

Desert Nightmare Chapter 51 - Tips

{Allie's P.O.V.}

Dorian and the others have been gone for three days now, and it's driving me and everyone else insane that we are unable to get in contact with him. Dorian brought his satellite phone with him, but it was still damn near impossible to get ahold of him. I was lucky to even get a single word out of him before the line went dead. At least that single word gave me the reassurance that he and the others were okay.

Sin started to show signs of morning sickness the day after the guys had left, and she became extra hormonal out of nowhere. Even more so than when she was pregnant with Allen, which gave us the sense that she was having a girl, just as she had hoped for. My pregnancy was going smoothly, and I was able to get an ultrasound squeezed in at the last minute yesterday, thankfully. We were so preoccupied with everything going on with Blue Lake and Vivienne's abduction that I missed my last appointment with Dr. Boyd.

Delightfully though, Dr. Quinn was the one who performed this ultrasound on me. After she and Luther talked everything out, she ordered him to explain everything to Celinda who, of course, forgave him. Celinda told him how her mother tried to break up her and Leroy, and Luther finally had enough of her bullshit. Luther confronted Avery and her whorish ways and demanded a divorce. On top of that, Luther went the extra mile to even reject Avery. Although the rejection should have killed her, all it did was cause her some pain, but that was it.

Apparently, their bond was so broken because of her, even rejection after the fact did nothing. Avery vowed she would get back at the Quinns for humiliating her and even threatened to kill Luther for real this time. That earned her a punch to the face from Dr. Quinn. I had never seen that woman use violence of any kind, but once a mother, always a mother. Elder Maxwell witnessed her threat on Luther's life and banished her himself. He even had her thrown out without any of her belongings.

It felt good knowing that wretched woman was no longer an issue for us, and I was even more glad that Elder Maxwell took care of the banishment. Hopefully, that would be the last any of us had to deal with her. Luther took his place back in the hospital as the bio-technician, and Dr. Quinn resumed her position as the head attending physician. To say that Dr. Boyd and the

temporary intern were happy to see her would be an understatement. I knew the pack hospital was a zoo some days, but seeing Dr. Quinn immediately take charge and seamlessly return things to the way they were was a breath of fresh air. I prayed that everything else would return back to normal soon too.

While sitting in my room with the twins and missing Dorian, I found myself staring at the ultrasound of the new pup. Savannah made the mistake of being inside the room during the procedure, and she blurted out the sex of our pup to me. I was pissed because Dorian and I wanted to be surprised with this one, just like we were with the twins. But since she had given it away, Dr. Quinn printed out the ultrasound for me. I was wrong about one thing; our new pup was not a boy like I thought it was.

“Mama, wut dat?” Daisy asked as she pulled herself up onto the couch and sat next to me. Demarco followed her to the couch and instantly grabbed the photo out of my hand, looking at it upside down. It was hard not to chuckle at his adorable antics.

“This, princess, is the picture of the baby inside Mommy’s tummy,” I told her, gently turning it around for Demarco to see upright and bringing him over to sit on my other side. Demarco gave it back to me on his own, and I showed it to Daisy. She smiled and looked at it while c*****g her head from side to side. I made sure to keep some baby dolls around for reference, one for each gender, to help them understand what was happening.

“Boy!” Demarco exclaimed, pointing towards the boy baby doll.

“Awww ... I’m sorry, big boy, it’s not a little brother. You’re going to have a little sister,” I explained to him. I expected him to get mad or pout, but he didn’t and simply nodded his head. I guess it was a bit much to expect a toddler to truly understand what having a little brother or sister meant.

“Girl!” Daisy shouted happily.

“That’s right, a girl means it’s a baby sister,” I told her and hugged them both. They leaned on me and put their hands on my swollen belly. I couldn’t help the giddy squeal that came out of my mouth because of how sweet the twins were being. I fished out my phone to snap a photo. “Do you guys want to record a video for Daddy?”

“Yeah! Yeah!” they both answered excitedly.

“Okay, I want you guys to keep your hands on my Mommy’s tummy, and tell your baby sister that you love her, okay?” I instructed them. I turned on the video camera on the phone and filmed it.

“Wuv you, baby,” Demarco said and planted a slobbery k!ss on my tummy.

“I lub you, baby,” Daisy said and rubbed my stomach before k!ssing it. Either it was the hormones or me just feeling sentimental, but the cuteness overload that I just captured on film brought tears to my eyes.

“Can you please stop with the love fest already?” I turned around, snarling at the unfamiliar voice, and quickly shielded the twins by placing them behind me. “Whoa! Calm down, mama wolf, it’s just me!”

“ARIA! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND! I COULD HAVE KILLED YOU!” I yelled at her.

“Psh, you wish you could k!ll me,” she said and rolled her eyes.

“What are you doing here!?” I asked her, completely annoyed while putting the twins in the playpen.

“I thought about what you said, about having Gideon fall in love with someone else other than Heather.”

“Okay?”

“I think I have a plan that will get him to fall in love with me but not know that it’s me.” I turned around and lifted my brow at her in utter confusion. “I’m going to use magic to cloak myself into another person and s.educe him.”

“What?” I looked at her like she grew a second head. “Aria, that’s insane. He’s the king of all demons. Wouldn’t he be able to sense you and your magic?”

“No, you see, that’s the beauty of dark magic cloaking, we can even cloak our own magic. Most demons at my level possess the same powers anyways. Energy balls, fire balls, and shimmering.”

“Aria ...” I let out a frustrated sigh. “You can’t just change your appearance and expect Gideon to fall in love with you. That’s not how this works,” I informed her.

“WELL DO YOU HAVE ANY BETTER PLANS!?! I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!! I CAN’T JUST WAIT AROUND FOR HEATHER TO GET PREGNANT AND LOSE ANY CHANCE OF EVER BEING WITH GIDEON MORE THAN JUST SEXUALLY!”

“Why are you still having se.x with him!? Do you have no self-dignity!?” I questioned her. “Why do you love someone who only uses you for se.x, Aria!?”

“I can’t help it! Okay!? I just can’t!”

“No, you can. You’re just choosing not to! I’m sure there are plenty of other demons in the underworld that would treat you ten times better than Gideon ever would!”

“I don’t care about those demons! I want Gideon! I love Gideon!” she screamed and crossed her arms like a child. I just sighed again.

“Aria, changing your appearance isn’t the answer. Why would you want to change who you are, just to earn even the slightest bit of attention and respect from a man? You should be respected and valued for who you are already. Regardless of you saying demons are soulless, it doesn’t mean you should be seen as less than a human being. You have a heart, and you have feelings. Why are you giving your heart to someone who doesn’t care about your feelings?” She just stared at me without answering. Right when I thought she was going to answer, she didn’t and instead shimmered away. I sighed for the umpteenth time and shook my head.

“Mama fwend?” Daisy asked me. I turned around and noticed the twins just staring at me. I thought about it for a second and answered her.

“Yes, baby, she’s mama’s friend.” I looked back to where Aria had just been standing, and I couldn’t help but feel bad for her. Was I being naïve or just plain stupid? I had no idea, but I knew that I wanted to help her. And not just help her in k!lling Heather, because the moon goddess only knows that I want Heather dead more than Aria does, but I want to help Aria find love. I want to find Aria a mate. Even if demons don’t have mates, I’m hoping that I can find Aria someone who would love her as much as she claims to love Gideon.

