legitimate. Our son will have opportunities we never had."

"And he'll have both his parents," I turned back to him, "because we'll face this together. As equals. The way the necklace's power is meant to work."

Fendwyr stared at me for a long moment. I could see the conflict in his eyes—the need to protect warring with the trust we'd built.

"Boss," David interjected, "we could have thirty men in position. Full coverage, no

blind spots."

"Forty," Fendwyr countered, not looking away from me. "And you wear a vest."

"It won't fit unless you order a special one for me," I patted my belly with a small smile. "But I'll stay behind you, and I'll listen if you tell me to run. Just... let me be there. Let me help end this."

He crossed to me again, his hand joining mine over our active child. "I've spent weeks trying to figure out how to get the necklace without bloodshed. How to end this without becoming the monster I used to be."

"I know." I'd watched him pour over plans, make calls, and seek peaceful solutions. "That's why I trust you. Why I need to be there."

"If anything feels wrong—"

"Then I leave" I reached up, touching his face. "But we need to know, Fendwyr. About our past, about why we keep finding each other. Our son deserves to know his parents' full story."

He sighed, looking around the nursery—at the life we'd built, at the future we were preparing for. "Forty men," he repeated. "And you stay behind me at all times."

"Deal." I turned back to the stuffed animals, unable to help myself. "Now, about this wolf..."

His laugh was soft but genuine. "Come to bed, little omega. The nursery will still be here tomorrow."

???



The cathedral loomed before us, its gothic spires piercing the golden evening sky. It was as imposing as I thought it was. Even from outside, I could feel the weight of history pressing down, making our son shift restlessly within me. The massive wooden doors stood open, like a monster's maw waiting to swallow us whole. I didn't like this, but we had to do it.

Fendwyr stood by my side like the reliable wolf he was. Though his face remained impassive, I could feel his tension. Sarah and Maria, two of our most trusted guards, flanked us while the rest of our security team moved into predetermined positions. They were ready for anything, as was I, despite my racing heart.

"Quite the entrance you've arranged," Fendwyr called out, his voice echoing through the vast space. I could see he was trying to project confidence, but I sensed a slight worry gnawing at his mind.

Rodriguez emerged from the shadows near the altar, his signature smug smile in place. "I thought the atmosphere appropriate. After all, we're discussing past lives, aren't we?" He gestured. "Your people can stay where they are. Mine are already in position, but I don't think we want to kill each other."

As if on cue, figures emerged on the upper balconies—at least thirty of Rodriguez's followers, all watching us with an unsettling intensity. These weren't just hired guns; their expressions held the fervor of true believers. They thought they were part of something revolutionary, something better than what Fendwyr had offered. I could understand that, given everything that had happened.

"You've built quite the cult," I observed, noting how they hung on Rodriguez's every movement. Some of them I recognized—former members of our organization who'd left seeking something better. Their eyes held judgment when they looked at Fendwyr, but curiosity when they looked at me.

They were wondering what I was doing here and if I wasn't afraid of the immediate danger.

"Not a cult," Rodriguez corrected, descending the altar steps with theatrical grace. "A movement. A chance for real change. Unlike some, I don't need to control through fear." His eyes fixed on my swollen belly. "Though I see Fendwyr's found other ways to ensure loyalty."

Fendwyr growled, low and dangerous. I squeezed his hand, reminding him of our purpose here. We weren't here to fight. We were here to end this, once and for all, and it didn't have to include bloodshed.

"The necklace," Fendwyr demanded. "Where is it?" His voice boomed in the environment, making me straighten myself up.

Rodriguez's smile widened. "Below. In the catacombs. More appropriate for discussing past lives, don't you think? Follow me."

He led us toward a heavy wooden door beside the altar. As we approached, I noticed ancient symbols carved into its surface—similar to those on the necklace, but crude, as if someone had tried to recreate them without truly understanding their meaning.

The door opened with a groan that seemed to echo forever. Stone steps descended into darkness, illuminated only by modern LED lanterns placed at intervals. The contrast between ancient and modern was jarring, much like Rodriguez himself—new ideas wrapped in old power.

"Watch your step," Rodriguez called back as we began our descent. "Wouldn't want anything happening to the little heir, would we?"

I narrowed my eyes, not believing his words. I didn't have reason to believe anything

he said.

