

Rafe POV

He was sitting in his oce and once again he felt annoyed and partially hollowed out at the same time. He couldn't understand it. The women were bloody twins and so very close. But neither of them would allow he or Jack to share them. It hurt every time they refused him. He also knew it hurt Jack, his Beta, every time as well.

Their connection to each other, had always been so very strong, gotten their wolves on the same day. Hell, they did everything together, including s*x with women, had shared damned near every woman they'd ever had.

But their own Mates would not allow it, and it was hurting them every day. Jack had tried to let it go, years ago now. He had stopped asking his Mate to let he and Rafe share her. Rafe, on the other hand, had Alpha needs that could not be sated completely but just him and his Mate, she alone, was not enough for him. Should be but wasn't.

He and Melissa had a screaming match just this morning about it, in fact. Up on the Alpha oor in the hallway. Jack and his Mate Maria, had tried to separate them. Maria was no more interested in Rafe touching her, than Melissa was Jack touching her. It caused him actual pain, always had likely always would. He wanted both women and he knew so did Jack.

Jack had dragged him downstairs and into the Alpha oce. "Just let it go Rafe. It's never going to happen."

"It needs to Jack," he'd snapped. "I'm sick of this, they are our Mate's, I don't understand it."

"I know, but it's been years now, Rafe. We are not going to sway them."

Rafe knew that his Beta was right, but it didn't stop the hurt or the constant hollow feeling he had inside of his chest. That was starting to feel as though it was going to swallow him alive, it felt like his life was being slowly, agonisingly slowly at that, ripped away from him. He had no idea how much more of this he could take.

He loved Melissa, she was his Mate and touching her, pleasing her and being with her meant the world to him, in one hand. But on the other hand, he hated her for denying him what he needed. He had tried to explain it to her and to Maria for that matter, how not only he felt but how Jack also felt, that there was a connection so strong between them they needed to be in each other's love lives, to feel whole.

His own Mate had glared at him and called him all manner of names, right to his face.

'Alpha' his attention was drawn away from his own painful thoughts, by the urgency and tinge of fear coming down the mind-link, he automatically opened the mind-link to Jack so he, too, could hear what was going on.

'Attack coming on the Eastern border. I don't see anything, but!'

'But?'

'I believe what I was told is true.'

'What you were told? Explain.' he demanded the eastern patroller, there was only the human world out there, not a place for an attack at this hour of the day, the sun was up and all.

'A mind-link, not sure who from though. Female, didn't recognise the voice. But her urgency was clear. She believed it to be war.'

'Keep me apprised. I'll send warriors now. Be careful.'

His eyes met Jack's as an uneasy feeling settled on him. This was what they had been fearing for a while now. Their pack had been getting systematically attacked over the last year and a half. Rogue wolves mostly. Testing their borders and response times, both he and Jack believed it was a prelude to being a full pack on pack attack. Though what they were after or who they were, was still yet to be seen.

Though they did not know who it was, he and Jack had their suspicions. War was coming and today, it appeared, was the day. He connected himself to the entire pack, a full pack wide mind-link, made sure every available tether he could feel was linked to him. Sent out an Alert for all the women not warrior ranked and all the children to come to the packhouse for safety. For every warrior he had to head for the Eastern boarder, war with another pack was here.

He was standing in his oce a frown on his face, "Jack," he half whispered to the man, and reached out to let him feel a link to them.

"Very odd Rafe, I can't place that at all, not familiar."

"I don't know it either." it was an odd feeling to be attached to a mind that felt loud and fuzzy, crowded even. He also did not recognise it at all. Yet it was part of his pack, came from the east as well.

Melissa and Maria appeared in his oce doorway, wide-eyed and worried looking. "Keep everyone inside, lock it down." He told Melissa, tilted her face up to him, despite their constant arguing he did love her, leaned down and kissed her softly on the mouth "Stay inside." he told her, then he left to head for the Eastern border.

It didn't take long for his patrolman to report to him that there was an Alpha and his Unit with at least a hundred warriors standing outside the pack border, stating he did not know the Alpha.

Told him he and his unit were on the way along with all their warriors. Rafe knew those patrolmen were outnumbered and likely not to survive the battle, if that Alpha did not wait for him to arrive to take him down, the sheer volume of men he brought with him said it all. He was in this battle to take over the pack or out to destroy them.

A still unknown enemy at this time. Wondered if he would be able to talk the man and his wolf down, out of the war and the battle that was about to start. Where both of them were going to lose people, wondered if perhaps he could come to some sort of agreement with this Alpha. It might be possible depending on exactly what that Alpha wanted.

The ghting was already underway when he got there. His wolf, Solar, launched himself into the ghting, though it seemed even with his man well trained, they were out matched. This Alpha and his warriors did not ght like other packs. They were attacking and bringing down his well-trained men. Four on one, they were killing his warriors quickly and eciently.

