

Chapter Sixty-Nine: Masquerade of the Monstrous

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Rex POV:

As I watch the wolves tear into each other with feral intensity, a symphony of chaos plays in my head, each snarl and snap of teeth a note in my gruesome orchestration. The ground is slick with blood, mud mixing with the crimson stains as bodies fall and rise in a brutal dance of survival.

Around me, the battle rages with savage ferocity, but inside, I'm calm, almost detached. It's as if I'm an observer, watching a play unfold—my play, where I pull the strings and manipulate each actor with precision. The air is thick with the scent of iron and fear, and it's intoxicating, feeding the darker parts of my soul.

"Push them back! For Red Moon!" I shout, my voice echoing over the clamor, a beacon for the weary fighters of the pack.

They rally around my call, drawing strength from what they believe is a noble alliance. Little do they know, they're rallying around their downfall. I stride through the melee, my presence a rallying cry as I direct the fighters with commanding gestures. My rogues fall back in strategic retreat, their movements deliberate, feigning defeat. It's all a carefully choreographed play, designed to win the trust of Red Moon's warriors.

With every step, I can feel the power shifting, the balance tilting in my favor. The pack members, desperate for any

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sign of hope, begin to look to me as their savior, their eyes filled with gratitude. The irony is delicious, and I almost want to laugh out loud at the ease with which they are deceived.

As a particularly large wolf falls at my feet, taken down by one of my hidden loyalists, I step over its body without a second glance. Its blood smears across my boots, a testament to the carnage that I have orchestrated. This is the art of war, painted in blood and betrayal, and I am its master.

To my right, a young warrior of Red Moon struggles against two rogues, his movements desperate but weakening. With a gesture from me, the rogues pull back, allowing me to step in and deliver a crushing blow to one of them. The young warrior gazes up at me, awe and relief mingling in his expression. "Thank you," he gasps, clutching his side.

"Stay strong. We're turning the tide!" I call out, offering him a hand up. As he takes it, I can feel the loyalty beginning to bind—not to his pack, but to me, the wolf cloaked in a hero's guise.

As the so-called retreat of the rogues becomes more pronounced, cheers begin to rise from the Red Moon ranks. They believe they are winning, not realising that each cheer is a note in the requiem of their sovereignty. The battlefield is my stage, and today, I am both director and star, leading them all in a dance of deception.

The smell of victory mingles with the stench of death as I turn my gaze to the horizon, where the sun begins to set, casting long shadows that mirror the darkening fate of Red Moon. Soon, all will be under my control, and the real

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conquest will begin.

The ragged edges of the battle slowly quiet down as the last rogue disappears into the underbrush, leaving behind a battered field strewn with Red Moon warriors catching their breath. The air is ripe with the metallic tang of blood and the earthy scent of upturned soil. It's then that the whispers start, quiet at first, like the rustling of leaves, but growing bolder, carried on the backs of every wary glance and furrowed brow directed my way.

"Isn't that Rex Evan? I heard legends about the old alpha's estranged half-brother," one of the younger warriors murmurs, eyes wide with a mix of fear and fascination.

"Yeah, thought he was dead. Didn't he vanish right before the old alpha was killed?" another replies, the suspicion in his tone spreading like a contagion through the gathered pack members.

Amidst the rising tide of murmurs, I step forward, my boots squelching in the mud, each step a measured tread to reclaim my place in a pack that once regarded me as an outsider.

"Yes, it's me, Rex Evan," I announce, my voice cutting through the whispers, commanding and deep. "Many of you grew up hearing my name whispered as if it were a ghost story meant to frighten pups. I left, believing my path lay elsewhere. But seeing our home threatened, how could I stay away?"

The crowd's reaction is a tapestry of emotions—some faces show relief at the return of a lost son, while others knit in skepticism. I need to sway them, bind their loyalty to me as tightly as vines around a tree.

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Nate, the pack's beta, and the those bastard triplets ever loyal fucking bitch, steps forward, embodying the suspicion of the pack with his narrowed eyes and tense posture.

"Rex, your return is as timely as it is... unexpected. You disappear for decades, and now, as we reel from rogue attacks, you emerge from the shadows, fighting at our side. What are we to make of this?"

Silence falls, the pack's collective breath held as they wait for my response. I meet Nate's probing gaze, my face a mask of sincerity.

"I understand your mistrust, Nate," I begin, my voice resonant, each word carefully chosen. "My departure was due to deep disagreements with the past leadership—personal conflicts that no longer matter. My heart belongs to Red Moon. Hearing of our suffering from afar, I could not remain idle. My actions today were for our pack, for our survival."