Our security team followed at a distance, their footsteps creating an eerie rhythm against the stone. Above, I could hear Rodriguez's people moving to follow as well. The air grew colder with each step, suffocating, even.

"You're awfully quiet," Rodriguez observed, glancing back at me. "No questions about why I chose this place? About what I've discovered?"

"I assume you'll tell us," I replied, one hand on my stomach. "You seem the type who enjoys dramatic reveals."

He laughed, but there was an edge to it. "Oh, I like this one, Fendwyr. Much more spirit than your previous omegas. Though I suppose that's why the necklace chose him, isn't it?"

Fendwyr opted not to say anything, just as I thought he was going to.

The passage opened into a circular chamber that took my breath away. Ancient stone walls were lined with bones—hundreds, maybe thousands of skulls and femurs arranged in intricate patterns. LED lanterns cast eerie shadows that made the bones seem to move. The effect was both beautiful and terrifying. More terrifying than beautiful, though.

In the center stood an altar, older and cruder than the one above. Atop it sat a single skull, yellowed with age, with the silver necklace draped through its eye sockets. The symbols on the necklace were moving, shifting faster than I'd ever seen them move before.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" Rodriguez moved to the altar, running his fingers along the skull's surface. "Took months to find him. Your last incarnation, Fendwyr. The one

from that dream you had."

Fendwyr's grip on my hand tightened. "You're lying."

"Am I?" Rodriguez circled the altar. "The necklace responds to his presence. To both of your presences, actually. Look how it moves, how it recognizes its true owners." His voice took on an almost reverent quality. "Do you know how many lives you've lived? How many times you've found each other, only to be torn apart? It would give me an existential crisis if I were you."

"If you know so much," I challenged, "why do you need us here? Why not just take the necklace's power for yourself?"

Something flickered across Rodriguez's face—pain, perhaps, or anger. Above us, his followers watched from the catacomb's upper levels, their faces illuminated by the lanterns' glow. They seemed entranced by the scene unfolding below.

"Because power isn't enough," Rodriguez admitted. "The necklace requires... more. Something I thought I understood, once." He touched the skull again, almost tenderly. "Something I lost."

"Your mate," I said softly, the pieces finally clicking into place. "That's what this is really about, isn't it?"

Rodriguez's composure cracked, just slightly. "Careful, little omega. You don't want to make assumptions about things you don't understand."

"But I do understand," I pressed, taking a step forward despite Fendwyr's protective grip. "I can smell it on you—grief, obsession, desperation. What happened to them? What did you do?"

"I protected her!" Rodriguez's shout echoed off the stone walls, making his followers shift. "I gave her everything! Safety, luxury, devotion—"

"Control," Fendwyr interrupted. "Just like I tried to do. How did that work out for you? I thought you knew better than me."

Rodriguez's hand shot to the necklace. "You think you understand? You think your perfect fated mate bond gives you insight?" He lifted the necklace from the skull. "Let me show you what real power looks like."

He slipped it over his head, his expression triumphant. For a moment, nothing happened. Then the symbols began to glow red, angry and violent. Rodriguez's smile faltered as the glow intensified.

"No," he gasped, clawing at the necklace. "It's supposed to—I did everything right—"

"Did you?" I challenged. "Or did you just hide your obsession with control better than Fendwyr? Your followers think you're different, that you'll treat omegas better. What would they say if they knew this was all about your lost mate?"

The necklace's glow turned harsh, filling the chamber with crimson light. Above us, Rodriguez's people began murmuring, their faith visibly shaking. They never expected to find out what I just told them about their new boss.

"Shut up!" Rodriguez tried to remove the necklace, but it wouldn't budge. I never thought I'd see him like that, distraught and angry. "I built something better! I showed them a better way!"

"A better way?" Fendwyr's voice was quiet but carried throughout the chamber. "Look at yourself. Look at what you've become. You're no different than I was."

The skull on the altar suddenly exploded, fragments of bone scattering across the ancient stones. Rodriguez screamed—not in pain, but in fury. He began grabbing bones from the walls, hurling them in blind rage.

"She was mine!" He roared. "My fated mate! My perfect match! But she chose death over our bond! Over my love! Over everything I offered!"

His followers gasped. Weapons lowered as they watched their leader's mask crumble. Even his most devoted supporters couldn't ignore the madness in his eyes.

