

Bad Love 111

Chapter 111

AARON

I shift back and brace to fight.

There are letters strewn across the floor and mattress and Leah's screaming.

It's a cry of pain and rage that chills me to the bone.

I sling my arms around her. "Calm down. You're alright."

But she isn't.

She's shaking and wailing.

She's completely out of f**king control.

I cover her mouth with my hand.

I drop my leg over hers to keep her in place. Then I just hold her. I hold her and pray that whatever the hell this is will pass.

It doesn't though, at least not right away.

Then when she finally does calm down, it's an eerie, silence.

I lift my hand. "Leah?"

She doesn't answer. Her eyes have a far-off look to them. A look I've seen before in the aftermath of horrific things.

I cup her face with my hands. "Look at me, honey."

Her eyes move to focus on me, but there is no change in her expression.

I don't know what the hell to do.

My wolf roils beneath my skin, wanting to get back out, but he

can't converse with her the way I can and right now, I need to understand what is happening.

"Leah, help me here. Tell me what you need. Give me the words."

She closes her eyes. She isn't fighting or screaming now, but she isn't moving or speaking either and this complete stillness is worse to me than her freakout of only a few minutes ago.

Leah is a fighter. She's got a mouth on her, and a dry wit.

She doesn't get laid out like this. Every other time life punched her down, she's gotten back up.

"Just read it," she whispers after a while.

Tears leak from the corners of her closed eyes and I want to kiss them away.

“Don’t touch me,” she says with her eyes still closed. “Just read the letter!”

I cautiously back away and grab the paper.

The letter is handwritten, and addressed to Leah. It doesn’t take but a minute to skim through the contents.

“How could he?” she whispers.

Leah has every right to be angry. To be devastated.

Because the answer to so many things is right here. In her dad’s confession note.

We’ve all wondered. We’ve had doctors run countless tests. I never in a million years would’ve guessed at the reason.

But now I know why Leah has no wolf.

Her father bound it.

Chapter 112

“He took the choice away from me, Aaron.”

That’s an understatement.

An Alpha has certain powers. It’s a little different for each of us, but the abilities allow an Alpha to control any member

of their pack. An Alpha can force a packmate to obey them, compel them to tell the truth, or force a packmate to shift, pulling their wolf to the surface. An Alpha can use his or her powers to help heal, to help unify the pack with a collective sense of calm.

An Alpha can strip a packmate of their wolf.

But this is the worst and most cruel punishment that can ever be inflicted. It’s such an abomination to our species, that most Alphas will just execute the packmember before even considering something so heinous.

To do this to Leah.

As an innocent child.

I shove a hand through my hair.

There isn’t any coming back from this.

Leah’s eyes are sad when they meet mine. The pretty hazel irises sparkling like autumn leaves. “Even if I did want to

transition in the Fall...that won’t work now, will it?”

I want to lie to her, but I won’t. “No.”

Tears slip from her eyes.

“Your wolf was bound. It can’t rise again in this lifetime.”

"He killed it."

Essentially. Yes.

She tugs her knees up and wraps her arms around them. She looks so small. "I shouldn't do it," she mumbles.

"Do what?"

"Hope."

I don't know how to reply to that.

"Everytime I think I'm about to have something good, it's taken from me. I thought receiving my father's powers would be the answer. That it would somehow unlock my wolf. But it's only made things worse."

I won't give her false hope.

"I thought maybe becoming an Alpha would save me."

Save her? From what?

I frown.

"Aaron, I need to be alone for a while."

She's pushing me away again. Building up those cursed walls.

"No."

"I appreciate what you did tonight. Honestly, you've been better about things than I thought possible. But you can't fight my battles for me. This is my life. I have to take control for myself."

She tugs her legs tighter and rests her head on her knees. I hate seeing her pain. I hate knowing that she's right. There is nothing I can do to help her.

In this situation, she can't even help herself.

LEAH

I hold my breath until Aaron finally leaves the bedroom.

He's the strong one. The force of nature so powerful not even fate can sway him when he wants something.

But the look in his eyes just now...

Seeing that he was helpless to help me.

That said it all.

So now I'm not just grieving my father's treachery, but the death of everything.

Because if Aaron has given up, then things really are hopeless.

I close my eyes and rock. I used to do this all those years ago, when I was scared and lonely. I'd rock and count and just focus on the motion and numbers until my mind calmed and I either fell asleep or

stopped feeling so anxious about everything.

