

## The Female Alpha's Sanctuary by Sanctuary Chapter 226

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Chapter 226

How similar that was.

"S-so, are you going to spare him?"

She asks, when she manages to have some composure.

"No."

I answer. For a moment, I might've felt terrible. I might've felt terrible for lying to her and giving her a false sense of hope. But then I remember what they've done and all the people who hurt and died in the process and that tiny bit of guilt is squashed down just as quick. Her eyes glaze over as she stares at me, open-mouthed and shocked at the blunt reply.

"Y-you said-"

"And I lied."

Within seconds she's up and trying to charge at me just from pure rage, but the guards holding the chains around her arms yank back and she falls on her ass with a thud. She glares at me, eyes still misty with tears and red from the stress. Thick droplets roll down her cheeks but she doesn't make a move to wipe them away. I can tell she's seething silently, probably proclaiming all sorts of threats and promises of pain and death in her head.

I look at her, trying to think back on any time we ever had a moment of affection. The affection she'd never given me in favor of Hestia. It's sad. To think I would long for something I never had.

"They'll be put into death. Method is up for debate."

All chatter stops when Williams spoke.

We all turned to look at him but he kept his gaze solely on Sophie. She pushes against the chains purely in persistence, lips dropping open for a moment but she quickly starts to retaliate. She's thrashing, trying to free herself from the binds burning against her skin, screeching out horrified no's and you cant do this.

But Williams spoke, and he wasn't going to go back on it. Instead, he turns to me and asks,

"Do you agree to this?"

His gaze fleets from me to her once more and the question resonates with Sophie. She stops in her attempts to free herself to look me in the eyes. Begging. Almost bargaining with me in a silent plea. "Isaac had given his vote and said he would follow whatever decision you would make. So I ask you, Alpha Crestfield: As the sole survivor of the attack at Duskfall, do you agree that the two traitors should face punishment by death?"

"Yes."

There's no room for hesitation,

Sophie roars out, screaming at me and calling me all sorts of things. Ralzel is at my side, hand at my waist as he kissed the side of my face for comfort. My wolf merely watches as our biological mother curses the day I was born. She hisses out,

"You act so justified but in the end of the day, you're just like the lot of us. You're a monster!"

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And at that, the faintest smile graced my face,

"I never said I wasn't."

They pull her away and out of the room, her feet dragging behind as her hollers echo down the halls. The tension immediately lessens when she'd gone and Williams calls off the meeting. The other Alphas with their respective members take their leave after a word of goodbye and all of a sudden, it's just us.

"Well... that was brutal."

Weston mumbles, pushing himself off the wall as Emerson nodded in agreement. The two look over to us but neither Raizel or I return their gaze. His thumb gently runs over my skin, calming me as I try to clear my head.

Too much was happening all in one day.

Meredith hums, staring down the door where Sophie had been dragged to. She'd been quiet this whole time, and from the looks of it, she was deep in thought.

"You know, you never did tell us what your plan was."

Hook at Meredith as she glances between Raizel and I. To say we were all exhausted with drawing out information and cracking down on Sophie was an understatement. The fatigue settled in my bones, but we pushed forth. We didn't have much time to do anything else, really. It was only now that we had a chance to finally breathe.

"Plans?"

I asked her.

Meredith nodded absentmindedly as she drank tea. She'd been insistent on keeping Hestia locked up in one of the safe rooms with three guards posted by the door. Had it not been for the fact she was carrying a child, she would've been thrown in the slums like Benecio and Sophie had been.

But soon, time would eventually catch up to her and she'd have no choice but to face the consequences. She'd get hers eventually, it was only a matter of time. Meredith sighed, a slight frown marring on her face.

“With you two announcing you’re mates and all, you do realize that you have to swear into oath with one another.”

Her hazel eyes sweep around the room,

“Usually in Alpha pairs, the partner would concede to the Alpha and join his pack if she was from somewhere else but...”

There’s an amused twist on her mouth, eyes sparkling with humor.

“With two Alphas, I’m not sure how this would work.”

“She’s right.”

