

Chapter 41 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

I cannot tell whether I am anxious or excited to go to work and see Axel. Yesterday's discovery that I am in love with him, caught me by surprise. And as exhilarating as it is to know how I feel about him, so devastating it is because I know it is hopeless.

I told Drew not to pick up for work. I want to take the bus. Not that I am avoiding Axel, I am simply buying time to mentally prepare myself. What if I stare at him like a lovesick puppy and embarrass both of us?

"Good morning," I greet Juliana and come to an abrupt standstill when I look at my desk.

"What's this?" I ask as I lean forward to smell the bouquet of orange roses.

"That came for you a minute ago," Juliana smiles. "It's lovely, who's it from?"

"I have no idea," I laugh nervously as I put my handbag down and hang up my jacket. Axel will not dare send me flowers at work, will he? I cannot think of anybody else that would do it. "I was going to ask you that."

"Well, read the card and tell me," she laughs.

"I didn't even notice the card," I grin sheepishly as I pick it up and start reading.

There is a language, little known,

Lovers claim it as their own.

Its symbols smile upon the land,

Wrought by nature's wondrous hand;

And in their silent beauty speak,

Of life and joy, to those who seek

For Love Divine and sunny hours

In the language of the flowers.

–The Language of Flowers, London, 1875

You don't want to hear my words.

So, I'll say it with a flower.

Orange roses for the one I desire.

L.C. xoxo

“So,” Juliana looks at me eagerly. “Who’s it from?”

“I ... uhm, just a guy,” I say flustered as I put the card into my handbag.

“Just a guy?” Juliana raises her eyebrows. “Honey, by the look on your face, he’s many things and ‘just a guy’ isn’t one of them.”

“I’ve seen him twice, Juliana,” I sigh and avoid eye contact as I turn on my computer. “You’re reading more into this than there is.”

“If you say so,” Juliana pouts and I know she does not believe me.

My fingers are slightly trembling as I type in my password. The roses are completely unexpected. Not to mention the note. It is both romantic and disturbing.

I already told Luther I am not interested but it does not seem to deter him one bit. And yes, it is very flattering, but I want Axel ... whom I cannot have.

I know I am an idiot for loving Axel. I am setting myself up for heartache and pain. It would be wise to give up now and seek love elsewhere. With a man like Luther. If only I could switch off my emotions or redirect them. As gorgeous and nice as Luther is, he does not send my heart racing as Axel does.

The phone rings and Juliana answers before I can. She talks to Shelly and looks at me as she puts the phone down.

“Heads up, Axel is on his way and Angela is tagging along,” Juliana rolls her eyes.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake,” I grunt and close my eyes. “It’s too early for her.”

“As if there’s any hour suited for her,” Juliana snorts.

“There is,” I sigh. “Witching hour.”

Juliana bursts out laughing just as the elevator's door opens. My heart skips a beat as Axel steps out of the elevator but calms the second I see Angela.

"Good day, ladies," Axel smiles and goes to stand at Juliana's desk. "You're in good spirits this morning."

"Well, sir, it's a beautiful morning," Juliana swallows the last of her laughter.

"I can only imagine how much since your husband send you roses," Axel smiles leisurely.

"Oh, they're not mine," Juliana laughs. "It's Liana's."

"Interesting," Axel turns to me, and my heart drops to my feet. He does not seem pleased at all. "Did you acquire a love interest over the weekend, Miss Erickson?"

"Well, I ..."

"I told you, Axel," Angela cuts me off as she comes to stand next to Axel and glares coldly at me. "She's nothing more than a pretty face with open legs."

"Angela!" Axel's voice whips through the air and instantly everybody goes quiet. "I warned you before about your attitude towards my personnel."

"I'm sorry," Angela shrugs but she does not look sorry at all. "It slipped out. I'm only looking out for you after Saturday night and ..."

"Get out!" Axel bellows as he points towards the elevator.

"But ..."

"Now, Angela," Axel cuts her off. "I had enough."

"Fine," she huffs and pulls her shoulders back. "I'll see you tonight."

Axel gives me a deathly glare as Angela walks away before he marches to his office.

"Juliana," he shouts over his shoulder. "Bring your notepad and hurry."

"Oh, dear," Juliana whispers as he slams the door shut behind him. "Angela really did it this time. He was in such a good mood and now she ruined it."

I do not respond as I look absentmindedly at my computer screen. Axel made it clear from the very beginning that I am not allowed to get romantically involved with other men and I kept my part of the deal. But with the flowers and Angela's harsh judgement, he might very well think I have overstepped.

“Listen here, missy,” Angela hisses and I look up in surprise. I did not hear her come back.

“Weren’t you ordered to leave?” I raise my eyebrows. “Or would you like me to ask Axel to repeat himself?”

“Let me make myself clear,” Angela sneers as she leans closer to me. “Axel is mine. I get that he’s scratching an itch by fucking you occasionally but don’t think for a second that it will last. He and I will be engaged by the end of this week and mark my words, you’ll be gone before I finish my first glass of champagne.”

“Is that supposed to scare me?” I grunt as I slowly raise out of my chair. As much as the idea of her and Axel together irks me, so much more would I like to slap her false eyelashes off her face. And I know she is right, Axel will toss me aside once he is done with me, but I will be damned before I let her know how I feel. “Do you think I care? Look at my flowers, bitch. I already have the next candidate lined up. But for the rest of your life, you will live with the knowledge that I entertained your soon-to-be husband in bed while I won’t even remember your name.”

I know I struck a nerve when she starts screaming like a mad person and reaches for me over the desk. Quickly I step back and out of her reach. Angela’s eyes are wild and crazy as she continues screaming and clawing at me.

“What the fuck?” Axel bellows and within seconds he grabs a still kicking and screaming Angela from behind.

“Enough of this!” He shouts as he drags her towards the elevator. “Calm yourself.”

“Axel,” Angela starts sobbing and stops resisting him. “She ... she said ho ... horrible things about ... about you and me and ... and ...”

“Really?” I raise my eyebrows and I watch with irritation as she clings to Axel. “You mean the part where I told you that I won’t remember your name once you and Axel are married? Or the part where I referred to him as Axel and not Your Highness?”

“What?” Axel’s head jerks to me and his green eyes are blazing dangerously.

“You know what,” I huff as I walk past them. “Calm your fiancé, I need fresh air.”

“Liana, come back here,” Axel shouts after me but I shake my head and keep walking.

Axel POV

My entire body is trembling with anger as I fight the urge to snap Angela’s neck. It will be so easy since she is already in my arms.

“I warned you,” Angela cries. “I told you that ...”

“Shut up,” I grunt as I shove her into the elevator. “Go home, Angela.”

“Why don’t you believe me?” She cries anxiously. “You heard what she said and still you won’t believe me.”

“I heard her loud and clear,” I huff as I ball my fists. “But I also know that I send you home and you came back to look for trouble.”

“I didn’t,” she sniffs. “I only talked to her.”

“Same thing,” I sigh as I stand back for the elevator doors to close.

I pinch my nose bridge and close my eyes as I think about how I am supposed to fix this mess. Everything went smoothly until I stepped into this building.

I take out my phone and call Liana but her phone starts ringing on her desk. Frustrated, I put my phone back in my pocket and walk back to my office. I will talk to her once she calmed down and comes back.

I pause for a second as I look at the roses on her desk and grind my teeth. I know I should not jump to conclusions, but it unsettles me, and I am jealous. I do not even want other men to look at her, let alone send her flowers. And I know a man send it. That is a two-hundred-dollar bouquet and not a token of friendship or appreciation.

“Sir,” Juliana looks questioningly at me. “Would you like to continue with the minutes?”

“No,” I shake my head. “I need a moment.”

I walk past her and close my door before I take a seat. Angela fucked up everything – once again. It took me hours yesterday to convince my parents that Liana and I had a business meeting and that Angela assumed it was a date. I must keep them calm and unsuspecting until we review the contract on Wednesday. I did try and move up the meeting, but Jack has prior engagements and cannot see me until then. And now Angela went and told Liana we are getting married.

If I want Liana to accept me as her mate, I must see things from her point of view. She was already once betrayed by her mate and is cautious when it comes to trust and cheating. How can I expect Liana to trust me when Angela fills her head with talk about marriage?

Just because I want to believe Liana felt the mate bond Saturday night, does not make it so. For all that I know, she is just waiting for our agreement to end before she moves on to the man that sends her flowers.

Chapter 42 Stuck In The Bathroom

Chapter 42 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

I take deep breaths as I storm out of Silver Enterprises and walk down the street. I am hurt because Axel is going to marry that cow and I am furious at her for rubbing it in. But mostly I am mad at myself for allowing her to get to me.

Nothing Angela said is new to me, but it still stings like a bitch, and I wish it did not. I wish I did not fall in love with him. I wish I could pull out a magic wand and transfer my feelings to Luther.

By the time I walk back into Silver Enterprises, I am calmer. But it does not last long when I see Angela walking out of the elevator.

For fuck's sake, what must I do to be rid of her? Why does the universe hate me so much that I must see her again? She should have been gone by now.

“Liana,” Angela shrieks when she sees me.

Nope, I shake my head and take the first corridor I can find. In a physical fight, she will kick my ass because she is a wolf, and I am not. But I am so over her, that it will not stop me from attacking her. Removing myself from the situation is the best option.

I notice a boarded-off passage and quickly dodge towards it when nobody is looking. I walk into the ladies' room and go hide in a stall. I hardly breathe as I hear footsteps coming my way. I sit down on a toilet and pull my legs up to my chest so that she cannot see my feet from beneath.

I hold my breath as the door opens and somebody comes inside. The person slowly walks up and down the bathroom, before they leave. Relieved I release my breath and lower my feet to the floor.

I place my elbows on my knees and rest my face in my hands. Now I must go back to the office and face Axel. How do you look the man you love in the eyes, knowing full well he is going to marry another woman and not lose your shit?