"She wanted to be free," I whispered, finally understanding everything that was happening here and what carried us to this moment. "Like I almost had to. Like Elias did. Like all the omegas you claimed to want to protect."

The necklace suddenly tore itself from Rodriguez's neck, hovering in the air between us. Its glow shifted from angry red to pure silver, and I felt drawn to it. Fendwyr moved with me, our hands clasping together as we reached for it.

The moment we touched it, everything changed. The symbols stabilized, showing clear patterns that could only mean I was right. The catacombs filled with gentle light, illuminating the truth for all to see. Our son kicked strongly, as if responding to the necklace's power.

Rodriguez fell to his knees, watching what he believed to be true crumble around him. He was beginning to realize that he had lost. He couldn't change the reality before his eyes, and that was terrifying. Even I could sense some of what he was feeling, and I was grateful it would never happen to me.

His followers began moving—some toward the exits, others toward our teams, looking for a new purpose. The revolution he'd built was dissolving as they realized its foundation had been built on his own unresolved trauma.

"It's over," Fendwyr said, not unkindly. "Let it go."

Rodriguez looked up, his eyes wild but defeated. "What am I supposed to do now? How do I—" He gestured at the destruction around him, but it was pointless.

I touched the necklace, feeling its warmth. "Learn from it. Like we did. Like we're still doing. True bonds can't be forced or controlled. They have to be chosen, again and again."

As we ascended from the catacombs, the necklace now properly claimed, I heard Rodriguez's broken sobs echo behind us. Part of me pitied him—he'd lost his mate, lost his way, and now lost everything he'd built trying to make sense of that loss.

But my pity didn't last long. He was getting exactly what he deserved, plain and simple.

The cathedral proper was awash in sunset colors when we emerged, giving me a fuzzy feeling. Our security team had already begun integrating Rodriguez's former followers, many of whom looked relieved to be with us.

"Are you okay?" Fendwyr murmured, his hand moving to my stomach where our son continued to kick energetically.

"Yes," I smiled, covering his hand with mine. "We both are. And now we know—about our past lives, about the necklace's power, and pretty much everything else. It feels good to know."

"And also about trusting one another," he added, pulling me closer. His hot breath fanned over my face, making my skin feel flush with heat. "About choosing each other, every time."

Around us, the cathedral slowly emptied as both teams worked to secure the area. Sarah approached to report that Rodriguez was being taken into custody, but I barely heard her. The necklace hummed softly against my chest, its symbols now showing clear images of our shared past—and our shared future.



*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Around 3 years later...

The indoor pool area fell silent when I entered, other parents instinctively pulling their children closer. Even after three years of legitimate business, my reputation still preceded me. Good. Some things shouldn't change.

Reyvan, barely four, gripped my hand with complete confidence. My son was a miniature version of myself—same dark hair, same commanding presence, even at his young age. The only trace of Gustall in him was a slight golden tint to his skin.

"Deep end today, Father?" He asked, already pulling me toward the water. Like me, he didn't waste time with unnecessary chatter. Smart boy, I thought.

"Not yet." My voice carried across the pool, making a nearby omega mother flinch and hurry away. "Basics first, remember?"

Gustall sat at the pool's edge, legs dangling in the water. Unlike others, he was completely at ease with my presence. It made sense he was. Not only was he my destined mate, but we'd also been living together for a long time. "Don't push him too hard," he cautioned, though his eyes sparkled with amusement.

I stripped off my shirt, revealing scars that made other parents whisper and move further away. Their fear amused me—they had no idea what real danger looked like, though I'd just give them a small sample of it.

"When have I ever pushed too hard?"

"Would you like the list chronologically or alphabetically?" Gustall teased.

Reyvan tugged my hand impatiently. "Father, water now."

I lifted him easily, his small body trusting completely in my strength. Like me, he preferred action to words. We entered the shallow end, and I could feel other families gravitating away from our space. Their instincts were good—I might be reformed, but I was far from harmless.

"Remember what we practiced," I instructed, positioning Reyvan's arms. My hands, capable of so much violence, now could mirror my gentleness when it was needed. "Control your breathing."

He nodded, face serious with concentration. Another trait he'd inherited from me—intensity in everything he did. Gustall often joked that we could intimidate people just by thinking too hard.

