

Chapter 24

When Zeke walked into his house, the first thing he could smell was fear. It had been only a day with these Omegas, but he was already tired of them. He hadn't even talked to them except for when they arrived.

He could also smell dinner, but he wasn't hungry—not for food, anyway. He had no idea why he had even gone to Ava's dorm, but after the conversation he overheard at breakfast, something drove him to confirm that she was alone in her room.

Shadow didn't like that she was on the ground floor and had such a wide window with a flimsy lock. He had accessed her room so easily from the back. But he told, the wolf to back off: she was not their concern. He'd told her to lock her window, and that was all the advice he would give her.

Hence all the growling in his head. Shadow was beyond pissed off, just as he had been when she had been sparing in combat class. Her little body had been thrown about like a ragdoll, and Shadow had been ready to rip people's heads off. He would never have got any rest tonight if he hadn't stopped by her room

Still, Shadow wasn't satisfied. The anger was building up inside him and he was prowling like the caged beast that he was,

Which was the scent that hit his nose next was very unwelcome.

Claire's scent made Shadow so angry that he contemplated leaving. He didn't have the energy to fight with Shadow about Claire tonight.

There you are. Training finished a while ago; I thought you'd be home by now."

His eyes glowed on and off when Claire came out of the lounge and walked towards him with a smile.

"Stop," he growled.

Claire stopped immediately. He had to close his eyes and focus to get Shadow to obey him.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Since you were tired last night, I thought..."

He opened his eyes when her voice trailed off. It was her fear that was clogging up his nose now. Why was she even with him when she was so scared of him? He couldn't remember a single time that he had warmed up to her, and their "dates" involved her dropping her panties and him leaving soon after. Why did she stick around for that shit?

“You know you can’t come here without permission, right? You know how territorial my wolf is.”

“I’ve always come here before,” Claire pointed out. “Almost every night”

The growling in his head became louder at that reminder.

“There’s a lot of pressure on me this year. I’ll invite you when things calm down. Leave, Claire.”

He had been saying that a lot lately. There was shock on Claire’s face, but she nodded and walked back into the lounge. She came out with her bag and walked towards him like She would kiss him. He stepped to the side and opened the door for her instead

Claire walked out without another word, and he closed the door with a breath of relief. Shadow was not killing anyone today. Crisis averted.

That display in the morning had been hard to endure with Ava in the room, but it had been necessary to prove a point to her. He had seen the devastated look in Ava’s eyes, so he had succeeded. It didn’t matter how his body responded to her. she was nothing to him. He could fuck anyone he wanted and sate his needs.

Try it, Shadow said.

He ignored the wolf’s threat as he pushed himself off the door to head to his room. He stopped when he saw Derek standing in the doorway to the lounge.

“Not that I’m not happy you’re finally pushing that vapid wolf out of your life, but what the fuck is going on. Zeke? That’s two days in a row you’ve turned her away.

He shook his head and walked past his Beta.

“You know there’s a lot going on. We haven’t made contact with Gideon yet, and my father expects a report on Saturday.”

“That’s the first thing we should have done. The vampires could retaliate any moment, but you seem intent on disappearing and forgetting your duties.

He snarled and came back to Derek, sticking his face in his and daring him to repeat that sentence. Derek stepped back and looked down in submission, but he wasn’t satisfied with that. After everything he had done, everything he had given up, how dare Derek accuse him of forgetting about his duties!

“I have never in my life forgotten about my duties,” he snarled. My whole life is a duty that you and Myles will never have to bear the weight of. Do not say that shit to me again.”

“Yes. Alpha I’m sorry.”

His anger cooled down quickly, and he came to his senses as he stepped back from his friend. Derek was right; his head was not on his duties right now, so he shouldn’t have reacted like that

“I’ll speak to the vampire prince tomorrow morning,” he said. “It’s not a good idea to let Shadow near them tonight.”

Derek nodded, his eyes still downwards.

“I’m sorry,” he said to Derek. “You’re right. I think I just need to sleep.”

He was going to be Derek’s Alpha, but he didn’t intend to be an asshole Alpha like his father. People feared him enough as it is.

Derek finally looked up and nodded again.

“Goodnight,” he said, starting up the stairs again.

“You’re not going to eat? They’ve been cooking a feast or something in there even though I told them not to bother.

“Myles will eat it. If they insist on wasting their time, let them,” he shrugged.

Like last night and the night before, he didn’t sleep as he had intended to. He paced his bedroom, wondering when things would blow up in his face. Because they would if Ava didn’t get more serious about leaving. He couldn’t help her with that because it would make people ask questions.

‘You will never take her from me.’”

Shadow’s confident statement left him feeling hopeless. He had found nothing about true mates in the library except mentions in passing and

hadn't wanted to ask the librarian. There had to be a way he could break or reject this bond.

He walked out to his balcony and looked in the direction of Ava dorm, Even across the distance, with woods and other buildings between them, she was calling to him. And all he would have to do to get to her was break a flimsy window. If she was to leave, would he still feel like this? Would distance stop it?

“She’s mine,” was all Shadow said.

It made him think there was an even worse scenario. That Shadow would follow her wherever she went. He had her scent now: he could hunt her. Ava would never be able to hide from them.