## 420 Loyalty To It's Luna

Eve 1

Chaos so grating it made my eye twitch was what greeted me when I walked into the council chamber.

These men are children, I thought, walking in with Elliot.

I took my seat, my ears buzzing, threatening to bleed from the sheer volume. This meeting was different—not just the Alphas who governed quadrants of the Obsidian packs were present, but also governors, ambassadors, and the sovereigns of those quadrants: the lesser Alphas.

Even seated, they were all on their feet, facing each other, hurling accusations, fingers jabbed into chests, profanities flung, nostrils flaring like they were one insult away from lunging.

The pack was in disarray—its Alpha and Beta missing, a considerable number of Gammas unaccounted for. Unrest brewed among the civilians. Chaos inside and out. That's what Obsidian had become in the absence of the authority that once kept them all in line.

I tapped my foot on the marble, watching them cluck at one another like irate chickens.

"Fangridge belonged to my grandfather! He built the pack from the ground up!" a balding lesser Alpha barked, nearly frothing as he sparred with another. "When Obsidian falls, it should be mine. It's ancestral land."

The other Alpha scoffed, clearly unimpressed.
"The one he built on the backs of slaves stolen from the Northwood sector? My pack? Screw your slaver of a grandfather. You have no right to that land. Your entitlement is breathtaking."

The first Alpha had already begun to shift.

Fifty panicking Alphas, both lesser and higher, scrambling to lay claim to a pack while our enemies likely already had their claws around the only capable leader we had. We were on the brink of utter defeat.

These were the men Hades had to lead? No wonder he was always cranky. No loyalty to the pack they claimed to serve, no faith in the Alpha who had pushed them through time and again—just greed and selfishness, fighting over whatever scraps they believed would remain.

"Pathetic" couldn't begin to cover it.

Disgust was too mild for what I felt. It coiled deep in my gut.

There was no pain. No hope left in the men now gathered in this room.

I exchanged a glance with Montegue. He stood still, assessing the situation like a spectator at a play rather than someone drowning in the same sinking ship.

Every second wasted here was a yard of land lost to Silverpine—figuratively, but lost all the same. And they were here fighting over metaphorical bones, as if their dead grandfather's claims could guard borders.

Numb. Hollow. So damn tired of every loss, every hit from Silverpine. Of walking blind through a ploy whose full shape I still couldn't grasp. What was the goal?

The cold dread that cleaved through me when I read James's letter had hardened into something sharper. Clearer. Ice in my veins. My anxiety had shattered and left something clearer in its place.

I allowed myself a faint smirk. It was almost funny—my father forgot that for a time, even if he had only been pretending, he raised me to be an Alpha. To lead. To rule.

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And James forgot that I had known him my whole life. His betrayal on my birthday had been unprecedented, but I had been wearing rose-colored glasses with frames so large I couldn't see anything they didn't want me to.

But that had changed.

Now I could see through the bullshit—at least some of it.

I locked my jaw and signaled Montegue as I raised my hand above the desk.

I brought it down. The impact ripped through the room in a thunderous crack—the obsidian desk split in two, shards scattering, sawdust rising in a choking cloud.

The noise died.

Silence rippled through the chamber like a whip crack. Every Alpha froze mid-breath, eyes wide as the dust settled between us. Even the Gammas by the doors had gone rigid, hands hovering near their weapons in case things spiraled into blood.

A beat passed. Then another.

Finally, one of the lesser Alphas cleared his throat, puffing his chest as if bluster could erase

what they'd just witnessed. "Destroying council property doesn't make you an Alpha," he sneered, voice brittle. "And standing beside Obsidian's Alpha in a press conference doesn't make you less of a mutt."

A weak murmur of agreement echoed around him, but it carried no weight. His words felt cheap—scraps tossed to a starving dog.

The insult didn't land. Not anymore.

I tilted my head, smirk slicing sharp as glass.
"Council property?" My voice rang out, cold and
unwavering. "That's what you accuse me of?
Furniture?"

I rose slowly, letting the silence stretch. My gaze burned into his until he looked away.

"While you sit here bickering over ancestral lands and slicing up Obsidian like carrion, Silverpine devours us piece by piece. You posture, you squabble, you cling to dust and bloodlines. And yet you call me the mutt?"

The words hit. Hard.

Silence followed. Not expectant—heavy.

Suffocating. A few shifted uneasily in their seats.

One swallowed hard. Even the balding Alpha's



lips curled in, but no rebuttal came.

Their cowardice hung in the air. And for the first time since I'd walked into this chamber, I saw their posturing falter.

The silence stretched, brittle and ready to snap.

One of the lesser Alphas growled low, body shuddering with the pull of his wolf. Another joined him, claws raking marble as he shifted in open challenge.

I didn't flinch.

Before they could lunge, the Gammas moved—fast and brutal. The chamber rang with snarls and yelps as the would-be challengers were slammed to the ground, pinned with brutal efficiency.

Gasps echoed. Rage sparked.

"Who do you serve?" one of the Alphas barked, spit flying, his voice cracking under fury. "Are you loyal to your kind, to the Lycans—or to a mutt who wormed her way into our Alpha's bed?"

The question rang out like a blade thrown into the room.

The response was immediate. Unified.