Just as I was about to get up, I hear the door again. Silently I lift my feet and listen to the footsteps entering. There is a banging sound and suddenly water pours down on me.

I inhale sharply as I look up at the fire sprinklers that are spraying the room. I want to jump up and get out, but I know this is just a ruse to lure me out. I endure the icy water until I hear the footsteps disappear and the door closes.

Quietly I leave the stall and walk to the door, but the handle does not want to move. I press and pull but it does not move an inch. What now? I sigh as I push my fingers through my wet hair.

I want to reach for my phone and sigh heavily as I remember it is laying on my desk.

“Hello!” I shout as I slam on the door but besides my voice and the pouring water echoing there are no sounds. I try again and again until my hand is red from banging against the door.

“Dammit!” I shout as I turn around and look at the bathroom. There are no windows. I am stuck in a box with only a door.

Cold starts settling into my bones, and I rub my hands together. These wolves and their heightened body heat. I do not even want to imagine how cold this place will be during winter. And being wet certainly does not help.

Swiftly I rub my arms for a little heat as I look at the ceiling. The air conditioner is blowing at - which feels like - full speed. Even if I climb onto the toilet and manage to stay on top of the stall divider, I will not reach the ceiling. There is only one way out and that is through the door.

My teeth start chattering as I look at the door’s hinges but without a screwdriver and hammer, I am stuck. Frantically, I start banging on the door again as I shout at the top of my lungs but give up after a while. I do not know when the sprinklers stopped spraying water, but I am eternally grateful.

The cold is becoming unbearable, and I rub my arms as I jog on the spot. My shoes are killing me but taking them off is not an option. It is still better than no shoes. I walk from stall to stall until I find a corner with the least airflow. I bundle into the corner and keep on moving to keep my blood circulating. I repeat the pattern of banging at the door for a couple of minutes before returning to the warmer corner.

I look at my watch and bite back my tears when I see the time. I have been stuck here for nearly four hours. I must stay calm and positive; I tell myself as I continue banging on the door until my hand hurts too much to continue. Shivering I take a seat on a toilet. The floor is too wet and pull my knees up to my chest. I need to rest, just for a moment. My hands and feet are killing me. I rest my face on my knees and blow warm air into my hands and lap. Tiredly, I close my eyes. Just five minutes, then I will get up and try again.

Axel POV

“Where’s Liana?” I ask irritated as I look at her empty desk. All her stuff is still here so she has not left for the day.

“I don’t know,” Juliana frowns. “I haven’t seen her since Angela was here. I thought you send her out or something.”

“Call reception and hear if they’ve seen her,” I order as I walk to the elevator. “And no mind-linking, I don’t want people gossiping about a missing person.”

“Yes, sir,” Juliana replies as I get into the elevator.

This is unacceptable, I grunt. Granted, Liana had reason to be upset but it is four o’clock already. She should have been back hours ago.

“Juliana?” I answer my phone as I step out of the elevator and walk to security.

“Shelly confirmed she left this morning, but she returned fifteen minutes later,” Juliana sounds concerned. “She walked towards the East wing when Angela called out to her.”

“Thanks,” I grunt as I end the call. Why does it not surprise me that Angela is partially involved? Where there is drama, you will find Angela.

Security guards jump to attention when I barge into their office.

“Get me the surveillance for the East wing from ten this morning,” I order as I look at the cameras.

“Sir, most of the cameras are disconnected due to renovations,” the guard informs me and my irritation builds.

“Just show me what you have,” I cross my arms in front of my chest.

“There,” I point out when I see Liana walking down the corridor. “I need to know where she went.”

Anxiously I watch as she hastily walks down the hallway. A moment later I recognise Angela going the same way.

“That woman as well,” I point to Angela.

“That’s it, sir,” the guard says. “All the other cameras are disconnected.”

“Are you serious?” I look at him in disbelief. “That’s the only angle we have. She could have gone anywhere from there.”

“I’m sorry, sir,” the guard lowers his gaze.

“Fine,” I sigh as I push my fingers through my hair. “Fast forward and see if she returns.”

It feels like an eternity as hours of recording fly by without any movement. Not even Angela comes back that way.

“Keep on looking for her,” I order when we have watched the entire recording. “She could’ve taken an elevator or stairs.”

“You four,” I turn to a group that is silently sitting in the corner. “Search the building. Her name is Liana Erikson and she’s a human employee here. And keep it quiet, I don’t want panic and chaos. I will have your heads, do you understand?”

“Yes, sir,” they nod in unison before they scurry away.

“Let me know if you find anything,” I say as I walk towards the corridor Liana was last seen.

Finding her is not going to be easy, I realize as I look around from the last spot the camera picked her up. The quickest way would be through surveillance, but I will go out of my mind if I must sit behind a screen and not actively do something.

I rest my hands on my hips as I look at all the possible directions she could have gone. All the hallways lead to stairs or elevators that could take her to other floors. All, but one. The old legal department. All the stairs and elevators are locked and sealed off. If Liana went that way, she would have no alternative but to return on the same path. And she did not. This leads me to the logical conclusion that she did not go there.

Something is wrong. The thought jolts through me and I take a deep breath to remain calm. If it were anybody else, I would not panic, but this is my mate, and I cannot control the fear that is creeping closer.

Frantically I pace up and down the hallways in search of Liana. Employees greet me as they leave for the day, and I nod absentmindedly. I enter every office and bathroom but there is not a soul.

It feels like an eternity before the guard from the control room phones me.

“No sign of her, sir,” he reports. “But we did find the second woman. She exited at accounting and left the building.”

“Thanks,” I disconnect the call and start undressing. Everyone has gone home, and I can shift freely without alarming anybody.

I run to accounting and scour all angles from which Angela could have made it to here from where she was last seen on camera following Liana. I rush towards the stairs and am relieved when I pick up Angela’s scent. I follow it all the way back to where I started.

A low growl rumbles in my chest as I continue tracking her scent into the old legal department and it is not long before I catch on to Liana’s scent.

My heart starts beating rapidly as her scent gets stronger and I look in horror at the scaffolding piece that has been jammed underneath the door handle.

Ferociously I claw the scaffolding to the side before I ram the door open. I slide over the wet floor and stammer backwards when I see Liana unconscious and curled up into a ball on a toilet.

Swiftly I shift back and kneel by her side.

“Liana,” I call urgently as I touch her hand and my heart skips a beat when I feel how cold she is.

“No,” I mumble as I pick her up and hold her tightly against my chest before I carry her outside.

Chapter 43 Hypothermia

Chapter 43 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Axel POV

“Drew,” I mind-link him. “Get my gym bag and first aid kit out of the trunk and place it on the passenger seat. Start the car and open the door, I’m on my way.”

I pray the entire way as I run with Liana. I cannot hear or feel her breathing. By my calculation, Liana was stuck in that bathroom between six and seven hours, which is plenty of time for hypothermia to kick in.

Drew’s eyes widen as he watches me run towards him.

“Get in and drive,” I order as I bundle Liana onto the backseat and get in next to her. I tear off her wet clothes and pull her tightly to my chest so that we can share body heat.

“What happened?” Drew asks as I open the first aid kit and pull out the thermal blanket.

“Angela,” I grunt as I cover Liana with the blanket. “But keep it to yourself, I have a special surprise for that bitch.”

“Is she okay?” Drew’s voice is thick with worry.

“I don’t know,” I sigh as I pull Liana closer. “She barely had a pulse when I found her.”

Drew does not say a word as he accelerates, and I look down at Liana. Her skin is pale and cold. I lean forward and rest my lips on hers which has a slight blue colour.

“We’re here,” Drew says, and I tug the blanket tighter around her.

Somebody jerks open the door and emergency personnel reach for Liana. I feel cold and alone when they run off with her. Quickly I zip open my gym bag and pull on a pair of shorts and a T-shirt before I run into the hospital.

It is not hard to find Liana – I only have to follow the snappy orders and people scurrying around to execute it. But before I could do or say anything, a male nurse blocks my way and firmly shows me to the waiting area.

“Any word?” Drew asks as he joins me.

“No,” I grunt as I take a seat. I rest my elbows on my knees and intertwine my fingers. I keep my gaze fixated on my feet.

I am going to kill Angela, I swear. I have enough evidence to prove it was her. People saw her follow Liana; she was caught on camera, and I picked up her scent. And I am certain that I will find her fingerprints on the scaffolding and door. Not to mention that the fire sprinklers did not activate themselves.

But I will be patient. It is Angela after all, and the situation is delicate because of our parents. I will play along and make her believe I am going to marry her. At the very least, that will keep Liana safe and off her radar. But as certain as the sun rises in the East, I will watch the life drain from her eyes.

“Alpha,” the doctor says, and I quickly jump to my feet. “The patient ...”

“Liana Erikson,” I interrupt him. “She’s one of my employees and there was an accident at work.”

I know I do not owe him an explanation, but I cannot afford people questioning my relationship with Liana. Especially if I want to fool Angela.

“Well, they’re still busy with Miss Erikson and I’m only here to give an update,” he explains. “She has severe hypothermia. We started with warm fluids intravenously as well as oxygen and cardiac monitoring.”

“Is she going to be okay?” Drew asks anxiously.

“It’s too soon to tell,” the doctor sighs. “But so far it looks good and we’re hopeful.”

“What’s next?” I clear my throat when it feels like all oxygen is being squeezed from my body.

“We wait and see how she reacts to treatment,” he says patiently. “We’re ready to start irrigation of the abdomen and lungs as well as diathermy and hemodialysis.”

“When can we see her?” I ask anxiously. Every second that I am not with her, is eating at me.

“Alpha, I understand your urgency since this happened at work, but it will take several hours to get her body temperature to normal. Once she’s stable only family will be allowed,” the doctor says patiently. “Do you know who her emergency contact is?”