The lesson progressed well. Reyvan was a natural, just as I'd expected. My son wouldn't be weak in anything. I would make sure he wasn't.

Then it happened.

Confident in his progress, Reyvan broke away during a brief distraction—another child's splash—and struck out for deeper water. His technique was perfect, but his strength wasn't yet equal to his ambition.

I moved in an instant, my body cutting through the water with predatory grace. Gustall was already diving in from his position, but I reached our son first. My arms closed around him just as his head dipped under.

"I had him," Gustall said as he reached us, but there was no reproach in his voice.

"I know." I held Reyvan up, checking him over with an intensity that made nearby children scramble out of the pool. "You okay, pup?"

Reyvan coughed once, then grinned. "Again!"

Gustall laughed, the sound echoing off the walls. "Definitely your son."

"Well, of course he is." I shifted Reyvan to a better position, noting how the water around us had cleared entirely. No one dared come close to the former cartel boss, even one teaching his son to swim. "But this time, we do it properly."

"I want to be strong like you, Father," Reyvan declared, his small face reflecting his pure determination. It was inspiring.

"You already are," I assured him while ruffling his hair, though my voice remained stern. "But strength without control is useless." A lesson I'd learned too late in life, one he would learn earlier.

We continued the lesson, my attention never wavering. Gustall stayed close, our synchronized movements born from years of trust and understanding each other. Other parents watched from a distance, both afraid and fascinated by our dynamic.

Let them watch. Let them see how a predator protects his own, I thought.

"Better," I praised as Reyvan completed another lap. My son beamed at the rare compliment, his pride radiating off him in waves.

"He's going to be a handful when he's older," Gustall observed quietly, but I knew he actually liked knowing that, as did I.

"Good." I smiled, knowing it probably looked more threatening than reassuring to

onlookers. "The world needs to be ready for him."

Reyvan swam to me, bypassing Gustall's outstretched arms. His preference for me was clear, though he loved his omega father deeply. He was simply drawn to the darkness in me, the same darkness that flowed in his veins.

My darkness wasn't the same as it had been in the past. It had diminished and transformed over time, much like the darkness in Reyvan.

"Enough for today," I decided, lifting him out of the pool in one fluid motion that displayed more strength than necessary. A reminder to everyone watching that my gentleness with my son was a choice, not a limitation.

"But Father—"

"Listen to your father," Gustall interrupted, his eyes signaling to our child that disagreement would not be tolerated. "There's always tomorrow."

As we dried off, I caught glimpses of other parents' expressions—fear mixed with grudging admiration. They saw a dangerous man who'd learned to be gentle without losing his edge. A predator who'd chosen to nurture without surrendering his fangs.

They were right to remain wary. I might have chosen a different path, but I was still the alpha who'd commanded the Nightshade Wolves. Still the man whose name made hardened criminals tremble.

I would never hide the person I'd once been. If people asked me about it, I'd always tell them everything. I didn't have anything to hide anymore, which was refreshing.

"Ice cream?" Reyvan asked as we headed for the exit, the crowd parting before us like water around a shark.

"After dinner," Gustall and I said in unison, earning a scowl from our son that promised future rebellion.

Ice cream wasn't good for him every day, obviously. While he didn't understand that now, he would soon enough—and when he did, he would thank us.

Then, I smiled again, feeling the other parents' fear spike at the expression. And I thought there was nothing wrong with that. They should remember what I was, even as they watched what I'd become.

Some things changed. Others never would.

And that was exactly as it should be.

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:15 am*

Around 10 years later...

I adjusted the silver chain in my hands, watching the ancient symbols shift and dance. Even after all these years, the necklace's power still amazed me. There was something about it that would never change. I had realized that long ago, and to this day, it continued to prove itself true time and time again.

Reyvan sat across from me in my office, his dark eyes—so like his father's—fixed on the artifact with intense curiosity. He had a few suspicions regarding its origins, but not much else.

"So, this is what brought you and Father together?" He probed, his deep voice another reminder of how much he'd grown. Sometimes I missed my little boy, but I was proud of the young man he'd become. Such was life.

"In every lifetime," I smiled, letting the memories wash over me. "Though your father didn't make it easy in this one."

"Because he was controlling?" Reyvan's directness, another trait inherited from Fendwyr, always cut straight to the heart of matters. There were some things I wished he hadn't inherited from his alpha dad.

