



Such a Lovely Omega (His Alpha Desires #2)

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Category: LGBT+

Description: Drowning. The best description of my life since my mate, Emile, died over a year ago. Struggling to run a business that he made look like child's play, despite my degree and working side by side with him all those years.

Hiding from the world, my new specialty.

My therapist says it's time to get out there. To reach out to friends and family. Sadly, I have no family and our friends were mutuals. Seeing them rips the delicate scabs from the wounds I've tried to heal. Most of our friends are co-owners of a new club called Cuffed. They call or text, but I am never in the mood to talk, and they respect that.

Emile was so excited about joining. Our lifetime memberships were among the first ones sold, Lifetime membership...his ended before the doors even opened.

I'd received an invitation to the private opening party, but at that point had barely been able to get out of bed—partly why the business was not doing well. A year later, searching through a pile of papers on our home office desk, I find the membership certificate. Emile always planned to have it framed... Suddenly, I picture his face, full lips twisted in disappointment. I told you not to die with me, mate.

I didn't, but my half-life hardly qualifies as worth living. I have to do something to get out from under the weight of grief at least a little. If only because it was what he would want. When Alex, one of the partners, calls to check on me and suggests I come by the club just for a little socializing, I agree. I can always run home, right?

Such a Lovely Omega is the second book in His Alpha Desires, the highly anticipated M/M Mpreg shifter series by USA Today Bestselling Author Lorelei M. Hart and featuring the members and staff of the hottest new club in town. Such a Good Omega features an alpha club owner who just wants to help his late friend's mate save his business and live again, an omega who doesn't want a new mate but can't stop thinking of him, sweet heat, sizzling heat, new beginnings, healing, true love, fated mates, an adorable baby (or two) and a guaranteed HEA.

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Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:47 am

West

“Hello?” I asked, answering the door. It had been a long time since anyone rang the doorbell or knocked.

Couldn’t remember the last time, in fact.

“Hi, I’m Eric. I’ve been sent by the Energy Co-Op to tell you your bill is past due. I was supposed to knock and then hang this on your doorknob, but you got here too quickly. Here.” The young man wearing a company shirt tucked into loose-fitting jeans juttred the neon-orange door hanger out to me.

“My bill is past due?” I asked.

“Yes. And...if you don’t pay it by five this afternoon, I’m afraid your power will be shut off. Call the number on the bottom if you need assistance. Good afternoon.”

I checked my phone and then yelled out, “But it’s already four!”

Eric reached his driver’s side door and shrugged. “You still have an hour.”

Great. Just freaking great.

I slammed the door, not with any anger at the worker or the electric company but completely at myself—and a little at Emile. Not a lot. It wasn’t his fault I didn’t learn to pay the bills and balance the accounts and know everything he was doing.

Never in a million years did I think he would leave me and my life would be turned upside down.

Now would be a fantastic time for his ghost to start haunting me, and, while he was at it, he could teach me all the things that he did, that I took for granted.

Emile was the best alpha most of the time. Certainly to the outside world. He paid the bills. Took care of making phone calls and handling the business side of everything. Hell, when he passed away, I didn't even know what car insurance company we had.

It was my fault—mostly. I let him take care of those things because he was so damned good at it. We never wanted for anything. I never had my debit card turned down, until lately. No past due notices while he was alive. Now our dining room table was piled high with them.

I sat down at the table and flipped open his laptop. His screensaver was a picture of us on our honeymoon. Those days were bliss for me, but things changed afterward. I didn't realize how much until he was gone.

I paid the electricity bill and cursed the late fee that went along with it, thankful I had the money in the checking account to cover it. Emile had a substantial life insurance policy that went to me but, even with that, I'd struggled to keep my head above water.

The majority of the blame I laid on my own shoulders.

In an effort not to have anyone else call or knock to tell me my bills were past due, I decided to tackle the pile in front of me to the tune of some of my favorite music. I made piles. Bills that needed to be paid immediately. Bills I didn't even recognize. Letters from insurance companies and warranties. Of course, the junk mail got chucked right into the metal trash can next to me.

It took an hour to get through the pile and, while I felt a little better that there didn't seem to be any more fires to put out that night, I was overwhelmed.

I got up from the table to put away Emile's laptop when I saw another envelope under the computer. It was silver and had a black wax stamp on the back.

The invitation had both of our names on the top.

You are cordially invited to the grand opening of Cuffed. Please join us for a members' exclusive night of tours, performances, and alluring entertainment. No guests, please. Members only.

I'd almost forgotten about the club. Checking the date, I saw the opening had already happened. I probably should've gone and seen Emile's friends but the truth was, it hadn't even registered on my radar. Emile had purchased us advance memberships. He said he wanted to explore some things—spice up our lovemaking.

I had protested at the time. Nothing about our bedroom activities needed any ramping up, in my opinion. Watching others and trying out unfamiliar apparatuses wasn't something I looked forward to, but he was excited and practically begged, so I agreed.

I stared at the invitation and moved to the file cabinet to get the document for our membership. It was one of the things I'd actually put away in the right place. My intentions were good first thing in the morning but, by the afternoon, I found my lists empty of check marks day after day. I was barely holding the business afloat. When I wasn't working or putting out fires of my own making, I stayed in our home. In the darkness.

There were things I'd discovered about myself after Emile passed that punched me in the gut. Somewhere along the line, I'd morphed into him. I accepted less than I

deserved in some areas. I listened to the same music he did. Gave up on recipes and meals that I'd once loved because he didn't. Lost interest in working out and taking care of myself to some degree.

Even my closet was filled with sweaters and slim dress pants when I longed for a simple T-shirt and a pair of jeans.

Emile had purchased a lifetime membership for the both of us. Would I even be interested in going to a sex club as a widower? On my own?

I gulped and tucked the invitation in with the membership paperwork, intending to forget all about it again.

Without even bothering with dinner, I headed upstairs and lay in bed, shutting out the world.

Emile, my alpha, my love, was dead, but I was drowning.

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Alex

The club took up more of my time than I had expected. When we planned the whole thing, we thought with several of us we could handle everything without losing time from our other responsibilities. After all, we were all successful in our various fields and had earned our time away for a pet project.

Talon, who took on the job of staffing, moved his business to the premises. As an investor, he could work from anywhere, and he and his new omega/sub were on the premises the most. A little less since his omega gave birth to their child, but it was helpful to have one of us here so much of the time.

My job in our partnership was a lot like the one I had in the military where I had been the officer in charge of a big distribution warehouse. Actually I guessed that put me on the other side of things, but it did give me knowledge of what was going on at our suppliers' facilities. In my previous life, I'd had to determine what to keep in stock in order to meet the needs of our "customers," who were various military facilities in a widespread area. I had to know how much peanut butter might be needed to ship out or bread or beans or beef. In the remote area where we were located—a place I was still not allowed to tell people about—we were responsible for a wide variety of items, and they weren't always easy to get.

So when a supplier tried to tell me it was "impossible" to get wild mushrooms or that there was an embargo preventing caviar from crossing the ocean, I knew better, and I had connections. One of my former NCOs was even now planning to open a company who would be getting as much of my business as I could throw him, but that would be in a year or two.

Until then, I had to put up with what was available, and our chef partner Xerxes had very specific desires for the kitchen. We hadn't even planned to serve food beyond maybe a bar nibble or two when we opened the place. But Xerxes, who owned a number of restaurants across the country and had appeared on TV as a celebrity chef, insisted that this element of our operation should be as special as any other.

But making the menus and making them make sense for a kink-focused club were not my jobs. No, I took on making sure we had all the ingredients as well as paper products, cleaning items, and just about anything else that would be bought for the running of the club. All but the dungeon furniture and similar—we had a partner in charge of that.

I came directly after leaving my day job office, wanting to go over some invoices. Our primary supplier had made some “goofs” lately in the totals—none of which were in our favor. Maybe I should consider investing in Sgt. Keen's business venture as a silent partner. It would speed things up and take some of the annoyance from my life. It would help him as well.

Plus, the idea of going back into my old type of workdays too sounded kind of good. As a CPA, I dealt with numbers day and night and sometimes I missed working with more tangible items. Who said my investment had to be silent?

Worth considering.

I struck out some ridiculous numbers on a final invoice and sent off a request for a correction. I definitely needed to help my sergeant get things going. So, I sent an email to him, too, requesting a meeting at his earliest convenience.

With all of that done, I left my office and set out to enjoy the club I had gone to so much time and effort to help create. Sometimes it seemed like my partners and I spent all our hours here working with no chance to play. I would have to consider how my

ideas on improving our supply chain would also streamline my work.

Out on the main floor, things were humming. Even though we had the biggest array of dungeon furniture and apparatus of any club on our side of the country, so far as our research showed, every station was in use with sign-up sheets for the rest of the evening filled. It was great, a real sign of our success, but it meant that I would not be able to visit my favorite even if I did have a sub in mind.

Sometimes it felt like we were doing too well...if that were possible.

“Hey, come over here.” Talon sat at the bar with a golden pilsner in front of him. “You’ve got to try this.”

Talon preferred something more sophisticated usually. “Since when did you become a beer fan?” I accepted the glass the bartender set in front of me. “What is this?”

“New local brewery. Very popular. Give it a try.”

“All right.” I also was more likely to have a single malt than a beer—except maybe while watching baseball in person. I held it up to the light behind the bar. “Nice color and a good head.” Inhaling, I nodded. “Faint hint of floral note.”

“Just drink it.” Samuel, the bar manager rolled his eyes. “It’s beer, not an aged wine from a French cave.”

“Cave?” I chuckled but obeyed, holding the fizzy liquid in my mouth before swallowing. “This is effing amazing.”

“That’s what I was saying.”

We ate and drank a couple of beers each, talking about this and that and nothing,

before his phone went off, and he looked at the screen, a smile brightening his whole face.

“Your mate?” As if I had to ask.

“He wants me to bring home milk. Which is code for ‘how much longer are you out’?”

“After your fire display with him, it’s hard to believe he’s at home tonight with a baby.”

“He doesn’t like to get a sitter too often.” He stood and stretched out his back. “Duty calls.”

And the fire dom left, whistling. I never thought I’d see the day.

“Makes having a mate sound pretty good, doesn’t it?” Samuel asked, also watching Talon walk away.

“What?” I blinked. “No, I mean sure, but fateds are hard to find.”

“Yeah.”

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West

“What’s on your mind today, West?” Dr. Braden crossed his legs and used his chin to click his pen.

I took a seat on the couch but refused to lie down. Sometimes I thought my therapist watched too many old movies and sitcoms. Did people really lie on the couch for their sessions in this century?

I wasn’t sure.

But nights were restless at best, and I was afraid I’d simply drift off if I lay back. “Selling off everything I own. Moving across the country or to another country and starting all the way over. Hell, I might even change my name.”

“Why is that?” he asked.

He knew why. Emile had been gone for almost a year, and eight months of that year I’d been here, weekly. In the beginning, it was two or three times a week.

My answer to him was a stern look and a tilting of my head in derision.

“The business is still not doing well?” he asked.

“The business is not doing well. The bills are piling up. Things are breaking in the house, and I have to call people in to fix them. I’m tired of gasping for air.”

“Nothing is improving?” the doctor prompted while taking furious notes. His handwriting was atrocious. He’d made me a list of ways to calm down when I was upset. That day, I laughed hysterically on the floor. I couldn’t read a single one of his suggestions.

His handwriting still took second place to the annoying pen-on-the-chin thing.

Still, he had helped me when I needed someone most. He’d given me some medicine that made me feel like I wasn’t going to crack in half anymore.

“Nothing is improving. Every day is more of the same. Except now, instead of having a simple, happy existence, or what I was telling myself was happy...now I’m flailing—running—but getting nowhere. The moment I think I have things semi-settled, something new pops up. Yesterday, I had someone knock on the door to tell me if I didn’t pay my electricity bill within the hour, it would be turned off. Emile would’ve never allowed this to happen.”

Dr. Braden put down his notebook and uncrossed his legs. He leaned his elbows on his knees and took a long breath. “What about hobbies? Something fun? What could you do to take your mind off your stress?”

I scoffed. “I barely remember what I like to do anymore. I remember what Emile loved to do. We did those things while my hobbies got delayed or ignored or...”

“Or what?”

I shook my head and scrubbed my hands down my face. “I don’t like talking badly about him. He’s gone. Not even here to defend himself or explain. What kind of omega would I be if...”

The doctor nodded. “Then let’s not. What are these hobbies that you once liked to

do?”

“Reading. Going to museums. Watching crime documentaries. Going to poetry readings. Book clubs.” The way my past interests reached out from the grave I’d put them in shocked me. Maybe I was the same person I had been when I met Emile. Perhaps I’d just lost myself along the way. No, I’d made myself little so he could be big.

“Those sound like good things. Maybe minus the crime documentaries.”

I laughed, barely recognizing the sound. “I’m just supposed to resume this life, regain this person I left behind.”

