



M.A. Grant

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After surviving Rupert's attack at the end of *Red Moon*, Flynn Sinclair is determined to marry Evie Hammond and spend every moment proving just how much he loves her. Fortunately, his brothers are more than willing to help him accomplish his goal.

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About the author

M.A. Grant fell in love with the romance genre while working at an independent bookstore. She spent a decade in the rugged beauty of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula before moving to the mountains of Eastern Washington. When she's not calling out to passing ravens or making a cup of tea, she's writing dark and moving stories.

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“We sometimes encounter people, even perfect strangers, who begin to interest us at first sight, somehow suddenly, all at once, before a word has been spoken.”

-Fyodor Dostoevsky

Infernus Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada

Owen Sinclair glanced down at his phone, which was buzzing on the polished bar. The screen showed a new text from Flynn.

Be down in a minute.

Owen rolled his shoulders, wishing he could get the knots to go away. That probably wasn't going to happen anytime soon, not after his last minute flight to Vegas, preceded by a flustered attempt to explain the situation to Rupert. His father had actually given Owen his blessing to go to Flynn's wedding. Yeah, that touching moment had set his skin crawling. But Rupert knew that there was no point in interrupting the nuptials; it was too little gain for too much effort, especially since the wedding was at Connor's casino.

Owen had to hand it to his brother. Connor had put together a hell of a show. The fact that he was using his clout as the owner to give Flynn and Evie their dream wedding proved to Owen that the move to Alaska had been for the better.

He'd talked to his oldest brother for a while that afternoon. The chapel was prepared, witnesses Connor trusted standing by. He'd already had one of the casino jewellers visit Evie, offering her whatever she wanted. The jewellers had told her it would be a loan; only Owen knew that Connor had given strict orders that whatever she chose would belong to her after the wedding. To their surprise, Evie had turned down the diamonds and gemstones and picked a simple opal necklace. Flynn was the only one who didn't think it an odd choice for her to make. Then again, Evie was not the kind of woman Owen expected his brother to fall for.

A prickle on the back of his neck urged him to turn around and look toward the door. Flynn was there. His custom tux did little to hide the rough man underneath. *You can dress up a wolf*, Owen mused, *but it doesn't change a damn thing.*

Flynn took a seat on the nearby stool as Owen commented, "You look nervous."

"Am I crazy for doing this?" Flynn asked for what must have been the millionth time that day.

Owen swallowed his sigh. "No, you're not crazy. Want a drink?"

"Water."

"Sure you don't want something stronger?"

Flynn shook his head adamantly. "No. Seeing her is the only buzz I'll need."

Owen's nose wrinkled. When had his brother started spouting romantic crap?

“Don’t give me that look,” Flynn griped, thanking the attentive bartender with a smile when the water was placed in front of him. “Wasn’t it like this when you and Joan got hitched?”

His wife. Well, cheating ex-wife of half a year since the paperwork had gone through. Not that he was sharing that with anyone in his family yet. To their knowledge, he and Joan were still just separated. At some point, he’d break the news. He could only handle being the failure so many times...

“No,” Owen said as casually as he could manage. “It wasn’t like that for me.”

Flynn’s hand trembled just a bit as he picked up his glass, downing half the contents in two gulps. “This is insane,” he muttered, setting the glass back down.

“Why?”

“She deserves better.”

Owen blinked. Flynn clenched his jaw, a stormy expression growing as he stared down at his hand.

“Her last boyfriend was an absolute bastard,” Flynn growled. “Tried to control everything she did. Made her so afraid of doing something wrong that she wouldn’t take any risks.”

“I don’t understand...”

His brother turned his head, hazel eyes filled with pain and confusion. “How am I any different than him?”

“Umm...”

“Shit, Owen, do you know how many *actual* dates we’ve been on?”

“No.”

“I can count them all on one hand.” Flynn groaned and ran said hand through his mussed blonde hair. “God, I’ve screwed this up already. What if she wakes up one morning and wonders what went wrong? How she got trapped with me?”

“Flynn, I’m no expert, but this seems like a conversation you should be having with her.”

“We’re getting married in an hour, Owen. I’m not supposed to see her until the wedding. How can I talk to her?”

Good question. Owen snagged his phone and dialed the suite Connor had booked for Evie and Flynn. Owen knew from Flynn’s sudden tensing that he could hear Evie’s voice on the other end of the line.

“Owen? Is Flynn ready?”

“Yeah, he’s dressed and ready. Hey, Evie, he has something he needs to talk to you about but he doesn’t want to blow tradition and all that. Can I bring him up to you? I promise we’ll stay on the other side of the door.”

“Sure...” Her voice dropped. “Is something wrong?”

“No,” Owen assured her. “Nothing’s wrong. We’ll see you in a minute.”

He hung up and patted his brother’s shoulder. “Come on.”

