



185 The Alpha V.S His Pack

Hades 1

Silence reigned.

Not the heavy, suffocating kind.

No, this was the cold, sharp silence of a room holding its breath—of men calculating, of power shifting beneath their feet.

And for the first time in his life, Darius miscalculated. 1

For the first time in his life, the great Alpha, the ruler of the Valmont's bloodline, the man who always held control—hesitated.

It was only for a fraction of a second. A flicker of shock in his otherwise impassive gaze, a minuscule widening of his pupils.

But I saw it.

I felt it.

She turned to me slowly, her lips parted, her breath shallow. As if she hadn't dared to believe I would say those words aloud. As if, for all her defiance, for all her strength, she had not thought I would stake my claim in front of the

court.

And yet, here I was.

Darius recovered quickly, of course. A man like him did not stay unbalanced for long.

He exhaled, measured and even, steeping his fingers as he regarded me. But when he spoke, his voice carried something new. Not just calculation.

A warning.

"You cannot do this, Hades."

I did not react. Did not blink.

Darius tilted his head slightly, studying me, as if searching for some weakness to exploit. When he found none, he continued, his words deliberate, precise.

"It would be a political disaster."

His voice was not harsh, nor dismissive. No, this was the voice of a man who wielded logic as his sharpest blade. And he wielded it well.

"Lycans and werewolves have been bitter enemies for centuries," he said, his tone smooth, patient—like a scholar explaining the inevitable collapse of an empire. "Our history is stained



with war and bloodshed. Your kind and mine have slaughtered each other for so long that peace is nothing more than a fragile illusion, held together by necessity rather than trust."

He gestured toward Ellen, but his gaze never left mine. "And now, you expect to announce that a wolf—a werewolf that your people call mutts—will rule over Lycans as Luna?" He let the question hang, let its weight settle between us. "Do you not understand what that would mean?"

I did not speak.

So he pressed on.

"Your court would revolt. Your gammas would reject her. Your alliances—shaky as they already are—would crumble. If you do this, Hades, you will not simply be making a decision for yourself." His voice lowered, calm and edged with something like grim finality. "You will be making a decision that could drive you to a civil war. There will be riots, there will be coup d'etats. You will lose more than you will earn just because you refuse to accept that my daughter is not safe here. I just want to take her home and help her heal where her own people here. She will be returned, she remains your fucking wife whether I like it or not. I gave her over to solidify



our alliance to ensure the safety of my people. I would never dismantle that. Just let her come home."

I held his gaze.

He was not wrong.

Lycans prided themselves on their superiority. Werewolves were mongrels in their eyes—lesser, weaker, tainted by Malrik Valmont who ocastrated the death of Elysia. He banished her children, the Lycans. The idea of a werewolf, not only a subject of the bloodline of murders and usurpers but the bloodline of Malrik himself ruling over Lycans would be seen as heresy. 1

And yet—

I did not care.

Darius leaned back slightly, his expression composed, but eager for me to waver.

He glanced at Ellen then, just for a moment. His expression darkening as if it was just fully sinking in that he might not get what he seeked when he decided to come here.

A father who understood that his daughter would no longer be able to bend to his will, what ever neferious plans he had.



But before he could speak again—before he could sink the knife in deeper, make another attempt at prying her from me—

I cut him off.

"You cannot tell me how to make decisions."

My voice was not raised. It did not need to be.

The air crackled with tension. Not the wild, uncontrolled kind, but the measured weight of a battlefield before the first strike. The silence between us stretched, taut as a bowstring, and I let it.

"There have been fourteen coups since I became Alpha five years ago," I said, my voice steady, unwavering. "Six of them led by my own brother."

I saw the flicker in Darius' eyes—the brief, instinctual calculation of a man who understood power but had underestimated the depths of mine.

"If I feared revolts, if I bent to the will of those too weak to accept change, I would not be standing here now," I continued. "My court has always been restless. My allies are as fickle as they are strategic. And yet, I remain." 3

I leaned forward slightly, resting my forearms

against the table between us. I did not blink.

"You think I do not know the cost of my decisions? That I have not measured the risk, counted the bodies, anticipated the blood that may spill?" My voice dropped, a quiet, deliberate blade. "If my people wish to revolt, let them try. If my gammas refuse to accept her, I will find new ones. If my alliances crumble, then they were never worth keeping to begin with." 2

Darius clenched his jaw, but he did not interrupt. He knew better.

"You speak of history," I said, my tone cool, calculated. "Of bloodshed, of enmity that spans centuries. But history does not bind me. I am not a ruler who clings to the past like a coward too afraid to forge a new path." My fingers tapped once against the polished wood of the table, measured and controlled. "The Lycans who follow me do so not because I uphold tradition, but because I win. Because I lead them to victory. And if you think for a second that I will abandon my Luna—my wife—because of whispers and rebellion, then you have gravely miscalculated." 2

Ellen exhaled sharply beside me, her hands clenched in her lap. I did not look at her. I did



not need to.

Darius, however, did. His gaze flicked to her, the first real crack in his unshakable presence forming at the edges.

"You say you want to take her home," I said, pulling his attention back to me. "That you want her to be among her own people, to heal." I tilted my head slightly, watching him, waiting for him to catch the snare before it closed around his throat. "And yet, you were willing to give her away to secure your own safety. To bind her to me with no regard for what that meant. But now that she has become more than a bargaining chip, now that she stands as Luna of the Lycans, suddenly, she must be 'safe'?"

His hands curled into fists against the table.

"Tell me, Darius," I murmured, slow and deliberate. "Did you truly come here for her? Or did you come here because you have realized that you miscalculated? That the daughter you thought you could use has become something else entirely?"

His nostrils flared. I smiled, but there was no humor in it.

"You fear what she will become," I said softly.



"You fear what she already is." 1

Darius exhaled sharply through his nose, dragging a hand through his hair, a single crack in his otherwise composed demeanor.

"You are making a mistake," he finally said, his voice lower, rougher.

"No," I said, rising to my feet. "I am making a choice."

I looked at Ellen then, and for the first time since this meeting began, I allowed the full weight of my claim to settle.

"My Luna stays."

"She is my daughter." He countered.

"She is my wife." I returned.

"She does not know what she wants, she is young and obviously infatuated. You are holding her despite what the contract as stipulated. You are breaching the contract that is holding our sides from a wars that will end in unwarranted bloodshed, casualties and pain."

"She is not coming with you because not because I forbid it, but because, my wife--my Luna does not want to. Is it so hard to grasp the simple concept? The Luna of Obsidan will not be



forced if she does not want to."

I looked at all of them, my eyes narrowing before turning to Ellen and offering my hand. "Stand up, love," I said gently.

Lyra's eyes widened.

Ellen eyes was filled with uncertainty as she put her trembling hand in my mind. I pulled her up and forward. "Tell them, your highness, what do you want?"

Ellen swallowed hard, the weight of every eye in the room pressing down on her like a physical force. I felt the slight tremor in her fingers, but she did not pull away.

Darius' gaze bore into her, demanding compliance. His presence alone had been enough to dictate her fate once before. He expected it to be enough again.

But like a fool, he had forgotten a variable and miscalculated.

Ellen lifted her chin. She was afraid but it would never be enough to hold her down. She was Red after all.

"I want to stay," she said.

It was quiet at first, barely above a breath. But




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the silence of the room made it thunderous.

Darius stiffened. Lyra let out a sharp breath even my guards had their eyes widened in shock. Kael was a statue where he stood.

Ellen swallowed again, her voice steady. "I choose to stay in Obsidian Pack." 

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