“Yes.” His answer was simple. “Or become a different version of him.”

A pause hung between us.

“West, do you have any friends? You’ve never mentioned anyone. Someone to talk to? Someone to do these things with?”

I leaned back. “We hung around with Emile’s friends. I didn’t have many to begin with, and the ones I did...I lost contact with them once we moved here.”

“When you moved here from New York City.”

I nodded. “That was almost seven years ago. Gods. I’m going to be thirty in a few months. A widower at twenty-nine. I never would’ve thought it.”

Dr. Braden nodded. “Sometimes life doesn’t go the way we planned. How does that make you feel?”

I shrugged but knew exactly how that made me feel. “Sad and, lately, a little angry. How he died wasn’t his fault. No one could know a drunk driver is going to swerve out and kill you while you’re running to the store for milk, but everything I am and did and liked and felt was enmeshed with him. Everything. I don’t even like these clothes.” I pinched my button-down shirt and pulled it away from my skin. I had a plan to go get some jeans and T-shirts soon. If I had money in the bank.

“It’s never too late to change who you are. That’s why I mentioned friends. Weren’t any of Emile’s friends yours too?”

I ran over the list and came up with one name. Alex. He had been kind to me. Even helped me once when Emile had too many at a party. He was kind and gentle.

He also was an amazing businessman. I’d heard Emile speak of it often, which was why when Alex told him about Cuffed, my alpha was eager to get a membership. That among other things.

“There is one. His name is Alex.”

Dr. Braden gave me a soft smile. “Would you feel comfortable getting in touch with this Alex?”

I sighed. “He’s into some things I don’t know if I’m into. He owns a sex club.”

My psychiatrist arched an eyebrow. “There’s nothing wrong with a safe place where consenting adults explore their preferences, sexually.”

“I’ve only ever had sex with one man. My alpha.”

“Let’s get back to Alex, West. Would you feel safe talking to him?”

I blew out a breath. “Yes. And I think I know how, but I’m a bit scared.”

The doctor chuckled. “At the cost of sounding cheesy, West, most good things in life are on the other side of scary.”

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Alex

Somehow, the whole doing my job at the club thing to the detriment of having any kind of a personal life had spiraled out of control. You'd never guess it, but I had an interest in kink and had thought being an owner would make it easier for me to pursue my leanings. In fact...I could not have been more wrong.

As the "supply guy" in the group, I had somehow anticipated my duties taking up a few hours a week, maybe on a Sunday afternoon when I was lounging around after a fun Saturday at the club. Sitting here at my desk, I felt about as disconnected from any kind of "fun" experience as anyone could ever be. With just my desk lamp and the screen light on, the room I'd put so much care into setting up was dark and depressing, but that seemed about right.

I'd even done a little shopping for toys as we were getting ready to open. Most were still in their original packaging. Sad. Not that I minded the extra income we were making a little over a year in. Our original investment would be locked in for some time, but with a steady profit from the growing membership, we had voted to take a quarterly payout.

Still... I hadn't gone into this because I was looking for an income source. But I was spending far too many evenings locked in my office dealing with emails and putting out fires. When we chose to have the kitchen be more than "tacky bar food," the health department requirements alone were extreme.

A club with the activities popular in ours had to have very specific areas for food in particular. And we did not want a "restaurant" per se. But we did luck into having one

of our partners be a pretty spectacular—and famous—chef. So, we set up some conversation pits of sorts where members could relax and socialize between visits to the stations. We arranged the comfortable couches and chairs around low tables where food could be served, close enough to the floor for them to watch the action but far enough away for the inspector to sign off.

It was complex, but one of our members was employed by the county and able to give us tips so we didn't make too many missteps. And how that all related to me? It meant that I had to order all the food the kitchen needed as well as other supplies and be sure everything ran as smooth as glass. Our members expected a certain experience, and we each had our own part in making that happen. I brought up another list of items missed from an order and began to compose my email to the party responsible.

“You gonna sit here all night?”

“What?” I peered up from the screen to see Talon lingering in the doorway. “Sorry. I was focused.”

“You work way too hard.”

“So I've been told. But if I don't do my job, we'll soon run out of those giant prawns you like so much.”

I'd never seen the fire-play expert roll his eyes until now. “You take yourself too seriously, my friend. If this is taking up so much of your time that you do not get to enjoy yourself on the floor, then it's time for a staffing upgrade.”

“You saying you can find someone better at my job?” He probably could, but he didn't have to be so plain about it. “Maybe I can do something simpler like sweep the floors.”

He snorted. “A little prickly, aren’t we? I would never imply anyone could do better. What I meant was we need to get you an assistant who can do a lot of helpful work during the day when you’re at your other office. Then you can spend some of your evenings on the floor doing what you like best.”

“Has there been a request for a demo of what I like best?”

“Impact play is always popular, isn’t it?” Indeed it was, with or without me out there.

Taking a deep breath, I let it out in a whoosh, closed my laptop, and stood up. “Come on, then. Not promising or even suggesting I’ll do a demo tonight. But I will have a drink and chat with the nice people. Satisfied?”

“Smug.” He smirked at me. “C’mon, friend. Never say I didn’t save you from yourself.”

“I’m just annoyed I didn’t think of hiring someone before you did. Why do you have to be so smart?”

“Can’t help myself. You didn’t even see my fire demo.”

“Yeah, I heard you finally did one.” We’d always had this sort of a relationship, bantering, teasing, a far cry from the intensity with omegas and submissives who looked to us to meet their needs on many levels.

Although, I did have to say that the few times I’d seen Talon outside the walls with his mate and baby, he revealed an ability to love at least as strong as his dominance. What must that be like? I couldn’t imagine. I’d only ever felt an attraction like that to one person, but he fell in love with someone else long ago.

I followed Talon out into the hallway, but before we got to the public area of the club,

he was waylaid by a staffing issue and had to send me ahead. He promised to meet me at the bar in fifteen, so I headed there and planted myself on a stool that opened just as I arrived. Music pulsed around me, the crack of whips, cries, and moans, the real sounds of our club. My soul awoke at the cacophony of pleasure and pain, reminding me why I took on this place. It had been just a “job” to me for too long, when that was never the intent.

The bartender set a single malt in front of me without being asked. The beers I had last time I set foot out here were good, but whiskey would always be my go-to. I picked it up and took a sip, rolling it around in my mouth. We had top shelf for our members, and some paid for a bottle up there, but my collection hid in a cabinet under the bar and only senior staff even had a key. “Thanks, Frank.” I spun the stool to face the club floor. From here, I could see several of the stations, bound submissive omegas stretched out on the spiderweb or bent over the spanking benches. The dungeon monitors, volunteer members all, were watching closely to make sure all was well. It took experience to tell the difference between consent and non—which was strictly forbidden. As well as pain chosen or not. Since we were all membership, and a forfeiture of the rather large deposit put up for the membership would be the result of rule breaking, we didn’t have a big problem.

As I relaxed, grateful for my friend who had my back, my gaze landed on a face I never expected to see here. I’d checked in with him a few times since Emile died, but since West never encouraged me to call again, I’d fallen out of the habit. An alpha was attempting to chat him up. Seeing his pale cheeks and uncomfortable posture, I was off the stool and on the way to his side in a flash.

“West, you got here.” I took his arm and steered him away from the other alpha. “I have been waiting.” Since he didn’t argue or dig his heels in, I had to assume I’d gauged his discomfort correctly. When we were back by the bar, I stopped. “I hope that was all right? I didn’t break up a kink connection.”

He shook his head. “No. It wasn’t anything like that.”

“It’s good to see you. Want to come to my office and catch up?” I hadn’t seen him since Emile’s funeral, and I now realized how remiss I had been.

He shrugged. “I guess.”

I probably had that coming.

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West

“It’s been...almost a year, hasn’t it?” Alex asked, shutting the door behind me.

“Yes,” I whispered, taking in the sparse but elegant office. Steel-gray walls. Hardwood floors, stained black but with veins of silver highlighting their imperfections. Everything was modern and minimalist. A simple black desk. A large leather chair. Files lined up. Five pens in a straight row to the right of the desk.

He set his glass of whiskey, neat, on the desk. “Please sit down, Alex. I can’t believe it’s been a year.” My back warmed where he gently touched me, guiding me to the seat opposite his desk. As I sat down, I couldn’t help tracing his movements with my stare. I didn’t remember him being so purposeful, so graceful and yet, power emanated from him, so palpable I could reach out and breathe it in, lean into it, let it shelter me.

“In one week. One week,” I repeated, not able to wrap my head around the fact either. Some days, it felt like he had been gone a week and sometimes, the hours dragged on and on until I was sure Emile had been gone a decade.

“How are you?” he asked. “Didn’t think I would see you here.”

I shrugged. “We had...we have...I have a membership.” This was harder than I thought but at the same time, Alex emanated comfort and safety. I tried to soak in as much of it as possible while I was here—fill up my cup. The damned thing had been a desert for far too long. “Emile bought us a lifetime membership before he passed. He...anyway, I’m here.”

“You didn’t answer the question, West.” My name rolled off his tongue and caressed me in places no one had ever touched.

“Which one?” I asked, feeling the corners of my mouth lift in a smile that felt foreign on my face. The muscles were out of practice.

“The one about how you are doing.”

I breathed in and out, caging my emotions in. They threatened to spill out at any drop of a song or the sight of a sappy commercial. “I’m okay.”

Alex cocked his head to the side. I’d never been a good liar. “It’s okay if you’re not. Emile was your mate. Your alpha. There’s probably a part of you that will never be fully healed, West.”

West. West. West. Emile called me baby or darlin’. Unless there was something serious going on, he never used my name. One of the things that jarred me in the beginning and then...one I eventually let slide. I had let a lot of things slide.

“I’m okay,” I repeated.

Alex nodded. “We order the best bourbon for the bar. You can trust me on that. I do the ordering myself.” His gaze darted to the glass of amber alcohol in my hand. “But I don’t remember you drinking straight alcohol like that. Didn’t you prefer mixed drinks, maybe frozen?”

I huffed out a laugh and recrossed my legs. “I ordered it for show. For something to hold. Didn’t want to look like a newbie.”

Alex swirled his whiskey around in his glass. “Newbies are kind of popular in here. Everyone wants to show a beginner the ropes. And the chains. And the spanking

bench. Maybe the fire table if you're adventurous. Talon has been training another dom."

My cheeks ignited with a heat I'd never experienced. "I know nothing about this...stuff. Do you?"

Alex's eyes darkened and then flashed with a gleam of gold. Ah, a glimpse of his wolf coming to the surface. Why, I didn't know. Emile never let his wolf out. He didn't like the loss of control. "I might, omega." He whispered the sentiment but with my shifter hearing, I picked it up, no problem. "Why did you come tonight, West?"

I swallowed against the pressure of the emotions lodged in my throat, trying to make them go back to the depths where I kept them so well. At least, for so long. "Emile bought the membership, and my psychiatrist told me that it might be good to see some friends. The thing is, I don't have any friends, not for a long time. I have people I know who were Emile's friends. And...this place has some of them. I thought..."

"You thought you would come here to make friends? With alphas who were friends of Emile?" I shuddered at the danger underlying his tone. No, not danger. Power. Strength.

"Yeah, I can see how ridiculous it sounds now. I don't know what I was thinking. I'm going to—" I pushed against the arms of the chair to stand and show myself and my pathetic ideas out the front door, when Alex got up and strolled around his desk and put his hand on my shoulder.

"I never said it was a bad idea."

My knees wobbled as a wave of tingles slid down my body. "I'm not okay," I blurted. My breath whooshed from my mouth as the weight I'd been dragging around all this time was lifted, if only for a second.

“I know you’re not. I can feel it. Tell me. Tell me everything.”

I swallowed past the knot in my throat. “I don’t want you to think I’m pathetic.”

Alex took both my hands in his. “I would never think that about you. Talk to me. You came here for friends. Here I am. Let me be your sounding board. Maybe I can help.”

Tears flowed down my face as I let my truths pour out. The more I told him, the more relieved I felt. I focused on his forehead, sure that I would find pity in his stare. I could take sympathy from a lot of people but from Alex? No way I could endure that.

“All this time, why didn’t you come to me? Or Talon? Any of us would’ve helped you,” he murmured. “Come here.”

I found myself drawn into his embrace. Letting out something between a moan and a groan, I melted into his warmth. I couldn’t stop the sobs that took over my body. Alex didn’t let me go or tell me to stop crying like Emile would have.

He held me tighter. Whispered loving words into my ear. Caged me in his safe arms. If freedom was being out of this cage, I didn’t want it.

“I...” I pulled back. I’d definitely overstepped the friendship zone. But when I looked up at him, really staring into those deep pools of brown I wanted to dive into and stay forever, I was overcome with need. With a hunger I couldn’t explain.

I leaned up on my tiptoes and pressed my lips to his. Instantly, I expected him to pull back. I was not his mate. He was not mine. I had no business touching him this way.

