

Bad Love 19

Chapter 19

The first few minutes consist of a welcome address and a summary of recent laws that have been passed and put into effect.

After that, comes the new agenda.

The Regional Collective requires dues paid for the tech protocols and contributions to help obtain files from the military-which keep packs updated on technologies and emerging tech that can be a threat to our way of life.

Then come more announcements, blah, blah, blah.

I glance nervously at Aaron.

There are a lot of wolves present tonight. Nearly twice as many as the last Council meeting. Asking for a divorce...it's going to embarrass him.

"You can do it," I whisper. "You can say that you want to leave me."

I don't think the who or why really matters, not now. "I just want to be free."

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His eyes narrow. He clasps my hand and threads our fingers together. "No."

His palm is warm and his grip is firm.

It's like a lifeline, tethering me.

I look at our joined hands. "This is all I ever wanted, you know."

His hand tightens around mine.

"I wanted you to see me. To care about me."

I sit here, waiting for the words. For him to give me a sign, something, anything so I have a reason to stay.

"Leah, I-"

"Alpha Roberts. Rise and approach the main floor."

Hearing my father's name called by the Council Leader captures my attention. It breaks the moment between us and I lean forward for a better view of the proceedings.

The main Council members range in age and ethnicity and gender. They are among the most studied and influential beings within our world.

The Elder, Karolina, speaks first. "Evidence has been obtained from our financial institutions that monies, in the total amount of seven and a half million dollars, have been siphoned from a Regional Council account to yours. How do you plead?"

My father sputters. He glances around nervously.

That amount. It's the exact amount that I switched from my savings to my dad's.

Oh god.

No.

I turn to Aaron. "You didn't!?!"

"Additionally," Karolina says. "We have it on reliable authority that the district attorney is preparing to levy charges against you for securities fraud. You recently offloaded ten-thousand

shares of stocks, resulting in charges of insider trading. How do you plead to this?"

My stomach rises into my throat. "Aaron. No!"

He stares at me, perfectly calm, while all around us, wolves gossip and whisper and my father is sputtering.

"You bastard!" I shrink away from him. "How could you do this!?"

Bad Love: An Alpha's Regret

"I don't know what the Council is referring to, ma'am," my father insists. "The money in my account came from my daughter. The stock advice was hers too."

Karolina arches a brow. "So you are incriminating yourself and your daughter in these crimes?"

Her reddish brown hair is drawn back in a bun and her features look severe. She stares down her nose at my father.

And I know she doesn't like what she sees.

This particular Council member is all about discretion and avoiding human notice. And this mess will be very, very public.

“My wife had nothing to do with the actions taken on behalf of Pack Roberts,” Aaron says loudly. He stands and stares hard at my dad. “I cannot imagine that Alpha Roberts would suggest otherwise.”

“I didn’t do it!” my father screams.

His tone does nothing to exonerate me.

Chapter 20

I start to stand up and Aaron’s hand comes down on my shoulder. “Don’t fucking move.”

But the pieces come together like a puzzle and I recognize that I played right into Aaron’s trap.

Seeing what he wanted me to see.

Doing what he plotted for me to do.

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“The account that I thought was mine,” I whisper. “You always had it flagged for the Regional Collective.”

He nods.

So my father isn’t wrong. I did do this.

Even if my father is spared by the Council, he’ll still be

convicted by human courts. Shit, even Martha Stewart with all her billions, couldn’t beat an insider trading rap. She went to

jail.

“Why? Damn it, Aaron. Why would you do this?”

“I already told you. Because of you.”

His eyes are cold and empty. “I’ve had this plan in place for a long time. But you forced my hand, Leah, when you

threatened to divorce me.”

Her face is pale and her eyes are glassy with tears.

I don’t feel bad about that.

She’s lied. She’s refused to confide in me. She’s plotting to

leave me-and to hell with the aftermath for my pack or our community.

She forced my hand.

I warned her. Multiple times.

"This will ruin them," she whispers, her eyes dancing around nervously. "They'll execute my father."

There is a chance of that. Yes. "That is a possibility."

"At the very least, he'll be stripped of his title. And a pack without an alpha is easy pickings." She pitches her voice lower

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still. "Was that your goal all along? To take what he has and to hell with who you crush to do it?"

was not my primary objective. No. But as the situation has evolved, so have I. "It's not my fault your father ran his pack into the ground."

Alpha Roberts gambles and drinks. He's wasteful. Focused on flashy cars and exotic vacations and fast women. He's also violent. Capable of unspeakable crimes and known for not caring about collateral damage.

"Leah... your father lost his way."

"You bastard! How could you do this!?"

I believe we've already covered the how and the why. I'm not going to argue with her. At least not here. Not in front of our peers. We're getting odd looks now and I know plenty of these wolves' tongues will be wagging.

I'm not concerned with the gossip.

I'm focused on the outcome that my machinations will achieve.

"Drop this whole stupid idea of a divorce, and I'll lend my support for the Council to be lenient."

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Karolina leans forward. "Would you like to explain what your
mean by that?"

Leah glances back at me.

My muscles flex and adrenaline pumps inside me.

My wife knows what I am capable of. And she has to know
that if she says or does something to hurt my pack that there will be repercussions.

I walk down the rows of empty seats until I'm in the central
area and I move to stand beside her.

Then she shocks all of us in this room by dropping to her
knees...