Flynn didn’t start dragging his feet until they stepped out of the elevator and headed toward the suite. Owen grabbed his brother’s arm and hauled him to the door, rapping his knuckles over the dark crimson surface. “Evie, we’re here.”

Inside the room, he heard a swish of fabric and light steps. “Flynn,” Evie called through the door, “you needed to tell me something?”

Flynn opened his mouth, started to speak, but stopped. Owen crossed his arms. It had been a long time since he’d seen his older brother at a loss for words. Flynn tried again, but still nothing came out.

Eventually Flynn rubbed at his face and took a deep breath. His body shook as he blurted out, “Are you positive you want to marry me?”

Absolute silence from the other side of the door.

Flynn winced. “That came out wrong.”

“How was it supposed to come out?”

“I...It...*Shit*...”

Owen raised his eyebrow when he heard an amused snort through the door. He couldn’t resist the tease. “Your fiancé’s pretty eloquent, huh?”

“Shut up, Owen.” Flynn rested his forehead against the door, hands fidgeting with his tux. “Babe, I know we didn’t have a lot of time together before...well, before everything went to hell. And if you wanted to date first, or try living together or something else, I will wait however long you want.”

“Flynn Sinclair, do you have cold feet?”

Flynn jerked back from the door, eyes widening in confusion. “What?”

“Are you trying to weasel your way out of this wedding?”

Flynn’s desperate look at Owen meant nothing. Owen held up his hands. “I’m not part of this. Fix it on your own.”

Flynn eyed the door. “I am not trying to get out of this wedding,” he said cautiously.

“Do you think I want to get out of marrying you?”

“God, I hope not. I don’t know how I’d do anything without you—”

“Then don’t you dare stand outside my door thirty minutes before our wedding and ask if we should still do this.”

Even Owen backed up at the fire in Evie’s voice.

She kept going. “I am so sick of everybody asking me if marrying you is the right thing! Let me make this very clear to you, Mr. Sinclair. I am in love with you. I know that it’s irrational and you’re worried that will change and you don’t trust me when I tell you it won’t. I understand why it’s so hard for you to put your faith in anyone but yourself, and I’m sorry your father is king of the asses. But if this marriage is going to work, you are going to have to trust me. And if you can’t do that even now, after all we’ve been through, then it’s better that we go our separate ways.”

Flynn stood there, body rigid, staring at the door. Owen tensed, wondering if the wolf was going to break loose. Flynn was an alpha. If he’d learned one thing from watching Rupert over the years, it was that nobody talked to alphas this way—

“Which is it, Flynn?”

A rumble worked its way from Flynn’s chest. Owen adjusted his weight, hoping he wouldn’t have to hold his brother back. Flynn’s eyes weren’t green yet—

Flynn tilted his head back and laughed. Gut-deep, joyful laughter. “God, I love you,” Flynn finally said when he’d finished. “I’m sorry. Forget I said anything. I’ll see you down there in a minute.”

Owen waited for the elevator door to ding before he knocked again. This time, Evie peeked out at him, her cheeks flushed, eyes worried.

“Bravo,” Owen murmured and held out his arm to her.

She gave a sigh of relief and opened the door the rest of the way. She was radiant. The dress made her look like she’d stepped out of some flickering Jazz Age dream. Lace flowed from the empire-waist, whispering with every step she took. The sheer cap sleeves covered her shoulders and poured down her back like a veil. The jewelled bodice sparkled, matching the mischief in her eyes. Owen had to look twice to notice her make-up, it was so understated, and her dark hair was swept up, pinned in place with a delicate opal comb.

“Think he actually went to the chapel?” she joked as she closed the door.

“He’d be a moron not to,” Owen said. The warmth in her eyes meant his honest answer had been the right one.

He walked her to the elevator, trying to understand the strange emotion he felt from having her hand tucked in the crook of his arm.

“Thank you for walking me down the aisle,” Evie said while they waited. “It means a lot.”

“It’s too bad your family couldn’t be here.”

She shrugged. "I don't have any family to invite. My mom and dad divorced a long time ago and my dad got sole custody. He died my first year of college."

"I'm sorry."

She smiled at him. "Thank you. But I know he's watching today. He would have loved Flynn."

They were silent during the elevator ride. One of Connor's immaculately dressed people was waiting for them outside the chapel. She made a little *oooh* when Evie emerged and flitted to her side.

"You look beautiful," she gushed. "The groom's inside, along with the officiant and the photographer. I have your bouquet here. When you're ready to walk in, just let me know and I'll signal the string quartet."

Evie went up on tiptoe to whisper in Owen's ear, "Connor got us a string quartet?"

"I guess so," he whispered back.

Yeah, that strange emotion was still trying to claw its way up from somewhere in his darkness.

