

Chapter 52

Zeke's father called just as he prepared to pick up Ava. Zeke normally called him when he was ready for the weekly check-in calls, usually after lunch, but his father had called an emergency conference meeting because the rogue attacks had increased in the past couple of weeks.

It pissed Shadow off. He had marked the whole territory because he considered it his. No one in the pack dared to dispute that, even though the current Alpha was alive and well. The rogues didn't dare attack when he was home; it only happened when he was too far away.

That was one of the reasons he was anxious to graduate and take over from his father. Nobody feared Ezra Michelson anymore, but they were fucking terrified of Shadow;

He paced the room while his father and his Beta and Gamma. Derek's and Myle's fathers, filled them in. They had been lucky that no one had been injured, and the warriors had quickly taken care of the rogues. But they had come too far into the territory and too close to the park residencies for anyone to be comfortable.

"Had they already succumbed to moon madness?" he asked.

Once a wolf was exiled from a pack, it went insane the longer it was alone. Once they lost all their humanity, they became a deadly threat to all they came close to. His pack was huge, so they also had a lot of human suburbs in it. A rogue attack on the humans would be disastrous; it would bring all the human authorities to their doorstep. Exposure was the last thing they needed. The Council would step in faster than anything, and then the whole pack would be up shit creek.

“Nearly. But several of them worked together almost as if they were a pack. It’s ridiculous even to imagine, but those are the reports”

His father wouldn’t have been out there with the warriors. He waited for the reports and the meetings. Zeke almost snarled in resentment, but he held himself back. His father would be stepping down soon anyway.

“They were so close to being rabid that I fear the next rogues that attack may be completely moon mad,” Derek’s father, Beta Lawrence, said,

“We have to increase patrols and protect our families,” Gamma Jeffries put in.

Myles had already lost his twin brother, and his family had not been the same since. His father was more protective of the remaining members of the family.

He looked at his future Beta and Gamma, and they nodded.

“We agree. Maybe speak to the nearest packs and come up with a plan together,” he said.

“Do you think I haven’t already done that?” his father snarled. “This is a mandatory meeting because you are the future Alpha and must be updated. I haven’t asked for your opinion.”

He clenched his fists and eyed the phone he had put on speaker on the table. If only he could hang up, but his father would find ways to punish him for the disrespect

“We’ve had a notice about Parents’ Weekend,” his father continued. “They want to have it before the Council comes for your evaluation. I’ll bring the girl so you can start getting better acquainted.”

The girl? Shit He’d been so preoccupied with Ava that he had forgotten there was already someone waiting to mate with him. Someone more suitable who would help him avenge his mother. Shadow growled loudly in his head, a threatening growl that had him tensing as he waited for the wolf to go crazy. It didn’t take long. He had to sit down as he fought with Shadow for control. His wolf would never let him touch someone else, not when Ava was still his mate.

Tonight. He would reject Ava tonight.

“Did you hear that?” his father said.

“Yes,” he said through his teeth.

“Now, give me an update on the vampires. And don’t give me that bullshit that you haven’t managed to bend them yet.”

The call had already been going on too long, and talking about the Vampires would make it even longer. Ava was waiting for him. He couldn't have her walk alone when he didn't know where Claire was,

Shadow suddenly calmed down, his attention taken by Ava's scent. She was close. She had walked after all. He let out a frustrated breath before explaining how the meeting with Prince Gideon had ended. As expected, his father thought it was bullshit, He expected the she wolf home to pay for her crimes by the end of the week, or he would go to the vampire territory himself.

Ava's scent got stronger. He frowned as he sniffed the air.

Was that blood?

He left the room while his father was still talking and opened the front door. Ava was limping up the driveway. There was blood all over her that made him growl. He'd failed her. She had been hurt again on his watch. Claire's scent was all over her, sending him into a rage unlike anything he had ever felt before.

Derek came to the door behind him, whispering something he couldn't understand,

But he had to help Ava. He rushed out of the house to meet her halfway and picked her up bridal style even when she weakly protested, Tears were running down her face, and they made him want to hurt something.

He didn't care about the rules anymore. In the back of his mind, he knew it was the bond speaking. If he just said the words he needed to say, if he

just opened his mouth and rejected her, he wouldn't feel this way. But he was already in too deep.

He could feel all of Ava's pain as he carried her inside. All her rage. All her confusion.

Mixed with his own rage, he could not think about anything except vengeance.

"Shit," Derek swore as he carried Ava past his Beta.

Ava winced as if every step he took hurt her. Something was not quite right, but he couldn't put his finger on it as he started up the stairs.

'Zeke, the Alpha is still on the phone,' Myles said through the link. 'He's going crazy-'

He cut the link to Myles as he frowned down at Ava. Where had all the blood come from She had it everywhere, but there didn't seem to be a mark on her. Had she already healed as she had last night?

He sniffed the air again as he put her down on his bed.

And then he frowned as he inspected her. She did have some of her blood on her clothes, but she also had Claire's. A little of his anger cleared, but he could still feel Shadow's murderous rage.

'Find her,' Shadow growled.

He couldn't think. Shadow was taking him over as he had the day Derek and Myles had chained him, and this time, he knew nothing would stop that beast. He turned to rush out of the room and bumped into Derek.

“What the fuck is going on?” Derek asked in a whisper.

“Chain me,” he ordered. “In the basement.”

Before Shadow killed everyone.