Even though she's a demon, the crazy thing I've noticed is that she doesn't have a dark essence. It's a strange anomaly I sensed when she abducted me last time, but I didn't want to mention it to anyone just in case my pregnancy was throwing off my vice. But talking to her again just now proved that I'm not losing my sanity. Aria has a good essence about her.

Speaking of Heather, I was really curious as to what she was up to, but as long as she was nowhere near me, I was golden for now. I was more worried about Vivienne and her well-being. There was something that the guys were saying before they left, but I didn't want to pressure Jed to say anything. Though, I thought I had an inkling of what it may be.

{Vivienne's P.O.V.}

Today marks the seventeenth day since that asshole Claude took me from my pack, from my home. Every day has been the same as the next. I'm honestly starting to wonder what Claude's problem is. Four years ago, he had no problem trying to take my purity for himself, but now all he does is slap me around before storming out. Well, more like stomping out, as if he were a mere child not getting his way.

"You seem to be deep in thought, mademoiselle," Marco said to me.

"I was thinking about Claude," I told him honestly.

"Oh, and why is that?"

"Something is wrong with him."

"What do you mean?"

"When I was 18, he tried to force himself onto me."

"And?"

"Well, he could easily do it now, but he's not. All he does is hit me, scream, curse, hit me again, and then stomp away."

"Your point?"

"What's stopping him from forcing himself onto me?" Marco pursed his lips together, slid his tongue across his teeth, and just nodded his head. After a moment, he just looked at me. "What?"

“You don’t know, do you?” he asked me.

“Know what?”

“It was different back then, Vivienne. You weren’t marked by a wolf, or by anyone for that matter,” he explained to me. I stared blankly back at him. “I would have thought your father would have explained this to you, but I guess he didn’t.”

“Qu’y a-t-il à expliquer?” (What is there to explain?)

“Once a vampire has been marked, they cannot be marked again. It will k!!! them.” My eyes widened and all I could do was make an O with my mouth, but then, I furrowed my brows.

“My Lord, I am a hybrid. Does that hold true for me?” I asked with curiosity.

“I do not know, and I do not think he does either. But I will also bet that he is not willing to take the chance.”

“Then how does he expect me to be his? I mean, not that it would ever happen, but still.”

“The only way for a vampire to be marked again is for the host to admit their love for another. Claude may be buying his time for you to admit that you care for him as a man.”

“But does it work the same way with that of a werewolf mark? I’ve never heard of werewolves accepting the love of another and their mark disappearing. Other than what Allie told me about a crazy woman who tried to k!!! her. Something about being an impure wolf and that their mark had no value. But Mon Loup’s mark is anything but invaluable. This mark is a symbol of our bond. Our love. A love so true it created a new life.”

“I know, Vivienne, but I don’t think Claude is willing to risk forcing his nocturnal mark on you. He won’t take the risk. This is a good thing for you.”

“It buys us more time for my mate to find us.”

“You.”

“Excusez-moi monsieur?” (Excuse me, sir?)

"It gives your mate time to find you and your young. As soon as I find the location of my family, I will be going to them." I nodded my head in realization. "Let us just hope that his blood can tell me where they are."

"Doesn't he need to be alive?"

"Non, he does not. As long as his blood is fresh, it will tell me all that I need to know."

"Well, that is a good thing. If I know my brother and my mate, they won't show any mercy."

"I would hope not," Marco said.

"Monsieur, have you figured out a way to determine who from our coven helped Claude find me?"

"His blood. All of the answers we will need are in his blood. Souviens-toi de l'enfant, le sang est la clé." (Remember child, blood is the key.) I nodded my head. He was right. Everything we needed to know about who, what, when, where, how, and why would all be answered once Marco got ahold of Claude's blood. A single drop was all it would take. I just hoped that mon loup and Alexandre found us before Claude learned of our pup. I was sure my scent had changed by now, but I'm fairly certain that Claude thought it was because I haven't bathed in nearly three weeks.

I was more worried that blood would eventually no longer sustain our hunger, and that my pup may die from lack of nutrients. I prayed to the moon goddess and the nocturnal god that J.D comes soon.

Don't worry, Vivienne. Our pup is in good health. For now.

TEMPEST!!!

Bonjour, mon ami.

Tu es en vie! (You're alive!)

Oui. The nightshade really did a number on me. Put me in a deep sleep while your vampire side took over.

Thank the gods and goddess, I thought I lost you, Tempest.

You can't get rid of me that easily, Vivers. I'm your wolf. I am here to stay. With that being said, I wanted to ask you something.

Oui! Anything!

Now that we are carrying a pup, have you thought about being turned into a full wolf?

What? What do you mean? You want me to give up my vampire side?

It's not that. I'm going to sound selfish for saying this, but it's because I want to be able to be with Gunner. I can only speak with him, but I will never be able to see him.

Oh, Tempest. Je suis désolé. Je n'y ai jamais pensé. (I'm so sorry. I never thought about that.)

Will you at least think about it?

Of course, I will.

Tempest retreated to the back of my mind, and what she said got me thinking really hard. I loved being a hybrid because I could do almost everything a vampire could, along with everything a werewolf could. Unlike Andre, I got the best of both species and very few of their weaknesses. But having a wolf spirit without being able to shift into a wolf made things quite interesting. It was like there was a magic block that prevented Tempest from fully taking over my body, and we both believe it had to do with the vampire gene.

Having her spirit within me proved that my werewolf side was more dominant, but the vampire side was just as possessive and wouldn't allow the shift to occur. My family felt that it was fine, and we were fine with it too; but that was because we felt that I would have a vampire mate and not a werewolf mate. But things didn't turn out the way anyone expected, and now, my wolf, my closest friend cannot be with her mate because of the vampire within me.

If I stayed a hybrid, Tempest and Gunner would never be able to be with each other. But if I had J.D. fully turn me, then I would lose my ability to shimmer, and my vampire side would no longer be able to communicate with my family. There was a lot to think about.

Desert Nightmare Chapter 52 - Tips

{Jedediah's P.O.V.}

Eighteen days. It has been eighteen fvcking*g days since Vivienne has gone missing, and I have just about lost the remainder of my sanity. I've been snapping at everyone, and I've shifted three times in an attempt to k!!! some of the pack members. Gunner has taken control more times than I can count, and it took Dorian or Bandit to put us in our place. Even though I'm of Alpha bl00d, and Gunner claimed that we were stronger than Dorian, I'm not a titled Alpha yet. Dorian still outranked me which meant I had to obey him, and so did Gunner. Gunner had nothing but respect for Bandit and knew he was currently beneath him in the hierarchy.

Once we were able to get Adrian and several other vampires from his coven to meet us in Buenos Aires, each vampire took three pack members to the prison in Antarctica. Even the king of their coven, Louis, and his son, Henri—the prince that Vivienne told me about—came along to a.s.sist. Louis wasn't happy that they were going to disclose the location of this damn prison to about two dozen werewolves, but Andre gave him a piece of his mind. Although it was completely in French, I knew there were a few curse words in there and I knew that he definitely called him a coward. That was a word Vivenne used a lot when she wanted to talk sh!t about someone.