He released Evie so she could get her bouquet and motioned to the assistant. "Can you ask the photographer to get a picture of the groom's face when she walks in?" he asked quietly. "I know she'd want that captured."

The woman smiled at him, touching his arm lightly with her hand, and nodded. "Of course, Mr. Sinclair. Just a moment."

She excused herself to Evie and slipped inside the chapel. Evie shot him a look.

"What was that about?"

"Just asking her to check one last thing for me. Are you ready?"

She took a breath and looked down at her flowers. Her fingers traced the blossoms. The light glanced off her engagement ring, a simple stone she'd chosen with Flynn that afternoon. He'd insisted she have an engagement ring, elopement or not. Owen had needed to take her to coffee to explain that Flynn didn't want her missing any of the experience before she'd finally let him purchase her one.

"I'm ready."

Owen gave her a hug, careful to not crush her bouquet, and knocked on the heavy wooden chapel door. It swung open and he walked Evie inside. Flynn stood at the end of the aisle, hands clasped in front of him. When he finally saw Evie, he and the woman on Owen's arm suddenly became the only two people in the room.

Flynn's stoic face melted, his militant stance disappearing as he raised a hand to wipe at his eyes. Evie gave a half-sob, half-laugh and her grip on Owen's arm tightened. If he let her, she would run down the aisle to Flynn.

Instead, she took her time, quivering as they neared. At the end of the aisle, Owen took the bouquet from her trembling hand and let her slip away. She reached out with both hands and Flynn met her with a fervent step forward. Owen took his seat, finally realizing what he was feeling as Flynn drew up Evie's hands, pressing a tender kiss to them.

Happiness.

The ceremony was simple, just as Evie and Flynn had requested. Owen watched them exchange their vows, trying to ignore his brain's whirring. Flynn deserved a strong mate. Evie understood what they were and she wasn't scared of it. She'd never leave Flynn, never betray him. He would be happy for the rest of his life, as long as she was in it.

Owen sucked in a breath when Flynn slipped the wedding band on Evie's finger. A pang of jealousy hit. Evie repeated the process with Flynn. As his band settled into place, she reached up and wiped at his cheek, pressing her forehead to his and murmuring softly. Flynn gave a choked laugh and closed his eyes.

Owen had to look away when they kissed, trying to push down the bitterness that rose in his throat. What was wrong with him? He glanced at his watch. Did he already need to take his meds again? It hadn't been that long since his last dose...

The officiant declared them husband and wife and Owen and the other witnesses applauded. Evie put her hand on Flynn's arm. He settled his left hand over hers, watching her with a reverence Owen had never seen before.

They both motioned to Owen as the officiant gestured for the witnesses to join him to sign the paperwork.

"Welcome to the family," Owen said. He was forced to give Evie a half-hug since Flynn wouldn't release her arm.

"Thank you for being here," Flynn replied. His eyes never left his wife and Owen's gut clenched at the wonder in that look.

"I wouldn't have missed this," he assured Flynn. "I know Connor had to so he could keep Rupert from pushing things, but—"

"Connor hates weddings anyway," Flynn finished with a chuckle.

"I think he may have liked this one," Owen offered.

Flynn finally looked at his brother and gave a curt nod. "Maybe," he conceded. Evie rested her head against her husband's arm.

Owen swallowed down the emotion that threatened to choke him. *Would he ever find a woman like that?* "When do you go back?"

"Tomorrow morning. After the honeymoon." Flynn and Evie exchanged a heated look before Flynn added, "We want to get home quickly."

He didn't need to explain why. The further from Rupert they were, the safer it would be.

“I understand.”

“Will he...” Evie tore her eyes from Flynn to look at him. “Will you get in trouble for being here?”

Her concern was sweet. He tried to smile for her. “No.”

Flynn’s eyebrow rose. Owen didn’t rise to the bait, leaving Flynn to ask quietly, “Evie, will you give us a second?”

She looked from brother to brother, before pressing a soft kiss to Flynn’s cheek. “I’ll just sign the papers.” She moved away, giving them the privacy Flynn had requested.

Flynn’s head tilted as he assessed Owen. “Is he going to take this out on you when you get back?”

“He gave me his blessing to attend.”

Flynn made a discontented noise.

Owen forced a laugh. “Flynn, he hasn’t cared about me in years. Besides, I can always blame it on the omega factor. It’s not my place to resist you.”

Flynn’s eyes darkened and he reached out, pulling Owen into a tight hug. He smacked his brother on the back once, muttering, “If you need me—”

“If I need you.”

They separated awkwardly. Flynn joined Evie to sign the paperwork. That final task complete, he took her hand and led her toward the doors. She laughed at him—*her husband, her mate*—and pulled free just long enough to give Owen a peck on the cheek.

“Thank you for being here, Owen. It means the world to us.”

Then they were gone, leaving Owen standing in the chapel. *Alone*. As he always was.