“I am,” Drew glances at me before he steps forward. “She lives with me and my wife. Her family doesn’t live nearby.”

“Very well,” the doctor nods. “I advise you to contact them. In the meantime, can you please fill out some forms?”

“Yeah, sure,” Drew nods. “I’ll be there in a second.”

“Thanks,” I whisper to Drew when the doctor leaves. “After our last conversation, I know her family will be more of a burden than a help. At least I know you and Carol have her best interest at heart.”

“Don’t thank me yet,” Drew grins sheepishly. “I must go fill in forms with the information I don’t have.”

“Don’t stress it,” I slap him on his shoulder. “I’ll go back to the office and get her information.”

“Okay,” Drew nods but I can see he still seems a little uneasy.

“And I’ll bring Carol,” I smile, and Drew instantly relaxes.

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Less than an hour later, Carol and I walk back into the hospital. I went back to the office and retrieved all of Liana’s information and got my phone and clothes as well. Drew might have lied about his connection with Liana, but you will never tell if you look at Carol.

Ever since I told her the news, she has been crying nonstop as if Liana was her biological child.

“Drew,” Carol sobs when she sees him and runs towards him.

Tenderly he embraces and comforts her.

“Any news?” I ask as I join them.

“Nothing new,” Drew shakes his head.

“Dammit,” I grunt as I open Liana’s handbag. Immediately I notice the card and my heart clenches. I do not want to invade her privacy, but I am dying to know who send her the roses. With a heavy sigh, I reach past the card and take out her purse.

“Here,” I hold it out to Carol. “Please take out her identification.”

“Sure,” she sniffs as she opens the purse and goes through it.

No one says a word as we sit down while Drew completes the forms. I know the doctor said several hours, but dammit, this waiting is gnawing at me.

With a heavy sigh, I take out my phone and construct an email informing all employees about the ‘accident’ and warning them to stay away from the area. I must get ahead of this before the truth gets out.

Carol hands Liana’s purse back to me and I cannot resist it any longer. I take out the card and read it.

Orange roses for the one I desire.

L.C. xoxo

Jealousy rages within me as I read it over and over until I know it by heart. The one I desire? Who the fuck is L.C.? I will kill him along with Angela. The only comfort I have is that she doesn’t want to hear his words. Which means that she has been rejecting his advances.

“I’m getting coffee,” Carol pulls me away from my murderous thoughts as she stands up and walks to the cafeteria.

“What are you going to do about Angela?” Drew asks softly once Carol is out of earshot.

“Kill her,” I grind my teeth as I put the card back. “Painfully and slowly.”

“Axel, I understand how you feel, but you should be careful,” Drew says softly. “Angela is not from this pack and her father will see it as murder and not justice.”

“Oh, I know,” I smirk. “And he will surely avenge his daughter. I will be patient, Drew. Angela will eat out of my hand and her parents will adore me. Only then will I take my change and afterwards I will be grieving with them about the terrible accident that took their beloved daughter from them.”

“Geez,” Drew looks at me with big eyes. “How long have you been sitting on that one?”

“From the moment I saw Liana in that bathroom and thought she was dead,” I sigh. “That reminds me. All our bathrooms will be upgraded, and the décor changed. I never want to see that room again or any room similar.”

I get up and walk away before Drew can respond. Recalling the image of Liana in that bathroom made me sick. There are no words to describe the agony and fear that I felt when I saw her. I am filled with anger and hatred as I stroll through the hospital’s garden.

I meant every word I said to Drew. The only thing I am uncertain of is how I will kill Angela. There are so many ideas running through my mind that I cannot decide which will give me the most satisfaction.

When I woke up this morning, I was full of happiness and great expectations for what is to come but everything went to shit. I was going to cancel my contract with Jack on Wednesday, but that idea must be placed on hold until I have dealt with Angela. I must find a way of not renewing the contract without suspicion. Along with finding L.C. and setting him straight.

Chapter 44 Will You Marry Me

Chapter 44 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Axel POV

I know I look like crap when I enter the jewellery store. I am still wearing my gym shorts and shirt from yesterday. I did not leave the hospital and am on edge because Liana is still unconscious. The only reason security does not stop me at the door is because they know who I am.

“Axel,” Paul, the owner, greets friendly. “I’m surprised to see you here. It’s not your mother’s birthday yet, is it?”

“No,” I smile stiffly. “I’m here to buy rings.”

“Certainly,” Paul smiles brightly. “What do you have in mind?”

“Engagement rings,” I reply.

“Is there something I should know?” Paul clutches his heart theatrically and bats his eyelashes.

“Not yet, Paul,” I sigh, and he instantly pulls himself together when he realizes I am not in a pleasant mood.

“Here is our classic collection,” he says as he pulls out a tray of rings and immediately, I see the perfect ring.

“That one,” I point out.

“Impeccable taste,” Paul smiles as he takes the ring out. “This classic Stelle Waltz diamond piece consists of a 1.53-carat round brilliant cut diamond and 18-carat white gold. Set in a diamond halo on a floating head with pave set diamonds on the band.”

“Perfect,” I nod. “Wrap it up, please.”

“Certainly,” Paul smiles satisfied. “Anything else?”

“Yes,” I cross my arms in front of my chest. “Another engagement ring. Big and grotesque. One that screams ‘look at me, look at me, I’m a spoiled bitch’. The cheapest one you have.”

“Excuse me?” Paul gapes flabbergasted. “Sir, we don’t sell hideous rings.”

“You know what I mean,” I roll my eyes. “Just give me a fucking big ring that looks expensive. One of those that women wear as showpieces.”

“Well ...” Paul thinks for a while before he walks to a cabinet. “We have this one ring that I personally feel is ugly. It was custom-made but the client couldn’t afford it at the end.”

I stare in awe at the atrocity that Paul places down in front of me.

“Three diamonds set on a rectangular band,” he sighs sadly. “Also white gold.”

“It looks like a fucking piece of Lego,” I burst out laughing. “I love it. Wrap it up, Paul.”

“Are ... are you sure?” Paul asks in disbelief. “It’s huge and ugly.”

“I want it,” I smile satisfied and take out my credit card.

“That poor woman,” Paul mumbles under his breath as he shakes his head.

Satisfied with my purchase, I leave the store and take out my phone. I smile inwardly as I dial the number.

“Angela, darling,” I say when she answers. “What would you say about dinner tonight?”

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I am sitting on my bed staring at the awful Lego ring. After a long nap and refreshing shower, I look human again even though I do not feel it. All I want is to be with Liana. But she is still unconscious and will not even know if I am there or not.

I am yearning to be at the hospital, but my lingering presence will only spark interest and questions. And I might not care about it, but I care about Liana and her reputation. Not to mention that I am trying to keep Angela away from her. Just thinking of what Angela might do next makes me ice over.

With a heavy sigh, I stand up and put the ring in my pocket before I grab my jacket. It is nearly time to meet Angela for dinner and it is the very last thing I thought I would ever do. I never liked her but now I hate her more than ever.

I take my car keys and pull the door close behind me. My anger is still simmering as I walk with long strides towards my parents' entertainment area. In fact, I never stopped being angry since I found Liana in that bathroom yesterday. My anger levels only vary from controllable to lunatic rage.

I can hear people laughing and talking and I take a moment to compose myself. Tonight, I must deliver an Oscar performance.

"Darling," Mother smiles when she sees me entering the room. "You look so handsome."

"Thank you, Mom," I smile politely as I walk to the bar and pour myself a stiff drink. I am going to need all the help I can get if I want to pull this off.

"And where are you taking my daughter tonight?" Jack asks jovially.

"Le Pavillion," I reply and stare into my glass. The less I communicate with these people, the better.

"I'm ready," Angela announces, and I steal myself when I turn to look at her.

"You look beautiful," I force my eyes to slowly glide up and down her and am satisfied when she slightly blushes.

The sad truth is that Angela is not ugly and that she knows how to dress. Her blond curls are perfectly styled, and the pink satin dress fits her body like a glove. Men will look at her with lust and women with envy when we walk into Le Pavillion. Unfortunately for her, I do not give a shit.

"Shall we go?" I ask politely as I put my glass down and walk to her.

"Lead the way," she smiles softly as she rests her hand on my outstretched arm.

"I was surprised that you invited me for dinner," she says as she gets into the car. "I mean, after the way you treated me yesterday."

I grind my teeth as I close her door and walk around to the driver's side. For fuck's sake, I have not even started the car and I am already irritated beyond measure.

"I'm sorry about that," I start the engine and do not look at her. "It was a difficult morning."

"And is it fair to assume that you reprimanded that dreadful assistant of yours?" She asks sweetly but I do not miss her dismay that she is trying to cover up.

"I haven't spoken to her since," I stick to the truth.

“Well, you should,” Angela crosses her arms like an offended teenager. “Her behaviour is unacceptable. Just another reason why humans don’t belong in our world.”

“Angela,” I sigh in pain. “Do you honestly want to spend the entire evening talking about her?”

“I’m sorry,” she pouts and lay her hand on my knee. It takes every inch of self-control not to slap her hand away. “You’re right. There are more pleasant topics.”

“Thank you,” I say as I park the car and get out to open the door for her.

I have nothing to say to her as we walk into the restaurant. I just want to get this over with. We follow the host to our table and accept the menus. The silence between us stretches out into an uncomfortable silence by the time I place our order with the server.

“Okay, Axel,” Angela sighs as she looks at me with frustration. “Why did you even invite me if you don’t want to talk to me?”

“Have you ever known me to be talkative?” I smirk.

“No,” she huffs. “But this is too quiet, even for you.”

“I have a lot on my mind, that’s all,” I shrug.

“Then share it with me,” she reaches over and places her hand on me. I stop myself just in time to jerk my hand away. “Maybe I can help. I’m not a dumb blonde, you know?”