When we finally made it to the prison, Louis led us down one thousand feet of stairs and through hundreds of feet of the corridor. We came to a stopping point and were met with a half dozen dark witches. We took a stance, but Louis explained that they were the ones that built the prison thousands of years ago. They were at a loss as to how someone was able to get past the magical barrier that prevented shimmering and spells. Everyone's conclusion was that a witch had lifted the spell, and a vampire from the coven had told Claude where to find Vivienne.

Henri admitted that Vivienne had bragged about finding me, her mate, and where she was living. I guess living in Las Vegas was a big thing that she couldn't help but brag about. It also didn't help that she gushed about the damn M&M store to some of the coven members. Because of her hybrid bl00d, Vivienne was the only one who was able to consume human food and not just bl00d. And, of course, there's Andre. Members of the coven loved hearing her stories, and about how excited she was to live in America so Henri believed that someone used that to their advantage. It was Adrian who

determined that whoever was helping Claude had done so willingly from the day he had been exiled. Claude had a loyal follower, but no one had any idea who it could be.

Louis, the Queen, Maribelle, and Henri all agreed with the Grand Elders of the vampire race that Claude and his accomplice needed to be extinguished. There would be no leniency. Gunner and I were relieved to hear that. Adrian, Andre, Giselle, and I made a promise to do rock-paper-scissors when it was time to k!ll him. Childish? Yes. Necessary? Abso-fvcking-lutely.

Thankfully, a few of us who were more experienced trackers were able to pick up Claude's scent off the pillow from his cot in the prison cell. His stench was all over it and had barely faded. With the prison being so far underground and all the cells having magical walls, scents did not overlap. What really helped us was that there were two other scents lingering in the cell that Amy and Albert picked up on. One belonged to a human, which meant it was the witch who betrayed the Wiccan coven. The other scent was definitely another vampire, which meant it belonged to the traitor that outed Vivienne's location to Claude.

The issue, though, was the scent of the vampire didn't belong to a coven member of theirs. It was a member of another coven according to both Louis and Adrian; however, Louis knew exactly which coven, so they agreed to pay a visit to that coven and try to find Claude's little buddy. Amos agreed to team up with the witches to find their betrayer, and the rest of us would follow Claude's scent.

It has been officially 48 hours since we began to follow the scent, and it was no walk in the park. Because he could shimmer, his scent would disappear and then reappear miles away. It made tracking him even more difficult, but with Andre's vampire genes, it made it a little easier.

We thought that he would have taken her to a different country, or even back to France, at the very least, but he didn't. His scent lingered all over Antarctica, which meant that he had to be here somewhere, but in a place that wasn't visible to the n.aked eye. We weren't going to give up though. I wasn't leaving this damn ice island until I had my mate, my Luna, and my pup with me.

"You holding up okay?" Dorian asked me.

“Trying,” I said with a single-word response.

“Jed, you need to stop trying to k!ll everyone. They’re trying their best. Amos and your entire team are with a bunch of dark witches that could turn on them in the blink of an eye. They didn’t even hesitate to team up with them. Everyone is doing their best to find Vivienne.”

“Ugh, I fvcking*g know that man! It doesn’t help calm me down though! In three days, it will be three weeks since she was taken. She could be anywhere between seven to ten weeks pregnant now. That means her scent would have changed to that of the pup. My pup. If this fvcker finds out that she’s pregnant with my baby, he won’t hesitate to k!ll him or her.”

“You heard what Henri said though. If Vivienne’s vampire genes are strong enough, it will mask the scent of the pup. Because she’s a hybrid, she has the best of both species, more so than Andre does. She has a wolf spirit in her, and she can shimmer. According to Adrian, that means her vampire side is just as strong as her wolf side. Also considering what Maribelle mentioned, vampires protect their hatchlings, as they call them, just as fiercely as werewolves protect their pups. You need to trust that Viv’s vampire side and Tempest will work together to protect your pup,” he said while putting a firm grip on my shoulders.

“How the fvck are you so great with words?” I asked, making him smile and chuckle.

“I’ve been an Alpha for over fourteen years. It’s in the job description,” he replied, making me smile too and almost even laugh. “When you get your own pack, I’ll be there to help you, and my dad will too. You may even want to ask Scanlan to help.” Dorian saying that reminded me about what Gunner had told me.

“Hey, speaking of Scanlan, there’s something I need to tell you.”

“What’s up?”

“Gunner told me that after we find Vivienne, we need to go back to Red Mountain.” Dorian furrowed his brows and gave me the most flabbergasted look. I couldn’t blame him. All of this confused the hell out of me too.

“Why on earth would you go back there? And with Vivienne? Are you trying to piss off Michaela?”

“No, this has nothing to do with Michaela. Though, I wouldn’t put it past her to try and start sh!t with Viv. But, no, that’s not the reason.”

“Then why?”

“Gunner says that I’m the rightful Alpha, or rather that we’re the rightful Alpha of Red Mountain,” I replied. Dorian gaped at me with his mouth hanging open. “I know it sounds fvcking*g crazy, but Gunner admitted that he knew we had Alpha bl00d and that Allie is right.”

“Allie? What is she right about?” Dorian c****d his head.

“That my parents aren’t my parents.”

“Are you fvcking*g serious!?! Gunner said that!?”

“Yeah.” Dorian was at a loss for words. “Trust me, I know, man. I was speechless too.”

“Hold on, if your parents weren’t actually your parents, then who were they?”

“I have no fvcking*g clue. I mean, they’re the only parents that I ever knew. But I know for a fact they’re Omegas,” I said while rubbing the back of my neck. “Do you ... I mean ... Could they be alive?” I asked without any confidence in my voice. Dorian sighed and just looked at me with eyes full of sorrow.

“I honestly don’t think so, Jed. If what Gunner is saying is true, that you’re the rightful Alpha to Red Mountain, it means your biological father would be the Alpha as well. But we already know that Scanlan isn’t your birth father because you were mated to his daughter. You wouldn’t be mated to your sister. Selene would never condone incest, and the biological makeup of our human sides detests it naturally. Well, that is unless you’re fvckingd up in the head. But that’s not the point. What I was trying to point out is that if Scanlan is the Alpha now, but your bl00dline is the rightful Alpha lineage, then that means Scanlan challenged your father and beat him. Either your parents were banished, or they were k!lled.” I couldn’t stop my shoulders from slumping and lowering my head in sadness.

“I was afraid you were going to say that.”

"I'm sorry, brother. Even if they were banished, you know rogues don't last long." I nodded my head. "But, I am wondering how a mid-level Alpha like Scanlan could beat your father, a Supreme Alpha. He wouldn't have been strong enough, or even fast enough. I've seen you move man. If you're even half as powerful as your birth father, then there is no way in hell Scanlan could have beat him fair and square." I looked at him and, this time, it was my turn to furrow my brows.

"What the fvck are you trying to say, Dorian?"

"I'm saying that it's highly possible that Scanlan cheated." I have no idea what came over me, but I felt a surge of pure, unadulterated hatred coming from me and Gunner. It was bad enough that Scanlan may have dethroned my father, but also cheated?

"If that's true, then how the fvck could the Elders allow a cheat to become Alpha!?" I growled.