The pack absorbs my words, their expressions a mix of hope, doubt, and a thirst for leadership. Nate watches me, the gears turning behind his thoughtful eyes.

"And what now, Rex? You return as a hero, but where have you been? Why should we trust you after all these years?"

I spread my arms wide, an offering of peace.

"I am here to serve, to aid in our recovery. As for trust," I pause, letting a solemn gravity lace my tone, "that is something I intend to earn. Not with words, but with deeds."

Nate's stance softens, though the scepticism doesn't

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completely leave his features.

"We will be watching, Rex. Our pack's memory is long, and trust is earned on the strength of actions, not promises."

As he melds back into the crowd, the murmurs begin anew, now tinged with cautious curiosity. My return has planted seeds of intrigue and possibility among the ranks—a first step in weaving myself back into the fabric of Red Moon.

I turn, facing the warriors, letting my gaze linger on each face.

"Let us heal and rebuild together. Red Moon has always been my home, and I will lay down my life for it, as any of you would."

The statement cements a bond, fragile yet vital, as nods slowly ripple through the crowd. I know this is just the beginning. Convincing them will require more than words; it will require manipulation, strategy, and the ruthless exploitation of their hopes and fears.

As I walk away, the weight of their stares on my back, a twisted smile curls the corners of my mouth. The game has just begun, and I am nobody's pawn.

Nate POV:

As I stride through the packed halls of our packhouse, barking out orders to the head warriors about handling the aftermath of the battle, my mind churns with unease. The dead need proper rites, the wounded need care, but it's the spectre of Rex Evan's sudden reappearance that darkens my thoughts more than the bloodstained earth outside.

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"Why now?" I murmur under my breath, moving aside to let a pair of medics pass with a stretcher between them.

The whispers I'd heard were troubling—some of the older pack members had indeed confirmed Rex's death years ago, just before the tragic murder of the triplets' parents. The details had always been murky, the body never recovered, but the confirmation had been enough to close the chapter on his supposed demise.

With a heavy sigh, I pull out my communicator, attempting to reach the triplets or Adam, hoping they might shed some light on this perplexing situation. But as I dial each of their numbers in turn, the only response is the dull beep of a call not going through. My brow furrows in frustration.

"Where the hell are you guys?" I mutter, the lack of response twisting my gut with worry.

Turning on my heel, I head towards the command centre, my steps quick with purpose. The situation calls for more than routine measures. If Rex is indeed who he says he is, and not some imposter playing a long game, but even I know that's not the case he was the underlying scent of the pack. But his motivations for returning now, amid such chaos, need scrutiny. Once in the command centre, I approach the communications desk, nodding to the operator on duty.

"I need you to get a message to the Royal Guard sent by the Alpha King. Ask them to delve into Rex's past—any records, any sightings, anything that could explain his sudden return from the dead."

The operator nods, fingers flying over the keyboard as she encodes my request into the secure line. As she works, I

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pace back and forth, the pieces of the puzzle nagging at me. The timing of Rex's return, his sudden heroics, it all feels too orchestrated, too convenient.

After sending off the message, I try once more to reach anyone from the rescue team. This time, my call connects, but it's only the voicemail of Zane. I leave a hurried message, my voice laced with concern.

"Zane, it's Nate. Call me back as soon as you get this. We need to talk about about your not so dead uncle Rex. There's something off about his story. And let me know you're all safe."

Hanging up, I lean against the cool metal of the communications desk, the weight of leadership pressing down on me. Red Moon is vulnerable right now, caught off guard not just by external threats but potentially by internal ones too. Rex's shadow looms large, a riddle wrapped in mystery, and every instinct tells me that solving it is key to protecting our pack.


As I stand there, lost in thought, a warrior rushes in, breathless.

"Beta Nate, the Royal Guard has responded. They're accelerating their investigation into Rex Evan due to the unusual circumstances."

Nodding, I straighten up, my resolve hardening.

"Good. Keep me updated. And get me any information on the triplets' whereabouts as soon as possible."

With that, I turn to leave the room, my mind racing with possibilities and plans. Red Moon needs its leaders now more than ever, and I'll do whatever it takes to ensure its safety. As I step out into the corridor, the weight of the


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pack's future feels heavy on my shoulders, but I'm ready to bear it. For Red Moon, for my alphas, for every pack member who calls this place home.

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