“Okay,” I say after a while, and she smiles satisfied. “I’ve been thinking a lot about my future. Where I want to be in ten years. My goals and dreams. And I realized that I have everything but a mate.”

“I understand, it gets harder with every passing year,” Angela sighs and for the first time I notice the sadness in her eyes. She might be the devil’s sister, but she is longing for her mate just like I did before I met Liana.

“Angela, I don’t want to be alone anymore,” I look deep into her eyes. “I want a family to go home to. A son to take over from me one day. You know how hard I’ve been looking for my mate.”

“Yes,” she snorts unladylike. “You’ve been dating everything with ovaries, including humans.”

I grind my teeth and ignore her remark. But one day she will pay for her words.

“Even so,” I clear my throat, “I’ve been unsuccessful in finding her. So, I decided to take matters into my own hands.”

“I’m listening,” she says softly but I do not miss the sparkle in her eye.

“Angela,” I reach into my pocket and take out the Lego ring. “Will you marry me?”

I open the box and place it in the centre of the table. It is with tremendous effort that I bite back my smile as I watch her swallow when she looks at the ring. I know she was about to shout ‘yes’ to the entire world but her vanity might be too great to accept this joke of a ring.

“It’s ... it’s,” she stutters as she picks up the ring and clears her throat.

“Expensive, I know,” I give her my biggest and brightest smile. “I was assured it’s unique and one of a kind.”

“Oh, that I believe,” she chuckles awkwardly.

“It’s unexpected, I know,” I say softly as I place my hand over hers that is holding the ring box. “And if you don’t want to accept, I will understand. We all want our true mate. Just say no and I will gladly take back the ring.”

“N ... no,” she quickly takes the ring out of the box and puts it on her finger.

“I accept,” she laughs happily and looks at me. “Yes, Axel, I will marry you.”

“Great,” I smile satisfied and wink the server closer.

“A bottle of your finest champagne,” I order as I look at Angela who is still staring at the ring. Unable to hide her disappointment.

Chapter 45 Liana Is Awake!

Chapter 45 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

The rhythmic beeping sound is the first thing I register, followed by muffled voices and somebody crying softly. The room is dark except for a dim light coming from the hallway.

Where the hell am I? I groan involuntarily as I turn my head towards the light. I blink a couple of times to adjust my sight. Suddenly I remember the wet, cold bathroom and my struggle to get out. I must be in the hospital; I realize as I look at the monitors next to me. But how did I get here?

I want to move but my entire body is stiff and sore as if I had tumbled down twenty flights of stairs. I fight the fatigue that is threatening to consume me and look around once more. Two figures are sitting in the corner, and I focus on them.

“Carol?” I croak as I recognise her and Drew. She is sitting on Drew’s lap and crying on his shoulder.

“Liana,” she sniffs and jumps up. “Drew, call the doctor.”

“Thank you, goddess,” she laughs through the tears as she takes my hand. “You had us worried.”

“Why?” I frown. Sure, I know I was stuck in a bathroom and felt like I was freezing but is that really worth all this drama?

“Because you nearly died, kiddo,” Drew’s voice is hoarse as he comes to stand next to Carol.

“Really?” I gape at them.

“Yeah,” Carol kisses my hand. “If Axel didn’t find you when he did, you would’ve died.”

“Where is he?” I ask and look around hopefully. I know we were fighting the last time I saw him but now all I want is to see him.

“He’ll be here soon,” Drew comforts me. “He spent the entire night in the hospital and only went home to take care of business.”

“How long have I been here?” I frown as I try to make sense of everything.

“Thirty hours,” Carol sighs. “It’s been the longest hours in my life.”

“Wha ...”

“Miss Erickson,” the doctor interrupts me as he walks into my room. “Wonderful to have you back with us.”

“Thank you,” I try to hide my disappointment behind my smile because he is not Axel.

“If you’ll excuse us,” the doctor looks at Drew and Carol. “I need to examine her.”

“We’ll be right outside, honey,” Carol leans over and kisses me on my forehead.

**

Axel POV

“You know,” Angela pouts next to me as we drive home. “You haven’t kissed me since we got engaged. Or held my hand.”

“Be fair, Angela,” I smile to hide my irritation. “I’ve never been affectionate in public. I’m not going to change now.”

“I know,” she sighs longingly. “But it would’ve been nice to seal the deal with a kiss, don’t you think? I’ve always dreamt ...”

“Either you take me as I am or I’m taking that gorgeous ring back,” I threaten her, and she instantly goes quiet.

I keep my grin to myself as she stares out of the window. I never thought I could control her with the ugliest ring known to humankind. But it also makes me realize how desperate she is to marry me. No wonder she tried to kill Liana. Not that it is an excuse, it only proves to me how dangerous she is and that I am doing the right thing. With a ring on her finger, she will go home and plan a wedding that will never happen, forgetting about Liana.

My phone rings and I anxiously answer when I read Drew’s name.

“Axel,” Drew’s voice is soft and steady. “It’s Liana, she’s awake.”

“I’m on my way,” I grunt and accelerate.

“Is something wrong?” Angela looks at me.

“Business,” I reply brusquely. I want to get rid of her and go to the hospital. “I need to go.”

“But we just got engaged,” she protests as I stop the car with screeching tires in front of the mansion. “We must tell our parents and celebrate.”

I grind my teeth not to lash out at her. I must remember to play my part but dammit, her nagging is driving me insane.

“I’m sorry,” I smile apologetically as I turn to her. “Your dad’s an Alpha, you know how it is. I’ll be back as soon as I can and then I’ll make it up to you.”

“Promise?” She pouts with a little girl’s voice, and I stop myself just in time to sigh.

“Promise,” I nod.

“See you soon,” she hops out of the car, and I pull away.

**

My heart is racing, and I can hardly breathe as I rush towards Liana's room. I should have been there when she woke up. Instead, I was with Angela, and I hate myself for it.

"Easy, Alpha," Drew stops me when I reach her door. "The doctor's still examining her."

"But she's awake?" I ask anxiously. "And okay? She's okay, right?"

"I'm not a doctor but she seemed fine to me," Drew rests his hand reassuringly on my shoulder.

"Thank goddess," I sigh and close my eyes as I push my fingers through my hair.

"Good evening, Alpha," the doctor says when he sees me. "I'm surprised to see you again."

"What does that mean?" I ask aggressively. "Are you implying that I don't care about my employees and their wellbeing?"

"No, not at all," the doctor quickly replies. "It's wonderful that you care so much about the pack members."

"It would do you good to keep that in mind," I grunt.

"Yes, well," the doctor clears his throat awkwardly. "Your employee will make a full recovery."

"Thank you," I say grateful as I hide my immense relief. "May I see her?"

"Technically, only family is allowed, but I will make an exception this time. But only for a moment, she needs her rest," he smiles before walking away.

"We'll wait our turn," Drew smiles sympathetically and I nod.

My legs feel weak as I walk to Liana's bed. She is still terribly pale, and she looks tiny and vulnerable against the white linen.

"Liana?" I say softly as I take a seat next to her bed and she turns to face me.

"Hi," her voice is hoarse, and she smiles weakly.

I have so much to say to her. I want to tell her I love her. I want to say I am sorry that I did not go look for her sooner. I want to apologize that Angela did this to her because of me. I want to tell her that she is my mate and that I want to spend the rest of my life with her. But my words are frozen by tears of relief threatening to consume me.

I take her fragile hand and kiss her palm long and tenderly.

"Why are you crying?" She asks softly.

“I’m not,” I sniff and wipe off the wetness that is clinging to my eyelashes. “It’s allergies.”

“You’re allergic to the bullshit you’re talking,” she grins.

“I’m relieved, okay,” I try to sound self-assured but fail miserably. “Do you have any idea how much paperwork will be waiting for me if you died on my watch?”

“Please,” she groans. “You’ll just make Juliana fill it out.”

“True,” I chuckle as I stand up and kiss her softly.

“You scared the shit out of me,” I whisper as I rest my forehead on hers. “Don’t ever do that to me again.”

“I’ll find better hiding places,” she smiles.

I cup her face and kiss her long and tenderly before I sit down again.

“Do you remember what happened?” I ask as I take her hand in mine.

“Yes,” she clears her throat. “I was trying to get away from Angela.”

“I know and I’m sorry,” I squeeze her hand. “I gathered as much when I watched the surveillance videos.”

“Did she jam the door or was that a freak accident?” Liana asks and I can tell she is angry.

“About that,” I sigh heavily as I look at her. “I need you to call it an accident.”

“But ...”

“I know it wasn’t,” I say quickly to calm her down. “Just please listen. Angela did break the sprinklers and barricaded the door. I know that and I’m not going to hide it. But Liana, you must realize this proves how dangerous she is. All I’m asking is to tell people it was an accident. Just for now, please. For your own safety. I will deal with her, I promise.”

Liana looks at me with hurt and confusion before she turns away.

“Liana, please look at me,” I plead with her.

“Do you think I’m afraid of her?” She turns to me with blazing eyes. “She might have a wolf and nearly killed me but I’m not afraid to fight back, Axel. I’m not a coward and she will not have the power over me to live in fear or hiding.”

“And you don’t have to,” I say urgently. “I need you to trust me. I already have a plan to keep her occupied and away from you. If you tell the truth, she will try and destroy you. As long as

she thinks you're not a threat, she will leave you alone. For goddess's sake, Liana just heal first and get out of the hospital."

"She's not getting away with this, Axel," Liana says adamantly.

"That was never the idea," I smile as I lean forward and kiss her.

"She will pay for this dearly," I whisper against her lips.

"Axel," Drew whispers urgently from the door. "The doctor is on his way."

"I must go," I quickly kiss her again before I stand back. "But this conversation is not over, I give you my word."

She tiredly nods and closes her eyes.

"Good night," I whisper.

"Axel," she grabs my hand and I look at her. "Thank you for saving me."

