

Chapter 76

Councilor Julia smiled when he said that. It was a condescending smile that he and Shadow didn't appreciate, but they both remained calm and watched her. The last thing he wanted to do was to piss off people who could end him in seconds.

Julia closed a file in front of her and pushed it away,

“I am curious about you,” she drawled.

“How so, ma'am?”

‘Your academic career has been spotless up until now. You rose the ranks in your very first semester and have proven time and time again that you are in control of your other self,’ she said as she sat back in her chair and crossed her legs.

Her eyes didn't leave his face like she was searching for any reaction.

This was where he and Shadow excelled. He had been fooling people his whole life because letting anyone else know the depths of Shadow's depravity was a death sentence. So he kept his mask on. Kept his calm.

“The only student trainer we have had in decades, and you also maintain the highest grades,” she continued.

“Yes. I take my responsibilities seriously.”

“And then, out of the blue, you broke a serious rule by attacking a student and ended up in Isolation,” she mused. “You’ve had a few... personal issues before, haven’t you!”

“Unrelated. And also dealt with,” he answered.

“I see. But wolves still died at your hands with no provocation at all.”

“I was a child, but I assure you I am in full control of myself now, ma’am.”

And that was the truth. The vampire inclined his head as he studied him and then looked at the others.

“It appears he’s telling the truth,” Andrei said. “At least about this.”

“So why would a wolf in full control of himself just suddenly snap?” Alpha Diego asked

“Personal reasons. Claire was my girlfriend for three years.”

“This just gets more intriguing.” Iulia said. “A mere lover’s spat? Somehow, I don’t believe that.”

“And yet it is the truth.”

The magic was more insistent now, but like in Isolation, he couldn't let them into his head.

"Let's say it is," Andrei said. "You end up in Isolation for four days, but here you are, a few days later, as if nothing happened"

Everything happened.

"I've had the weekend to recover."

"You didn't need to recover, Mr. Michelson. You might have struggled initially, but you were perfectly fine in there. Like you were on a vacation."

And that was when he understood why they were there. He had beaten them. The Isolation had not done what they had expected it to do. It had not broken him. And they were there to find out why.

"It was no vacation, as I'm sure you're aware."

"You're still doing it right now. You're blocking me," Julia mused, "I wonder how much more you can take before you break."

"Tulia," Alpha Diego said in warning.

That was something he wasn't meant to know. Were they trying to test his limits? For what purpose?

“I’ve reviewed the tapes of your time in Isolation,” the vampire said. “You struggled the first half and then nothing. You sat still for the rest of the time; you didn’t move for two days. Tell me what happened.”

He kept his mind blank. The vampire’s allure was strong, but he kept himself hidden behind his mental wall.

“I remember going in and then coming out. If you reviewed the tapes, you know more about my time there than anyone else, sir.”

The vampire frowned at him and then looked at the other councilors. No one knew exactly how strong the Council was or their strengths and weaknesses, but it looked to him like they could actually mind-link each other. A vampire, a wolf and a witch. How was that even possible?

“Mr. Michelson, tell me how you blocked the magic in the Isolation room,” Alpha Diego said

And that was a command. The Alpha’s strength washed over him and had him bowing his head again. Even behind the walls he had created, he felt compelled to answer. Shadow whined. They were defeated, and it hadn’t even been much of a match. It seemed they had been toying with him at first, but now they were ready for the answers,

The magic he felt in the room increased and forced itself against the wall, the only protection that he had. He tried to reinforce it, but it was harder now. They were going to break through.

But how had he got out? He didn’t know, not for sure, and that was the truth.

“I don’t know,” he answered.

“He’s not lying,” the vampire said.

“That’s impossible,” Iulia stated. “Ask him again, in a different way.”

“Mr. Michelson did something happen in that room that allowed you to block yourself from the magic.”

“No. Nothing happened. You said yourself that I sat perfectly still.”

“Stop being difficult and just answer the questions. There are only three of us today, but if you don’t help us understand what happened, you will face the whole Council,” Julia said firmly. “Tell the truth, and we can all get out of here.”

“I’m not sure what you want me to say. I don’t know what you’re looking for,” he lied.

The three of them looked at each other again, and when they looked back, he knew they had decided to take this further.

He was preparing for his walls to be broken and all his shit to be laid bare when the sweetest scent hit his nose. Vanilla... A hint of orange blended in...Human.

No.

Why was she here?

“No, what?” Julia asked.

He concentrated on his bond with Ava as he had done in Isolation, and his mental walls slammed down, pushing the witch out of his head.

“How did you do that?” Julia mused.

She appeared more fascinated than insulted,

“You have red eyes,” the Alpha stated.

He hadn't realized Shadow was that close to the surface. He looked down, avoiding their gazes as he tried not to think of anything.

“I think we've seen enough. But we will be in touch soon, Mr. Michelson,” Andrei said.

He didn't wait to be dismissed again, and when he walked out, he had to take a deep breath and clench his fists to stop himself from reacting.

Ava sat in the waiting area as if she had also been called into the meeting. The Council was going to rip her apart.