

## SIENNA

On Saturday morning, Aiden was up and out of the house by seven.

The responsibilities of an Alpha were never-ending.



But knowing he was doing necessary work didn't make missing him any easier.

Honestly, I had no idea what to do with myself.

Painting hadn't worked out yesterday.

Neither had reaching out to people, though I knew that's what I should try doing again.

Call my mom or dad—or try Selene or Mia again. Anything but stay in this hotel room, going crazy.

Instead, I grabbed a cup of coffee and checked my phone, where I found a series of social media notifications.

Sir Fredsalot @allottaavocados  
That interview with #MichelleDaniels is a trip

Marco Lupo @LupoActor  
#MichelleDaniels is a #hottie love seeing her  
interview telling her story!

#MichelleDaniels is a #home love seeing her interview telling her story!

Interview?

I scrolled down, looking for a yip that would clarify the rest.

Curtis Paul @CurtisatPackNews

Don't miss Pack News exclusive interview with #MichelleDaniels mate of the East Coast Beta! She's out of her coma and telling it like it is. What she reveals will shock you! <https://bit.ly/2m96mlm>



I clicked on the link.

The video started.

Michelle was sitting up in her hospital bed, looking rosy-cheeked and pretty.

Her hospital gown was suspiciously well fitted.

But nothing could hide the paleness of Michelle's face, or the fact that she was nervously chewing her lip.

How on Earth had the press been allowed to see her so soon?

"Tell us, how did you end up in a coma in the first place?" Monica Birch, the reporter, said. "Who is this person we've all been hearing about since the

“this person we’ve all been hearing about since the Yule Ball?”

“Konstantin?” Michelle replied.

Monica nodded. “What role did Konstantin play?”

A muscle jumped in Michelle’s cheek, but she smiled at Monica.



“Konstantin was—is—”

“A vampyre,” Monica cut in. “Who infiltrated the inner circle of the pack.” Her eyebrows shot up in mock surprise. “How is that even possible?”

Michelle smiled awkwardly at the camera. She looked back toward Monica, who gave her an encouraging nod.

“A lot of people are blaming Alpha Norwood for letting Konstantin do all this damage unchecked,” Michelle said. “But that isn’t really fair or accurate.”

My heart warmed at her defense of Aiden.

“And why is that?” Monica asked, pressing.

Michelle paused for a long time before saying in a quiet voice, “Because it was his mate. It was Sienna’s fault.”



I blinked.

“Sienna Norwood?” Monica gasped with exaggerated shock.



“That’s right,” Michelle said. “She’s who Konstantin was really after. Something to do with her birth parents, who nobody’s ever met—or so I’m told...”

Her eyes dropped, and she began fidgeting with her hair.

I knew for a fact I’d never revealed that information to Michelle.

She could only have learned it from—

“Konstantin.” Michelle continued. “He stalked her—that’s how he ended up attacking me. I was minding my own business and I became a casualty of their whole drama.”

I watched, stricken.

Monica leaned in. “And this vampyre—he’s still on the loose. Still a danger to everyone.”

*Was that a question or a statement?*

Fear flickered in Michelle’s eyes. Then she

nodded. “That’s right. I—I guess there should be some kind of public service announcement to warn people to stay away from him.”



“Alpha Norwood hasn’t issued any kind of warning, has he?” Monica pressed.

I dug my nails into my palms.

Michelle hesitantly shook her head. “No, he has not.”

“So it seems he’s trying to sweep the whole scandal under the rug—to the detriment of everyone’s safety,” the reporter followed up.

*That’s not true!*

“But fear not my viewers,” Monica said, addressing the camera. The shot tracked to exclude Michelle, but before it did I caught sadness on her face.

I’d seen that sadness before.

On Emily’s face, the last time I saw her before she killed herself.

My gut wrenched with grief for my friend.

Both of them.

“The Monica Birch Show won’t let you down. We’re here to keep you updated on the threat of this dangerous vampyre and what it means for the safety of you and your family,” she said reassuringly, with a hint of ominous undertones.

## MICHELLE



Later that afternoon, I soaked in a luxurious bath.

I was home. And it felt so good to be out of that hospital bed and away from family.

Josh was at the Pack House. This was the first time I’d been alone since...

*When was the last time I was alone?*

Konstantin had been a constant presence in my mind for so long. Controlling me. Ordering me around.

Making me eat fattening foods.

I took a deep breath, sinking lower into the bubbles.

Picking up my phone as a distraction, I scrolled through my social media, drinking in the comments people were making about my interview.

It was glorious.

Patriot Nancy @ECPdweller  
OMG #MichelleDaniels is amazing CANNOT  
believe what she went through and so concerned  
for all of us



Alpha Etienne Tremblay @CanadaAlpha  
Stunned to learn of the ordeal endured by  
#MichelleDaniels today. She showed true bravery  
and grace in her interview. You are in my thoughts  
during this period of recovery, Michelle.