"They might not know. It wouldn't be the first time someone cheated to dethrone another Alpha. Scanlan may very well have been your father's Beta or even an Omega. We don't know. But what I do know is that it's not unheard of. Wyatt's mate, Rylee, had something similar happened to her father. A neighboring Alpha used an official challenge to conceal premeditated murder. The only reason why he was found out was that his anger got the best of him during an official investigation, and he outed himself."

"Are you fvcking*g serious?"

"Yes."

"So, you're fvcking*g telling me that there are Alphas out there who shouldn't be Alphas at all!?"

"Yes. There could tens of hundreds of Alphas who earned their place illegally or found legal loopholes. The fact of the matter is, if you're the rightful Alpha of Red Mountain, you need to challenge Scanlan. Once you beat him, which I know you will, then you'll need to force him to tell you what happened to your birth parents."

"But what if you're wrong? What if it wasn't Scanlan who killed my parents or banished them or whatever?"

“We’re going to have to confront him. Or if you feel so strongly about it, you can do it yourself,” Dorian said nonchalantly. I was starting to get a fvcking*g headache over this.

“Dude, one thing at a fvcking*g time. Let me find my mate and my pup, then we’ll think about a plan to confront Scanlan, or challenge him, or whatever. None of this sh!t will even matter if I don’t have my mate.”

“Spoken like a true Alpha,” he said, smirking. I smirked back and nodded my head, thanking him for talking to me.

“Yo!” We both turned to see Brandon and Mikey approaching us.

“If you are done having a bro moment, Aries picked up the scent again,” Mikey told us. Dorian and I nodded in response and followed them to where Aries and the others were waiting. I wasn’t sure if Brandon and Mikey had overheard anything, but I knew that even if they had, they wouldn’t say anything to anyone. As of right now, everything about Scanlan and how he became Alpha was nothing but pure speculation. Either way, I felt it in my bones that he knew about my parents, and why I ended up with a pair of Omegas as parents. It also started to make sense why I felt like my parents didn’t love me and always fought because of me. I wasn’t a screw-up like I had thought. They fought about me because I wasn’t theirs.

I also started to question Michaela’s mom, the deceased Luna. Did she know about my parents? Did she take that secret to the grave with her? Was that the reason why she took me in as her own when my parents were k!lled? Did she feel responsible for me being utterly alone at an age where I needed a male role model? So many questions were left unanswered, but I intended to get answers to them all. That is after I found my Luna and officially made her my wife.

Desert Nightmare Chapter 53 - Tips

{Jedediah’s P.O.V.}

It has officially been three full weeks since Vivienne went missing. My thoughts were becoming a slippery slope, and I was seriously close to believing that we would never find her. Thankfully, Adrian, Louis, and Henri came through just as I thought all hope was lost. They went to the coven that Claude’s little minion belonged to, and they were able to apprehend him with the help of their coven’s king. Louis practically had to make a business deal

with them, and it was at the cost of Henri's single life. Their coven had a princess who was still unwed, and they agreed to hand over their traitor in exchange for Henri's hand in marriage.

Henri refused the exchange, at first, but Adrian and Louis reminded him that Vivienne and our pup's lives were both at stake. That was enough to make Henri reconsider, but only after he saw this princess did he immediately change his mind. Apparently, the princess of this coven was a model of some sort, and she took his breath away; at least, that's what he told me as he practically bragged about his newly betrothed when they brought us the traitor. Unfortunately, due to the fact that vampires don't show up in pictures, he had to settle with explaining her looks: 5'10", 135 pounds, legs for days, with fiery, red hair that was curled and danced when the wind blew. Her eyes were an icy green with skin as white as snow. Just based on what Henri told all of us, she had to be a looker. Even then, in my mind, Vivienne would always be the most beautiful.

"Henri, we get it. Your new fiancé is hot as a fvck, but can we hurry and figure out where Vivienne is now? The faster we find her, the faster we get to go home to our wives!" Brandon shouted at him. Henri was still daydreaming until he heard Brandon call him out, which put an end to his lovesick trance.

"Get a grip, Henri, she is not even your vampire mate!" Andre told him.

"I cannot keep waiting for my mate, Alexandre! I will be 100 years old in two years. I must find my future queen now so that I may take over the coven when the time comes. Unlike you werewolves, we take over once we are a century old. That is when we are considered to be of age in our world."

"I know how the laws of the vampire work, Henri! I'm a hybrid!" Andre exclaimed.

"Enough!" Dorian yelled. "Henri, I'm happy for you. But Brandon is right. I ... I mean, we would like to get home to our wives. And the only way we can do that is if we find Vivienne. How about we get a move on and have this traitor from your fiancé's coven tell us where this Claude fvcker is hiding."

"Oui, oui, I am so sorry. You are correct. I will have to woo my Chloe when we return from rescuing my mon ami, Vivienne." I shook my head at him. I hated it when he called Vivienne mon ami. I knew that it meant friend, but just hearing him refer to her as his—in any way, shape, or form—had me snarling inside and Gunner wanting to rip his head off. It didn't help that not too long

ago he wanted to marry Vivienne, but she was the one who turned him down. In hindsight, the prince getting engaged like this was better for me.

We made our way back to the prison where Claude had escaped from because that was also where they were keeping his sidekick. When we got there, we noticed that Amos, the rest of the team, and the dark witches had also returned, and I witnessed the witches throwing what looked like lightning bolts of all sorts of colors at one of the prison cells.

“What the hell is going on?” I asked Amos.

“Jed, perfect timing,” he replied. “Our group was able to track down the witch that betrayed our new Wiccan comrades here.”

“Where did you guys find her?” Mikey asked as he came up to us.

“Gamma, we found him hiding out in an icy lair inside of a fvcking*g glacier. Apparently, he had created his own little safe house that blocked out magic to prevent the other witches from finding him, but he forgot to hide his scent. Once Amy and Albert picked it up in the wind, it led them to the glacier. Amy found an opening just small enough for her to fit in which slid down into the heart of the glacier. Thankfully, she was able to mind link and the witches did the rest of the work after Amy had located the target.”

“What are the witches doing?” I asked, trying to look behind Amos.

“Their own form of magical punishment,” he answered. I c****d my eyebrow at him. “Trust me, you don’t want to know. Remember, they’re dark witches, they don’t play by the rules. Not the way the Luna’s friends do, at least.”

“Okay ...”

“Amos!”

“Alpha!”

“What did the dark wizard have to say when you found him!?” Dorian wanted to get down to business. I did too, don’t get me wrong, but I was curious to see just how dark witches punished their own for betraying them.

“He admitted that he disabled the magical barrier that should have prevented Claude from taking Miss Vivienne. And it wasn’t just one time.”

“What do you mean it wasn’t just one time!?” I exclaimed. That really got my attention.

“Jed, he said that Claude offered him 250,000 Euros if he would lower the shield once every couple of months to allow him to spy on the Dubois family. According to the wizard, Claude was hell-bent on revenge against the Delta’s family and their coven for exiling him.”

“He tried to r.ape Vivienne! What did he expect would happen!?” I shouted.

“Claude apparently saw nothing wrong with his actions because, in his mind, Vivienne was always meant to be his. He had plotted to take her for years, but she was never alone. He just so happened to be set free the day before the Delta’s family came to visit. The same time that you and Vivienne met. He didn’t know that Vivienne stayed behind for her mate, rather, he assumed she stayed for the Delta. After all, that’s her brother. But the second time he came to spy on her was when he saw you two on a walk around the pack grounds. A week before she went back to France.”