"Anytime and every time," my heart pulls together as I lean over and kiss her. "Now please, heal and come home, okay?"

"I'll see what I can do," she closes her eyes and reluctantly I let go of her and walk away.

Chapter 46 Inappropriate Behaviour

Chapter 46 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Axel POV

I am relieved and sad at the same time as I drive back home. I am overjoyed that Liana finally woke up, but I am devastated that I must leave her there. The only consolation I have is that now I can focus on getting rid of Angela since I am less worried about Liana.

The more I think about the incident, the more it dawns on me how dangerous Angela is. She knows full well what she has done and yet she has the audacity to ask me if I reprimanded Liana. It makes me wonder why she asked the question. Did she fish for information if Liana has been found? If I knew what happened? Or if I suspect foul play? What if she gets it into her head to finish what she started while Liana is in the hospital recovering?

Just thinking about it makes me grasp for air as if an elephant is sitting on my chest. I pull my car into the garage and take deep breaths to calm myself. An Omega comes running towards me and I sigh inwardly. What now?

“Alpha is waiting for you in the living room,” he says hastily as I get out.

“Thanks,” I nod and walk inside. The last thing I am in the mood for is my family and their guests. I have not slept in two days and am exhausted.

“Where the hell have you been?” Dad asks as I walk into the living room. I was hoping everyone would be sleeping by now and that it will be just me and Dad. But clearly, Angela told them the news and now I am being ambushed.

“The hospital,” I sigh and reluctantly take the only open seat next to Angela. “Why are all of you still awake?”

“We’re waiting for you, of course,” Angela giggles as she takes my hand. “To celebrate our engagement.”

“Why were you at the hospital?” Mother asks concerned. “Are you sick?”

“No,” I smile at her and ignore the urge to free myself from Angela’s hold. “There was an accident at work yesterday and an employee was hurt.”

“How bad?” Dad asks brusquely. “And why do I hear about this now only?”

“Because it happened late afternoon,” I look at Dad. “And at that point, the doctors didn’t know whether she’ll make it through the night.”

“That bad,” Dad mumbles concerned as he rubs his chin.

“It doesn’t look good. She might die,” I lie smoothly and look at Angela, but she keeps her eyes fixated on our hands. But I can swear she is doing her best not to smile, and it infuriates me. At least with this lie, she will stay away from Liana.

“That’s terrible,” Mother exclaims. “What happened?”

“I don’t know,” I say firmly. “We’re starting investigations tomorrow. That reminds me.”

“Jack,” I turn to him. “I’m terribly sorry but we’ll have to postpone our meeting. This is a priority. If the employee dies, I will be dealing with a shit storm.”

“Sure, sure,” Jack nods. “I understand. I would do the same. Another week or two will make no difference.”

“Thank you,” I smile and stand up. Now that Angela and I are engaged, there will be no pressure from his side. Little does he know that I have no intention of renewing the contract with his company. When I am done, there will be no ties between us. Not personally, or business. “If you’ll excuse me. It’s been a long day and it’s not going to be better tomorrow.”

“But what about us?” Angela looks at me with teary eyes. “We should celebrate.”

“Daughter, be reasonable,” Jack steps in and I could kiss him at that moment. “As future Luna, you should be supportive in situations like these and ease his stress. Not add to it.”

“You’re right,” she lowers her gaze. “I’m sorry. I’m just so happy that I forgot about my responsibilities for a moment.”

“No Jack,” I decide to play the dedicated fiancé. “It’s reasonable for her to be disappointed. Angela, how about I make this up to you and you plan an engagement party? We keep tonight’s news to ourselves and announce it publicly with all our friends and families present. How would you feel about that?”

“Really?” She looks at me with big, sparkling eyes.

“It’s the least I can do,” I shrug.

“Yes,” she jumps up and hugs me tightly. “Thank you.”

“Then it’s settled,” Jack grins from ear to ear. “Tomorrow we will return home and start the arrangements.”

I smile satisfied as I wiggle myself from Angela’s hold and walk to my room. Not only is Angela going home, but she will also be occupied, and Liana will be safe.

**

I moan in pleasure as my erection grows harder and desire pulses through me. Yes, I groan inwardly. Her mouth is so soft and warm. I missed her so much since ... my eyes fly open.

In horror, I look at my groin where blond curls are bobbing up and down. I must blink a couple of times to register that it is a very naked Angela who is sucking on me.

“What the fuck are you doing?” I bellow and try to pull out of her mouth without harming myself.

“Pleasing you,” she looks up and glides her tongue along my shaft.

“Angela, get off,” I twist myself away from her hold and get out of bed.

“I’m your fiancé,” she pouts as she stands up and walks to me. “It’s my duty to relieve your stress.”

“This is not helping,” I protest as I walk to my closet and put on boxer shorts. “I need sleep.”

“Everybody knows sex reduces stress,” she laughs coquettishly as she comes closer.

“Not when it’s against one’s will,” I cross my arms in front of my chest.

“Why did you even propose if you don’t even want to touch me?” She asks angrily.

“It’s not that I don’t want to,” I say calmer and change my attitude. “But this is inappropriate. For goddess’s sake, your parents are under the same roof as us.”

“Now that we’re engaged, Daddy won’t mind,” her voice is sultry as she comes closer.

I wreck my mind to find a solution to get her out of here. No way in hell am I sleeping with her. But I must do something to keep her satisfied and obedient.

“I mind,” I growl as I take her by the throat and pin her against the wall.

“When I say it’s inappropriate, it’s inappropriate,” her eyes widen and fill with fear as I tighten my grip, but it soon makes way for lust when I slip my hand between her legs and start rubbing her clitoris. Instantly she spreads her legs and looks at me with anticipation.

“When I say I need sleep, I need sleep,” I say as I rub harder. “If I want you in my bed, I will call on you. If you ever disobey my orders again, I will not touch you until the wedding night.”

“Do you understand?” I grunt as I continue rubbing her.

“Y ... yes,” she pants.

“Do not make a sound,” I order her, and she nods. I have no desire to hear her moans of pleasure. All I want is for her to cum so that I can get her out of my room and some sleep.

She bites onto her lip as her body tenses as I relentlessly continue. I close my eyes and lower my head to hide my disgust about what I am doing.

By her shallow breathing, I can tell she is not going to last much longer, and I release my grip around her neck a little before I choke her to death.

“So,” I lean forward until our faces are only inches apart and increase my finger’s speed. “Be a good girl and go back to your own bed.”

She closes her eyes and whimpers as I continue my onslaught until she starts trembling.

“Oh ... oh ...”

“Not a sound,” I hiss, and she clamps a hand over her mouth as her orgasm ripples through her.

After a moment she goes limp, and I let go of her. She clings to the wall as she catches her breath and looks at me with a mixture of lust and victory.

“This is so much better than a kiss,” she pants. “Are you sure I can’t do the same for you? I want to. I so desperately want to.”

“No,” I turn my back on her. “Now leave.”

I listen to the door open and close as I walk to my bathroom. My skin is crawling from her touch. Vigorously I scrub my hands with soap and water to get rid of her stench. I only stop when it feels like I am about to remove my skin.

With a heavy sigh, I dry my hands and rest them on the counter as I look at myself in the mirror. How and when did things get so out of hand? How did I never realize how crazy that bitch is? For fuck’s sake, she is capable of murder.

Furious at myself, I punch the mirror and it shatters into pieces. A sharp pinch radiates up my arm and I look emotionless at the blood on my knuckles. It is only a superficial scratch, but I deserve to lose this hand. I touched Angela with it. Worse, I pleased her with it.

Filled with disgust and self-loath, I step over the glass shards and lock the door before I climb back into bed. But as tired as I am, so restless am I. I want to be with Liana. No, I need to be with Liana.

I reach into the bedside drawer and take out the ring box. For a moment I stare at the perfect ring and fantasize about how I am going to propose to Liana and what our future will be.

The thoughts calm me enough to make me smile and I put the ring back into the drawer before I finally drift off to sleep.

Chapter 47 Stupid, Stupid Girl

Chapter 47 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

“Good morning,” the soft, angelic voice of the nurse is like sandpaper against my eardrums. Why in the name of everything holy must they wake me at five in the morning? Why are sick people not allowed to sleep in?

“It’s still night,” I complain as I pull the cover over my face against the light. I did not have the best night’s rest. Between the unfamiliar noises, I kept on waking up. Not to mention the stabbing pain in my chest at one o’clock this morning. It was so painful, I thought I was having a heart attack. But just as suddenly as it appeared, it disappeared.

“I’m sorry,” she says softly, lifting my arm to take my blood pressure. “I’ll be quick.”

“What day is it?” I yawn as I turn on my back and look at her.

“Wednesday,” she smiles. “You’re allowed to receive visitors today.”

“Even better, three more days and then I can go home,” I smirk. I am not too fussed about the visitors. Between Drew, Carol and Axel I was not alone for a moment. Last night I insisted that Drew and Carol go home and get a decent night’s rest. There is no need for someone to watch over me while I sleep.

“Maybe,” there is a warning in her voice and instantly I am irritated. I want to go home.

“All done,” the nurse smiles. “You can go back to bed.”

“Thanks,” I bite back a sarcastic remark. She is only doing her job, there is no need for me to take my mood out on her.

“Do you need help?” She asks as I get out of bed.

“No, I’ll be fine, thank you,” I say as I take a moment to find my footing. Once I am certain my legs will not give in, I gather my things to take a shower. I need to wash this sick-person hospital smell off me.

**

After washing my hair and brushing my teeth, I feel human again. And I could finally get rid of that ridiculous hospital gown and put on my own pyjamas that Carol brought.

I smile happily when I get to my bed again and notice that I have clean linen. Now I really am grateful that I did not snap at the nurse. They truly are taking good care of me.

“Why are you out of bed?” Axel sounds upset and rushes towards me to help.