It was enough to give a girl a taste for celebrity.

Still, guilt gnawed at my stomach.

When Monica had told me about the interview,  
she'd made it clear that the public needed  
someone to blame.

And if they hated Sienna for a little while, it would  
be okay. They'd get over it.

Sienna was the golden girl, after all.

And anyway, maybe it was time for someone else  
to take the spotlight.

I set the phone down and smiled, easing back into  
the hot, bubbly water.



My hands traveled over my body, mild tingles of the haze sending little shocks of pleasure through me.

It crossed my mind to call for Josh, but ever since I'd woken up, the worry behind his eyes made me feel...

Well, it reminded me of how bad things had been, and I didn't want to think about that.

So I closed my eyes instead and took some time, just for me.

I swished my arms through the water, feeling it lap against my skin.

My thighs rubbed against each other, slippery and wet.

I licked my lips, letting my hands roam over my breasts.

Rubbing my nipples.

The haze warmed me.



Just as my fingers slid down my belly, the bathroom door burst open.

Josh stood there panting, his hungry eyes roaming



over my foamy skin.

“Allow me,” he said.

I smiled, biting my lower lip.



Josh had been the first person I saw when I woke up. I wanted him now, more than ever.

His hand plunged into the bath, soaking his sleeve as his sensitive fingers pressed against my sex.

Catching my breath, I met his blue eyes.

He pushed a finger inside me, the heel of his hand rubbing the sensitive nub that ached for contact.

I grabbed his arm, digging in my nails.

As he plunged another finger in, my nails became claws.

Josh started rotating his hand, massaging and pushing against me—my walls tightening around him.

I could feel the heat rising. I suppressed it for as long as I could until I couldn't take it any longer.

I rocked my head back and let out a cry as a surge of euphoria spread throughout every inch of my



body.

Finally, for a brief thrilling moment, I remembered what it felt like to be alive.

## SIENNA



The day after Michelle's interview hit the net, I decided to drive back to my gallery. Give painting another try.

But once I got there, all I could do was stare at my canvas and mix colors that never looked quite right.

I lingered for forty-five minutes, dabbing at the canvas, until the pull of social media finally won out, distracting me from my art and dragging my spirit down.

But after scrolling through what seemed like endless negative posts, I blew out a long breath, shoved my phone into my purse, and left the gallery.

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Aiden looked up from his desk with a smile when he saw me.

I held up the bag of greasy food I had picked up on the way here. "Hungry?"

“Like a wolf,” he said.

As I watched Aiden dig into his burger, the urge to tell him about how I couldn't paint, how I was feeling overwhelmed, pressed against me.



I nibbled on my own chicken sandwich, but I wasn't feeling particularly hungry these days.

“So, how are things going?” I asked.

“It's crazy,” he said at last. “Being out for six days... things have more than piled up. They've avalanched.”

I ran a hand over his thigh. “Sounds stressful.”

I wanted to tell him about how I felt, but compared to what he was dealing with, my problems seemed trivial. It wasn't like we were expecting any more vampyre attacks, right?

The thought that Konstantin was still out there made my heart speed up.

I could feel it pounding faster and faster.

*Talk to him! He'll understand!*

But just as I opened my mouth to tell Aiden about how off-balance I was feeling, Felix stepped into the office.

“I’m so sorry to interrupt, my Alpha,” he said in a hushed voice.

Aiden raised his eyebrows at him.



“It’s Georgina Tate,” Felix said. “We rented the large vases from her gallery for the Yule Ball, the ones that all got shattered, and she’s out there and...”

He lowered his voice. “She’s a bit distraught.”

Aiden groaned.

Felix made no move to leave.

“I’m sorry, Sienna, I have to deal with this,” Aiden said, getting up.

“Actually, Aiden...?”

“Yeah?” he said, turning back around.

I started to speak, but the words wouldn’t come out.

“It’s nothing. Don’t worry about it.” I finally replied.

He could tell something was wrong. I could see it in his eyes.

“Are you sure?” he asked.



“Of course,” I said as merrily as I could. “Go do your Alpha thing.”

“Okay then,” he replied, smiling warmly at me.

I forced a smile in return as Aiden walked out.

My mate had so much going on, how could I worry him about something as ridiculous as painting?

Still, as I headed to my car, my chest felt tight.

I couldn't talk to my mate about what was going on. I couldn't talk to anyone.

Because it was all in my head. And there were real problems we needed to deal with.

It was time to grow up and stop worrying about trivial bullshit like art.

I needed to be better.

To show everyone that I could be more than what they had read on the internet.



painting?

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UNLIMITED

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It was time to grow up and stop worrying about trivial bullshit like art.

I needed to be better.

To show everyone that I could be more than what they had read on the internet.

That I could be a true mate to the Alpha.

But how?

I suddenly felt very small, and alone.

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