Alex never pulled away. His full and firm lips caressed mine as he used his palms to press my body against his. “Mmm, omega. You taste so damned good.”

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Alex

Once West's lips pressed against mine, everything fell into place.

The attraction that instantly called to me once the omega was in my sights was overcome by another sensation. One that came directly from my wolf. One kiss, and my beast was convinced he was mine. Sure, I'd known West before, but he was mated then and I'd put any attraction out of my mind, respecting his relationship with Emile who I'd known for years.

I'd always thought he was a beautiful, thoughtful mate.

But now, he was my beautiful, thoughtful mate.

I pressed my palms against the small of his back to get him closer. Closer still. All I wanted in that moment was his body pliant and flush against mine.

West tensed a bit after our kiss had just begun and blushed so furiously. Gods, he was gorgeous and so damned needy.

"Mmm, omega. You taste so good," I said and brushed my knuckles over his cheek.

"I'm so sorry." He stepped back. I released him but not without a quick fight with my wolf. Sure, he was ours but we had to be patient. He'd lost his mate. He was a widower. The last thing I wanted to do was hurt him in any way.

I had to be careful with my omega's heart.

“Why are you sorry?” I asked. “I’m not.”

“I...he’s gone, but I feel like I’m cheating on him. My brain is telling me one thing, my heart another, and my animal yet another.”

“Sit down, West. Let’s talk about this.”

He let out a nervous chuckle but did as I said. Interesting. I wondered in what other ways he would obey me, putty in my hands. “You want to talk after I basically assaulted you.”

“Hey,” I said. I took the seat next to him and put my hands over his. “That was no assault. I was surprised, sure, but not offended, and I certainly didn’t consider it an assault.”

“It’s been so long. I forgot what it felt like to be held. To be kissed.”

Tragic that this omega had been alone. Sure, life happened, and sometimes mates passed away before their time, or what we thought was their time, but West was clearly suffering. “You...there’s been no one since Emile?”

He ducked his head and then shook it. His sweet scent twinged with a bit of citrus. Shame? Was this omega feeling shame?

“West, please look at me.” I reached under my chair and scooted it closer to him until our knees were stacked together. “Omega, please.”

Sucking in a breath, he nailed me with his deep stare. I could’ve drowned in it and been smiling all the way into the afterlife.

“How long has it been since someone touched you? Held you? Gave you the affection

and care you need?”

A whimper fell from his lips. Huh. That long. “I...Emile has been gone, well, you know how long but even before that. For years...”

“What do you mean even before that?” I barely contained a snarl. He didn’t need that from me. West needed patience and calm.

He shook his head. While I wanted to press, I realized it might be hard for him to speak about his mate, or late mate.

“Too long?” I whispered.

“So damned long,” he answered and stole the breath from my lungs.

“Then let’s fix that, shall we?”

I reached for him and, thank the gods, he willingly swayed into my hold. I took his mouth this time with more passion, trying to pour myself into the kiss, strengthen the bond we had only just begun. Moving to his neck, I growled at how responsive he was. Moaning and whimpering at every touch and kiss. My hands roamed down his lean form as I took mental note of all his planes and valleys. Underneath these clothes was a dream body, I imagined.

When one of my hands grazed his groin, I pulled back. “Can I take care of you, omega? Ease this need?”

Breathless, he nodded.

“Stand up so I can take your pants off.”

He did so. I noticed how his knees shook as I removed his shoes, socks, and then released his leather belt. I checked once again before unzipping his pants. “Are you sure?” I prompted. No way I would do this without his explicit permission and consent.

“I think I might die if you don’t touch me, Alex.”

I pressed my own hardened length against him and nipped at his lips. “The words, West. I need to hear the words before I take you into my mouth.”

He squirmed, bucking his hips and threw back his head.

“I know you can say it, omega. This alpha needs permission.”

“Alex, I need you to get on your knees and suck my cock.” His eyes widened as though he didn’t realize he could say it and now he was well aware.

Gods, that was sexy.

“Good omega,” I praised and stripped him of his pants. I sank to my knees in front of him and kissed his thighs. His sighs and the way he threaded his fingers in my hair fueled me on. My cock grew harder by the second. “Are you slick for me? Is your channel pulsing with need?”

His brown eyes met mine, and he nodded. “Everything in me needs you.”

Exactly how I wanted him. Starving for me. I cupped his balls while I took him from head to base into my mouth. He cried out my name while I sucked his length. Gods, he was big, bigger than I expected.

“Can I touch all of you?” I asked, gazing up his body.

“Yes, please. I’m aching.”

“Get onto my desk, West. Ass on the edge.”

He did as he was told, and I got up and pulled the chair to the desk. I tugged him into position, nudging his legs wider apart. He was a sight for sore eyes, and new eyes and any eyes. I wanted to bury myself inside him, but now wasn’t the time. He needed this release. Needed to be shown how fucking sexy he was.

“Omega, you are lovely.”

I leaned forward and took him into my mouth. Bobbing up and down on his cock, I slipped my fingers between his cheeks, finding that sweet puckered entrance so slick and ready for me. One finger and then two breached his channel while his bulbous head throbbed against the back of my throat. His hips rocked again as he fucked my mouth, grabbing fistfuls of my hair.

I pumped my fingers inside him over and over until his sac tightened and his movements became frantic. He let out a roar worthy of a bear as ribbons of cum painted my throat and his channel pulsed and fluttered around my fingers.

“Alex!” he cried, riding the waves of pleasure.

He came down from the orgasm, cheeks red, a sheen of sweat along his brow. He slowly let go of my hair and lay back on the gleaming wooden desk.

My mate was a sight.

I wondered if he realized he belonged to me, now more than ever.

After cleaning him up a bit, I helped him off the desk and pulled his clothes back on.

He kept trying to take things into his own hands, but a few growls had him relenting.

“Come here.” I sat back down in my chair and patted my lap.

“What?”

“Come here.” I pushed a bit of alpha tone in.

He nodded and straddled my lap. I embraced and loved on him for what seemed like eternity and yet only a second. He melted into my hold, nuzzling my neck and inhaling deeply.

“I’m so glad you came to the club tonight,” I whispered in his ear.

He stiffened. “I have to go.”

“Right now?” I asked, my wolf frantic inside me for him to stay.

“Right now.”

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West

I didn't sleep a wink. Tossing and turning and punching my pillow didn't count as rest.

The memory of Alex's hands on me kept alive a fever that wouldn't die. Where his fingers had dug into my skin, the muscles pulsed in recall of the pressure of his careful yet possessive touch. My cock had never been harder in my life. Not when I was younger. Not when I was with Emile. Never.

When I came in his mouth, I saw stars. Stars and planets aligned.

Then he cared for me afterward. Held me in his arms. Whispered sweet things in my ear and kissed me—I needed those things so much, but at the same time, they were hard to accept.

Maybe I'd hardened myself against them since I was starved of affection and convinced I didn't deserve them.

Except those things weren't what kept me up all night. The guilt and shame did. Caged in my home and surrounded by everything that was my late mate, the guilt choked me. Stole my breath away.

What happened with Alex the night before felt like cheating. I stood in front of the scalding water in the shower for far too long, debating whether or not to shower. The cheating-on-Emile part of me wanted to wash away Alex's scent. The pre-cum on my cock, stirred by him. The skin he touched.

But the other part, the one that ended up winning over, wanted all of those things. My wolf wanted my skin branded with the scent of the alpha. He cared for me. Held me close and let me cry. Looked into my eyes as he told me everything was going to be okay. My back muscles relaxed when Alex kneaded them, turned me into goo under his knowledgeable movements.

Closing my eyes, I could still feel his breath skid over my neck as he whispered in my ear.

Gods, what kind of omega was I? A cheater. A betrayer. The worst kind of shifter—one of the ones who turned their backs on what Fate granted me.

My cock bounced in my boxers as I got out of bed. That part of me felt no remorse at all.

And surprisingly, neither did my wolf. My animal had howled at the attention paid to me by the alpha. It all confused me. Emile was my mate. My fated, or so I thought. Yeah, Emile was my fated mate.

Then, why in the hell did Alex make me feel more alive in those twenty minutes than I had been in years?

I trampled over that voice that told me not to wash his scent from my skin and got into the shower, taking my time to wash everything away. Too bad the water couldn't take care of my lingering shame.

When I went downstairs to make coffee, I saw I had a missed text and a missed call.

From Alex.

He was probably calling to tell me he regretted our encounter.

I held my cup and stared at the phone for a while, letting my nerves take over. Emile's rejections in the bedroom didn't bother me after a while, but Alex's would be disastrous.

What would he even want with an omega like me? I couldn't handle my finances—my business—and if last night proved anything, it was that I didn't even have the strength to keep my problems and my emotions in check.

I shook my head. Selling everything and moving to another country was sounding sweeter and sweeter.

My wolf snarled inside me. He didn't want to be away from the alpha who took our breath away the night before.

"Hello?" he answered on the first ring, not giving me a chance to hang up or even get my bearings.

"Alex? It's West."

His response was a growl, low and deep, sending shivers the length of my body. "You didn't answer my calls."

"I keep my phone downstairs, plugged in."

I heard the sound of him sitting down somewhere. "What if there was an emergency, omega? You should have your phone close."

"It's fine. There's a landline upstairs. Is this why you called?"

Alex cleared his throat. "I called the landline. I think it's out of order. And no, that's not why I called at all."

I picked up the home phone and tested it. Sure enough, the damned thing was off. No dial tone. Had I paid the bill? “Damn it. I can’t get things together.”

Alex paused. “West, I called to check on you. About last night.”

I let out a shaky breath and wrapped my arms around my chest, wishing they were his. “If you apologize, I’m not going to be able to handle it.”

“No way in hell I’m apologizing for last night. The way you and I connected was so passionate, like a fantasy come to life. But after you ran out, I was worried I’d gone too far too soon.”

“I’m sorry. No one has touched me like that in a long time. Not even...” I couldn’t finish the statement. There was a fine line between telling the truth about Emile and bad-mouthing the man who once had been my alpha. I also recognized my flaws in the relationship, including putting up with substandard treatment and attention. “I was confused.”

“Are you still?” His voice dipped low.

“No.”

“Good. I was also calling to ask you about your business and finances. You mentioned some concerns, and I was hoping maybe we could discuss it all over dinner.” When I didn’t immediately respond, he continued, “I am really good at those things, West. Some would say genius. It’s me. I’m some.”

Laughter bubbled from my mouth. “Let it not be said that I ever turned down the help of a genius. Hey, how did you even know my number?”

“From your membership application. I am a part owner here. Remember?”

How could I forget? “I do. How about dinner tomorrow night? Here at my house?”

Alex rumbled from deep inside. The rumblings of any alpha wolf were sexy, but his called to my animal. “Are you sure? Your house?”

I nodded, looking around the place. I’d need to straighten up some—a lot. “I’m sure. Six o’clock?”

“I’ll see you then, omega. Until then, please reply to my texts so I don’t worry.” He hung up before I could respond.

Alex’s worry about me warmed me to the core.

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Alex

He is my mate.

I felt the draw to him the first time I saw him. It was at a gathering of friends, and I caught a glimpse of the young omega sitting in a corner looking lost. My wolf came on full alert, and I started over, anxious to meet him. I had never felt such a strong attraction to anyone. His downcast eyes and slumped shoulders had me wanting to know what made him so sad. Nobody could deny how good-looking he was, but not a bit of confidence clung to his form.

The room was crowded, loud voices and louder music making it hard for anyone to hear conversations more than a few feet away, or even to get to them, but my wolf's determination made it impossible not to try. His outrage at the omega's sadness sent a rumble from my chest and out my lips. Not that anyone could hear it.

I fought my way through the crowd, gaining little ground, having various people try to start conversations with me, until I vibrated with frustration. My wolf was demanding I do whatever it took to reach the omega. I finally ducked under someone's arm and emerged right where I'd seen him. But he was gone. I spent the next two hours struggling through the people in the room, unable to even ask about him since I didn't know his name and "sad omega wearing blue shirt" just didn't seem useful.

An hour later, I saw him—with Emile. A friend of mine who was totally vanilla but a good guy otherwise. Emile had his arm around the blushing omega's waist and was whispering in his ear, and he towed him toward the exit.

I tried to forget about my draw toward him, to think of him only as Emile's omega, but it was difficult, and when we encountered them at a party or gathering of any kind, my wolf's fussing made it hard to keep it together.

And now he was inviting me to his home for dinner?

I stopped on the way and picked up a bottle of good wine. West was clearly interested in me, but he had lost Emile not so long ago, and I had to be careful not to be his rebound or have him lean on me just to ease his heartache. Maybe think it was more and end up realizing he'd made a huge mistake.

Which would not only hurt him, something a dominant should try to avoid, but break me. I'd suppressed my feelings when I thought he was happy and where he should be, convincing myself that I should be glad for him. But the more we talked, the more I learned, and the less I liked what I heard.