“Because I’m not an invalid and I have needs,” I slap his hand away that reaches for me. “You can fondle me or even molest me but if you so much as try and help me I will have your head.”

“I wasn’t going to help,” he looks at me with a twinkle in his eyes. “I was reaching for your boob.”

“Sure,” I roll my eyes. “Because that’s what you always do.”

“Since we’re on the topic,” he smiles wickedly as his arms go around my waist and he pulls me closer. I look at him in anticipation and sigh contently when his lips finally touch mine.

My hands glide up his arms and ties behind his neck. Happiness bubbles in me as I allow his tongue to explore my mouth. I have missed him and his touch so much. Desire starts pooling down below and I push closer to him. His hands stroke over my back and cup my bottom. Instinctively I wrap my legs around his waist, and he carries me to the bed.

“Lock the door,” I pant as he kisses my neck.

“You’re still sick,” he murmurs against my skin. “We shouldn’t go any further.”

“I’m not contagious,” I start undoing his buckle. “And as long as we don’t reenact the Kamasutra, I’ll be fine.”

“Liana, I want what’s best for you and ...”

“Then lock the door,” my voice is hoarse with desire.

“You’re supposed to be on bed rest,” he protests but walks to the door and locks it.

“I am on the bed,” I smile as I pull my pyjama top over my head. “And I will be resting afterwards.”

“I cannot argue with your logic,” he grins before he takes my nipple in his mouth, and I groan in delight.

My fingers revel in the silkiness of his hair for a moment before I continue undoing his pants and push them down his hips. His erection is hard and throbbing in my hand as I stroke him.

He lifts his head and looks me in the eyes before he takes me by the hips and pulls me closer to the edge of the bed. I lift my hips and he strips off my pyjama pants and I smile lovingly at him as he centres himself before he gently glides into me.

“Oh, yes,” I whimper in delight as I push my breasts against his chest. I cling to him as he continues thrusting into me. I indulge in the sparks that are igniting everywhere he touches me and my orgasm creeps closer and closer. I bury my face in his shoulder to muffle my cry of ecstasy when I reach my climax. Axel shoves into me harder and faster until a groan escapes deep from his chest and he goes limp in my arms.

For a moment we only hold on to each other, catching our breaths before he pulls out of me.

“You should’ve kissed me when I was frozen,” I mumble as I dress. “It would’ve heated me right up and then I didn’t need the hospital.”

“My mistake,” he grins as he puts his pants on. “I’ll have to compensate for that once you’re out of here.”

“I’m going to hold you to that,” I laugh softly as I sit down on my bed.

“I brought you this,” he holds out my tablet. “I figured you might want something to keep you busy.”

“You’re the best,” I smile brightly as I take it from him.

“Axel,” I clear my throat and look cautiously at him. “About Angela and ...”

“I’m handling it,” his lips pull into a thin line and his playful attitude turns into anger. “She and her parents departed this morning.”

“I see,” I swallow my disappointment. Hurt radiates through me as I stare at the tablet in my hands. She tried to kill me, and he is letting her go. After he told me to trust him and that he will not allow her to get away with it. I do not know why I am surprised. Angela warned me that he will pick her over me and she was right. And even if she did not say a word, I knew that he would move on to her. It is just my stupid heart that fell in love and like a fool, I clung to hope. So, what if he is kind and kisses me into another dimension? It means nothing. He will find his mate or marry a suitable Luna and I do not make the cut.

“You should get back to the office,” I fake my prettiest smile when I look him in the eyes. “Thanks for stopping by.”

“I’ll see you after work,” he leans forward and kisses me before he walks out.

I bite hard on my quivering bottom lip as I lay down and clutch the tablet against my chest.

You stupid, stupid girl. I reprimand myself. Did I not have enough problems? Why did I add to my misery?

I turn my back to the door and pull the covers over my head before I sob my heart out into the pillow.

**

I am all cried out and staring absentmindedly at the wall. I do not want to do anything other than feel sorry for myself.

Somebody taps me on my shoulder and reluctantly I turn around.

“What are you doing here?” I ask surprised when I look into Luther’s smiling eyes and sit up.

“When you didn’t show up for class yesterday, I phoned your office and they told me what happened,” he explains as he places a huge bouquet of white roses on the side table and takes a seat next to my bed. “How are you feeling?”

“Bored out of my mind,” I roll my eyes and keep my voice light and happy.

“Is that why you are crying?” He asks softly and I look away self-consciously. I bet my face is all puffed up and red.

“No,” I clear my throat and keep my eyes on my fingers that are fumbling with the linen. “I enjoyed a pity party but I’m over it now.”

“Are you sure?” The kindness in his voice makes me look at him.

“Yes,” I put on my bravest smile. “And I will be my old self once I’m out of here.”

“Maybe this will distract you,” he grins and takes a paper out of his pocket. “You have an assignment for class.”

“My first assignment,” I laugh nervously.

“If you need help, just call,” he shrugs, and I raise my eyebrows at him.

“Another clever ruse to get my number,” I laugh.

“Guilty,” he laughs heartedly. “But can you blame me? You’re making it impossible to get close to you.”

“Luther,” I sigh and avoid eye contact. “We’ve had this conversation before. I’m not available.”

“That’s what I don’t get,” he says seriously. “You keep on saying that, but I don’t see a ring on your finger or a boyfriend by your side.”

“Actually, I don’t have a boyfriend,” I laugh awkwardly. “I don’t but I’m in love with somebody and I’m foolish and it’s hopeless, but I can’t help it.”

“What kind of idiot doesn’t want you?” He looks at me intently.

“The kind that’s out of my league,” I smile wryly. “So, let’s just drop it, okay? It is what it is.”

“Okay,” he sits back leisurely. “But you do realize that now I have more reason to pursue you?”

“You’re still wasting your time,” I shrug.

“If you say so,” he gets up and comes to stand next to me. “But all I’m asking for is a chance.”

“Maybe one day,” I say apologetically. “But not now.”

“I’m a patient man, Liana,” he looks longingly at me before he turns around and walks away.

Chapter 48 Wilson's True Colours

Chapter 48 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Liana POV

I am sitting on my bed bent over my tablet as I draw my frustrations. It felt awkward last night when Axel came to visit. Between scolding myself for falling in love and thinking about Luther’s visit, I was not in a talkative mood.

And I know Axel must have caught onto my mood because he did not come to see me this morning like he usually does.

The fact is, the longer I allow myself to enjoy Axel and his touch the harder it is going to be to let him go. If I had any working brain cells, I would distance myself from him. But nooooooo, I must go and shamelessly beg him to have sex with me in a hospital room. How dysfunctional am I?

“You have a visitor,” a nurse announces as she walks into my room. “Visiting hours is not for another hour, but it’s your brother. Can I send him in?”

“My brother?” I gape at her in surprise. Of all the humans in the world, he was the last I expected to see.

“Yes, sure, please,” I stutter as I put my tablet away, but my excitement does not last.

Am I a bad person for thinking he is here because he needs money? I wonder as I watch the nurse leaves. It is not like I want to think it, but what else? Why would he come and not Mom and Dad?

“Hello, sister.”

My jaw drops to the floor and every drop of blood drains from my face as I watch Wilson walk over to me.

“What are you doing here?” I ask brusquely as I pull myself together.

“Nina told me what happened,” he replied as he puts down a vase of daisies. I fucking hate daisies. “So, I came to see how you’re doing.”

“I’m alive,” I snap. “Now you can go.”

“That’s no way to treat a visitor,” he raises his eyebrows.

“Oh, fuck off,” I sneer. “The mere fact that you’re here without Nina tells me everything I need to know. You already drove a wedge between me and her. You’re just disappointed that I didn’t die.”

“Oh, you’re mistaken,” he raises his eyebrows. “I want you alive, my dear.”

“I’m not your fucking dear,” I sneer. “Or any other term of endearment of which you can think. You and I have nothing to say to each other.”

“I gather your accident is the reason why you haven’t sent Nina that picture?” He ignores my rant as he takes a seat and looks at me smugly.

“If you say so,” I grunt. I am sure as hell not going to share my thoughts with him. I will burn in hell for all eternity if I should speak my mind. I hate him even more than I hate Angela.

“If you care for Nina, you will delete it,” there is a coldness in his voice that sends a shiver up my spine.

“Oh, please,” I roll my eyes. “If you care for Nina, you wouldn’t cheat. Even if I don’t show her the photo, she will end up getting hurt by you. No way your threesome will end in a happy ending. As a matter of fact, maybe I should tell Stacey the truth. I heard it could be rather painful when your mate rejects you.”

“Don’t break your little mind over it,” he laughs evilly. “She’s my mate and knows exactly what’s going on.”

“Figures,” I grunt. “Shit does attract flies.”

“Has it ever occurred to you to ask why I’m doing it?” He rests his elbows on his knees and intertwines his fingers as he leans forward.

“Has it ever occurred to you that your reason doesn’t matter?” I raise my eyebrows.

“In this case it does,” he smiles, and I wish I could slap that smug look off his face. “I know Nina is your friend, but have you really looked at her? She’s not in the same league as Stacey.”

“Listen,” I sigh theatrically to mask my disgust. “I might be dying here. So, either speed up and say what you mean or leave.”

“You look at Nina and see your friend,” he says angrily. “I look at her and see a pathetic and needy woman that should stick to salads and exercise for a couple of months. And a nose job wouldn’t harm either.”

“You sick fuck,” I hiss as I cling to the last threat of my fury. “Get out, now. I’m not going to sit here and listen to you insulting her.”

I reach for the button to call a nurse, but he quickly takes the controller.

“Not so fast,” his words are dangerously soft. “You want to hear this, believe me. You can sit here and slur at me all you want, but the point is, you’re the reason why I’m dating her. You were right about one thing. I don’t give a rat’s ass about Nina or her feelings. She’s only a means to an end. A way to get close to you.”