There's a clock across the room, an old grandfather clock that is an antique leftover from Aaron's dad, and it tick, tick, ticks

with each swing of its pendulum

I count each one.

An hour passes.

Then two more.

Gradually, I begin to gain control of my emotions.

There's only so much a person can cry before they're all cried out.

My nose is stuffy and my head aches.

But that's okay.

I stand up and stretch.

What can I do?

I can help set up my pack for a better future. I can make them financially solvent-or close to it.

I can establish my successor for when the inevitable moment

comes that I pass on.

I can focus on staying strong for my baby.

I'm not sure how far along I am in my pregnancy, and I'll need to figure that out quickly.

I can carry my child as long as I can and then make sure she

or he has the best prenatal care possible. Aaron will make a good father.

He doesn't think he's capable of love.

But he's loyal and strong and he'll fight to the last breath in his body to protect his offspring.

It will have to be enough. Chapter 113

"I've been thinking about your father's motives for severing your wolf," Aaron tells me.

We're on horses, riding out on the back stretch of his property.

There are miles of fields and endless trails through the

backcountry.

I wanted to go back to Pack Roberts this morning.

Aaron convinced me to go for a ride before he drove me back.

I was too tired to argue.

So I drank a big glass of orange juice. Ate the omelet chef made for me and mounted up on this docile mare named Daisy. I've ridden her a few times in the past, although rides for 'fun' weren't common. I'd occasionally get tasked to run the fenceline or do a perimeter patrol, but more often than not, I was left inside the mansion to read or study or research investment opportunities.

"Okay," I say. "I'll bite. Why did my dad do it?"

"Because of me."

I chew on that for a second. It tracks. "Because as a wolf, you could mate me fully. It would solidify your claim to Pack Roberts."

"Yes." He rubs his chest. "Your father destroyed any possibility of you connecting with your mate."

He looks murderous.

His stallion is a good three hands taller than my mare. Aaron pulls back on his reins so my horse can keep pace. He looks straight ahead rather than at me when he adds: "And I think your dad did it because of the children we would have."

I gasp.

He glances at me sharply. "Our kids would be the true heirs to both packs. They'd embody the peace that you and I began."

"And my dad never wanted that."

"No. All evidence points to the contrary."

"So why bother making me his successor?"

Aaron draws his horse to a halt. He leans forward to rub the stallion's neck. "Guilt? A last f**k-you to me, maybe? Your father never thought our relationship was good or real-"

"It wasn't."

He growls.

My horse sidesteps, and I pat her flank to calm her.

"It was the only way to get you away from me, Leah, and still preserve the peace."

Maybe. But I'm not so sure. He could've, you know, talked to me. My father could have taken the time to ask what I wanted or needed. He could've spared me the horror of hearing him commit suicide.

So much time and energy and pain. And it's all for naught.

Aaron is still as powerful as ever.

The Council won't allow me to continue to rule.

I'm dying and will have no freedom or peace.

And we will forever be bound to Pack Rathborne...because I'm having Aaron's baby.

"Stay here, Leah."

"You know I can't."

"You don't have to physically be on Roberts lands to affect changes. I'm handling Pack Leithrow remotely. You can do the same."

"It's not the same. And it's not how I want people to remember me, as a frail Alpha who spent her time hiding."

"Remember you? You going somewhere?"

I blanch.

I'm not good at lying and I'm carrying too many falsehoods to keep them straight. "Let's head back, Aaron. There's a lot to do and not as much time as we think."

Chapter 114

The drive back to my family's lands is quiet.

Aaron sits beside me, but he doesn't make conversation. He doesn't hold my hand or do much of anything, really!

If I didn't know better, I'd think he was brooding.

But that's not his style.

He's too volatile a wolf for that. I'm more the one to sulk and think. Aaron is a man of action.

When I hit the second gate I get out of the car.

"I'll drive you up," Aaron insists.

"No."

He curses. Then he reaches into his suit pocket. "Here."

He hands me a small velvet bag. "What's this?"

"Open it."

I undo the tie string and pull out a simple gold chain. It

has a moonstone pendant on it. Hecatolite isn't especially expensive, but it has a really pretty opalescent glow. The chain and design look old.

"I get that you won't wear my ring or much else that I sent

over, but that was my mom's."

"Oh." I rub my thumb over the cool gem.

This gift has meaning.

I pull it over my head.

"Can you keep it on?" he asks softly. "For me."