I parked in front of his place and looked up at the lit windows. Not so long ago, Emile would have been sitting at the dining room table with West. Maybe. I was starting to have doubts about how good an alpha my friend had been. Memories of things he'd said in passing were coming back to me. He had bought that membership wanting to try new things with his omega, but was that the truth?

I'd likely never know. He was gone, I was here, and if I could keep from jumping too fast and ruining what might grow between us, I could learn if he truly did belong to me.

The door opened, and he peeked out then stepped onto the porch, lifting his hand in a wave. The porch light revealed his happy smile, and I couldn't wait a second longer before leaving the car to join him on the porch and pull him into a hug. "Hello, omega. Were you watching for me?"

“Is it okay if I was?”

I kissed him, deeply, inhaling his scent and heat. Straightening, I set him away from me and sighed. “More than.”

Dinner was great, even if I barely knew what I was eating. My whole attention was focused on the omega as he talked about his day and the weather and anything that came to mind. I wasn’t sure if I should stay the night, even if he asked, and our time in my office made me fairly sure he would.

He had lit a couple of tapers on the table, and his face in the light was so lovely, it took my breath away. When we finished eating, I helped him carry the dishes to the kitchen and clean up, continuing our conversation about his day, my work, and whether I thought he’d enjoy the club. Everything about being with him was a joy, and despite my best instincts, when he turned away from the dishwasher and bumped into me, my arms went around him, my lips were on his, and I was walking backward out of the kitchen, bringing him along with me.

He shifted away from my lips, halfway through the living room. “Up the stairs to your right.” Kissing recommenced, and how we made it the rest of the way across the room, up the double flight of stairs with a landing halfway, and into his room without landing on our heads, I will never know.

But we did, and I began to undress him the moment we crossed the threshold. His skin was warm under my palms as I pushed his shirt over his head. I’d never wanted anyone more, but I tried my best not to hurry, although my cock was throbbing, and all I wanted was to bury it balls deep in my omega. Not mine, not yet, but a male could hope.

“Please hurry,” he moaned, grinding his groin against my upper thigh. “We can have slow and sweet later, but I need you now.” He stepped out of his jeans and pushed

down his shorts, kicking off his socks along with the rest. “Now.”

It would take a better man than me to resist him bent over the side of the bed, his ass in the air and slick hole glistening in the light of the lamp by the window. One I’d been looking up at from the car. I hadn’t known it was his bedroom then, but I would from now on.

“Omega, are you sure? I want to make this good for you.”

“Don’t make me beg. Actually, I think I’m already doing that.”

“Then let’s make sure it’s very good for us both.” I grasped his hips and lifted him onto all fours. “Grab your cock.”

He shuddered, but he did as I asked, now balanced on one arm and his knees, but he was already jerking at his dick, his elbow sawing back and forth when I tested his slick. So slippery, I put the head of my cock at his hole and rocked my hips, the head disappearing inside him. Now I was the one with tremors, but I locked my legs and drove in deeper, his hot walls closing around me. In and out, faster and faster, my grunts creating a harmony with his moans until I leaned in and ordered, “Come now, omega.”

No marking...this time.

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West

Hot kisses pressed against the back of my neck. “Mmm,” Alex said from behind me. “I thought that would wake you up.”

“But why?” I giggled. Me. Giggling. I shook my head at the silliness, but at the same time lapped it all up. The alpha who had made fast then sweet, slow love to me the night before, lit up all new facets of my life.

“Because it’s almost nine, and I’m starving.” He slid his hand along my hip before wrapping it around the base of my cock. “All kinds of starving.”

We shared a shower that was anything but clean and then stumbled into the kitchen. Alex had on his jeans from the night before and nothing underneath.

“Should we order in?” he asked, fumbling with the espresso, latte, cappuccino, whatever machine. The best on the market, Emile had said, claiming he had to have it.

I shook my head. “Let me get that for you. I’d like to cook for you if that’s okay?”

Alex wrapped his arms around me and pressed his face into the crook of my neck. “I would love that, omega. Thank you. You’re so giving—in and out of the bedroom.”

Funny how one person can appreciate another more than they’d been appreciated in a lifetime.

“You weren’t so bad yourself.”

While I whipped up some French toast to be topped with blueberry-lemon compote, Alex sipped coffee and cleaned up behind me, washing bowls and utensils so there wouldn’t be a mess when we sat down to eat. Something I never managed on my own. He set the table for two and, after some coaching from me, found the maple syrup.

I really should’ve stopped comparing Alex and Emile in my head, but the contrast was so glaring, I couldn’t help myself. Emile went to the back porch in the morning, saying he needed alone time. Time to think. Time to collect his thoughts. What he really did was go outside to talk to the neighbor. It irked me. He could be cordial and friendly, making light conversation with him but not with the omega who slept in his bed.

“Where did you go there?” Alex took my cup and made me another round of espresso. He was a fast learner. It took me three times to figure out that damned machine.

“Nowhere,” I lied through my teeth.

“Tell me, West. There’s nothing you can say that will lessen how I feel about you. Good. Bad. Ugly. Mean. Even if I was a disappointing lover. Lay it on me.”

“Never that. You were”—my cheeks flamed—“spectacular. I served us both up four pieces of French toast and spooned compote onto both. “I’m feeling guilty about not feeling guilty.”

Expecting Alex to laugh, I braced myself for impact. He reached for the maple syrup and poured some on my French toast first and then his own. “There are no rules about how you are supposed to feel, West. What you feel, you feel.”

My shoulders and jaw relaxed, releasing the built-up tension that started in the moment I woke up every day. “I’m a widower, and my mate has been gone not even a year, and I’m wrapped up in you like I never was with him. I threw myself at you the moment we were alone. That’s not something to feel bad about?”

“No. No one, no matter what stage in life they are in, should feel guilty about receiving and giving love.”

He said love. Alex said love. I stabbed my French toast and stuffed a bite in my mouth, closing my eyes and trying to slow my rapid heartbeat.

“West?” he urged. He grasped the underside of my chair and slid me closer. “West. Omega, look at me.”

I opened my eyes slowly to see Alex’s lines in his forehead deepen. He was worried again. I kept doing that to him, and my wolf didn’t like it. He wanted us to settle in and be at peace—or at least lust together. This alpha had a grip on me, and I wanted it so badly.

“I’m looking.”

“There you are. Listen, let’s not label this quite yet. I think you’re beautiful and sweet. Such a lovely omega. But we’ll take this at your pace. I’m not going anywhere unless you tell me to.”

I never wanted him to leave. He should go home and pack. Or maybe I’d pack and...
“Okay.”

“Good. I thought while I was here, we could take a look at your accounts. Maybe I can set a few things straight. I hate for you to have to put out fires when balancing might be easy. May I? Would you let me help you?”

I opened my mouth to say yes, but I was ashamed of not being able to do it myself. I told him so, biting back tears.

“No shame. Not anymore. Not about us, and not about silly things like accounting. Okay?” He leaned forward and kissed my lips. “I won’t judge. I promise. You are a smart and capable male and, under different circumstances, I bet you would excel at anything thrown your way. You’ve had a bad year. Let me help you get back on your feet. Please. You’d be doing me a favor, really. When I lose sleep, I get horrendous bags under my eyes. It’s hideous, really. And how would that look at the club?”

I shook my head. “You could never be hideous, Alex. Never.”

He stood and pushed his shoulders back. “Is that right? Do you think I’m sexy and handsome, omega?”

Pushing at his chest, I laughed. “You know you are gorgeous, Alex.”

He grabbed my hands and kissed them. “It only matters if you think so. Now, where’s the computer and the pile of bills?”

“In the dining room. Let me show you.” I led him in and waved toward the table piled with the paperwork Titanic. As I looked at it, imagined what he must think, my stomach sank. “Really, you don’t have to do this. I can hire an accountant or maybe file for bankruptcy.”

He sat in the chair in front of the laptop and reached for my hand. “It’s going to be okay. Right?” He took my hand and turned it over, pressing a kiss into my palm. “Trust me?”

“I do. Yeah, I really do.”

Alex

I shouldn't have done it, not this soon. But it would take a better man than me to say no to his pleas. He was irresistible, and now that I'd had him, I didn't know how I could ever let him go again. Back at the club, it almost seemed like a dream, and I leaned back in my chair and considered what I wanted to do with all this angst. I didn't sleep around, not in the traditional/vanilla way. I did play with a variety of partners, but it didn't sound all that appealing anymore, and most of the time, it was for the sake of demonstration. Not that I didn't enjoy wielding my whip, but when it was with someone I had no emotional connection to beyond the moment, it did not hold nearly the satisfaction.

I had relationships, dating or once even living together for a couple of months, but none of those came within miles of what I was feeling for West. None had been mates, nor had I deluded myself that they were. But I cared about them and vice versa. And I gave them credit for teaching me how good something could be even when it was not a gift from Fate herself. And for a number of years of that time, my wolf and I were both aware that our mate was living in wedded bliss with Emile. My friend.

Who had been as vanilla as ice cream until the day he signed up to explore new horizons at the club I owned.

Had I pushed things too hard with West? He'd been floating since Emile's death, and I had kept my distance all that time. I should have recognized what he needed, should have put my own feelings aside and made it clear he had a friend when he had been in the throes of grief. Instead of vague comments about "call me anytime" that everyone

knew were not sincere—or not intended to imply a large commitment.

Could I have been that friend and kept my emotions at bay?

I'd never know, would I? Not now or ever.

But now that we'd crossed that line, going back would rip my heart from my chest. Probably no better than I deserved. He seemed comfortable with where we were going. Still, we had not crossed that line, had not mated or marked, and in shifter world, that would normally have happened the first time we went to bed together, if it was going to happen at all. Holding back not going there with him took every bit of control I had, but I did it.

And I was fairly certain I would not be able to manage that if we made love a second time. I needed to know whether he was on board with where I was...or if he was even ready for anything like that.

With that thought in mind, I picked up my phone and sent a text.

What are you doing? Cheesy, but effective, maybe.

Binging a series I've seen before.

While your membership at Cuffed sits idle?

Well...you're working, right? I didn't want to come down and make you feel like you had to pay attention to me.

I blinked hard. My omega's consideration was more than I deserved. What if I want to pay attention to you?

Then I'll be there as soon as I can change into a shirt without a hole in it.

Doesn't matter, since if you agree to play, your shirt will be off fast enough.

I have my pride.

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West

I stopped with my hand on my front doorknob. A rush of doubt and nervousness slid down my body and suddenly, I was rethinking every choice.

My outfit.

My shoes.

Hell, even my haircut. I'd gotten one this morning. The barber said it made me look younger, but I felt like a walking mousse commercial.

A text came through. Alex asking me if I'd left the house yet. I called him instead of texting back. His voice would give me the push I needed to see this through.

As much as I was nervous about the club and actually participating in Alex's preference, I was equally excited and intrigued.

"I should've come to get you," he answered instead of a hello.

"I'm getting into the Uber now. You had work to do. Hear that?" I shut the door of the car and greeted the driver.

Alex made a noise deep in his throat. "I'm eager to see you. I'll meet you at the front desk."

I hung up and focused on breathing in and out for the ride to Cuffed. When I arrived,

the man at the front door greeted me by name.

Interesting.

Once I saw Alex, a surge of joy threatened to make me lightheaded. I reached out to grab the desk, but he came over and wrapped his arms around me. “I’m really happy to see you too, West. Let’s get you cuffed.”

They gave me a leather bracelet and put it on my right hand after checking my ID to the chagrin of Alex.

“How about we get a drink and talk first. You’re looking paler by the second.” Alex led me to the bar with a hand on the small of my back. The music was loud, but I would swear my heartbeat was even louder. “What do you want?”

I leaned in to him. “I can’t even think straight.”

Alex tugged me against his body. “How about something sweet, like you?”

His nearness gave me instant calm. “Sounds good.”

He ordered me a dirty horchata but for himself nothing.

“Why aren’t you drinking?” I asked.

“I already had a glass before you got here. I’m nervous about what you might think of me and the things I want to show you tonight. Never been so damned nervous.”

Leaning up on my toes, I kissed his chin and then his lips. “I won’t judge you if you don’t judge me.”

One of his hands snaked around my waist and brushed my ass. “I would never. Do you want to go sit down and talk, or would you like a tour?”

“Let’s talk a bit first,” I offered. The bass of the music was beginning to soothe me. We picked a booth shrouded in darkness. It gave us a bit of privacy.

“How did my accounting setup work for you? Any issues?” Alex’s thighs pressed against mine as he faced me.

“No issues at all. I got the first notification on my phone this morning that a bill was coming up. You really helped me. Thank you.”

His dark eyes roamed my face as he smiled. “Anything for you. Tell me more about you. I find myself wanting to know everything. Your favorite color. Music. Hobbies. Interests. Last night, I was scrolling on Netflix and wondered what you would like to watch if you were next to me.”