It was a blood bath out here on the edge of the pack. Solar and Flare, he and Jack's wolves were trying to get to that bastards Alpha Wolf, didn't recognise the wolf, hadn't seen it before, but it seemed to be impossible, he had several units in front of him and if even one of those men fell, another from somewhere else appeared to take his place.

They were eradicating without mercy Rafe's men, one by one, and seemed to be barely losing any of his own at all.

'Were losing.' Jacks voice shot down the mind-link.

'I know,' but his wolf did not stop ghting, none of them would, they had to protect the pack's women and children, their Mates, his Luna.

'Alpha, step your men back now.' roared into his mind, so much power rolled with it. Solar actually bowed his damned head, whoever it was, it was that weird link he'd felt before. The urgency and demand from her, and it was definitely a female voice, had him actually obeying and he sent out a full retreat order of fty feet.

Everyone went, including him and his Alpha Unit. His wolf lifted his head to look and see where she was, who she was, and noticed the woman in the water. Not a wolf, he realised, saw her stance, and the way she was solely focused on the enemy.

'Rafe, what's going on?'

'In the lake Jack.' he shot back, knowing that the man and his wolf would look. There was a very pale opalescent scaled creature with long hair draped over the front of her body, had pure black eyes that radiated a slightly bluish colour, almost as if they were glowing. Distinctly female, it had all the curves of a woman. It was standing there in the water, she seemed to be on his side. Had called him Alpha.

'What is it?'

'Hell, if I know, called me Alpha though.'

'She's a pack member?' Jack asked, sounding shocked. Knew neither of them had seen anything like her before.

The snarl and the sound that suddenly issued from that creature, hurt his wolf's ears and Solar snarled and snapped his teeth in its direction in response to the pain, wanted nothing more than to race down there and rip its head off for the pain it was causing his wolf. It was horrid.

'Rafe, look to the enemy.' Jack shot to him.

They were all being force shifted by the pain of the sound directed at them. 'Thank the Goddess, that thing is on our side.' Rafe sent back.

The pitch changed and he was in less pain, so was his wolf, but he watched as those closest to the creature started dropping like ies. Blood was pouring from them, some of them were actively turning towards the creature and even moving towards it, like the sound was calling to them, drawing those wolves to her.

When it stopped, a third of the attacking pack was dead or dying laying on the ground bleeding out. Solar turned his attention to the Alpha in question. He was standing with his hands over his ears, tall with more lean muscle than bulk, that blonde hair that was nearly white, a dead give-away. He knew that man, 'Victor Sampson' had seen him with some of his other allied packs. His suspicions were now conrmed, he'd thought as much, though with no actual proof, couldn't do anything about it, had even seen the man over the years down at Nightfall, he'd not seemed bothered by Rafe of Jack, had been respectful, wouldn't say polite, always asked after Luci. Their only statement was she's ne.

Victor was a complete brute of a man and Rafe would not align his pack to that man, and his Bloodless Moon Pack. They were a bunch of thieving, murderous, bastards, who loved to s*****r everything even when the ghting was over, he let his men torture the survivors of the battles. He was just plain cruel and sadistic.

His attention moved back to the creature in the Lake, watched it shift and become something else entirely. Looked like a half-shifted wolf but with scales not fur, but those black eyes now held glowing green iris's.

'What the hell is it?' his whole Alpha Unit asked him.

Rafe was really looking at it now, it was not nished yet, saw it building water up around its hands 'I don't care what it is. It's on our side.' was his reply.

'Rafe,' a separate private link from Jack 'Luci? It looks like Luci.'

Rafe could see it a little. He'd not seen that wolf in over half a decade though, she had run off and left. Presumed dead, drowned herself the day he and Jack had come home with their Mate's, in that very lake.

Rafe couldn't tell not really, though he knew without a doubt Luci was a wolf. Whatever that thing was, was not wolf and the power it held, had made his own Alpha bow its head.

Then water spears, was how he thought of them, were ying through the air towards the enemy, took down a lot more of those ghting for Victor.

'Now Alpha.' the creature roared at him as it collapsed into the water, his wolf let out a battle cry and the ghting restarted. This time though he had more men than Victor, he still had warriors joining the battle, those that were unable to keep up with him and his Unit or his elite warriors, his numbers were still increasing in size.

Watched as Victor called a retreat to his remaining men when there were only about 30 left, knew he could no longer win. It was now a losing battle for him.

Rafe did not send his men after that man, he'd already lost too many today. He would not lose anymore, for a hunt and kill mission. Though he could feel several of his men wanted revenge, would have lost family members out here today, not just parents but children as well. Many of his elite warriors were old enough to have grown children, some grown grandchildren.