“Wait, are you saying that he has been spying on us?” I asked in complete dismay.

“Unfortunately, yes.”

“Why the fvck couldn’t I sense him!? I’m a tracker!”

“His scent was being masked, courtesy of the wizard that is currently getting his a.ss handed to him,” Amy answered. “Even the guards who patrol the pack border had no idea it had been breached. It also didn’t help that he wasn’t using the front gate either. The fact that he could shimmer was his biggest advantage of going undetected.”

“So, Claude knows that Vivienne has a mate. Does he know that she’s pregnant?” Mikey asked.

“She’s what!?” my entire team exclaimed. I growled at him in annoyance.

“Oops.”

“Dammit, Mikey, this is precisely why we don’t tell you sh!t!” Brandon shouted and smacked him upside the head.

“I don’t fvcking*g understand how you and Sin are so horrible at keeping secrets!” Dorian shouted at him as well.

“Jed, is that true?” Amos asked. “Is your mate pregnant?” I sighed and just nodded my head. I half expected my team to get pissed off at me for keeping this a secret from them, but they didn’t. What they did afterward shocked me, though. Half of the team pushed past the witches into the cell where the wizard was and started to wail on him left and right. The other half of the team went to the cell where the vampire traitor was, courtesy of Henri, and started to knock him senseless as well.

I looked back at Dorian, and he just shrugged his shoulders. About ten minutes later, all I could hear was both prisoners screaming that they would tell my team what they wanted to know. Both cells were officially open for all ears to hear and all eyes to see. The vampire errand boy allowed Adrian to drink his bl00d to get the truth from him, while the wizard allowed the witches to cast a truth spell on him.

After interrogating them both for another five minutes, they were spilling their guts about Claude and his plan to practically starve Vivienne into a delirium. Once she was in a state of madness, he would dress like me and get her to tell him she loved him.

“What the fvck would that do?” I asked, looking at Adrian.

“Jed, the marking on a vampire can actually be reversed,” he told me. “Unlike a werewolf, a vampire’s mark can be reversed if the host admits they’re in love with another. Claude is betting that if Vivienne tells him she loves him while she is in a delirious state, it will make your mark on her disappear. Only then would he be able to mark her for himself,” he explained.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because, if a vampire marks one that already bears another’s marking, it would k!!! the host.”

“Wait, are you saying that if he were to try and mark her now, he could k!!! her!?” I asked.

“Not could. Would. At least, that is how it works for us,” Henri said. “Because Vivienne is a hybrid and holds a wolf spirit within her, we don’t know how she would react. But Claude doesn’t appear to be willing to take that chance, and that is good for us.”

“Only if we find her in time!” I exclaimed, becoming even more agitated by the second. “Where did he take her!?”

“Claude is hiding her in plain sight,” Adrian answered.

“What?”

“Jed, according to the blood of Claude’s minion, as you call him, Claude has Vivienne in your townhome.”

“WHAT!?!” the entire pack shouted. Our voices carried so loudly that we shook the land around us and the surface.

“Hold up, why did me and the other bounty hunters pick up his fvcking*g scent all over the damn place here!?” Aries asked.

“That was the wizards doing,” a witch answered. “He was carrying Claude’s scent in an amulet. He would open it in random areas of the region to keep those tracking him from leaving Antarctica, essentially sending them on a wild goose chase while Claude carries out his plan to re-mark the young girl.”

“Where in the townhouse is he!? I never once could sense him! Adrian, you were in there!” I exploded, throwing my arms up like a maniac.

“Again, that is the wizard’s doing. He created a safe house underground. Like the one he built for himself in the glacier. Only this one is built beneath the sands of the desert. Dark, cool, and dry.”

“The best conditions to force a vampire to starve,” Andre said with a growl.

“You’re telling me that this fvcker built an underground lair beneath my townhouse and has been keeping Vivienne there this entire time!?” I bellowed. “And this whole fvcking*g time, we’ve been here in fvcking*g Antarctica!?” I couldn’t believe what I just heard. Vivienne was literally right under my nose, and I had left her. I had completely left her and came to the other side of the world when she was right underneath me.

“We need to get back now!” Andre hollered. “Pere! We need you and several of the other vampires to shimmer us back home!”

“Andre, wait!” Dorian shouted, grabbing his attention.

“What!?” he and I both roared.

“We can’t just shimmer back! It’s night here! Which means it’s daylight over there! Everyone would die if they shimmered us back to the desert at this hour.”

“Alpha, what if they shimmered into the dungeon? It’s always dark down there, and there is plenty of room for all of us,” Amos suggested. I looked at him and wanted to kiss him for his brilliant idea.

“Yo, that could work!” Brandon agreed.

“Dorian, I can’t wait! I need to get back home!” I cried out. He looked at me and I could see the wheels turning in his head. “Come on, man!”

“Okay, fine, but we need a plan of action. We don’t know if Claude may have b00by-trapped the lair or even your house at this point. He may know that we’re gone right now, and that puts us at a disadvantage,” he explained, and we all nodded.

“What is the plan, mon ami?” Andre asked him.

“First, we need to know exactly how big this underground safe house is, and if it’s livable. I’m sure it is, but we need to figure out how to get in without being seen or heard.”

“How do we do that?” I asked.

“Andre, can we use Dani?” Dorian asked him.

“Non, that is not a good idea,” Adrian answered on Andre’s behalf. Claude is a skilled vampire, and he will be able to sense another from a mile away. As soon as Adrian said that, Andre snapped his head up and his expression told us the gears in his head were turning like a hamster on a wheel.

“Andre, what’s up?” I asked him.

“Claude could sense another vampire from a mile away, but what about another supernatural who could disappear just as quickly as they appear?” he asked everyone. We all looked at him like he was insane.

“Dude, care to elaborate?” Mikey asked.

“A warlock.”

“Warlock!?” we all repeated.

“Where the fvck are we supposed to find a fvcking*g warlock!?” I asked.

“Mon frère, do not worry about a thing, I know exactly where we can find a warlock that would be willing to help, well, a warlock hybrid to be exact,” he told me and smiled. Though I was happy that Andre seemed to have a plan up his sleeve, I wasn’t all that keen on using a warlock to help us find Vivienne. But, at this point, I would use all the help we could get.

Desert Nightmare Chapter 54 - Tips

{Dani’s P.O.V.}

Everyone was getting more restless with each passing day, but Allie and Sin were the worst off because their hormones were really starting to affect them. It’s probably been about a week since the guys left for Antarctica in search of Vivienne, and we were all getting super worried at this point. It didn’t help that none of us could ever get in touch with them, even though they were supposed to have their satellite phones.

After running out of things to do, we tried to spend the last week helping around the packhouse to keep things in order. And, of course, we also took the time to get to know Anna. This whole thing with Vivienne had put a halt on Brandon’s punishment of Sly for the incident with Leah. As expected, Leah had already forgiven Sly and swore to make sure that Brandon didn’t keep his promise to punish him.