Raizel rumbles, looking down at me as he gripped my hip tighter. She was right. I hadn’t really thought about the outcome of our mateship. It was all just going forth until now. Something like this was unprecedented, so there wasn’t really a traditional step to follow. No guide or example to look

over. We were on our own.

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Where do we go from here?

The deafening silence must’ve been an answer to her.

“You can go, you know.”

I turn to Meredith. She has a melancholic smile on her face, but she sits dignified and poised. Even before she clarifies what she means, I know what she has to say. There’s an indignant part of my that doesn’t want to listen but I know better than to interrupt her.

“You can go to Ignis Red, Selene.”

The fondness in her eyes is overwhelming as she stands. She walks by Noah and Isaac, not even sparring a glance at Williams who also seems to realize where she’s going with this.

She walks over to me in three strides,

“When all of this is over, you can go and live the life you should’ve had. Be happy, have pups... No more suffering.”

“What about Greyhound, Meredith?”

I ask, my voice on the edge of irritation. To think she’d suggest that I’d turn my back on them. On her. I couldn’t imagine doing such a thing. Not after everything we’ve all been through together.

“I will not abandon you-”

“Oh, darling, you won’t. Someone else can take over. We have good people, Selene. Yes, you are the Alpha, but first and foremost, you are my daughter.”

She takes my face in her hands and gives me a warm squeeze. Her thumb brushes over my cheekbones affectionately,

“At first, it was just about getting an Alpha in my seat. But now, I only want you to be happy. And if the only way for you to achieve that is by leaving, then so be it.”

I stare at her for a beat, then two, astounded at this turn of events. I could feel Raizel reach out to me, but I couldn’t look at him. Not yet. I didn’t want to hesitate. To allow him to persuade me any which way. I wanted this to be my decision.

Meredith was deathly serious. Anyone could see by the way she was looking at me. She held my gaze and not once had she looked away or faltered.

She meant everything she said.

“Then I suppose we have to find another way,”

Htell her,

“Because I am not doing that.”

She lets out a defeated sound but nods reluctantly. I knew Raizel and I had a lot to talk about concerning this. Sooner or later our people would want answers on how this was going to be done. I had no doubt rumors and talk were spreading around our packs as we speak on what was going to happen to them. On whether or not they lose and Alpha or gain another. Joining our packs together would be ideal, but it was hard when our territories were cut off.

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It could never work being so far apart.

“There might be one way...”

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Williams mumbles. He chews on his bottom lip before opening the drawer in front of him. Everyone watches as he pulls out a scroll and starts to unroll it.

When he finally flattens it on his table, he gestures for all of us to come over and look.

It’s a map.

(lol I thought of Dora)

“Greyhound and Ignis Red are miles and miles apart but...”

He points to the section where the two meet and my heart drops. I feel it beat against my chest as I slowly look up to Isaac who looks just as astounded by what Williams is suggesting. There’s a bitter taste on my tongue, but I ignore it in favor of staring at where he’s pointing.

“There is one connecting point.”

He looks at me,

“Duskfall.”

ISAAC HAD BEEN the one to break the silence.

No sooner than the words left Williams’ mouth, the Gamma had abruptly gotten up. His chair scraped back with a screech before he brushed passed everyone with a forced, “excuse me” gritted under his breath. He kept his head down for the sake of his pride but the clench of his jaw and the balling of his trembling fists said more than words ever could. He was taken off guard. He’d been caught at a loss and he couldn’t stay in the room long enough to lose his cool.

There’d only be a handful of times I’d seen Issac lose his temper but for each and every instance he’d hidden himself away. Like a ticking bomb, he’d stay out of sight until his anger diffused.

He’d refuse to go out before then.

It’s only fitting that when the Gamma briskly moves around the table and heads straight for the door, no one said a word.

No one tried to stop him, nor did anyone really ask why he was suddenly so tense and hostile to the point his potent rage permeated the air of room. The hostility was so thick and heady that goosebumps rose from my skin in immediate response.

Emerson and Weston had stiffened at the change of his posture. They eyed him cautiously from their place until he passed them by. His aggression triggered the instinct to be wary of him. Of what he might do should he be unhinged. The sound of the door slamming shut behind him and the drag of his footsteps fading into silence is what is left behind.