"Because we both had to learn about trust," I corrected, setting the necklace down. "There's—"

The door to my office burst open. I looked up, expecting Fendwyr or perhaps one of our business associates. Instead, my heart stopped. This couldn't be happening. Not

after so many years.

My parents stood in the doorway, aged but unmistakable. I could never have mistaken them for someone else. They looked exactly as cold and judgmental as they had the day they threw me out.

"So, it's true," my father sneered, his eyes moving between me and Reyvan. "The omega disgrace actually someone dumb enough to fall for him."

My blood boiled, but not because they were belittling me—rather, it was the way they were referring to Fendwyr. I doubted they knew him, though. If they did, they never would have said what they did.

Reyvan stood, his presence filling the room just like Fendwyr's did. "Who are you?"

"Your grandparents," my mother's voice dripped with disdain. So, both of them knew about him, and I didn't like that. "Though, I have to say, I wish I didn't know."

I rose slowly, positioning myself between them and my son. I wasn't the same scared omega they'd cast out all those years ago. Though I was no alpha, I wasn't powerless. I'd do whatever was needed.

"How did you get in here?" I asked. It was a pertinent question. I should have been informed of their arrival. Someone must have betrayed me.

"Money opens doors," my father stepped forward. "We heard rumors about your... success. Came to see if you'd finally become worth acknowledging, but maybe it's just a waste of time."

"And?" I kept my voice steady, though my heart raced.

My mother's gaze fixed on Reyvan, her lip curling. "Worse than we imagined.

Birthing the spawn of a criminal? You've fallen even lower."

Fendwyr's reputation wasn't a secret. He didn't shy away from sharing it when asked, though he always kept some details to himself. It was no surprise that she knew about it.

Before I could respond, she spat—actually spat—at Reyvan's feet.

Something in me snapped. "Get out," I growled, surprising even myself with the authority in my voice. "You lost the right to judge me or my family when you threw me away. I'm not just going to stand here and let you hurt my son."

"Father," Reyvan's voice was dangerous, so like Fendwyr's it sent chills down my spine. "Let me handle this."

"No," I affirmed right away. "They're not worth your effort." I faced my parents. "You came to see if I was worth acknowledging? Let me be clear: I don't need or want your acknowledgment. I have everything I need—a husband who loves me, a son I'm proud of, and a life I built despite your best efforts to break me."

"A criminal's whore," my father took another step forward, "raising a criminal's spawn—"

"Careful," I warned, feeling stronger than I ever had in their presence. "You're talking about my mate and son. I won't warn you again. I don't want to do what my body is screaming at me to do."

"Or what?" My mother laughed. "You'll set your alpha on us? Hide behind his protection like the weak omega you—"

"He won't need to."



Fendwyr's voice cut through the room like a blade. He filled the doorway, his presence making the air heavy with dominant pheromones. My parents instinctively stepped back.

Relief washed over me, just like it did every time he was around. With him nearby, I always felt I could do anything.

"The omega you cast out," Fendwyr continued, moving to stand beside me, "has more strength than either of you could comprehend. The son you just spat at carries more honor in his little finger than you've shown in your entire pathetic lives."

"How dare—" my father started.

"I dare," Fendwyr's smile was all predator, "because unlike you, I recognize true worth. Your son didn't need my protection just now—he was handling you quite well on his own. I simply couldn't resist watching you realize exactly what you threw away."

Reyvan moved to my other side, reaffirming the bond of our family. My parents seemed to shrink, glancing between me, my son, and then my alpha.

"Leave," I said quietly. "And don't come back. I have all the family I need right here."

They left, my father practically dragging my mother, who couldn't seem to stop staring at me. Maybe she had finally realized who she'd cast out. She'd just changed her mind and wanted me with her, but she'd long destroyed any chance of that ever happening.

When they were gone, I let out a breath I hadn't realized I'd been holding. Fendwyr's arm slipped around my waist while Reyvan gripped my shoulder.

"I'm proud of you," Reyvan whispered. "You didn't need Daddy's help at all."

I smiled, touching the necklace on my desk. "No, I didn't. But it's nice knowing I have it anyway." I looked between my mate and son, feeling blessed despite the confrontation. "Now, where were we?"

End of Book 8