It was strange having an archangel in the pack now, but she has already gotten along so well with everyone, especially the pups. We assumed that spending so many years taking care of young children while being held prisoner naturally gave her an affinity towards them, but they also doted on her like crazy. She told us that angels have a way with kids because when angels come from Heaven, only children are able to see them.

All of the girls and I were sitting in the common area of the packhouse while we hung out with our guards, their mates, and some other pack members. We were chatting amongst ourselves and preparing for another uneventful evening.

“Anna, do you mind recording that lullaby for me? It put Danica to sleep so fast, I must have it recorded,” Leah pleaded with her.

“Of course, Leah, it would be my pleasure,” Anna replied with a big smile. Leah squealed and clapped her hands with extreme delight. Before anyone had the chance to say something, the door flew open out of nowhere. We turned around and watched as all of the guys and their teams came running into the house like a stampede.

“What the hell?” Allie cried out, pushing herself to her feet. “Dorian, what ... How? ... When?”

“I’ll explain later, baby, but right now I need everyone to grab your pups and get down to the bunker immediately,” Dorian commanded.

“Mikey, what’s going on!?” Sin asked him as he was practically shoving her towards the packhouse bunker.

“Honey, we will answer all of your questions in a second. Just do as Dorian says, get to the bunker while I go get Allen!” The rest of us didn’t bother to question further, and we proceeded to follow Allie to the bunker while the guys ran upstairs to get the children. A few minutes later, the main bunker was completely full and the guys came rushing in with the kids in tow. Thankfully, they were still asleep despite the commotion. The guys laid them down in the bassinets prepared for the bunker, and we all waited for Dorian to tell us what was going on. What surprised me the most was the person I saw behind Andre.

“DAD!?”

“Hi peanut,” he replied nonchalantly.

“Dad, what are you doing here?”

“Andre called me and said that he needed my help with something important. So, I came to lend a hand.” I looked over at Andre and he just smiled at me. I c****d my eyebrow at him because I hated being kept in the dark.

“Okay, look ...” Dorian addressed everyone and we gave him our undivided attention. “I’m sure you’re all wondering why we’re back and why we just started shoving you guys into the bunker. It turns out that Claude, the man who took Vivienne, had help from both a dark wizard and a vampire from a third-party coven. Splitting up into teams, we were able to apprehend both. Thanks to everyone’s combined skills and abilities, we found out that Vivienne has been right under our noses this entire time.”

“What are you talking about?” I asked him and looked back at Andre.

“Claude has a magical safe house underneath Jed and Viv’s townhouse. He has been spying on them ever since she and her parents came to visit. Essentially, because he has been stalking them since she and Jed found out they were mates, he was able to wait for an opportunity to abduct her while we were away helping Wyatt with his trafficking predicament.”

“Wait, are you telling us that there has been a vampire living on our land without us knowing!?” Allie exclaimed.

“Not on our land, under it.”

“What the hell!?” Sin shouted. “How are we supposed to find a magical safe house underground and below a townhouse?”

“That is where I come in,” my father answered. I snapped my head towards him and gave him the most confused expression I could. “Andre explained everything to me. Given that the victim is his younger sister and seeing as how he will soon be my son-in-law, that makes Vivienne family as well. Above all else, we protect our family.”

“Dad, how are you going to help?” I asked. I didn’t mean to sound presumptuous, but I was really at a loss for words seeing him in front of me, inside of a werewolf packhouse of all places.

“Mon Amour, if we were to send a vampire down to find this safehouse, Claude would find out almost instantly; however, your father being half warlock gives us an advantage,” Andre told me.

“How?” I asked, looking between the two of them.

“I can blink, my sweet girl. Remember?” my father said to me.

“Okay?”

My father sighed. “Sweetheart, they need someone who can go down there and scope out the place without getting caught. Blinking literally takes a single blink, and warlocks don’t leave behind a scent that would get them caught. We appear and disappear in the blink of an eye,” he answered.

“Right, and you’re just doing this out of the kindness of your non-existent heart?”

“Peanut, I thought we were past all of the drama?”

“I mean, we are, but you’re not the type of warlock that just helps others unless you have something to gain from it.”

“Respect, Daniella. I gain respect.” I pursed my lips together and looked at Andre. Again, he just looked at me stoically, as if to say that my dad was the only choice here.

“Dorian, I don’t get it. Why do we need to be in the bunker for you to be telling us all of this?” Allie asked him.

“Because we think that Claude has been staking out the pack territory at night while we were asleep, attempting to maintain the upper hand. That’s how he has been able to stay hidden for so long beneath our property. During the day he is in hiding while we’re out looking for Vivienne. And at night—”

“Oh my God, that fvcker has been watching us while we slept!?” Allie snarled while cutting off Dorian. He just nodded. All of us girls gasped in horror.

“What the fudge! What is this guy, a peeing Tom!?” Lacie exclaimed and hugged herself as Aries wrapped his arms around her as well.

“Now that we have the explanation out of the way if you all will excuse me, I have some recon I must attend to,” my dad announced and blinked away. Just as fast as he blinked away, he returned. “Wow, that bastard really went all out when having that thing made.”

“What?” everyone replied.

“He’s down there alright, but I can’t get in.”

“What do you mean you can’t get in?” Jed asked him.

“I hit some kind of invisible wall, and it bounced me right back here,” my dad answered. We all furrowed our eyebrows at him. “Whatever magic was used to create it must be preventing anyone from getting in using magic. That includes blinking and shimmering.”

“That fvcker really did go all out,” Mikey said.

“Hold on, what if he used the same magic that was used for the prison in Antarctica?” Jed pointed out. “If that dark wizard who betrayed the witches built it, then maybe our new evil Wiccan friends can take it down?”

“It’s worth a shot,” Dorian said. He looked to Andre who quickly made a phone call and, my guess, it was to Adrian.

“Hold up, how did you guys get home?” Sin asked. “I didn’t hear any cars outside.”

“Yeah, neither did I,” Sam chimed in.

“Their coven members shimmered us home as soon as we got in touch with Robert. We didn’t have time to go back to Argentina to retrieve the jets and then fly back home. It would have taken too long, and we’re on a major time crunch,” Dorian explained.

“What time crunch?” I asked.

“Dani, my father, and Louis believe that Claude is starving Vivienne to cause delirium,” Andre answered.

“What? Why?”

“In order to impersonate me and manipulate her into saying she loves him,” Jed replied.

“Oh god! He wants to re-mark her with his vampire venom!?” I exclaimed.

“Hello! Care to explain to the rest of us!?” Leah shouted. I looked back at them and gave them the cliff notes version of how re-marking worked for vampires.

“What a sick son of a b***h!” Sin yelled.

“Let me at him! Who the fvck does he think he is trying to screw with the mate bond that way! That’s just as fvckngd up as the sh!t Heather pulled!” Allie added, trying to leave the bunker.

“Whoa there, my little wolverine,” Dorian said as he picked her up gently and put her back where she was. “You’re not going anywhere with a month left in your pregnancy. You can’t even shift right now.” Allie scowled at him. A second later, Adrian shimmered into the bunker with a woman we didn’t recognize.

“Good evening, my name is Serenity. I am the Wiccan mother of the dark coven that commissioned the exile prison. I have been informed that an escaped prisoner may be in a safe house underground that is guarded by the same magic?”

“That is the assumption,” my father said.