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Well, that and the remains of his heart.

“F uck.”

Noah breathes, raking a hand through his hair. The need to comfort and the surge of protectiveness inside him sings through our bond. His wolf lets out a soft whine, tail low and ears bent. Both human and wolf counterparts can sense the sorrow from Isaac’s end.

They feel for their comrade. Their blood brother. Yet they also know what he needs right now isn’t some meddling worrier sticking to his side like a pest.

“Can’t say any of us expected that.”

Noah mumbles, eyes fleeting to me. I force myself not to return his glance no matter how tempting

it is.

The suggestion of uniting two packs had been rousing enough, but acknowledging the actual physical link between the two territories had been nothing short of devastating. A concept I haven’t thought about or perhaps was unconsciously hoping to avoid ever considering.

I ignore the uncomfortable prickling heat of everyone’s eyes in my direction. Some are wary, like they felt for Isaac. Others are concerned, as though they were waiting for the other shoe to drop. With everything that went on the past few days, I couldn’t blame them for thinking of the worst.

“I didn’t mean to offend him,”

Williams offers to no one in particular when the silence became deafening. His lips thinned out around the edges but he doesn’t apologize for his words. Regardless of the

bitter sting it delivered, there wasn't a need to. He didn't do anything wrong but point out reality. Even if the suggestion hurt and turned my stomach at the thought.

"Duskfall is the only real bridge uniting both packs. If you really want to make it work... to really have a chance at something-"

he stops himself before he goes further but the unsaid words ring clear. When silence continues to prevail he sighs, heavy and defeated. He rolls up the map, slipping it back inside the drawer of his desk as though hiding it away would erase the last ten minutes.

Williams observes me from where he stood.

I don't shy away from his intrusive gaze. It's clear what he wants. He's waiting for me to say something. To react regardless of whether it be a good reaction or not.

Another test.

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A show of how I would handle a decision so difficult make. To see if I'd crumble under the pressure.

But I refuse.

I don't know what I'll do but I refuse to fold. That's the only thing I really do know right now.

"Perhaps we should revisit this thought another time."

I nearly flinch when Raizel comes up from behind me. He rests a warm, firm hand over my shoulder and gives me a reassuring squeeze. I greedily latch onto the comfort he freely offered without thinking twice of it. Moving my hand to cover his, I grip onto his fingers like a lifeline. I needed this.

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Needed him, because right now, I'm not sure how I can think clearly when my head's all over the place.

I'm not oblivious to what Williams was alluding to. I wouldn't lie and say I didn't see the logic and appeal of his suggestion. There were only two real choices in the matter: the right one and the wrong one.

Take Duskfall to properly form the union between Ignis Red and Greyhound, thus extending to Raizel and I.

Or

Reject the suggestion and effectively eliminate any real potential to unite. And of course, that meant for Raizel and I too.

We may be in love and we may be mates, but we were both Alphas. Alphas who had no intention of ever turning our backs on our packs. It was our duty to prioritize the betterment of our people. Nothing less.

Being mated however, poses issues we can't overlook. It's not as if we could stay apart for too long after we'd bound ourselves to one another. We'd have to stay beside each other. We needed to stay together.

Traveling back and forth from pack to pack weekly if not monthly would be stressful, and quite frankly, inefficient. It was unprecedented and I couldn't see it working. Constantly moving wouldn't create that sense of permanency. It wouldn't be the same as staying in one place.

Especially with the sheer size of our packs alone.

If we decided to pick the alternative and settle down, which would we pick? I couldn't ask him to come to Greyhound, he'd never agree. To leave the land he so rightfully inherited and grew up on? No. He wouldn't do that. I wouldn't ask him to.

On the off chance he did, I know I would resent myself for uprooting his life like that. Of making him choose between me and his pack. I could never ask him of that as I know he could never ask the same of me. Not to mention how far Greyhound is from Ignis Red. At least with Duskfall, we'd be centered. We'd have a perfect balance.

The most logical decision was to combine the packs.

And to untie them, Duskfall was key.

Taking a breath, I flex the hand with the Greyhound ring. The weight of it suddenly felt heavier. A looming reminder of what it was I carried on my shoulders.