“Oh. I like crime documentaries, and I watch a lot of movies over and over.”

Alex’s eyebrows bunched. “Because you like them?”

I shrugged one shoulder and took a sip of my cinnamon-laced drink, savoring the heady sweetness. There was almost no alcohol in it, which suited me for the moment. “It’s because I know how they end. No surprises. My psychiatrist says it’s due to anxiety. I don’t have to predict the ending or wonder if I’ll enjoy the movie.”

Alex threaded his fingers through mine. “Have you always had anxiety?”

My hand tingled. “Some.”

“After Emile’s death,” he said.

I took another sip but now it was too sweet. “It’s hard to talk about. There was a lot during our mating and then after, well, a different kind.”

“Did he hurt you?” Alex’s warm, whiskey breath fanned over my skin, raising goose bumps. “Please tell me my friend didn’t hurt you.”

“Not physically. I can’t do this.” I moved to get out of the booth, out of the club, out of this afterlife, but Alex drew me back in and pulled me onto his lap facing him. “Don’t run from me, omega. You are safe. You don’t have to talk about anything you don’t want to. I’d love to know everything about you, but I’ll only take what you give me. Nothing more.”

Our wolves reached out to each other through the bond we’d created a few nights ago in his office. The tether was thin and fragile, but our animals were connected.

“I’m so torn,” I said, holding onto Alex’s shoulders for dear life.

“I know. I’m sorry. I can take you home if you like. I pushed too hard.”

“No.” I pulled back. “You never push too hard. I want this. I’m so damned scared, but I want to have a life again and you’re a part of that. I want to explore this with you but please know that a slice of me is still mated to Emile. I’ve tried to make my feeling and my mind agree that he’s gone, but I’m struggling.”

Alex held me tighter. For a few seconds, I forgot we were in a sex club and not in our own bubble. “Tell me what you want to do tonight and we’ll do that. You’re in charge.”

I laughed. “I think you’re in charge.”

He shook his head. “No. This lifestyle is give-and-take, omega. I don’t do anything

you don't give me permission to do. You're in charge. I'm in control, but you're giving me your submission. It's empowering if you experience this life with someone you trust."

"I trust you," I said.

"Thank you. Now, have you thought of your safe word?"

Alex

I'd hinted that I wanted to get his shirt off at the club. Surely he knew what that meant? That I wanted him to experience what I did there and see if he felt any inclination toward the kink. Whether he did or not would not affect his being my mate. As long as he was comfortable with it, I could do my demos with others, and it was possible he would like other things once he'd had the chance to observe.

Emile, my late friend and his late mate, had not been very good to him, I didn't think. Or at least not in the way of meeting his needs, not even in the most basic ways. Perhaps when he bought the membership, he'd done so with that in mind? Something else we'd never know, but the idea made me think more kindly of him.

Unsure how familiar he was with anything at the club, I talked a little about control and trust and submission. There were so many options in the club and in this world, and if I was going to be his mate and his dominant, I needed to make sure they were tailored to his needs and desires even before mine. He said he trusted me, but it was going to be so new for him.

"Now, have you thought of your safe word?"

He licked his lips and glanced off to the left, not meeting my eyes anymore. "No. I don't really...I don't understand how it works exactly."

"That's all right. Why would you? Let's walk around while we talk, and I'll try to demonstrate." The stations were filled tonight, all the different kinks on display. Many people were glad to show off to those who enjoyed watching, but as we strolled

from one stop to the next, I watched for signs of excitement in my omega's expression. We passed the area where a female dominant was applying molten wax to a female submissive's nipples. Her sub was lying back on a table but not tied down in any way. As the dom painted her breasts, the sub thrashed only her head from side to side, pants emerging from between parted lips.

"Doesn't that hurt?" West asked, gripping my arm.

"About as much as the one on the opposite side." That one was two men, and the wax was being applied to an entirely different body part. A part that thrust eagerly upward in its coating.

"Oh my goodness."

"I take it that does not interest you at all?"

He shook his head. "No, I have no desire to be a candle."

I chuckled and guided him along the floor. "Fair enough. What do you think about electricity?" A friend of mine was just setting up his violet wands. "Want to see how it works?"

"Would he be using it on my tender parts?"

"Not unless you ask him to. Here, Bert, would you show West how the violet wand works?"

"Full demo on the submissive I have lined up is about to start...but here." He grinned. "Hold out your hand, subbie."

After a glance at me for reassurance, West did as ordered, extending his fist toward

Bert.

“Open your hand,” I told him. “Palm up.”

The dom trailed the wand over his heart line, and West jumped then shivered. “Oh wow. I can see how that would be titillating.”

“Maybe we’ll try it sometime.” We continued on, stopping here and there while I asked West what he thought about the activities. He liked the spanking bench. “Let’s watch the St. Andrew’s cross for a moment.”

We stopped in front of the bound omega, remaining outside the marked circle for those participating only. The dominant, someone I’d only seen in passing and did not know, was checking the wrists and ankles of his submissive before stepping back and picking up a flogger.

“Is that what you do?” West asked as the dom went to work on the sub’s exposed buttocks and thighs. “Like that?”

“Sometimes. I like impact play in general, but the whip is my favorite tool.”

“The whip,” he breathed. “Wouldn’t that scar a person? I mean, in movies...”

“In movies, no doubt you have seen mostly whipping for punishment and probably meant in a cruel way.” I stroked his cheek. “I have left marks but never a scar.”

“I think I’d like to see what that is like,” he said thoughtfully. “I mean, someday.”

“And I would very much like to share that with you.” I brushed a kiss over his lips. “When you’re ready. For tonight, if you’re willing, I would be content to take you home and give you pleasure of a more mundane sort.”

“Nothing with you is mundane, and I’d love that, alpha. But one day, I’ll be ready for more. For, for your whip.”

“We’ll see.” I hoped so, but he’d have to come to it in his own time. “Maybe we’ll start with a little spanking in privacy.”

His shiver gave me hope.

West

Alex came to my home almost every day of the week now. We'd gotten into a routine. He came over and joined me in the office. We worked together while he showed me new ways of doing things. I listened and learned and soaked in all his knowledge.

The business was thriving. Alex had made my job so automated and easy that I could get most of the work done in four hours, which begged the question as to why Emile was handcuffed to his desk and laptop for twelve hours at a time.

I tucked that inquiry into my mental pocket for exploration later, or to forget about it altogether.

Little by little, I learned to let go of those questions that would never be answered. Emile had kept things to himself and had ways of living his life that were a mystery to me even though I was the one in his bed at night and by his side for years.

In moving on, I had to accept that some answers would be buried right alongside my former mate.

"That's it?" I asked no one in particular once the tasks for the day had been completed and emails had been answered. My checklist was done.

I bounced on my toes. It was only noon. And Alex was leaning against the wall and staring at me.

“How about lunch?” I asked. “And what are you staring at?”

“A happy and beautiful man. Lunch sounds great. What did you have in mind?”

We always ate what I wanted. Alex was so easygoing.

“None of that.” I put my hands on my hips. “What do you want? My treat.” The alpha did always for me. Dinners. Movies. Lunches. He insisted.

Not this time.

“Omega,” he began, his voice dipping to his alpha tone.

“Alpha,” I mimicked, not very well, “I’m doing much better financially with your help. Let me show my gratitude.”

“Fine. You win this time. How about ordering sandwiches from my favorite shop.”

I punched my fists in the air, feeling as though I’d won a prize. Once the food was delivered, we took it to out back to enjoy the sunshine and the slight breeze. I’d asked Emile for this picnic table, and then begged for him to sit with me for lunch. He did once. I lamented the good times like that when we were spending moments on silly things when we could’ve been loving each other.

I had every intention of not wasting a moment of my life like that again.

“Where do you go?” Alex asked. I shook my head clear of my thoughts. Here I was, spending time thinking about the past when my present was so much brighter.

“Overthinking.”

He nodded, pulling me closer. “You do that a lot, mate.”

Mate.

Alex called me his mate.

I jumped up from the bench and considered all the paths I could take to run fast and hard away from this alpha and his false claims. His mate? Wait, no, maybe it was a mistake. Maybe the word simply slipped out.

A man like Alex didn’t do anything accidentally. He was purposeful in every facet of his life.

“Don’t run, West. Let’s talk about this.”

I turned to him, still braced to break out in a sprint at any moment. “It was a mistake. You didn’t mean to call me your mate.”

Alex reached for me.

I sidestepped his touch. The move didn’t please my wolf one bit.

“West, I don’t say very many things I don’t mean. I believe you are my mate. My fated.”

I reached inside for some anchor to calm me down but there was none. “I was already someone’s mate.”

This time, I allowed his touch. He held my hand. “He was your mate. Emile was your mate. And there are no rules that say Fate can’t smile on someone twice.”

Alex mentioned rules more than once. I had rules I'd put on myself. On life. On Emile. On our mating. On mourning. On being a widower. On everything I could. It was a form of control, but this beautiful male in front of me challenged my rules as much as possible.

Was he my mate?

Did I feel the same?

"I need time," I breathed out, surprised at how quickly I'd calmed down. His touch didn't hurt.

"You don't think you're my mate?" The sadness in his voice ripped me open.

"I don't know. I'm so confused and muddled. I'm not saying I am or I'm not, that you are or you're not. I need time, Alex. You promised this would all go at my speed."

He put his head down and released my hand.

My heart broke a little more each time he let out a heavy exhale.

"You're right. I'll wait a lifetime for you."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be. Don't ever be sorry for being honest. Can I hold you?" he asked. "My wolf is going nuts. Please."

Alex begging me wasn't something I ever expected, and it finished off the job of breaking my heart.

“Yes,” I answered and gave in to what my wolf wanted as well. I laid my head against his chest and wrapped my arms around his waist.

“There’s no need to respond, but I have to tell you some things. I adore you. I want you in my life whatever way you allow it. No matter what you decide, I’m always here for you. Always.”

Alex

I bought a dozen red roses on my way home, since my date with West was for breakfast. I'd gotten in from the club at nearly midnight, which was early for me. I wanted a good night's sleep, even though without my mate was restless. Mostly, I flopped around in my bed, fish-out-of-water style. But I managed to get a few hours of shut-eye in there.

He'd allowed a spanking for the first time the night before, and my palm tingled as I remembered him laid over my lap with those smooth buttocks perched at just the right angle for my perusal.

Sometimes, I spent the night with him and other nights, he stayed here but when we were apart, I felt it in my body and so did my wolf. He also woke me up at the crack of dawn to get ready.

After showering, I dressed in jeans and a light sweater. We were going to a new diner in the city. It was owned by one of my friends in the business and we wanted to support them as well as get some comforting food.

West hadn't been eating a lot lately, which concerned me, but he dismissed my worry.

I grabbed the flowers and was headed out the door when my phone rang. My mate.

"Good morning," I said, loving when he called me first. Giddy alpha, I'd become.

“Good morning. I can’t make the date today. I’m so damned sick to my stomach. I don’t think I could handle a single bite.”

“What can I do? Can I come over?” I asked.

“Sure. Your company might help.”

On the way to West’s house, I stopped at the market and picked up some things. Plain crackers. Ginger ale. Nausea medicine. Mints. Things that I knew would help with an upset stomach. I also picked up some other things, but those would stay in the car.

My wolf was suspicious, not of our omega but of these symptoms and nausea. West was touchy about all things commitment between he and I, so I had to tread lightly. Happy to do if it made him more comfortable, but I would have preferred to face the facts right then and there.

When I arrived and knocked on the door, West answered, looking worse for wear. His face was pale, his forehead shiny with sweat. He was still in his pajamas, completely out of character for him. When I’d spent the night, he showered and got dressed right out of bed.

“Come in,” he said, stepping aside.

I leaned in for a kiss but he shook his head. “I need to go brush my teeth. Two minutes.”

Shutting the door behind me, I watched as he climbed the stairs slowly. I walked into the kitchen. He hadn’t washed the dishes the night before, something he insisted on doing. He liked to put the kitchen to bed, as he called it.

“Omega, what’s going on?” I asked with my back turned. I heard him come down the

stairs.

“I’ve been sick in the mornings lately. Sometimes right out of bed. Or while I’m brushing my teeth. Other times, it’s fine and then I get a whiff of food or coffee and my stomach turns. I probably have a bug.”

“What else have you been feeling?” I asked, unloading the bag. He sat down, watching every movement. He took some of the crackers and cautiously took a bite from the corner of one.

While he chewed, his head tilted to the side a bit. “I’ve been feeling run-down. Taking naps almost every afternoon. If I smell eggs or coffee, it’s over for me. And I know this might sound weird but, some nights, it feels as though there are a thousand butterflies fluttering around inside my belly. Those things might not be related.”

This omega. He just described all the symptoms of the flu but what he didn’t know, or probably didn’t know, was that his scent had changed. I hadn’t noticed it until this morning, but it was as apparent to me now as my love for him. “Come over here and sit with me,” I said, patting my lap.