This man has never been sentimental before. Not about anything.

"Uh, okay."

He smiles and looks almost boyish, it's so genuine.

I shake my head and get out of the vehicle.

"Keep your phone on you," he tells me.

I plan on that anyway.

"I'm going to have a few guards positioned here," Aaron says.

"I don't think that's a good idea."

"It's them or me."

"Okay," I say abruptly.

He shakes his head. His smile is wry this time.

I did agree to someone-anyone other than him-rather quickly.

"Stay out of trouble, princess."

I step back as he drives off.

I want to stay out of trouble. The problem is, trouble seems to find me...

The long walk to the main packhouse gives me time to think and clear my head. Instead of going into my father's house, I go first to the infirmary.

Adam pokes his head out of the lab as I enter the building.

"Leah! I'm glad you're back."

"I'm assuming you know why I'm here."

"I can venture a few guesses," he says.

"Adam, I need you to swear to me that any information between us stays between us. No one else. Is that understood?"

He shoves his hands into the pockets of his white lab coat.

"I am your Alpha. If you value this pack or my father's decision, I need to know that I can trust you."

"Of course, Leah."

He guides me back into his lab, then uses the computer system there to lockdown the facility.

"Are these computers connected to a cloud server?" I ask him.

He nods.

"Disable it. Anything connected to the web can be hacked."

"I'll make the changes to our security system and backups."

"And you'll share all of those access codes with me. Today."

He jerks back like I've slapped him.

"Leah, this is years of my research. Archives of our entire pack's medical history..."

"Precisely. And as the Alpha, it is my highest priority to better protect that information."

He sputters and I watch his eyes flare.

Interesting...

Adam has a temper. He hides it well.

"I know you've served this pack tirelessly, my friend. We should just take additional steps given the nature of my position and those who might use me to access Pack Roberts."

My 'friend' comment and explanation seem to appease him.

"You're right," he says. "I'll initiate new protocols immediately."

"After my ultrasound," I say.

His mouth drops open with an audible pop.

"Why do you look surprised? You're the one who told me I was pregnant. I need to know how far along I am. I need to take vitamins. I'm assuming we'll need to monitor the progression of my cancer along with the pregnancy. I want to have a full Neonatal Intensive Care Unit established here by the end of the week."

"Leah, that kind of machinery-"

I arch a brow.

"Yes, Alpha," Adam corrects himself. "I'll see to it."

"Thank you." I smile brightly and it puts him at ease.

I was too harsh with him at the party, I realize. He has a great deal of ego and wants to feel included. I can do that.

I can-and will-play these games.

Adam wheels over a portable ultrasound machine and hooks up the various wires and monitors. "Pull up your shirt," he says. "And unzip your pants."

He opens my jeans and tugs them down a few inches, tucking either side onto my hips. My panties are lowered, but kept on. It's just my lower abdomen that's revealed.

"This is going to feel cold," he says before squirting some type of gel onto my skin.

"You're not kidding!"

He smiles.

I'll play nice. I'll do anything to achieve my goals. And I understand what those are now: 1) Set up Pack Roberts to succeed.

2) Stay alive long enough to hold my baby.

Adam turns on the machine. He presses the probe against my skin and moves it around. Almost instantly I hear the whoosh, whoosh, whoosh of a very rapid heartbeat.

"It's so fast!"

"That's perfectly normal," he says. He punches a few buttons.

"About 165 BPM."

"Beats per minute?"

"That's right."

"I get that we need to run more tests. And I can go back to the oncology department, but I need to know... How far along am I? Can I make it, Adam? Can I save my baby?" Chapter 115

"You're at eight weeks, Leah."

Wait... that would mean I got pregnant right before Aaron imprisoned me? I blanch. "I didn't eat for a

week. I can't
imagine that was good for the baby."

Adam studies the ultrasound and moves a mouse taking measurements. "The embryo would've been a cluster of cells at the time and your diet was good leading up to that event, yes?"

I nod.

"If the baby was going to terminate due to the starvation mode your body entered, it would've happened. But this little guy hung in there."

"Little guy?"

He looks sheepish. "Sh it. Did you not want to know?"

I didn't know. But, uh, too late now. "Isn't it too early?"

"Too early to really see his anatomy, yes, but your bloodwork confirmed."

His anatomy.

I'm having a boy.

All I can think of is Aaron. His smile. His dark eyes.

My heart swells with love for my baby.

