

## Chapter 33

Zeke sat perfectly still on a sofa in his lounge, staring at the wall. His head was in turmoil.

For the first time in his academic career, he lied to the dean and said he had an emergency call with his father. As future leaders, this was the only valid reason to miss out on their education. Pack business was serious business and could affect even the relationships and allies in the academy, and the academy valued its principles too much to allow that to happen.

He had almost killed her today. Claire. He'd seen her leaving the dining hall and partially shifted to go after her, but Ava's scent from the dining hall had pulled him out of it. It was only Shadow's fixation with his mate that had saved his ex-girlfriend.

Even though it hadn't happened, he could see clearly in Shadow's mind how that scene would have looked. Blood. Limbs. Screams. Because Shadow kept playing those images in his head. Claire was at death's door, and she didn't even know it.

And then he had gone to see Ava, only to see her sitting so close to that...

Breathe. He needed to breathe.

Clearing his mind again, he focused on the wall. He ignored Shadow and the images he kept filling his mind about how he would kill that one—the one he would not name.

He focused on the intricate designs on

When he heard the car driving up his driveway, his concentration slipped a little. Instead of the lines on the designs, he saw Claire's head. Instead of the colors, he saw Jared's blood. A growl left his lips and he clenched his fists, drawing blood with his claws as he shoved Shadow back to the recesses of his mind. Then he started all over again.

"I didn't know we had an urgent Pack meeting. Myles said as he entered the lounge,

Derek snorted as he entered behind him. They hadn't spoken to him since he almost snapped Derek's neck.

Zeke concentrated on counting. He had known they would be excused, too, and he had known there would be questions

"Why are we here, Zeke." Derek asked.

He looked away from the wall in front of him to look at his pack mates. He could tell by the way they stepped back that they were looking into Shadow's eyes. Blood red, murderous eyes.

“Because Shadow wants to kill everyone,” he whispered, “and I don’t know how to stop him.”

The worry on their faces turned to fear. It took him back to the first time he had lost control of his wolf.

“Shall we go home?” Myles asked.

As if he would want to be stuck in a car and then a plane with an uncontrollable wolf

“You know they won’t let us,” Derek said.

“But this is an emergency! The last thing the Academy wants is bloodshed on their soil,” Myles argued.

“It doesn’t matter. Even if they let me go, Shadow’s not leaving this place.”

Not without Ava. Thinking of her brought the scene from the morning back to his mind, and then the scene from the weekend when Jared had had his filthy hands all over her. He looked back at the wall and desperately tried to push those thoughts back.

“What triggered him? Is it something we can fix!?” Derek asked.

“It can’t be fixed. It’s something that will be very bad for everyone.”

“It’s Jared, isn’t it? Something happened at his party, and the next day, we had to leave the assembly to calm Shadow down,” Myles stated. “I knew something had happened. Why can’t you just talk to us?”

His fist clenched and unclenched at the mention of Jared’s name. He remained focused on the wall.

“What does Shadow need? What will make him calm down!”

Ava. He needed Ava. He needed to mark her. He needed to mate with her and make her his. He wanted her sweetness, her innocence, her defiance, her stubbornness. He wanted the challenge she gave him

“I can’t give him what he wants.”

His claws extended further as Shadow shoved his way forward and growled in his head. It was the most threatening growl he had ever heard.

“Stop it,” he whispered.

He hadn’t been this weak against his wolf in a long time; he had forgotten how vulnerable it made him. To have something so strong locked up in his body, controlling how he thought and how he acted, was torture.

“We will mark her, Zeke. And you will enjoy every second of it.”

Shadow changed his torture methods. He changed the images in his head.

Ava's lips.

Ava pressed up against him.

The heat of her body.

Her scent.

Everything forced his body to react involuntarily. His need for her washed through his body as everything hardened for Ava

He didn't know which torture was worse.

"Stop it," he repeated.

"Go for a run. It will clear your head, the wolf suggested, and then the sadistic bastard actually laughed in his head.

He opened his eyes and looked at his friends. They were standing far from him, but if Shadow decided to do anything, they wouldn't be able to stop him.

"Get the chains," he commanded.

He had prepared for this. He'd discarded his uniform for shorts and a muscle shirt so they would have more exposed skin.

Shadow fought against him as his friends rushed to do what he asked. With gloves on and silver chains in their hands, Zeke had to dig his nails into the couch to stop Shadow from reacting. It was only after he was bound and the silver started to poison his body that Shadow retreated with a whimper.

He ignored the excruciating physical pain as his mind cleared for the first time in days.

Of all the wolves the Moon Goddess could have blessed him with, why had he been given a psychopath whose mind never aligned with his own? What son of Alpha would he be if he still couldn't control his wolf?

“You need to talk to us, Zeke, Derek said, his voice shaky and cracking as he sat on a different sofa. “We're supposed to help you.”

He gritted his teeth against the pain as he tested the strength of his binds. With his control over the wolf back, he could think again. He would have to tell them something. Even if they reported it back to their father, it would be preferable to allowing Shadow free rein.

“I'm in trouble,” he started. “I know you'll report back to my father if commanded, but I can't keep Shadow away without you

They didn't deny it. No matter how loyal to him they were, they y couldn't disobey their Alpha's commands,

“It's not just Jared Shadow wants to go after Claire, too,” he explained.

“Because she’s a lunatic” Myles snorted. “We saw her waiting on the human again when we were leaving the training center.”

And just like that, his mind snapped again. A menacing growl left his lips as a red haze covered his vision. The chains sizzled against his skin, but he ignored the smell of burnt flesh as he pulled on his binds.

“Release me!”

Shadow’s command ripped through the room, and he had no choice but to admit he had failed. Shadow owned him now, and he would do what he wanted.