



Prologue

“Just spit it out,” Miles Erikson yelled at his Beta impatiently. He had been waiting for the incompetent fool to give him news about Lily, but the coward had yet to get a word out in the last few minutes since he had entered the room.

The Beta swallowed nervously, his eyes shifting to the sides and avoiding contact with the Alpha of the Portland pack. He was twenty-five—surprisingly young and inexperienced to be the Beta to a forty-five year old Alpha— but Alpha Erikson had a habit of killing his Beta’s and replacing them with whoever he felt might do a better job than the last. Beta Lawson was the fifteenth, and he could never be sure how long he would last in the dreaded position that no one wanted, but that no one dared refuse. The record was a mere four months, which meant the Beta’s time was probably running out.

“I managed to get into Hood River undetected Alpha, but I’m afraid the news isn’t good,” he explained, the fear emanating from his voice in a way that spoke more about the Alpha’s cruelty and intolerance than about the Beta’s bravery— or lack thereof. Alpha Erikson was a man to be feared and never to be underestimated. It was something Beta Lawson and the rest of the Portland pack had learned early in their lives.

Alpha Erikson’s chilling blue eyes narrowed dangerously, promising a world of hurt if he didn’t like what the Beta had to say.

“Lily and her mate completed the mating ceremony a few weeks ago,” Beta Lawson told him, lowering his gaze to the ground as if unwilling to meet the rage he knew would be swirling and festering in his Alpha’s eyes.

The little control that Alpha Erikson had over himself snapped at the words his Beta spoke. He had wanted to get his hands on the young Lycan while she was still a moldable child, but after his Beta’s failure, his plans had had to be adjusted. He had been biding his time, and when Kyle and Alpha Mason had approached him with a deal, the perfect opportunity had presented itself. Everything had been ruined by that insufferable mate of hers though. Had it not been for Finn, the Alpha would have had no trouble carrying out his plans for Lily, and she would have been there with him now.

With a roar of pure animalistic rage, Alpha Erikson lunged his Beta across the room, sending him crashing into a bookshelf. Beta Lawson fell to the floor in a crumpled heap but managed to push himself up to face his enraged Alpha.

“They also have plans to move to Seattle,” he told his Alpha as he wiped the trail of blood from his split eyebrow. “They leave in a month, a few days after Christmas.”

Alpha Erikson wrapped his hand around his Beta’s throat, pinning him against the bookshelf and leaving him only just enough air to be able to wheeze in shallow breaths. “Give me one good reason why I shouldn’t kill you,” the Alpha spat in Lawson’s face, tightening his grip in warning.

“I have a plan,” the Beta choked out, his face turning an unattractive shade of purple as he struggled for more air.

The Alpha sighed and narrowed his eyes in consideration, assessing just how useful Beta Lawson’s might be. “Alright,” he finally said, releasing his Beta’s throat and taking a seat at the immense wooden table at the center of the room. “What’s your plan?” he asked, the threat clear in his tone— if he wasn’t impressed, the Alpha would need to find Beta number sixteen.

“I overheard something that could help us,” the Beta explained. His forehead shone with sweat and the Alpha could practically smell the scent of fear in the air. “We didn’t even realize it, but we have the key to your plan right here in the city Alpha. It’s right under our noses.”

“Explain,” the Alpha said, his eyes shining with new interest.

The Beta told him what he had discovered on his brief trip to the small town, revealing how the Alpha could get exactly what he wanted in a way that neither Lily nor her mate would ever see coming.

“That might just work,” the Alpha admitted, pursing his lips in thought. “It’s not exactly full-proof or intricate, and there are a f**k-load of things that could go wrong,” he sighed. “But it could be exactly what we need,” he said as his lips tugged up into a grin. “Well done, Beta Lawson, you’ve survived another day.”

“Thank you Alpha,” the young Beta said with an inaudible sigh of relief. “I’ll make sure everything is in place. When would you like to initiate the first step of the plan?” he asked the Alpha.

“Let them have two or three weeks to settle down in Seattle,” Alpha Erikson said, shocking his Beta.

“That long?” Lawson asked, the words slipping out before he could contain them.

“Yes, that long,” the Alpha replied with an impatient glare. “I want them to think that they’re safe, and that’s when we’ll hit them— when they least expect it.”