"Here, look," Adam says. " He swivels the screen and then I see it. A tiny outline of arms and legs and a little face.

"He's so small!"

Adam laughs. "He's the size of a raspberry right now. By next week, he'll double. If you can make it through the next month, there's a good chance this little guy will be born."

My eyes water. But for the first time, these are tears of joy.

There's a beeping sound and we both turn to the panel of monitors across the room. "What's going on?"

Adam crosses the room and switches camera views. "It's your brother."

I swipe the gel off my body, stand up and zip my jeans. I pull my shirt down. "Let him in."

There's a beep as Adam electronically unlocks the door. I pull the plug out of the wall turning off the ultrasound.

"Remember what we talked about, Adam."

He nods and says no more.

Adam enters the lab. He crosses his arms. "What are you doing?"

It's an honest question, however, as Alpha, I don't owe him or anyone else an answer. "Adam and I were discussing these facilities. I am going to expand the medical pavilion. Let's ensure we have more room and resources for our young and elderly."

He glances at me with concern creasing his brow. "Are you anticipating war?"

"Not from Aaron." At least...I don't think he will. Our son will ensure that when I'm gone.

"The Council, then." Liam curses. "The nerve of those bastards coming here and thinking they know what this pack needs or that they can just insert a new ruler in your place."

"We aren't going to let that happen," I tell him.

He looks between me and Adam.

I've given this a lot of thought. My father made every sacrifice to ensure that Pack Roberts remains a pack, separate of Council influence or the takeover of another Alpha. I know exactly how far my father was willing to go because my life has been sacrificed in pursuit of it. My father gave up everything to protect his pack and to prevent Aaron from taking control.

"I'm going to honor Dad's wishes, Liam."

He rubs his chin. "How?"

I hold out my hand, and Liam takes it.

I step closer to him and bring his hand up so I can kiss his knuckles.

"I want to clear something up right now. You're my brother and I love you."

He gives me a lopsided smile.

"And I believe in my heart that Dad intended you to rule. He made the choice he made to preserve the stalemate with Aaron's pack-and to get me out of that untenable situation."

"I would have freed you, Leah."

"Not without us going to war. But don't worry...I have a backup plan."

I pull Liam closer then bite down hard on his wrist.

Chapter 116

"Leah! What the hell are you doing!?" Adam grabs me and tries to rip me off Liam. He's acting like I'm some kind of rabid dog.

I swallow a gulp of blood then another.

When I push Liam's hand away, there's blood seeping from the bitemarks on his skin.

I see my reflection in one of the computer monitors. My lips are red, and blood drips down my chin.

"You're my successor, brother." I turn to our pack's doctor. "Adam, you're here and can bear witness. I'll write up a formal will and testament, but given the recent attempts on my life

and the way the Council has been thinking they're going to intervene in Pack Roberts affairs, I figure we should clear this

up now."

Liam grins. "Thank you, Leah."

Adam throws his hands up in the air. "We're in the pack's hospital wing. There are a hundred syringes not five feet away

from us." He wrenches open a drawer and pulls a handful out to prove his point.

I laugh.

Liam does too. Then he takes my hand again, bloody and all.

“I’m going to support you.”

I nod. “I know you will.”

Because we’re family.

Chapter 117

The days that follow are boring. And, really, who ever wishes for a boring life!? But for me the quiet is bliss.

No attacks, no drop-ins from Council members wanting to take control. No drama from exes or girlfriends. No murder attempts.

I feel mostly good, and I make it a point to eat lots of veggies and fruits and lean proteins. I’m in ‘nesting’ mode and focused on staying healthy and positive for my baby. I take a walk each day with my brother.

I’m getting reacclimated with childhood friends and packmates that haven’t seen me since I was a teen.

Liam takes the time to show me more of our packlands and the innovations in the time I’ve been gone. As it turns out, the pack has thrived. There are dozens of new families, and a slew of kids.

The relative peace gives me a chance to analyze the books for Roberts Corp. and they aren’t pretty. Living expenses are high and it appears that my dad and his packmates have kept up a lavish lifestyle of travel, gambling and a fleet of exotic cars and private jets, even as the company was hemorrhaging money.

It may be that revenue was so low that they just didn’t bother to curtail spending because it wouldn’t have made a difference.

But they should’ve tried.

The twenty million from Aaron isn’t going to make a dent—and maybe that’s why he was so chill about offering it in the first place.

I text him. I’m calling a *board meeting*.

Time? He texts back.