“You love it when I sit in your lap.” He laughed but got up and came over.

“You don’t? If you don’t...” I started.

“No. I do. I feel safe in your arms.”

Precisely why I wanted to have him near me when I broached the subject. The subject of my mate being pregnant.

“Good. I always want you to feel safe with me. I think I know what’s causing you all these issues, West.”

“What is it?”

“We’ve been together for months. How many times have we made love?”

A blush crept up his neck and settled in his cheeks. “A couple of times.” He and I shared a laugh. We both knew it was many times.

“I think one of those times, we might’ve made a baby.”

If I thought he was pale before, now he had zero color. Even his blush from a few seconds ago had fled the scene. “You...do you really think so?” He looked down at his abdomen and then back to me. “We need to get a test. I have to know.”

“Give me two seconds. There’s one in my car. I bought it on the way.”

He reeled back. “Did you? What a thoughtful alpha.”

I winked at him and got the test from the car. He insisted that I go in his en suite with him while he took the test.

Then we waited.

And waited.

Waited some more.

The timer on my phone went off. West’s stare met mine and I could feel the tension flowing between his animal and mine.

Fear.

Stress.

Worry.

And a little splice of hope.

“Here goes nothing,” he said and walked toward our fate.

West

I collapsed into a heap right there in my bedroom. Alex moved to catch me, but I was too fast. In my hands was the white plastic stick with the two lines that had just changed our lives with a bit of biological testing.

“Everything is going to be okay,” Alex said, sitting beside me. He wrapped me up in his arms, and I melted against his warmth.

My wolf was beyond pleased.

We were having pups—something I thought was out of reach for me for so long.

“I’m pregnant,” I whispered the obvious, hoping that saying it out loud would lessen the blow.

“You are,” he cooed.

“I have something to tell you,” I said.

His eyebrows raised. “You do? Tell me.”

“You’re my mate. I know I said I didn’t know or was confused, but I’m sure now. You’re mine. And I’m yours.” I pulled his hand from my back to my stomach. “And this cub or pup is ours.” Tears ran down my face. “You’re mine, Alex. You have been since that night in your office.”

Alex gathered me up in his embrace and pulled me into his lap. He tended to do that when I was upset, and in this moment, there was nothing I needed more. He always knew when to touch me and when to refrain, which wasn't often. "I've been yours since you came into my office. That night will be one of my most cherished memories."

"You're not mad because I took so long to know? That I made you wait?"

He cupped my face with his gentle hands. "Never. I would've waited as long as it took. Now you're making me wait on something else."

"What?" I asked, letting out a laugh.

"Are you happy, omega mine? Are you happy to be carrying my child?"

I nodded. "I'm ecstatic. I always wanted a family and babies, but Emile...I didn't think it was in the cards for me."

"Well, that's all changed now. And I'm going to spoil you rotten, both of you."

"Are you?" I asked and then paused. "Will it fade?"

Alex tugged me closer, splaying his hands on my back. "Will what fade?"

"The way we feel right now. Will it fade and we will become like roommates? Will we walk past each other with a strained smile? Stop making love? Stop caring? Never whispering good night before we fall asleep?"

"Not if I can help it. I'll try every damned day to remind you of how much you are loved and adored and cherished." He paused. "Is this something you're concerned about because of Emile?"

“Yes,” I admitted. It was one thing to make a promise to myself not to bad-mouth Emile. After all, I didn’t want to be that omega, bitching and moaning about my mate behind his back, especially after he was gone. But sharing this part of my life with Alex was different. He was my alpha and my mate, and there was nothing I would keep secret from him. “He was tender at first. Caring. Doting. Always touching me. After our mating ceremony and honeymoon, it all dulled.”

“I never knew,” Alex responded. “From the way he spoke, he treated you like a prince. I wondered why you never had children but it wasn’t my business to pry.”

“He was never mean, not often, at least, but I felt invisible. Like a piece of furniture he passed every day without notice. To everyone else, he was so charismatic and kind, but to me...we hadn’t had sex in months. Months.”

“Mmm,” Alex growled, rubbing my back. “No wonder you are so starving for affection, omega.”

“I am. I can’t get enough of you or your touch. So you see why I’m scared.”

“I won’t let that happen to us, mate. I won’t. We will have to work at this like every mated couple but I’ll never stop trying. I can’t foresee a time when I’m not on fire for you.”

“And now we’re going to have a family,” I said, putting my palms on my belly. “Want to spend the night? I don’t think I can sleep without you.”

“Didn’t plan on leaving. Mind if I cook for you?”

We got up, and I placed the pregnancy test in a plastic bag. I would keep it with some other things, commemorating our relationship and family. “I would love for you to cook for me. I haven’t been keeping a lot down during the day, but at night, I can eat

okay.”

“How about some chicken pot pie?” he asked.

“You can make that?”

“I can.”

I pushed off the table where I had been leaning. “You’ve been holding out on me.”

“There’s more where that came from. How about I run my omega a bath?”

Alex got better and better.

That night, we ate and spent the night loving each other. It had to be strange for him and his wolf to be here, surrounded by Emile’s scent and where we spent our time, but he never complained. Not once.

“West?” he prompted as we went downstairs for dessert. “Will you run with me? We can drive out to a field or something but my wolf needs to bond with his mate.”

My wolf wanted to as well.

“That sounds like a good idea. Tomorrow, I need to make an appointment with a healer.”

“Let’s run and we’ll find you the best healer in this city.”

Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:47 am

Alex

“It just makes sense, doesn’t it?” I asked Talon. We sat in the empty club before it opened. We had a meeting that afternoon between the owners and while the others had gone their separate ways, we lingered.

“Who are you trying to convince, Alex? Me or you or your omega?” He sipped on his whiskey. He always sipped. Never known Talon to get drunk—ever. And we’d been friends a long time.

“I’m trying to convince West and getting your input.”

He nodded. At home, he already had an omega and a baby. The only reason he was hanging out here when he didn’t have to be was because I asked him to. “He admits that you’re his mate. He’s carrying your young. This is the next step, right? I’m pretty sure you’re not the only one who knows this. Maybe he’s biding his time, waiting for you to ask him.”

I blew out a breath. Since West admitted that I was his mate, there had been less tiptoeing around on my part. He was still sensitive and rightfully so.

“I’m making dinner for him tonight. I’m going to ask.”

Talon chuckled low and deep, loosening his black tie. “It’s hard, isn’t it? Sleeping without them. I know I slept before Rowan but gods help me, I don’t know how. I swear when he goes to the bathroom, I wake up and search the bed for him. It’s only a half-life without our mates.”

He wasn't wrong.

"It's the hardest thing I've ever done," I agreed and finished off my whiskey in one swallow.

That night, I went to the organic food market and picked up a huge salad for two, a rotisserie chicken, and a fresh loaf of garlic and rosemary sourdough. It was a simple meal that made sure neither of us had to cook since I'd had a long day and my omega probably had as well.

The meal was nutritious, but West always wanted an after-dinner treat, so I stopped at my favorite bakery and chose a retro pineapple upside-down cake that looked amazing.

Balance, right?

When I arrived, West came out of his front door and nearly tackled me on the stairs. He wrapped his arms around my neck and his legs around my waist and kissed me until I forgot dinner, dessert, and even my name.

"I missed you," he whispered in my ear as he slid down my body, revealing exactly how much he missed me.

"I can tell. Let's feed you first."

He smiled and took one bag after a small growl of protest from me. Once inside, we tossed the salad and cut up the bread and ate together in the backyard. If it were up to me, I could've lived on rotisserie chicken, salad, and sourdough.

"This meal was perfect," West said, leaning against me as the sun set.

“It was. I brought dessert, but I wanted to talk to you about something first.”

My mate stiffened. His breath hitched. His scent went flat, losing all its sweetness.

“West, nothing is wrong. I’m not angry or upset with you. You did nothing wrong. It’s a good thing.”

“Okay.”

While he hadn’t revealed everything about Emile to me, I’d ascertained some things during the span of our relationship. He didn’t like secrets, which was fine, since I kept none. He assumed that every conversation was because I was upset with him. And sometimes he hesitated bringing things up about us because he thought I might be combative.

He didn’t have to tell me a damned thing about Emile for me to gather how he’d been treated during their mating. How had I not realized what Emile was truly like?

“You said you missed me earlier.”

He nodded. “I did miss you.”

I turned to him, wrapping my arms around his waist. “I miss you all the time, omega. I want you with me as much as possible. This living separate lives is killing me. What I wanted to ask you was...will you come and live with me?”

He blew out a long breath. I steeled myself for the negative response. To be turned down.

“I don’t know,” he said and hopped up from our sitting area and went inside. I paused for a moment, giving him time to breathe.

After I picked up our leftovers and brought them inside, I saw West, leaning against the counter, inhaling the pineapple upside-down cake. He'd said to hell with a knife and dug in with his hands. Nervous omega.

"You want me to sell this place?" he asked.

"I never said that. I asked you to move in with me so I can have you with me as much as possible and when our babe is born, have he or she with me as well. I want to see my pup grow up, West. Not just have visitation here and there. I want to be with you and them for it all." I walked over and leaned down, taking a bite of the cake from his hand. "There's something missing when you're not around, West. I love you."

Tears welled in his eyes and he dropped the cake back into the box. He leaned his head on my chest and sighed. "Alex, I love you too. I don't know what I want to do with the house."

I shrugged, kissing the top of his head and rubbing his back. "One day, you'll make the decision. No pressure. No hurry."

"Then I say yes. We say yes."

West

“Let’s take a walk around the house to make sure we have everything you need.” Alex wrapped his arm around my waist. I stretched my neck one way and then the other, trying to relieve some of the stress of moving.

I still hadn’t decided what to do with the house. It was a beautiful home, inside and out. I loved every part of it, but it was my home with Emile. Alex and I were starting something new.

“Sure.” I started up the stairs, remembering how Emile wanted each step wiped down by hand. He always said he would get to it, but I ended up taking on the task just to please him.

Of course, he never appreciated any of that.

As we perused the bedrooms upstairs, I cleared my mind of the bad memories. Sure, we had good ones. Emile could be charming and funny at times, but those were sparks and glimmers in a relationship that was otherwise stale and neglectful.

No matter how good an omega I tried to be, I couldn’t make him love me more.

“You want me to leave you alone to do this? You seem lost in thought.”

He removed his arm and turned to go. As hard as this was for me, seeing me sad about leaving this house had to be difficult for him.

“No, mate. Stay with me. I’m just saying goodbye.”

“To Emile?” His expression didn’t change, but my wolf felt the wave of sadness emanating from his.

“No. To a life I don’t live anymore. I’m moving on with you—with our cub—toward something better.”

We moved to the guest bedroom downstairs where Alex opened up the closet. “There’s a sweater in here. Do you want to bring it or leave it here when you decide what to do with the house?”

I walked over and reached for the top shelf where the sweater sat folded. Alex touched my belly gently, and I gave up reaching. My mate often rubbed my belly as a sign he would prefer to do whatever I was doing. He would never tell me what to do but whatever he did, he did because he cared for me and was protecting me.

“Here you go,” he said, handing me the sweater.

It was Emile’s. One he had told me he lost. Perhaps he’d placed it here and thought he had. I added it to the list of things I would never understand, to the list of things I simply had to make peace with never knowing. “Thank you.”

I worked on detaching myself from this place and as I got to the front door, satisfied with our look-over, I left the sweater on a shelf meant for keys and such and sighed. “I’m ready.”

Alex nodded and wrapped his arms around me from behind. “Then let’s go. I’m planning on dinner in bed and a massage for my mate.”

“No. I mean, yes, that too. I think I want to sell this place. I thought about us

renovating it or remodeling it to suit our needs, but we need a new space. A place you and I can call home.”

“If you don’t like my home, let’s find a new one.” His chin was on my shoulder as both hands made circles along my ever-growing belly. I had to put on one of his shirts this morning since mine were getting tight.

“Maybe. But your home is fine for now. I’m thinking about the future. With the money from the sale of this one, we can find a great place with room for our cubs to run.”

Alex stiffened behind me. “Mate, did you just say cubs? As in plural cubs?”

“I did. Did you only want one?”

His hands roamed down my belly and grazed over my zipper. “No, I want all the babies you will give me.”

“Hey, Alex?”

“Yes, mate.”

“Let’s go home and change.”

He walked around and came to face me. “Change? What’s going on in that pretty head of yours?”

“I thought we could stop by the club. Have some fun.”

My alpha’s eyes flashed with darkness as one of his eyebrows rose. “We’ll have to be gentle with you.”

“I need the release,” I moaned.

“Yes, you do. I can see that. Plus, I can’t deny my mate. But you have to eat first. You haven’t had anything since lunch.”

“Yes, Sir.”

He gave me a warning growl. The sound shot straight to my dick. “Save it for the club.”

