

## Chapter 40 You Have Nothing To Worry About

It was on that note, that Lancelot stood straight, his head held up high to address the council.

"Elders of this prestigious cabinet..." he started, just as his father had taught him. His opening sentence caused all of them to focus on him, all side chattering ceased immediately. Lancelot sighed within him, at least he would be able to hear himself speak.

"I must say that I understand your concerns, I know your fears and I deserve your anger. The hunt came to an abrupt halt, because I had to rescue the woman from my cousin, Albert. He was going to kill her," Lancelot spoke up, in the best understanding way that he could.

Obviously, it was not enough. Immediately he was done, the murmurs started again.

"That doesn't matter! She did herself wrong by trespassing, she deserved whatever was coming for her!"

"Yes! Albert should have been allowed to tear her into pieces! How would a human stroll into our territory and live in good health to tell the story? It was never happened!"

"And it will never happen!" two elders chorused again.

Hermione and Albert were enjoying every moment of Lancelot's disgrace. Finally, everyone could see that the high and mighty Lancelot Dankworth

was not as good or as smart as he appeared to be after all. And it pleased both mother and son.

Neither Madeline nor Edward could speak up on his behalf. Even Garrett was very furious, if this woman meant anything to Lancelot, his daughter's place in this family would be threatened. Ava had been raised her whole life for this particular purpose, he would not sit back and allow a scrawny human woman steal it from under her nose, never.

"Elders!" Lancelot called out again. All eyes returned to him once more. Albert was particularly surprised how much Lancelot could talk, despite the fact that more than half of the population in the room were against him. Where did his cousin get his courage and boldness from?

When Lancelot was sure he had gotten their attention, he spoke up.

"I know that humans are worthless entities who mean absolutely nothing to us. However, that does not require us to stain our hands with their blood!"

"Your Grace..." an elder wanted to speak, but Lancelot cut in.

"If we decide to do as we like with them, act as swines and distasteful beings, we would be the exact thing we accuse them of being; uncivil, uncultured, tyrants. I was only doing my duty as the Alpha Prince of this pack and saving us from a huge scandal," he spoke again. His voice was charming, and so was his poise and confidence.

When he spoke, he spoke like a true leader who had the sincere and genuine interest of his people at heart.

And it sickened Hermione from where she stood. She had not expected it to turn out like this. It was becoming too easy for him to win the council over. She took in deep breaths to scan Lancelot's audience, their eyes had begun to soften slowly. The elders were beginning to see reason with him.

Hermione shook her head. No. She could not allow it to happen. This opportunity had presented itself on a platter of gold and she would use it to her utmost advantage.

"None of it would have happened if you didn't bring her here," Hermione's voice filled the air.

From where Madeline stood, her brows furrowed, anger flooded her veins and poisoned her blood. Lancelot was already doing a good job in reasoning with the elders, but Hermione was desperately trying to sabotage her son's effort. Why wouldn't this woman accept defeat and find some other dream to pursue with her children?

Lancelot's jaw tightened at his aunt's question, but he made sure he did not show it. From the look on Albert's face and the tone of his aunt's voice, he could tell they were desperately trying to get under his skin, unnerve him and throw him off balance. It annoyed Lancelot, they underestimated him far too much for his liking.

"Or, do you wish to deny that you do not know this lady?" Hermione added.

"I do not deny it, I do know her."

The council murmured amongst themselves.

"And you brought her here, despite knowing the consequences," she added again.

Madeline's blood was already boiling, and Edward could see it from where he sat. So, he made sure not to take his eyes off his wife again.

"Yes, I did. But I must assure you it was not my intention to keep her here for long."

"Of course it wasn't! She came just in time to help you sabotage the hunt, and she would leave right after. That was your plan, was it not? You were scared that you would lose not only your pride, but every other thing you

have, to my son. You just had to stoop so low to planting a mole, just to find an excuse to run off. How very aristocratic," Hermione spat, bitterly.

Lancelot was going to ignore her harsh remark and blow her off gently, but Madeline would have none of it. She turned on her heels and walked to the woman, charging in fury towards her.

Hermione caught sight of Madeline approaching her in anger. But she did not move, she had already succeeded in infuriating the woman. And now, there was nothing that Madeline could do, she had lost.

When Madeline stood in front of her, she was ready to give Hermione a slap across her cheek. Her left hand was already up in the air, Hermione closed her ears in fear. All that remained was for Madeline's hand to land on Hermione's cheek. "Stop!" Madeline's wolf heard the voice of her mate, Artemis. Madeline's hands stuck midair, her eyes drifted to her husband's loving stare. Edward shook his head gently, urging her to lay low. Defeated, Madeline dropped her hand by her side and walked away from Hermione. She wasn't sure she could bear to look at the woman's face without wanting to strangle her.

When the commotion was over, Garrett returned his eyes to Lancelot. He had to know who this woman was.

"Who is the human woman?" Garrett asked.

Lancelot looked up at him, he cleared his throat so he could speak calmly.

"Nothing. Nothing a council as prestigious as this should bother about. I assure you, she would be properly taken care off," he spoke; his eyes focused on each of the elder's faces.

Garrett sighed and looked around to his colleagues.

"This was not the ending we had all expected. But I am sure that we would all want to retire to our homes now. We do hope that you take care of this..." His eyes locked with Lancelot's before slowly drifting to Madeline's. "...problem before our next council meeting. We would be

wanting reports. You are to be our leader soon. We are expecting accountability and utmost transparency."

"You have nothing to worry about," Lancelot replied, curtly.

With that, the elders rose to leave, and Lancelot turned away from his mother. But, Madeline's hands drew him back. When Lancelot turned to her again, she had a dangerous glare in her eyes. "Mother..."

"I would ask you this and I would only ask it once. Who is that woman?"

Lancelot sighed, looking away from her, over to the hall that was becoming empty. How could he answer the question when he, himself, did not even know who she was to him? So, he gave the answer he was very familiar with. "Mother, she is nothing."

Madeline's eyes danced over him.

"She had better be. You are engaged to be married to Ava Relish and that should be enough reason for you to behave yourself. He is a very important part of this royal cabinet and you cannot have him against you. He is a powerful ally, but a more dangerous nemesis. You cannot ruin your chance by yourself, because I would not let you." She made sure that he understood the intensity of the situation.

Lancelot looked back at her.

"I would take care of it."

"How?" Madeline did not look away from him, not even for a split second.

"I would make sure she leaves the palace. It is the only thing to do."

"No," Madeline replied, flatly.

Lancelot's eyes narrowed on his mother.

"No?"

"You said she came here to work right? Very well then, she would work in this palace."

Lancelot forced himself to stop his eyes from widening.

"Mother?"

"It is now a public issue. Brows would be raised and tongues would wag. An innocent man has nothing to hide. Taking her away from here would be as though you have moved your business to a secret place. She would remain here, under my watchful eyes." When she looked at Lancelot, he appeared to be lost.

Madeline frowned.

"Or do you have a problem with that?"

Lancelot looked away.

"No, mother, not at all."

"Good." Madeline looked over him and walked away...