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Williams nods at Raizel's words.

"Yes, I believe it would be for the best if you two talk over this. It isn't an easy decision to make, and one neither of you can afford to regret. Take your time. Think things through. Let me know when you've made up your mind."

Williams gives us a definitive nod, and I take it as a sign marking the end of the conversation. He doesn't stay around for much longer, opting to leave the room for our discussion. The only ones left were Meredith, Noah, Weston, Emerson, Raizel and I.

Though that doesn't stand true for long.

"I believe that's the cue for all of us to leave."

Emerson mumbles, getting up with a minor grimace on his face. The ginger stretches his arms as he gets ready to leave. Weston grunts in assent, dusting off his trousers when he stands beside the

small smile in my direction. Gam ma. Noah doesn't bother to argue and goes along with them with a They're far too eager to get out. Not that I could really blame them. When the trio disappears out the door, Meredith sniffs,

"I suppose I'll have to make sure those boys don't go wrecking havoc."

She pauses for a beat longer, her face set into a small frown before she sighs and pats my shoulder support. Then she's out the door like the rest of them and suddenly it's only Raizel and I. Us and the sudden weight of our choices hanging over us.

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"I won't ask you to give up your title."

Raizel says suddenly as soon as everyone was out of earshot,

"As I know you won't ask me to give up mine."

"

He slips his hands around my waist, slowly turning me around to face him. I almost didn't want to. I didn't want to see his expression in fear that he might be upset. To perhaps be annoyed that I'm so hesitant when the answer is so obviously clear. Though I know my thoughts were illogical, it was that irrational fear of rejection eating away at me.

Dark grey eyes clash with blue and all my fears vanish. His lips quirk the tiniest bit,

"We both know what has to happen. It'll be hard, but I will always stand by you when it does. I've told you before that I want your everything. That includes the burdens you carry."

He lifts a hand, gently ghosting the backs of his fingers over my cheek,

"But I also know it isn't me you need to have this discussion with first"

Then he leans down to kiss my cheek, lingering a second longer than necessary.

“I’ll be right here when you’re finished.”

I can’t help but crack a smile at his words. The things he’d just said instantly lessened the anxiousness I felt. It’s amazing how his reassurance can soothe the spikes of turmoil inside me. More so after our bond was established.

“Am I that predictable?”

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ask him, giving myself a second to soak in his warmth. Raizel lets out a low hum, chest rumbling

with the sound of it.

“No, my love. You’re just careful. But you don’t have

to be. Not with me.”

It’s a mess. It’s a huge mess and it hits me just now of how naive I’ve been. How very careless I acted. I’ve overlooked the importance of what the mateship I

tween Raizel and I meant for our

packs.

I hadn’t thought things through and that was on me. I didn’t step back and think for a moment what our union signifies.

I was so caught up and drawn to Raizel’s sudden appearance in my life that I failed to see the problems it would result in. It was ignorant of me. I’m an Alpha, and the core in being one was ensuring the safety and success of the pack.

But even so, I can’t find myself to regret this.

I never could.

Call it selfish, but I could never regret him.

We'd make it through somehow, I had no doubt of it. It may be a hard and tedious journey from now on but we will make it out together. From the looks of it, we already knew where the answer of our future lies. There was really only one way this would end. Only one way it should end.

"You make it so hard not to love you."

I tell him with an exasperated breath.

His answering grin never fails to make my heart skip a beat,

"I should hope so. I've no plans for you to ever stop.

"I

I couldn't resist to kiss him after that. A kiss he so readily fell into when his mouth slanted over mine

wrong. The world was beautiful and all my problems disappeared into thin air. My head cleared of warring thoughts and all traces of panic had been silenced with his lips.

with a soft puff of breath escaping him. For a moment it felt as if nothing was

We pulled away a few seconds later. Lightheaded was a word I could closely associate with whenever Raizel was close by me. He was just so intoxicatingly good. I welcomed the momentary distraction and the respite his easy affection gave me. It helped me brace myself for whatever it is I'd face when speaking to Isaac,

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"Thank you."