“What are you talking about?” I ask as an ominous feeling sends dark tendrils down my spine.

“Stacey is my mate,” he explains as he looks at me with boredom. “Nina is the solution to keep an eye on you. It was quickly clear to Wyatt that you’re the alpha’s pet and that it’s too much of a risk to touch you. So, we needed to find another way to get to you and Nina was the answer.”

“Wyatt?” I whimper on the verge of hysteria. His words are a mumble jumble of confusion and I have no clue what the hell is going on.

“I’m more than an accountant, Liana,” Wilson snorts. “I have a very lucrative hobby as a bookie and your brother owes me. Wyatt vouched for Leon, and I went to him. And according to Wyatt, he’s broke because he must pay you. And since Leon can’t pay, you’re going to help.”

“I will not!” I explode as I try to put the puzzle pieces together.

“Oh, but you will,” he laughs ugly as he stands up. “That is if you care for Nina. You shouldn’t worry so much about her broken heart as about her broken neck. You have three weeks to repay the twenty thousand dollars Leon owes or somebody will get hurt.”

“And you think I will pay if you hurt Nina?” I ask angrily. Wilson is sadly mistaken if he thinks he can blackmail me. I am scared out of my mind that he might hurt Nina, but I will find a way to get to her before he does. “Harm her and see what happens. Not only will you be out of your money, but I will also destroy you. As you said, I’m the alpha’s pet. I might be human, but I do have the means to get to you.”

“I wouldn’t tell Axel about this if I were you,” his evil eyes bore into mine. “I have many desperate clients that will do anything to get out of their debt. Even mechanics and personnel from Silver Enterprises. It would be a terrible day for the pack if an elevator malfunctions and he gets hurt. Not to mention if his car’s breaks fail on a rainy day.”

Anxiety pulls my throat close, and all my bravado evaporates.

“Three weeks, Liana,” his smile is evil as he stands up. “After that, you’ll have one less friend.”

I bite my tongue as I watch him walk out. Shame washes over me as Wilson’s words replay in my mind. Has Leon and his bad habits not caused enough drama? Now his mindless behaviour is endangering lives.

Instinctively I reach for my phone to contact Axel and Nina but decide against it. No, I sigh and close my eyes. I must think this through.

Nina did not believe me when I told her he was cheating, why would she believe me that he is threatening her life?

If Wilson has two brain cells, he will know that I will tell her and is most likely monitoring her phone. By now he must have flooded her with lies. Just like he did before. I have no proof and it is his word against mine.

And Axel ... even if Wilson did not threaten him, I do not want to ask him for help again. I ran to him with Dad’s operation. He stepped in with Wyatt. He took care of Brand and gave me a job. He rescued me from the bathroom. Now this.

It feels like I take and take from him without giving back. Just like Leon. A parasite that sucks the host dry. Even if I have sex with him for a lifetime it will never compensate for everything, he has done for me.

I rub my temples where a headache is brewing. This is such a mess. I want to strangle Leon but what will that help? Wilson will still look at me for his money. And poor, innocent Nina. All she ever did was support and help me. I would not be standing if it were not for her after I broke off my engagement with Wyatt. This is not fair to her. Even if I do not pay Wilson, I do have the obligation to keep her safe.

I know Axel can protect himself. Wilson can threaten him all he wants. Axel will snap his neck like a twig. I shudder involuntarily as I think of Axel’s reaction when he hears about this. He is going to be so mad, and I do not even want to imagine what he will think of me after this. I might not be the love of his life but at least he does not look at me like trash. But that will change once this comes out.

I have two choices here. Either I ask for Axel’s help to keep Nina safe and he will loathe me for the rest of his life. Or I pay Wilson and pray that he will never contact me again.

Furious and frustrated I get out of bed and take the awful daisies and toss them into the trashcan.

Chapter 49 Going Home

Chapter 49 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Axel POV

Liana takes my breath away when I walk into her room. She is sitting in her bed and staring out of the window. Her hair is a golden halo around her face and for a split second, she reminds me of an exquisite porcelain doll. But the soft frown on her face tells me that she is troubled.

I am not exactly sure what happened but somewhere between yesterday morning and last night, she changed. One moment we were making love and the next she withdrew from me completely. The worst part, I have no clue if I am responsible for this shift in her mood.

Without saying a word, I walk to her and take a seat next to her on the bed. She looks at me with her soulful blue eyes and smiles softly when I pick up her hand and gently kiss her fingers.

The now familiar sparks of the mate bond surge through me and I cannot stop the jab of guilt about touching Angela intimately. That was not my proudest moment and I pray to goddess that Liana will understand and forgive me if she ever learns the truth. If I could tell Liana that she is my mate, I would have told her here and now, but it will do more harm than good.

“What’s bothering you?” I ask as I wrap her hand in mine.

“Nothing,” she shrugs. “I just want to go home.”

“Miss Erickson,” the doctor walks into the room and I quickly let go of her hand. “How are you this evening?”

“Still alive,” she smiles. “And bored out of my mind.”

“I might be able to help with that,” he smiles as he goes to stand by her side. “If you promise me that you’ll take it easy and not return to work until Monday, I’ll discharge you tonight.”

“Really?” Liana’s face lights up as she looks at him hopefully. “I promise. Anything you say, I’ll do it.”

“Fine,” he chuckles. “I must say, you healed exceptionally fast.”

“Because I wasn’t that sick, to begin with,” she smiles happily.

“Whatever the reason, you can go home,” he pats her on the shoulder.

“Thank you,” she smiles, and I am relieved to see that she looks like her old self. Maybe I was imagining things. Maybe her mood was because she was stuck in here.

“I’m going to get dressed,” she says as she hastily gets out of bed and rushes to the bathroom.

I stand up and pace up and down in the room while I wait for her. The colourful arrangement of flowers catches my attention and I walk closer. I frown when I see the daisies in the trashcan. They do not look wilted. Why is it in the trash?

“Finally,” Liana sighs as she emerges from the bathroom. “Going home never sounded so good.”

“Can I help you with anything?” I smile as she starts packing her bag.

“I will appreciate it if you can start taking the flowers to the car,” she replies over her shoulder.

“All of them?” I raise my eyebrows as I look at all the flowers.

“It’s not debatable,” she wrinkles her nose. “Its symbols smile upon the land, wrought by nature’s wondrous hand.”

I feel the blood drain from my face as she quotes the poem that L.C. has sent to her. With Liana nearly dying and Angela’s drama, I completely forgot about it. Until now.

“Fine,” I hide my frustration behind a smile and pick up a vase with a single yellow rose.

“Interesting,” I frown as I hold up the vase. “Only one?”

“There’s beauty in simplicity,” she smiles softly.

“I’m going to sign out,” she says as she leaves the room.

I was about to gather more flowers when I notice a card attached to the single rose. I place the vase down and read it.

A single yellow rose, happiness shows,

all over your face. It is obvious, you just glow.

Peace and harmony like a river flow,

as our relationship steadily grows.

L.C.

Son of a bitch! I grunt and stop myself just in time before I smash the vase and flower to pieces. This guy is really getting under my skin. I was at the hospital every possible moment and I have not seen anybody here but Drew and Carol.

I grab a different vase and march towards the car. If there is any justice in this world, that rose will be left behind.

But two trips later between the car and the room, all the flowers are loaded, and we are on our way back home.

Liana POV

“It’s so good to be home,” I sigh contently as Axel parks in front of my cottage. “I swear, if it weren’t for you bringing my drawing supplies to the hospital, I would’ve gone insane.”

“Happy to help,” he gives me half a smile before he gets out of the car, and I sigh inwardly. I guess I only have myself to blame. I was the one who made it weird between us yesterday. And honestly, Wilson’s visit did not help my mood either.

My entire cottage is filled with fresh flowers when we are done unloading. Luther sent me flowers every day. There are also bouquets from Juliana, Shelly, Nina and even my parents. The latter was the biggest surprise of all. I am usually the one spending money on them and not the other way around.

Axel is sitting on the couch brewing, and I silently pick up my tablet. I make myself comfortable and work on a sketch for class. I need the distraction. I still have no idea what I am going to do about Wilson, and I cannot discuss it with Axel until I have decided what to do.

“You were gone for three days and now you don’t even talk to me?” Axel huffs and I look up.

“I’m sorry,” I put the tablet down and look at him. “You seemed distracted, and I didn’t want to bother you.”

“Why are you assuming I’m distracted?” He growls. “I’ve been nothing but polite.”

“Exactly,” I smile. “You’re polite. Not friendly, not happy, polite. And now I’m giving you space until your sparkling personality returns.”

“I love your sarcasm,” he snorts as he gets up and storms out of the cottage.

My heart breaks when he slams the door shut behind him. I was not even sarcastic. But it is evident that there is a strain between us, and I do not know how to handle it.

“Who the fuck is L.C?” Axel bellows as he barges through the door and towers over me.

“What?” I frown confused as I look up. How does he know about Luther? Not that I mind or hide it from him, but I have not told Axel. He must have read one of the cards attached to the flowers.

“You heard me,” his mouth is pulled into a thin line and his chest is heaving up and down as he fights his anger. “Don’t make me repeat myself.”

I take a deep breath and place my precious tablet down as my anger starts simmering. The accusation in his question was crystal clear and I do not care for it. I have enough to deal with. Slowly I rise out of my chair and meet his eyes.

“I do not care for your tone, Axel,” I hiss furiously.

“Please, Liana,” he closes his eyes briefly and takes a deep breath. “I’m not an idiot. Something happened in the last twenty-four hours. And I’m willing to bet it has to do with another man. Our agreement was clear, no other men.”

“And I kept to it,” I match his tone of voice. “And stop jumping to conclusions and accusations after you read my cards. Which, by the way, is private and none of your concern.”