“Ah, a warlock, but not full-bred. A hybrid,” Serenity commented on my father before turning back to the rest of us. “If the magical barrier is indeed the same magic we used when building the prison, then I should be able to take it down quite easily. The problem is that we don’t know what lies beyond the barrier.”

“What do you mean by that?” Jed asked.

“There could be b00by traps, silent alarms, not so silent alarms. He could even have his own army down there for all we know. If I disable the magical barrier, there’s no telling what will emerge from the ground.

“I have a question!”

“Yes, young Luna,” Serenity responded to Allie. “And a powerful one at that. Goodness, your aura is radiant. You and your Alpha. Quite the power couple, I see.”

“Uh, thanks? Anyway, back to my question. Is this magical wall strong enough to block a wolf’s mind link to their mate, or their pack?”

“Yes, it is. It’s the most powerful barrier that magic can conjure. Unbreakable without the correct spell,” Serenity answered. Allie made her thinking face. “I see the wheels turning in your head, young Luna. Penny for your thoughts?”

“I was wondering if Jed was close enough to the wall right as it’s being taken down, could he mind link, Vivienne? If she can hear him and he tells us where she is, maybe she can just shimmer to us?” Allie said.

“That’s only if he doesn’t have a contingency.”

“Even if he did, he wouldn’t risk placing one that could possibly kill Vivienne, if she were to escape. If what the guys and Dani said is true, and he wants to re-mark her for himself, he wouldn’t risk killing her. Then everything he has done would have been for nothing. Claude seems deranged but not stupid. He wouldn’t go through all of this to get her to be his and put a baby trap that could possibly result in her death. That would make no sense.”

“Allison is correct. Claude is not stupid. Desperate, yes, but not stupid,” Adrian said in agreement.

“Okay, so you want me to go underground?” Jed asked.

“No, silly, just stand in the townhouse. If the safe house he built is actually under the townhouse, then maybe just being in there will bring you close enough to Viv for a mind link to reach her. With you being a Supreme Alpha and her being your destined Luna, your bond to each other should be strong enough to allow your link to reach her.”

“She has a point, Jed,” Dorian said to him.

“But what if she’s too injured to shimmer out? Remember, he’s been physical towards her, and it’s been three weeks. She may not have the strength to shimmer. Especially if she’s been starved this whole time,” Jed countered. Suddenly, I had an epiphany.

“What if she just shimmered in place?” I asked. They all looked at me.

“Remember, direct family members can track one’s shimmer path. What if she just shimmered in place. Just long enough for Adrian to pick up on it?”

“Dani, that is brilliant!” Andre shouted and picked me up, spinning me. He put me down and slammed his lips to mine. I couldn’t stop the moan that automatically left my lips as I pulled him flush against me and deepened it. Our tongues intertwined, and I knew for a fact that I was leaking arousal because I sure as hell felt his rub against me.

“Ahem,” someone cleared their throat. We reluctantly pulled away and saw everyone was staring at us. My dad looked like he wanted to rip Andre apart.

“Hey, if we can’t tongue dance with our husbands, you can’t tongue dance with your fiancé!” Sam shouted at me. I buried my face into Andre’s chest as he kissed the top of my head.

“No one is tongue dancing with anyone until we get Vivienne back!” Jed insisted. “Serenity, please, help us take down the wall.”

“What do I get in return?” she asked, catching all of us off guard. fvcking*g dark witches. I should have known they would want something in return.

“I beg your pardon?” Jed replied with slight annoyance and anger in his tone.

“For taking down the wall. What do I get in return?” she said and as she eyed Jed like a piece of fresh meat.

“Serenity!” Adrian shouted at her.

“I’m just playing. Can’t a dark witch have a little fun?” she said in a not so joking manner as she eyed Jed again. “I’ve never been with a Supreme Alpha before,” she continued as she went to touch Jed’s arm. But before she could even lay a finger on him, he grabbed her wrist with one hand and her neck with the other, lifting her into the air. She immediately started to choke.

“Touch me again, and I will rip your head off and go find another dark witch from your coven to bring down this wall. I don’t fvcking*g have time for your stupid a.ss games, Serenity. You will help us out of the kindness of your black heart because it was one of YOUR KIND THAT ALLOWED THIS HAPPEN!!!” He snarled at her as his eyes turned black with pure anger and then threw her to the floor. She began to cough as she glared up at him.

“Fine, be that way, you big brute!” she whined and stood to her feet as she massaged her neck. “Let’s go to this damn townhouse. The closer we are to the barrier, the faster it will fall once I say the incantation.” She took Adrian’s arm and he shimmered there.

“Dani, take Jed and Andre. Jed, once you’re able to reach her, whether she gets out on her own or Adrian has to go get her, be sure that they land outside of the townhouse in the front yard. We will have it completely surrounded by

both our pack and their coven. The sun has already set,” Dorian instructed us. We all nodded and I shimmered them to the townhouse.

{Vivienne’s P.O.V.}

“WHY WON’T YOU JUST GIVE IN AND TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME!!!” Claude screamed in my face and slapped me as hard as he could, forcing me to fly out of the chair he placed me in. I instinctively held my stomach as I landed, trying to protect my pup. I prayed every second of every day while I was here that he didn’t notice the change in my body or my scent.

“You are a fool, Claude. Always have been, and always will be. You cannot break my bond with my mate!” I snarled at him. He pinched my chin and forced me to look at him. I spit in his face, and he slapped me again.

“Oh, but I will. You’re merely a hatchling, Vivienne. Soon, the thirst will become too great and in your desperate need for blood, I will dangle a bag over your head. Let’s see how strong you are then!” he shouted and hit me once more for good measure before he stomped away. After the door slammed shut, Marco came and helped me up. I was starting to resent the Grand Elder for not stopping Claude when he attacked me. But I also knew that Claude had no idea who Marco was. His true identity.

“Vivienne, just hold on a little while longer.”

“I don’t think I can. I am starting to show, and I am still in the same tight shirt I was wearing when he first took me.” I wanted to cry so hard. I missed J.D. and my family. I missed the pack members. I honestly didn’t know how much longer I could take the beatings and starvation. I couldn’t keep feeding on Marco either. Soon, it wouldn’t be enough to sustain me and the pup. I needed to get out of here. Marco was about to say something when I felt immense pressure inside of my head that made me topple over again.

“Oh, mon Dieu!” I cried out as the pressure increased ten-fold.

“Mademoiselle! What’s wrong!?”

“My head! It hurts! It’s like someone is hitting me with a baseball bat!” I cried.

MATE! Tempest exclaimed. Mate is trying to link us! I can feel Gunner!

Hearing Tempest say that it was J.D. trying to mind link me, I quickly pushed Marco away and tried to concentrate on J.D. and our bond. The pressure intensified. Stronger and stronger. I felt like my head was going to explode when, suddenly, the pressure was gone, and all I heard was the most amazing sound.

Mon Coeur? Can you hear me?

MON LOUP!!!

Holy fvcking*g moon goddess! Finally! I've been trying to reach out for thirty minutes!

Thirty minutes? It's been weeks since I have been taken!

Yeah, I know that, but ... Ah, I'll explain later, we don't have time right now. Mon Coeur, I need you to listen to me carefully. Claude has been hiding you within the pack territory. You're in a safe house that was built with dark magic and you're literally under the townhouse.