His eyes moved back to the lake only to see the creature disappear. 'Luci?' he tried to reach out to it via the mind-link. It was severed as violently as the last time and he could not re-establish any connection to it, was trying to maintain any sort of connection with the female creature. But the minute it was gone from the pack's territory the tether to it was gone as well.

'Rafe?' it was Jack again.

'I don't know,' he sighed, 'cut me clean off, both link and tether, the second it left the pack territory.'

Rafe shifted back to his human form, and he headed for the lake. There was no trace of it, whatever it was, he couldn't see it. Whatever it was, it lived here in the lake, somewhere deep down in the depths, he supposed.

Jack was standing beside him now. "Do you suppose it could be Luci?"

"Likely the thing that killed Luci." Rafe sighed "She went in and never came out, Jack, no body was ever found, remember."

"Maybe...because."

"Luci was a wolf, Jack." Rafe turned from the lake, whatever or whoever it was, it had been or was a part of his pack, it had a direct and clear line to his patrolman and to him.

His eyes moved to the bloody battlefield. "We gotta get the s**t cleaned up before any body's movements stroll through on their way to the lake...nd me a live one, that was Victor Sampson."

"What? That's not good Rafe, that man is a monster."

"Agreed and though he lost a lot today, he'll be back with more. We need to prepare for another attack and likely soon. He's the type to go gather and regroup, no time will be given for us to recover."

"Agreed, I'll get Hannah and her sisters out here to clean this s**t show up quickly."

"Already here." he heard a female voice, emotionless as always.

Both he and Jack turned and looked at her. "When'd you get here?"

"Been here the whole time, you want full clean up Alpha or just those pricks over there?" she and her two sisters stood casually looking over the battle, dressed in simple pale blue hooded dresses, he knew their backs would be bare a full, hollowed circle that showed off what he could only think of as their coven markings, it was identical on all of them, moons that ran down their spines. Their feet were also bare, they never wore shoes, like to feel the ground under their feet always, connected them to their mother earth. They were the three witches allied to his pack. Never seemed bothered by the sight of a s*****r.

Didn't care about much, just their Mate. But they were reliable in his pack always. Had not been sure they had turned up out of the blue at rst. Had just strolled right across his borders and waved any attacking wolf off into sleep. Then had looked right at him and announced, "We're here Alpha Rafe, at your service."

He had not called for them, but they had pledged loyalty and the only thing that they seemed to want was a nice quiet place to live. Picked out a place and settled themselves in. Loyal they were, which surprised him, for witches usually only answered to themselves or their coven leader. Though these three redheads looked no more than twenty, that's how they'd looked when they had arrived, hadn't aged a day in ten years.

Rafe turned to his victor, so many of them and sighed. He hated the sight of lost wolves, still had no idea why Victor was attacking him, or what he actually wanted had yet to be voiced, but he could think of one reason. There was no active threat from him to Victor or the other way as far as he knew, though he had declined an alliance with the man years ago when Luci had still been with them.

"Just those that aren't ours."

"On it Alpha."

"Hey what did you make of the girl?"

"Not a girl." the three of them stated in unison and then simply walked off to magic away the enemy bodies. They were indeed very useful to him.

"Cryptic as ever." Allen his Gamma commented, walking over, he was covered in blood. Not the rst time Rafe had seen that, the man's eyes lingered on the three hungrily, all three of them were his Mate's, one wolf to three witches. It was likely he was the actual reason that they came. Had probably seen him, the full moon after they had arrived, that man had found himself staring right at the three of them, all of them had raised their arms up to him and called him Mine, his wolf and he had growled it right back without any hesitation at all.

"You'll nd the answer."

Allan laughed "They will say what they want to say, I'm just their fun toy."

Rafe's wounds were healed by the time he got back to the packhouse and despite the battle being long over, it was still in lock down mode, he mind-linked to Melissa that he was outside, and she should open the packhouse back up.

Many she-wolves were distressed and crying from the loss of loved ones, whether it be father, brother, sister or their Mate even, they all had that hollowed out and in pain look. He'd lost 76 wolves today. It was not a good day at all.

Melissa looked right at him, was frowning somewhat, but then walked over and hugged him. He hugged her back then put her away from him. He had work to do and so did she, for that matter. Already he could see there were three small children sobbing horrendously. Lost both their parents in the battle that had raged. They were now her charges to console and nd homes for, if there were no family to take them in, it was likely they would have grandparents here inside the pack somewhere, though them standing along with no female meant no grandmother, could well be orphan's.

Melissa would nd out and let him know. That was part of her Luna duties. He now had to record the battle, his lost men, make sure the clean-up was attended to properly. Would have to send someone into the human town to make sure there were no reports of it, though his witches were also useful in the clean-up department.

Not one bloody survivor to be brought back either, any that had been still alive had died on the way to the cells. That creature's power, whatever she had done to them, its affects still working on them even after she stopped and vanished back into the depths of the lake, it seemed.