For a moment we stare at each other like raging bulls. Sizing up the opponent. He is right, something did happen, and it does involve a man, but it is not Luther.

“Then who is L.C?” He asks with a calmer demeanour.

“A friend from art class,” I cross my arms in front of my chest. I will not tell him Luther’s name. Axel is irrational enough to seek him out and confront him. “He’s helping me to stay up to date with my work.”

“Believe me, he wants to do much more than that,” Axel smirks humourlessly.

“I know,” I smile sweetly. “But I made it clear that I’m not interested.”

“You know?” Axel gapes at me like an imbecile. “And you still keep in contact with him?”

“Seriously?” I raise my eyebrows. “You dare say that while Angela basically stalks you?”

“That’s different,” he grunts with less aggression as he pales.

“Oh, please,” I throw my hands up in the air. “How? She wants to be your bride and tried to kill me because of it.”

“Liana, I ...”

“No,” I interrupt him, now seriously pissed off. “You don’t get to judge my friendships when yours threaten my existence. And then you ask me to trust you and keep it quiet while you let her go home scot-free. So yes Axel, something did happen and it’s Angela. Do you know how devastating it is when the man you sleep with allows your attacker to go free?”

“That’s not what happened,” he defends himself. “I made you a promise and I will honour it. She will pay dearly when the time is right.”

“Okay,” I pull my shoulders back adamantly. “I trust your judgement with Angela. Now it’s your turn to trust me and my friendships.”

“It’s not about trust,” there is so much anguish in his eyes that my anger simmers. “I am a man and know how men think. It does not matter how many times you tell a guy you’re not interested, if you don’t cut ties with him, he will keep on trying.”

“And I will keep saying no until our agreement expires in five months,” I reply.

He steps back as if I have physically slapped him, and I frown slightly. None of this is news to him, why does he look so shocked?

“So, you are interested in him,” his voice is hoarse.

“How did you come to that conclusion from what I’ve said?” I close my eyes in exhaustion. Arguing about this feels redundant. Axel does not love me, and we have no future together. He knows that better than me. Why make a thing about it?

“You’re keeping him around as a friend until our agreement is over,” he says sourly.

“That’s your conclusion, not my decision,” I grunt as I push past him and walk to the kitchen.

“Liana!” He grabs my wrist and pulls me against his chest. His fingers tangle into my hair and he pulls my head backwards. “You’re mine.”

Chapter 50 Insatiable For You

Chapter 50 - Selling Myself To The Alpha

Axel POV

Jealousy turns into insecurity and fear as I look into her eyes. She might be loyal and faithful to me now and for the months to follow but that is no guarantee that she will not fall in love with L.C. He already shares her love for art. He brings her flowers and poems. She obviously likes him. Why else would she memorize his poems and keep him around?

The thought makes me panic and I desperately pull her against my chest and kiss her. The softness and warmth of her lips drive me to the verge of insanity. Nobody must ever taste her sweetness but me.

Effortlessly I pick her up and carry her to the bedroom. If I cannot tell her in words that I love her, I will show her.

Liana POV

His lips are merciless on mine while it feels like my world is shattering. You are mine. Three simple words with so much power. It emphasizes that I am merely an object to him. A toy, a possession. I am his to do with what he wants to when he wants to.

I do not fight him when he picks me up and carries me to the bedroom. Toys do not have a choice. They are picked up, played with and set aside until the next time.

I avoid eye contact and do not say a word when he puts me down and starts undressing me until I am standing in front of him in my underwear. I wish I could talk to him and explain how I feel. Tell him that I love him and that no man can get close to him. But this is not a real relationship and there is no place for feelings or deep conversations.

“You’re so beautiful,” his voice is loaded with emotion as he gently slides his hands from my shoulders, over my breasts and ends on my hips.

I close my eyes tightly when he starts kissing my neck. This is as painful as it is thrilling. I love him so much, but it hurts to know he does not feel the same.

He pulls my hips closer to his groin and with a moan I give in and lean closer to him. I cannot fight him, and I do not want to either. These moments in his arms are not going to last forever and I must cherish them while I can. Soon he will be done playing with me and these memories will be all I have to keep me warm at night.

The sparks that he ignites and the sad truth that he will soon leave me, bring me to life. I pull away so that I can cup his handsome face and kiss him with every ounce of love that I carry for him in my heart.

My melancholy feelings quickly make way for desire and an all-consuming need for him. Eagerly I tuck his shirt from his pants, and he lets go of me only long enough to get out of his shirt.

He shivers slightly as I scrape my nails over his muscular chest to his pants. Axel tangles his fingers in my hair as I caress his chest with my lips and tongue while I undo his pants. I kneel in front of him and pull down his pants. He growls low and deep when I take his erection into my mouth as far as I can. Gently and slowly, I glide him in and out of my mouth before I curl my fingers around his shaft.

My hand’s stroking is in rhythm with my mouth as I move up and down. I continue sucking and stroking him as my other hand cups his balls and I massage them gently.

“Dear goddess, Liana,” he groans, and his fingers clamp into my hair, urging me to continue. I move my hand faster and suck harder while I keep my tongue soft and warm around his tip. I can feel his muscles tighten as I carry on.

“If you want me to last, you need to stop,” he pants as his breathing becomes faster and his hold on my hair tightens.

Drunk by the power I have over him I suck harder and faster. His grunt is low and deep when he explodes into my mouth. I swallow everything he has to give until he gently pulls away from me.

I look up at him and his green eyes are dark and stormy when he takes me by the arms and pulls me upright.

“You’re going to be the death of me,” he mumbles as he picks me up and lay me down on the bed.

He kneels next to me on the bed and reaches behind my back. Quickly he unhooks my bra and tosses it aside. I lift my hips and he slides my panties down my legs. His eyes bore into mine as he spreads my legs and settles between them.

“I’m not a poet, Liana,” his words confuse me so much that I can only lay there quietly and stare at him.

“I can’t woo you with flowers and pretty words,” he leans over and softly circles his tongue over my nipple before he sucks on it, and I moan in delight.

“That’s not me and I will never be that person,” he moves over to my other breast and repeats the action.

“I might not be a man with words,” his lips trail to my neck as his hands cups my breasts. I turn my head sideways to allow him better access to the spot he likes so much and curl my fingers into his hair as his fingers start with their sweet torture on my nipples.

“But I’m a man of my word,” he whispers before he lifts himself and looks me in the eyes. He smiles softly as he places his palm against my cheek and his thumb strokes my cheek.

“And I’m giving you my word,” he leans over and tenderly kisses me. “That I will cherish and care for you as long as you allow me.”

Dumbstruck I stare at him for a moment before he kisses me again. The kiss is warm and tender, and I clamp my arms around his neck. I push myself closer to him as my heart swells with warmth and love.

Our kiss quickly turns intimate and hungry.

“No, don’t,” I say desperately and tighten my hold around his neck as he pulls away. I cannot get enough of him.

“I’m not going anywhere,” he kisses me softly until I relax my grip on him.

“I’ll never leave you,” he murmurs as he leaves butterfly kisses down my neck and over my breasts. “That’s another promise.”

“As long as you’ll have me,” his lips trail down my stomach to my navel. “I’ll be there, I promise.”

I gasp for air and open my legs wider when his tongue glides over my clitoris. I am in sensory overload as his tongue continues making magic. My fingers cramp into the sheets and my back arches as there is no end to his onslaught.

My moans are getting louder as my orgasm builds but before I can reach my climax, Axel stops. He pulls me up and his arms protectively go around my back and waist when I straddle his lap. I cannot hide my surprise when I feel his erection hard and ready between my legs.

“I want to look at you,” his voice is sultry, and we maintain eye contact as he tediously slowly pushes into me, and my arms go around his neck.

“Don’t close your eyes,” he almost sounds pleading when my eyes fall shut in ecstasy, and I obey.

“You are mine,” he slowly glides in and out of me. “But I’m also yours as long as you’ll have me.”

“Promise,” I croak on the verge of tears and ecstasy. Never in my life have I felt so emotional. I have never felt closer to anyone than at this moment.

“I give you my word,” he increases his rhythm and I bury my face in his neck.

I bite my lip and close my eyes as I enjoy every thrust and every touch. I cling to him tighter as my desire builds higher and higher. The world comes to a standstill and our breathing becomes louder. I move my hips faster as he thrusts harder, and my orgasm hits me hard as he ejaculates into me.

For a long time, we only hold on to each other, trying to get our breathing under control. I cannot bring myself to let go of him. I do not want to spoil this moment of pure perfection. The things he said and the promises he made have filled my heart with peace and warmth. I am not naïve to think that this will last a lifetime, but I will take what I can get. And having him completely to myself for the next five months is a gift that I will cherish.

“Are you cold?” Axel breaks the silence after a while.

“No,” I sigh contently and lay my head down on his shoulder.

“Are you tired or hungry or ...?”

“What’s this?” I laugh softly as I lift my head and look at him. “Twenty questions?”

“I’m only looking after you,” he smiles softly as his fingers glide up and down my back.

“I’m perfectly fine,” I cup his face and kiss him tenderly.

“So, Uhm, you don’t want to sleep?” There is an undeniable twinkle in his eyes.

“No?” I look at him sceptically. “Why?”

“I only want to be a hundred percent sure,” he gently pushes me back into the pillows.

“The doctor did say to take it easy,” he picks up my arm and kisses my wrist and trails down my arm towards my shoulder.

“I haven’t felt this healthy in a week,” I assure him.

“Good,” he smiles wickedly as he leans over and kisses me while his hand starts fondling my breast.

“Axel,” I look at him in surprise as his lips take over from his hand. “Are you ... do you mean ...”

“Yes,” he murmurs before he looks up at me. “But only if you’re up for it.”

I reach down and tighten my fingers around his erection.

“You’re insatiable,” I smile as I stroke him.

“Only for you,” he sighs as he kisses me.