

Damon POV

I reached my pack's territory the next morning and was informed by my father's Gamma, Jack Kinkaid, that my father was in the hospital. Without waiting for anyone to fill me in about it, I charged to the hospital. Killian followed me.

There were about a dozen pack members who were standing outside the hospital room. When I walked in the room, all had their eyes on me.

A healthy dose of trepidation surged through me when I saw various tubes running in and out of him. He was heavily bruised as if he was attacked by a thousand wolves at one time. Bits and pieces of his flesh were chipped off. My father, Kevin Lombard, was lying on the hospital bed, unconscious, like a fallen hero.

My mother, Mary Lombard, was standing at the edge of the bed, looking at him with rapt attention. "Mom!" I rushed to her. She whipped her head towards me.

"Damon!" she cried and instantly fell into my embrace. "Your father..." Her lips trembled. It was as if she was waiting for my arrival. As the Luna of the Umbra pack, my mother was a very strong woman. I was sure that she hadn't shed a tear until now, but the moment she saw me, the dam that she had built around her heart, broke and she sobbed and sobbed.

"Mother..." I stroked her long sandy brown hair. "How did this happen?" I was shocked to see my father in this state. He had called me just yesterday and asked me to come on an urgent basis. What could have happened in less than twenty-four hours? I was confused as hell.

Mom didn't utter a word because she couldn't stop crying. My mother was my father's mate. They were childhood sweethearts and my mother was the only woman my father had ever wanted or dreamt of. My shirt became wet with her tears and I had to stop myself from breaking up. I continued to stand there with her for as long as she wanted me to. Only when her cries reduced to hiccups did she stop. I cupped her cheeks and raised her face to look at me. "Mom, you have to tell me what happened. What happened to dad?" My heart was feeling like it would split into two if I wasn't filled in with the relevant information.

"Damon..." she said, her lips trembling. "We were attacked."

Blood drained from my face. "By?"

She held my hand and tugged me to the sofa at the far end. "Sit down." When I sat down, she called Killian and Jack in. "Close the door," she said to Killian. As soon as the door was closed and we were all seated, she started, "Yesterday we received information from our warriors in the north borders that the Howlers pack had attacked us. We were taken by surprise and your father was confused. He wanted to talk to Alpha George Dawson about it and sent a message, but the messenger was killed and his head was sent back to us."

I gasped. That was Nash's pack.

She continued, "The attack took place in the morning. It was so sudden that even though our warriors were able to contain it, it wasn't without sacrifice. Fifty of our warriors died, defending us against them. Jack sent an army of two hundred warriors as soon as he heard about it and that's why it was all contained. However, by the time it was evening, the Shadow pack attacked us on the west frontiers."

"What the hell!" I growled. "Why would Shadow pack do that?" That was Poppy's pack.

"I have no idea, Damon," my mother replied with more tears in her eyes. "Your father was very angry. In his rage he spearheaded the retaliation on the Shadow pack but little did he know that they were ready for it. When Kevin reached there with his Beta, Pike, he didn't realize that the Shadow pack had used land mines. Kevin stepped on one of them without knowing and it blasted."

"Heaven's above!" I breathed and got up with my fingers in my hair. I went to the window where I saw more people in the garden.

"Ever since the attack, Pike has been missing. While our warriors carried your father and his men back to the hospital, they couldn't find Pike," she said and gazed at father. "The Shadow pack members were too few in number. They ran away the moment the attack was successful. Our warriors at the north informed us that the Howler pack members also ran away after the attack, but George Dawson has sent a warning to us."

I turned to hear the warning.

"He said that these attacks will continue until Damon Lombard comes to his senses," said my mother, looking straight into my eyes.

So it was personal.

I felt the sour bite of guilt. George was attacking because I didn't want Monica. But why had the Shadow pack attacked? What was James Vincent's story? I said nothing as I closed my eyes, turning my face to the window. This whole thing happened because of me. To say that I felt horrible was an understatement. Anger and guilt warred inside me. Emotions swirled in my chest. I leaned over the edge of the window as the weight of those dead warriors sagged my shoulders.

I loved Poppy. She was my mate. But I didn't know that loving her would cause so much mayhem. When my eyes traveled to my father, I felt the sting of tears in my eyes. I had never ever thought in my wildest dreams that he would be battling for his life because of me, because of what I did to the pack.

I walked to him with my will disintegrating into a thousand pieces. I did this to him. I, Damon Lombard, who was the strongest wolf in all of North America, couldn't even save my father. I held his hand and pressed the back of it to my forehead and let my tears slip. "Father..." I murmured. "I will avenge this and then some more."

What I wasn't prepared for was my mother's reaction.