Noon.

Corporate office?

I've never actually been into the main offices. I think I visited once with my dad as a kid.

Yes, I reply. Then I look at Liam. He's seated across from me in the living room. "Get someone to ready the jet."

"For when?"

"Now."

He nods to two of the wolves at the entrance to the living room. They move off, presumably to prepare things.

Liam looks at me oddly then he stares pointedly at my phone. "Where are we going?"

"California. I'm calling a board meeting." I glance at the time displayed on the screen. "And I expect it to start promptly in four hours."

"Cutting it kind of close," Liam says.

"If the board is doing their jobs, they should already be in their offices."

He purses his **lips**. He wants to say something but doesn't.

"You do know we're on the verge of bankruptcy," I remind him.

He nods grimly. "Yes."

"What aren't you telling me, Liam?"

His eyes avoid mine. "Nothing."

Hmm. I'm not convinced.

"I know you go offlands most nights. We're in a remote corner of Montana. Hours away from any major city. What **are** you **up to?**"

He shoves his hands into his jean pockets. I see it. The flinch in his eyes. He's thinking about lying. He's debating whether he can get away with it because I'm human.

I hold up my hand. "Stop. I've been lied to enough. If you don't want to tell me, don't say anything. But please don't destroy

what little trust we have between us."

He rises from his chair and crosses to me. Then he drops to a kneeling position. "You're my sister and my Alpha. I swear to you that I'm not doing anything that isn't aimed at our pack's best interests."

"I know, Liam. I know you're loyal to our pack."

He **bows** his head.

But I don't think it's a sign of fealty, I think it's so I can't see what he's thinking...

Chapter 118

Within the hour, I'm airborne.

A wolf named Heath is our pilot and his confident and easy demeanor made the flight a breeze. Wheels up to wheels down, we're in Silicon Valley in under two hours. The corporation is a short ride from the airport and Liam has arranged to have a limousine waiting for us.

I play with the moonstone pendant Aaron gave me on the drive.

When I realize what I'm doing, I glance up. Liam is frowning at

1. me.

I inwardly sigh.

He'll never compromise or want to preserve the peace with Aaron.

I get it.

I wasn't so young that I forgot the lives lost. So many people grieving.

My mom died because of the war.

"You sure you want to do this?" Liam asks.

I'm taken aback by his question.

I mean... "Liam, this is our pack's company. And if we lose it..."

He glances out the window.

I'm not interested in all the fancy modern buildings or the small houses stacked on top of each other that cost millions of

dollars. I'm focused on him.

"We need Roberts Corp to succeed."

He nods but doesn't look at me. When we reach the headquarters, he gets out first and holds his hand out to help me out of the vehicle. Liam leads the way into the building.

I have notes and thoughts of what I want to say and what I want to do.

But I'd be lying if I didn't admit that part of me is fixated on Aaron. Is he here? And why does my heart race when I think about seeing him?

AARON

"Where the hell is she?"

Cedric drags in a deep breath, like I can't tell that he's exasperated.

We've been here an hour already.

The penthouse suite of Roberts Corporation is quite nice. It's entire walls of glass with views spanning out to the city and

sightlines to the other major tech companies in the area.

Pack Roberts had once been on the cutting edge of technology. Stocks had been coveted and they'd been poised

to make huge strides in the digital markets.

But somewhere along the way, that passion for innovation died.

The engineers stopped looking forward and got complacent. In the span of a few short years, what was a billion dollar company was devalued significantly.

I eye the seven people seated around the conference table. They all look exceptionally anxious. The two wolves among

them...even more **so**.

I smell their sweat and fear.

Their greed.

As I've been buying up the shares of Roberts Corp it was always with an eye toward the future, but there isn't an engineer among these entitled bastards, they don't know how to roll up their sleeves and do the work. While they may have

contributed to the success during the formative years, they've grown lax since.

I'm not sure if they realize that I hold the controlling shares.

I'm successful enough and run in the same circles, that they'd know my capabilities outside of this boardroom.

But...this isn't about me.

For now, anyway.

I rub my chest. My wolf is stirring.

It only takes a beat for me to know why.

Leah.

She's coming toward me...

Chapter 119

When she enters the boardroom, her gaze raking over each member present, I feel a jolt that travels through my body and straight to my dick.

It's stupid.

I've had females chasing after me for as long as I can remember.

Yet it's *this* woman. Her willfulness and vulnerability that are like a Molotov Cocktail. She just has to enter the room and she ignites something inside me.