I mumble, resting my head against his shoulder. Raizel dips his head down to kiss the top

"There's no need to thank me. I'm here. Always."

I didn't doubt him.

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Finding Isaac had been easier than I expected MYTHSTAR

of

my head.

With how vast the territory of the Capital was, it normally would've taken a considerable amount of

both. As it was, Isaac had shut his side of the time to find him even with a bond that connected u bond off. I wasn't surprised. I knew he wanted his thoughts to be his own for a while. The sorrow he'd let slip for just a few seconds earlier on was so overwhelming it made me physically sick.

Trudging on into the thick of the woods, I let my wolf handle the reins of control. She had a better sense of Isaac's lingering scent. While normally she would've turned tail to bask in Raizel's presence she knew our pack mate needed us more. His anguish practically called on our end of the bond. It urged us to do something.

A few deep whiffs led us to the starts of a narrow creek.

When we broke free from the thicket of trees, she obediently relinquished all control back to me, understanding the gist of what we needed to speak to him about. I stepped into view without making the slightest bit of noise. Water rushed down the rocks of the stream and pushed further into the north, but I didn't care to watch it. My Gam ma was sitting by his lonesome, knees drawn up and head resting on his forearms. His broad back hunched over in on himself and although he still looked strung up, the earlier trembling had ceased.

Uniting with Duskfall.

The phrase repeated itself in my head like a mantra. What do I even say to that?

Sow am I supposed

to feel? How is Isaac supposed to feel? How can I pretend any of this was easy? As though making. this decision could be as simple as picking what to eat for dinner?

I almost scoff bitterly to myself.

didn't

Isaac obviously wasn't jumping for joy at the prospect of merging our packs. It matter the reason, he just wasn't. Understandably so.

Fate really is a cruel thing, isn't it?

Everything was coming to a full circle with the ancestor dilemma and now, pack unity. From what it looks like, we could begin again in the place where everything ended. Where I ended. Where Isaac ended.

The cruel irony of it all had my chest aching with loss. It never really stops, does it? This vicious cycle of destiny and what must happen for the greater good. Fate never stops

for anyone. It shouldn't come as a surprise. It never stopped for me before, nor will it stop now.

"When someone leaves a room like that, people don't usually try to follow, Alpha."

Isaac lifts his head to turn in my direction. The relief I felt at the small smile playing on his lips was

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poorly concealed in the way I unconsciously let out a breath. Isaac, ever the attentive Gamma, noticed and fondly rolled his eyes. The little smile that played on his lips widened just a tad more. He'd calmed down, that much was obvious, but the remnants of his heartache still persisted in his tone. No matter how hard he tried to play it off, it was there.

"I suppose not,"

I admit, walking over to him. When it's clear he doesn't mind my presence, I allow myself to settle down beside him. I can see why he decided to go into the deeper parts of the woods. It guaranteed the seclusion someone who wanted to be alone would be looking for. It was perfect for him.

Isaac isn't looking at me anymore. Instead, the green-blue of his eyes remain at the steadily flowing

stream.

"But not everyone is your Alpha. Not everyone understands the real hurt of what Williams said."

Isaac says nothing to that. He doesn't appear to have any plans to, so I fill in the silence for us.

"We'd decided to postpone making a decision. Maybe a week or two later, give or take. He wanted to... give us time to discuss what's going to happen-"

"What needs to happen."

Isaac cuts in. The steel in his tone surprises me. Such a startling contrast to the mood of despondency surrounding us. He didn't sound mad, didn't even sound upset in the slightest. The entire walk here I'd been contemplating on how to bring this conversation

up, but it seems as though Isaac had already made up his mind. Judging from the look of determination on his face, he was very certain of it.

The Gam ma lets out a ragged breath,

“I’m not opposed to uniting the territories together.”

He began carefully, picking at the ground for a small rock,

“I’d much rather Duskfall fall into your hands than some other Alpha. If I could’ve, I’d have taken the land myself a long time ago. But I’m not an Alpha. It’s not in my blood. I wasn’t born to be one and never wanted to be one. You, however, are. There’d be no one better to take the mantel from Alpha Oliver than you. There’s no else I’d entrust it to.”