Alex

My mate had a great business. Emile might have sucked the big one as a mate—my words not West’s—but once I showed West how to run it, he showed a real talent. Apparently my late friend had failed to give him the tools he needed. My mate was very smart and savvy and creative. My business and the club were also rocking, and all that was great, but it was making it hard to spend as much time together as I wanted.

“Come to the club tonight.” I’d called him before leaving my other office. “I’ll stop by and pick you up, and we can have some fun.”

He snorted. “I’m afraid I have outgrown all my club wear.” He had stopped by every so often, and although we enjoyed watching others together, he’d gotten pregnant so early that we had not managed to do any kind of real playing. But he had worn some great outfits before his belly got too big to fit in them. “You have fun. I’ll be at home.”

“You know I don’t have fun without you.” And if he didn’t, I was doing something wrong.

“But you do need to be there, and I am so huge, they’d need to widen the doors just to get me in.”

“That’s it. Nobody is allowed to talk like that about my lovely omega. I’ll be there in a couple of hours so I won’t have any work hanging over me. We can grab a bite on the way.”

“Fine,” he grumped. “But don’t blame me if everyone points and snickers.”

“Still talking like that? The spanking bench awaits.”

“Like I’d fit on it.”

Which he of course did not, but it didn’t matter at all because I needed a plan to make him realize how lovely he truly was, and I thought I knew what it would be. A pregnant omega needed to be treated gently, but a master could make it work. He’d been more and more into one particular art as we visited the club, and I’d taken advantage of my evenings there to up my game with a future demo in mind. After the baby came.

But the more I thought about it, the more I recognized that he needed to know how beautiful he was and to do it publicly. I only hoped he wouldn’t hate me for it.

“Dinner was great,” he said, sitting back in the passenger seat and sighing. “But my belly is even bigger now.”

I bent over and examined it. “Maybe a little. Looks great to me.”

He shook his head. “You’re prejudiced.”

“Probably, but everyone in the club is going to take one look at you and be jealous.”

“I would argue but you told me not to put myself down.”

I gave him a big kiss on the lips before starting the car. “And you remembered this time.”

“Ha ha. I always remember, I just don’t usually agree.”

With no further discussion, I drove us to the club where we entered and paused to chat at the front desk for a few minutes. West turned over his phone. Being my mate did not protect him from having to follow the rules. Rules that included restrictions on what a pregnant omega could do. So, no whip for sure. Only light impact play. But what I had in mind?

Perfectly fine.

We strolled around, seeing what was going on, but I gradually steered him toward the station I'd reserved for us. It stood open when we got there.

"Oh, no." West's disappointment was palpable. "Maybe someone will show up soon. I was looking forward to this."

I bit my lip to suppress my smile. "Then you're in for a treat."

"There will be a demo? Or at least a scene? Did you look at the schedule?"

"There will be a demo slash scene, yes. And I didn't have to look at the schedule to know that." Cupping his chin, I brought his lips to mine and kissed him deeply. "Undress."

He stumbled back. "No, you can't mean...you don't...that is, I can't be naked in front of all these people. Besides, you are a whip guy and this is the shibari station."

"I'm well aware, omega, of what this station is. I've been practicing here every afternoon for two weeks. Now...are you going to undress?"

"Who were you tying up?" He was jealous?

I was very glad I could reply, "I've been working with the dom and his omega who

were kind enough to tutor me. Now...strip.”

His cheeks flamed and he planted both palms on his belly. “You don’t have enough rope for this.”

“There will be a spanking in your future, omega. I warned you not to speak that way about yourself. Now, I have plenty of rope. While you get ready, I have someone bringing a chaise lounge for you to lie on.”

“What if I say no?”

“If you don’t want to proceed at any point, use your safe word.”

He chewed on his lower lip, watching two security guys carry in the lounge. “And if I do, I won’t be in trouble?”

“No. I’ve explained how safe words work. If you use it, everything stops, and it’s all fine.”

He stiffened then relaxed, his lips curving up in a small smile. “In that case, you’ll have to help me get my shoes off.”

I’d never wanted to take pictures of anything more than my omega in the coils of rope. I’d learned how to use the ropes to enhance the beauty of his pregnant body without putting any strain on him. The omega I’d practiced on was not pregnant, but we used a pillow and a belt, and everything I’d learned carried over. My trainers were present in the watching crowd, and as I coiled the rope and tied them in what was not nearly what they were capable of, the magic of the process was deep in my soul. I’d never have tried it if not for West’s interest, but I was very glad I had.

When we finished, I sat on the edge of the chaise and drank in what the ropes only

framed. And the comments of those around us were nothing but complimentary. West was deep in sub space—another reason I'd have to learn more and use this art on him often, but I would be sure to remember and repeat what those watching had said.

They were in awe of him.

As I was every day.

West

It was after four in the afternoon, and I hadn't seen my mate since very early that morning. When we started dating, Alex delegated things to others or rearranged his schedule to meet mine, but for the last couple of weeks, we'd been ships passing in the harbor.

He came. I went.

I was busy. He was busy.

The only time we saw each other was at night, when we both collapsed into our bed.

I didn't like it and, furthermore, I hated the way my mind instantly compared this relationship to the deteriorating one I had with Emile.

"West?" Alex called from downstairs.

"I'm up here."

"Hey, beautiful. I brought you something." He revealed a bouquet of peach-colored roses. "You were napping. I'm sorry."

I tried to get up but was wider and broader than all outside. "I woke up a few minutes before you got home."

He came over and sat behind me, using his strength to help me to a sitting position.

“If you’re tired, I completely understand but I was hoping I could take my lovely omega on a date tonight. I made a reservation.”

I paused, almost crying. Shame on me for thinking that Alex was anything like Emile.

“That sounds great. Is it fancy? I don’t have a lot of things to wear.”

Alex chuckled. “First of all, you would look good in anything you wore. But second, your alpha took care of that. There’s a bag right outside the door with a new outfit just for tonight. Reservations are in an hour. Do you think you can get dressed that fast?”

A night out with my alpha. Hell yeah, I could. I didn’t bother answering him. Instead, I showered and got dressed in record time. Alex picked out a dark-gray button-down and some black slacks with a stretchy waistband.

“There you are. You look stunning.”

I slouched. “I look like a whale.” Climbing down the stairs, I felt his stare and it wasn’t a happy one.

“Didn’t we talk about those disparaging comments about yourself?”

I scoffed. “You talked. I listened.”

“But you’ve been so good. This is the first time I’ve heard one of those nasty comments in weeks, and then today you’ve been a naughty omega twice. Twice.”

“I’m sorry. It’s tough getting used to this body.”

He hugged me tight. “I can’t imagine but I don’t like you calling my mate names.

He's too precious to me."

"Maybe you'll have to punish me later."

Alex pursed his lips. "I think it's time to give you that spanking you earned a while ago and a few extra swats for tonight."

I intended to come back with something smart but my stomach interrupted the conversation. If I could go one hour without being hungry, that would be fantastic.

"Food is in order. I've got two wolves to feed. Come on."

The place wasn't ultra-fancy like some of the restaurants he'd taken me. The atmosphere was quiet, too, I supposed, since it was a weekday.

We ate together and held hands but something was on his mind. My stomach tangled in knots over it.

"I wanted to talk to you about something, West. And I owe you an apology."

Not what I expected. "I can't see how but go on."

"I'm so sorry for these last few weeks." He moved his chair closer and took both my hands in his. "I haven't been home as much as I wanted or you needed. That was wrong of me."

I nodded. "I have missed you."

He leaned in and swept a gentle kiss over my lips. "I have missed you so much. This morning, I decided enough was enough. I was sitting there, ordering things for the club and balancing texts and had other screens open, and I realized I was at my

breaking point. So, I did some finagling. I delegated a bunch more tasks to other people. I gave myself a firm schedule at the club and will cut back at work, too. None of that or the income is as important as you. This way, I will be free to have more time with you and eventually more time with the baby. Actually help raise my family instead of being an absent father.”

Tears ran down my face. Happy tears. Relieved tears. “Are you serious? You did all of that for me?”

His smile would light up the world if it weren’t for the sun. “I would do anything for you. Don’t you know that by now?”

“I do.”

We shared an embrace. He wiped away my tears while the waiter served us one of each dessert.

Because we were celebrating.

“How about a movie?” Alex prompted once we were done. We’d overstayed our welcome at the waiter’s table, but I knew my mate would compensate the young man enough for three tables. “There’s that new drive-in. They’re showing some Hitchcock movies.”

“Hmm, not sure I’m in the mood for horror.”

He leaned in. His mouth barely grazed my earlobe. “Then we can sit in my car and not watch the movie at all. I’m sure we will come up with some way to pass the time. Besides, you love movie theater popcorn.”

I did.

“You just want to get lucky in a movie theater.”

He chuckled low and deep, running his hand along my inner thigh. “You have no idea. Come on, it’s a little fantasy of mine.”

“Race you to the car.”

Alex

Making love to my mate at this stage of pregnancy was something I looked forward to every night when I came home. Which was lucky because my mate was very into it. “Keep your hands out of the way, omega, or they could get hurt,” I cautioned. “I can bind them for you, if it will help.” He had finally decided on the safe word pineapple since it seemed unlikely to come up during sex or any other kind of play. “Would you like that?”

“I don’t know.” His voice was tight, tense. “It’s a little scary.”

“But in a good way?” I stroked circles over his cheeks, one then the other. Slow, hypnotic, soothing. “It takes discipline not to try to cover yourself when the spanks start coming hard and fast. And trust that I might hurt but will never harm you.”

“I trust you, alpha. And I earned this.”

“Tell me what you did to earn it.” I continued to rub, warming the skin.

“I put myself down.”

“And?”

“And I continued to do it even after you reminded me a bunch of times.” He braced his hands on the floor.

“I thought you’d stopped but then you did it again.”

He nodded. "Do your worst."

"Never say that, omega, and always remember your safe word. Understood?"

"Yes, alpha." He drew in a long, shuddering breath, and let it out. "Do your best, then." His belly cradled in my lap helped his bottom to stick up higher. So sexy.

He could make me laugh in even the most intense moments, but when the stroking stopped and the spanking began, his cock was rock hard against my thigh, his breathing harsh, and he never once spoke his safe word.

West's reddening ass cheeks had me every bit as hard, the heat under my palm growing, the slick tracing down his leg more than a sign that he was ready for me. He liked this, loved it. "Omega, you were born for me."

His hands stayed on the floor, his bottom still lifted toward me, and I parted his cheeks and tested his hole, the slick allowing my fingers to glide inside.

Normally, I would spank a lot longer, but this omega's unspoken pleas would never go unanswered, and I stood him up, unzipped my pants, and released my cock, then sat him on it. The swollen head passed his tight muscle ring with ease, and he sank down, engulfing me by inches until I was balls deep inside him. We moved faster and faster, and I reached between us and gripped his cock, jerking him firmly until he spilled on my lap and the scent reached my nose, driving me wild. With a roar, I stood and flipped him over onto the bed, somehow managing to stay connected. Three fast thrusts, and my cum poured into his body, my knot swelling. "I'm going to mark you tonight." We were acknowledged mates, but we'd never done this important thing. This critical thing. "If you permit me."

"Please mark me, alpha." He let his head fall to the side. "I want to wear your brand."

“My pleasure.” My fangs lowered, and I inhaled his scent. Arousal overwhelmed even the fragrance that told me he carried my child. Our child. “Mine.” My fangs pierced his skin, and the salty, coppery tang of blood filled my mouth. I swallowed before lapping the wound closed and arranging us in a comfortable position to wait out my knot that was showing no signs of abating. What if it never did?

Somehow I couldn't see a downside to being attached forever to my omega. Of course, the knot did go down, but that was no reason to stop cuddling, so I didn't. I simply turned him away and helped him to set his body pillow in place to support his stomach then spooned him, nuzzling the spot on his neck that would bear my mark for the rest of his life. And I went to sleep with one hand resting on the bump that held our child.

My last thought as sleep took me was that my omega liked spanking. It was a good start.

West

“There’s a screw left. Oh, no. There are two screws left.” Picking up the tiny things was a project of its own.

“Maybe they sent us more screws than we need?” Alex suggested, shrugging. I hadn’t requested he put our baby’s crib together wearing only low-slung pajama pants, but I was so not mad about it. I sat in the rocking chair while he worked, the planes and valleys so alluring as his muscles tensed and relaxed.

I was mated to some kind of demigod.

“Maybe.”

Alex stood and made a show of shaking the crib this way and that and deemed it stable. He turned around, hands on his hips. “Our cub won’t be creating earthquakes in there so I’m sure it’s fine. Let’s get the bed made up. First, the mattress.”

We made up the bed, and Alex laid the rug down.

“That’s it, I think.” We stood back and admired our work.

“It’s a beautiful room, but I plan on having our babe as near as possible. At least for the first year.”

Alex wrapped his arms around the top of my waist since that was the part of me he could encircle. Gods, I was getting huge. “That’s why we got the cradle for the

bedroom, West. And the Moby Wrap to keep them near.”