I don't address her as Alpha.

Not in this mixed company.

"Leah," I say and walk toward her.

I kiss her cheek and she lets me. Then I extend my hand indicating that she should move **to** the head of the table.

She does, taking her time to assess each person here.

It isn't necessary. I know my girl. She'd come prepared, having researched about each of them before even proposing this

board meeting.

When she's at the head of the table, she rests her hands on the polished wood. She isn't tall. But the white pants and pale blue blouse make her seem bigger.

"Thank you for coming," she says.

She inclines her head at her brother who stands at the

entrance of the room. "Liam, if you wouldn't mind..."

He hands out a folder to each board member, including me.

"Inside that folder, you'll see a summary of your contributions to the company in Q1 and Q2."

Several men at the table share a look.

Leah keeps talking, "You'll also see our financial forecasting from the year prior and through today. The considerable drop in revenue and inability to pivot in the marketplace—either with investments, products, acquisitions or business practices—makes me wonder what each of you have been doing these last few years."

She says it innocently enough, but I know my girl. She's reeling them in with her calm tone and innocent eyes. She looks too sweet to eviscerate anyone.

But I sense a bloodbath coming.

"I'll make this simple," Leah says. "In the same folder in front of you, you'll see a severance check." She glances at each board member. "Our stocks plummeted by 34%. But how many of you still took your holiday bonus? Come on now, show of hands?"

These older men and two women look around nervously.

"Aaron," she addresses me. "As a majority shareholder of this company, what would you recommend for employees or board members who put themselves ahead of the good of this corporation?"

"I think you know my answer."

Leah smiles. "If you took a bonus while our stocks were plummeting, consider that your severance pay. You can leave. You will be removed from your position."

"Now, just one minute!" one of the old white men sputters.

"What do you need a minute for?" Leah asks calmly. "You're fired. Get out before I have our attorneys sue you for gross

negligence and mismanagement of this company."

Aaron grins at me, right before *all* hell breaks loose.

Chapter 120

AARON

Leah's smirking.

I love that look. It's confident and sexy and just a bit arrogant.

And as an Alpha, it's a damn good look on her.

It's the kind of look that makes me want to bend her over this conference table.

Her lips twitch like she knows exactly what I'm thinking.

It's not a bad idea.

Two board members topple their chairs as they get up and start yelling.

Two others are flipping through their folders trying to read everything and acting like they haven't done anything wrong.

The last members, two females and one male, are sitting back in their chairs completely shellshocked.

The only two wolves on this board. An Alpha named Sean MacPhearson and a second leader, Claude Taggerty, don't kick up a fuss.

They walk out of the room.

Yes, well the writing has been on the wall.

For years.

I'm not feeling particularly sorry for any of these bastards.

Liam steps into the havoc. He doesn't actually say anything. He just moves until he's standing next to Leah. That show of solidarity has an immediate effect. These board members realize that they aren't going to bully her or talk their way out of this.

I move until I stand on Leah's opposite side. I actually own 51% of this corporation and if any of them bothered to keep up to date on the stock sales, they'd know that too.

"Mr. Rathborn," one of the men says. His name is Hugo Clarkson and he's on more than one board with me. "Your recent acquisitions would mean that you own the controlling shares of Roberts Corporation."

Okay. So at least one of them has done their homework.

"As the controlling member," Clarkson says, "It's you. Not Miss Roberts or her brother who can make these decisions. I'm sure you can recognize that her hasty assessment and rash actions are misplaced in this situation."

Divide and conquer. I see what he's trying to do here.

Leah glances at me.

"Are you calling my wife rash and questioning her judgment, Clarkson?" my voice is almost a growl, I'm so angry.

His pasty white face flushes all blotchy. "That's not what I said!"

Insulting Leah was definitely not the right strategy. "An insult to my wife is an insult to me."

Now the old man blanches.

"Leah, Liam, shall we conduct a vote?" I ask. "All in favor?"

Their hands go up and it's over.

The smart ones file out of the room. They've milked this company long enough.

"Make sure they are escorted directly out, Liam. Call in security to oversee each of them. Get their access restricted immediately."

He storms **out** of the room and my wolves follow to help ensure security.

Then it's just me and Leah in this conference room.

I put my hands on the long stretch of wood and press down. "It's sturdy," I tell her.

She spins so her ass is on the conference table and she faces me directly.

"What did you have in mind?"