I shook my head. “Silly of me. I’m possessive over our cub and they’re not even out of my body yet.”

“That just means you’re going to make an amazing father. But I already knew that. You take such good care of me.”

I leaned to the side and kissed his head. “Here, I thought it was you who took care of me.”

“We take care of each other. Oh, look what time it is. We have to get to your healer appointment.”

We rushed out the door and made it to the appointment with no time to spare.

“Good afternoon, you two. Are we excited to see your little one?”

Until the healer mentioned the ultrasound, I’d been too busy rushing to the appointment to let my nerves get the best of me.

“We are,” Alex answered, squeezing my hand. Our cub tumbled inside me. Maybe he knew he was about to be in a tiny movie and wanted to show off.

I hoped he had Alex’s dark eyes. A little Alex running around would be my dream come true.

“Now, Alex, I’m going to lift your mate’s shirt and put some of this gel on his belly. Then I will take this wand and move it around to get a clear picture.”

Alex sat on the stool next to the bed and laughed. “Yes. I’ve seen ultrasounds on TV

and movies.”

The healer chuckled. “Yes, but many an alpha has growled or nearly attacked me for touching their mate. Never can be too careful.”

The screen lit up as the healer smoothed the wand along my belly. The gel was cool. “Oh, there they are. Look at that.”

On the screen, I saw blobs and circles encircling more circles but nothing that looked like a baby. “A little help?” I laughed.

“Sure,” the healer said. “There is the head and the legs. Oh, I forgot to ask. Did you want to know the sex?”

I deferred to Alex. We had discussed it before, and I wanted it to be a surprise.

My mate smiled. “Can you tell me and not him? He wants it all to be a surprise.”

“No!” I said. “If you know, then I’m going to fold and make you tell me.”

“Okay, okay.” Alex put his hands up, palms out. “No reveal. Let’s get back to the important stuff. Everything look healthy to you?”

“Let me take some measurements but yes, right now, this one is a feisty baby. Lots of movement. Good growth from what I can tell. Womb looks healthy. One minute.”

The healer took all kinds of screenshots of measurements and then printed out plenty of pictures for us to keep.

“Everything is going very well,” the healer said, slapping his thighs after cleaning my belly up. “Measurements are right where they should be. Is there anything you have

questions about or concerns?”

We talked a little about nutrition and making sure I avoided caffeine. I had done that the entire pregnancy and while I wasn't pleased about it, I knew it was best for our little one.

We left the healer with smiles. After today, we would be going in more frequently to do checks since I was nearing my due date.

“Our cub's gonna be here before we know it,” Alex said.

“They are. I'm excited but a little scared too.” Admitting that was tough.

“About the labor or about being a daddy?”

My stomach swirled with worry. “Both.”

Alex reached over to me in the car and took my hand in his. “It's okay to be scared. It's okay to worry.”

I sighed. “I want to be strong for you and for our cub.”

Alex stopped on the side of the road. “Listen to me well, omega. You can be strong and afraid at the same time. It's called bravery, and you are one of the bravest people I know.”

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Alex

I was downstairs at home, finishing up some ordering for Cuffed when my wolf stirred inside me. He was well aware of our mate's movements upstairs. West had been restless lately, at the very time his body needed him to rest. And I was working at the house as much as possible.

The healer wanted him to take it easy, but my omega had no plans to do so. Lately, he would often get up in the middle of the night to pace the house, claiming he was achy or couldn't get comfortable.

It was times like these that I wished I could be pregnant in his place. To carry the weight of our child. To endure the changes and fluctuations. Take all the discomfort away from him.

And that part had only just begun.

If I was honest with myself, I didn't know how I was going to be able to handle seeing him endure the pain of labor.

My mate in excruciating pain? Even if it was going to end with the arrival of our child.

I shut my laptop and went upstairs with some red raspberry leaf tea the healer said would help West bring in his milk supply and have it be plenty once it was time to chest feed. Plus, West loved the taste of it, and it seemed to soothe him a bit.

“I brought hot tea,” I said, walking into our bedroom. How I ever thought this place was home without him was beyond me. We could live in a box, and it would be home because of his presence.

“And you brought me a hot alpha. Yummy.”

West paused near the bed, his hands resting on his lower back. “Are you hurting?” I asked.

“A little. Bit of a backache. Nothing to fret over.”

I chuckled, setting his tea on the night table. “Fretting is my favorite. How can I help?”

“Let’s watch our show.”

“That I can do. Come on, I’ll rub your back while we watch.”

Our show was House of the Dragon . West was obsessed. It was mostly his show, but I would watch just about anything if it meant more time with him.

He sat in front of me, commenting about some dragon while I rubbed his lower back, kneading and stretching his muscles. It must’ve been tough for him to carry this load alone, so I did what I could to lift some of it. He drank all of his tea and lay next to me but before his head rested against my chest, he groaned.

“Ugh, gods, I have to pee.”

“Let me help you.”

I went around to his side of the bed, and he held on to me while standing up.

“Oh...” He gripped my arms tighter.

“What is it?” I asked, looking for something broken.

“I’m so embarrassed. I think... Mate, I think I peed myself.”

A puddle surrounded his feet but had no odor of ammonia. “I don’t think that’s urine, West. Did you feel a big whoosh? Like the healer said?”

His eyes widened. “My water broke.”

“Yes. Your water broke. Stay put. I’m going to grab a towel and then we’ll get you into the shower.” I demanded my voice be steady and solid. He needed me to be.

“Shower. Yes. Then we start the plan.”

I nodded. “That’s right. We have the plan. You’ll shower. I’ll be right on the other side of the door making calls. We have a plan. We are going to be calm and have this baby.”

West smiled. “We’re about to be a family.”

“No,” I said, kissing his lips briefly. “You and I have always been a family. Now we’re adding a little one. You’ve got this.”

“I do. You and me. We’ve got this.”

West

“I can’t believe this is happening,” I said as I cleaned up in the shower. I was speaking to myself, mostly. Alex’s stomps could be heard all over the house. He was calling the healer. Getting things ready. We had a plan. Of course we did. Alex was the most organized and responsible person I knew.

Once I stepped out, Alex was there, holding out a white towel almost as pale as he was. “Everything is going to be okay.”

“I hope you’re right. I...oh.” A powerful pain pulsed against my lower spine and then gripped my entire back in a vise of pressure and pain that made me see stars. “That’s two minutes, Alex. Two minutes since the last one. This baby is coming.”

“We haven’t set up the tub or anything.”

I laughed while gripping the vanity counter. “This baby doesn’t care, apparently. Just...lay some blankets on the floor, mate.” My wolf spoke through me, which I hadn’t realized he could do until that moment.

“We’re having this baby without a healer?”

I nodded. “We are. We have to trust my body and my wolf. They both know exactly what they’re doing. We’re just here for the show.” I cried out as another burning pain ripped through me. I could feel my channel begin to widen, making way for the baby.

My wolf took over, forcing me to my knees as soon as the blankets were spread out.

Alex kneeled behind me and removed the towel still hanging from my hips. “You’ve got this, Alex. You’re doing amazing.”

His warm hands caressed my hips and back as contraction after contraction ripped through me. I was rocking on my hands and knees back and forth when I heard the front door open. Alex called out to the healer. Once he was in the room, he kneeled in front of me. “Looks like you’ve got this all under control, omega. Let the pains come through you. They are welcoming your child. Alex, are you seeing the head yet?” My vision was a bit hazy as a huge pain tore through me. My back entrance ignited in some kind of ring of fire.

“I see the head. Oh, gods. I see our baby. Should he push again?”

The healer kept my gaze. “Big breath in. Only a few more pushes.”

I did as he said.

“Excellent. Now, when you breathe out, push that babe out of you.”

I took one long breath and exhaled with the loudest yell I could muster, and my muscles relaxed as a weight left my body.

“I’ve got him. I’ve got him!” Alex yelled.

The healer said something to me. I didn’t know what, but he rushed behind me and helped Alex with the baby, I supposed.

I was so damned tired.

“I need to see him,” I said.

“Of course you do, omega. We’re bringing you your son. Let’s get you on your back.”

The healer helped me over and laid a small body on my chest. “West, say hello to your son.”

Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:47 am

Alex

West had popped the last bite of his sandwich into his mouth when Benji grunted and scissored his legs in his cradle underneath the window. I chuckled, removing the tray from my mate and placing it on the dresser before going to get our son.

“He knows.” West laughed and climbed out of bed. “He knows when I’ve finished eating and it’s his turn.” He eased into the recliner I’d bought for the living room but brought up here once I saw how comfortable it was for West to chest feed in.

“Do you know?” I asked our son as I lifted him from the cradle. He was still doing the infant scrunch, pulling his knees up to his tummy when I lifted him. “Do you know when your papa is finished eating?”

I changed his diaper while West took off his shirt and prepped for our son to eat. We’d made it through Benji’s first growth spurt a few days ago, and he finally gave West a break on the round-the-clock feedings.

My omega had been a champ through the whole thing. A star even. He never complained. He’d gotten accustomed to letting me know what he wanted and when he wanted it. Of course, I’d learned his cues as well.

He never let Benji cry. We had learned his physical movements and his grunts well enough to preempt his needs.

“Here you go, Papa.” I handed Benji to West, and he latched on instantly.

“Water?” West asked me as I leaned down to kiss his lips.

“On my way. Anything else?”

“Let’s talk about something when you get back.”

“Sure,” I answered and sprinted down the stairs with his cup in hand. I filled it and grabbed a bowl of fruit for him. Feeding our babe made him thirsty and hungry.

Once I got back upstairs, I sat on the bed next to West as he fed Benji. “You wanted to talk about something, omega?”

“I did. And it’s actually more than talk. I did a thing.”

I cocked my head. “What is it?”

“I asked Talon and Rowan to keep Benji for the night. It’s been eight weeks since I gave birth, and I’m all healed up.”

“What about the feeding?” I asked, my eyes darting to our son, who was taking great gulps of his papa’s milk.

“I pumped enough for the night and half of the day tomorrow. We’ll pick him up at noon.”

“Are you sure?” I asked.

“Do you...do you not want to? I know my body has changed, and I’ve got some weight to lose, but...” Tears welled in his eyes.

“Oh, West. Please don’t say anything like that. I want you more today than I ever

have. I'm...we've never had him away from us."

West chuckled and reached for my hand. "He'll be okay for one night, Alex. I need time with you. Just me and you. I'm craving my alpha."

"Me too, omega. Me too."

Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:47 am

Bronson

The other owners were out for the night. Talon and Alex's omegas had suggested a double date and they'd complied. The others were somewhere else.

Whipped, they were. I envied them.

"Another whiskey sour?" Samuel asked, already picking up the whiskey bottle.

"No," I said, covering my glass with my hand. "Just one for tonight. Thank you."

"Boss," one of the bouncers said, coming up behind me. I hated when people came up behind me. Reminded me of my past. A trickle of fear made its way down my spine.

I growled, "What?" I stood and turned around, shoving my back against the bar—where it was safe.

"There's something you should see."

Pushing off the bar, I followed Rath through the club and to the back exit. He unlocked it and we walked out. Usually this was where the owners exited the building. Talon had his own exit from the back of his office, but the rest of us used this door.

"Well?" I barked. "What is it?"

"He's over here."

He?

We walked around one of the dumpsters and in between them was a crumpled man. An omega. One that looked worse for the wear.

“Let’s get him out.”

Rath and I pulled the body out gently. I pushed my fingers to the omega’s throat. “He’s alive but barely. Call an ambulance.”

Rath pulled out his phone and paced while he talked to the operator.

The omega’s hand slapped mine several times.

I leaned down. “What’s your name?” I asked. “Who did this to you?”

“Please. Just let me die. It’s better this way. Let me fucking die.”

Not on my watch.

Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 11:47 am

I've been on the run for so long. Can't remember the last time I slept in a bed that belonged to me. Had a phone that held contacts. Didn't live out of a threadbare duffel bag.

I fell for the wrong alpha. I left him and now, true to his promise, I was paying the price for abandoning him.

Until one night, looking for somewhere to sleep, a car hit me as I crossed the street.

With broken ribs and the taste of blood in my mouth, I hobbled to the nearest place where I thought I would be out of the way of prying eyes and any of my ex's goons only to have someone come out and drag me from my hiding place.

An alpha who smelled like peaches and cream. Except it was too late. I was too broken and my ex wouldn't stop until I was dead.

The best thing for this man to do was leave me be, let me fall into the darkness in peace.

Such a Brave Omega is the third book in His Alpha Desires, the highly anticipated M/M Mpreg shifter series by USA Today Bestselling Author Lorelei M. Hart and featuring the members and staff of the hottest new club in town. Such a Brave Omega features an alpha club owner who wants to help an omega who won't tell the secrets endangering his life,, sweet heat, sizzling heat, new beginnings, healing, true love, fated mates, an adorable baby (or two) and a guaranteed HEA.