Mon Loup, I don't understand. Townhouse? Do you mean our townhouse?

Yes, our townhouse. Our home. Listen to me, I know he's been starving you and hitting you. I've felt it. It didn't get super intense until about five minutes ago. How badly are you injured?

Not as much as I should be. Tempest is trying to heal me slowly. And even though Claude has been starving me, I have been fed a little by my cellmate.

Cellmate!? Who is there with you!?

No time to explain, Mon Loup. How do I get out of here!? Are you coming for me!?

I can't because I can't go underground. But if you can, try to shimmer to me. Shimmer to the front yard. If you're too weak, try your best to shimmer in place even for a few seconds. Your dad is here. If he can feel it, he can track you and get to you.

I will try, Mon Loup. I will try.

Vivienne?

Yes?

I love you, Mon Couer. I love you so fvcking*g much. You and our baby.

How did you ...

Your dad could sense it after you were taken. Our pup's scent had mixed with yours. Just hold on, love. You'll be in my arms soon. And we have a party waiting for Claude if he decides to follow.

I cut off the link and looked at Marco who had a knowing smile on his face. He must have known I was mind linking J.D.

"Do what you need to do," was all Marco said. I concentrated on my vampire side and focused all of my remaining energy into shimmering. I already knew I couldn't shimmer to the townhouse, but I could shimmer in place. I felt my body become light as a feather for about two seconds before falling to the ground beside Marco. Not even a second later, I felt the presence of a very familiar person.

"Vivienne."

"Papa."

Desert Nightmare Chapter 55 - Tips

{Jedediah's P.O.V.}

I couldn't believe it took thirty fvcking*g minutes to reach Vivienne through the mind link, but I had no doubt in my mind that our love, our bond would overcome any obstacles. Once she knew what to do, it didn't take long for Adrian to sense her shimmer. He said that it was weak, which meant that she had shimmered in place, but it was still strong enough to trace. Sure enough, less than a minute after he shimmered away to rescue her, they appeared in the front yard of the townhouse together. Everyone was expecting to see just the two of them, but what caught us all off guard was the third party they had in tow.

"MARCO!?" Louis was stunned after he recognized the unknown stowaway. I figured this guy was the cellmate that Vivienne mentioned to me earlier. I could honestly care less about him, I just wanted to get to Vivienne. I broke away from the crowd and ran straight to her.

“Mon Coeur!”

“Mon Loup!” she cried out, pulling away from Adrian and practically jumping into my arms when I finally reached her. I felt some relief when I was able to mind link her, but this was different. The moment I had her securely in my arms, it was like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. Gunner was finally at peace and so was I. Immediately, I felt that her once flat stomach now had a very noticeable baby bump. “Are you okay?” I asked her, never once letting go of her. I knew we weren’t exactly out of the woods just yet.

“I am now,” she whispered. I felt her body relax into mine.

“And the baby?” I asked. No response. “Vivienne?” I pulled back a little, and her head lulled to the side as her arms dropped from my neck and shoulders. “VIVIENNE!?” I shouted, realizing that she had fainted.

“Dani, get her to the hospital!” Andre instructed her. Dani sprinted over, but someone got to her first and threw her backward before she could reach us.

“DANI!”

“DANIELLA!” Andre and her father exclaimed in unison. I looked to see who had intercepted Dani, but it was someone I’ve never seen before. Apparently, Andre and everyone else knew exactly who he was because the amount of hissing and loud snarls coming from all directions gave away that he was the enemy.

“YOU DARE TAKE WHAT IS MINE!?” he screamed at me as I protected Vivienne’s unconscious body, holding her close.

“YOURS!?” I snarled at him. Gunner was two seconds away from taking over. “VIVIENNE IS MY MATE! AND MY LUNA! YOU MUST HAVE A fvcking*g DEATH WISH TAKING HER FROM ME!”

“CLAUDE BUNTAINE!!!” Andre shouted at the top of his lungs. Vivienne’s entire family was in full-on attack mode, and the members of their coven who had offered us support were right behind them—icy blue eyes, fangs out, and saliva dripping. Giselle shifted in half a second, her wolf was dark auburn with golden highlights and her eyes were bright orange. I had never seen anything like it. I wondered what Tempest would look like if Vivienne was able to shift completely.

Giselle looked like she was about to charge, but the guy Louis ID'd as Marco stepped forward. The coven members started to mumble, asking about who he was. I studied him carefully and noticed that his eyes weren't icy blue like the other vampires. His eyes were almost an icy silver color, and his pupils were black.

"Claude Buntaine, you have committed a grave mistake," he announced.

"Mistake? What mistake? Taking the woman who rightfully belongs to me!?"

"Well, taking her was a mistake, yes. But that is not what I am speaking of, your mistake was taking me and believing you would get away with it."

"You!? You're nobody! You're nothing but an elderly vampire of the coven who provides nightshade to those in need of it!" Claude mocked him. Some of the coven members gasped, and Adrian and Louis smirked knowingly.

"That is what you and other coven members are led to believe. I am not an ordinary vampire within the coven, Claude. My name is Marco, and I am the founder of this coven." More gasps came out; this time, there was an uproar.

"IMPOSSIBLE!" Claude shouted. "The founder is dead!"

"Again, that is precisely what I wanted you and the others to believe. When I gave the crown to Louis's father, I made sure that only a handful of executive members of the coven knew my true identity."

"But ... But ... Th-tha-that would make you a—"

"A Grand Elder. And you, Claude Buntaine, not only kidnapped me but also my wife, who is also a Grand Elder. Your actions are punishable by death!" I looked over at Andre and his family and nodded my head. He nudged Adrian and Giselle, who was still in wolf form. She shook her head, indicating that she didn't want to keep her end of the bargain. Andre rolled his eyes. The three of us kept our promise, and we quickly played a round of rock, paper, scissors. Low and behold, I won fair and square, which made perfect sense since Vivienne was my mate.

"Claude!" I shouted his name, and he turned to face me. "If you want Vivienne, you'll have to challenge me for her!"

“Me? Challenge you? A mere child!?” he cackled like a hyena before addressing me. “I am more of a man than you will ever be, you m angry mutt!”

“Prove it then.”

“Very well. I, Claude Buntaine, challenge you, whatever the hell your name is, for the right to court Vivienne Dubois from here until the end of time!” I smirked and nodded at Andre to come get Vivienne. After I handed her off, Dani shimmered to Andre’s side and took Vivienne’s hand. She glared at Claude for a brief moment before shimmering Vivienne to the pack hospital to be treated.

“WHERE DID YOU TAKE HER!?” Claude whined like a petulant child.

“To the pack hospital. Because of you and your fvckingd up ways, she passed out from lack of nutrition and the constant beatings she suffered while in your hands. The fact that you claim to love her is beyond me. How the fvck does a man hurt the woman he claims to love!?”

“A woman needs to know her place! When a woman belongs to a man, she must serve him and him only! She belongs to me! Her lack of submission is the reason she was beaten!” he answered. His response had me and everyone else of the male species growling, hissing, and snarling at him.

“You’re the furthest thing from a man! You act like an adolescent child who’s never been told ‘no’ a day in his life! A woman does not belong to a man. She is his equal. Women will always be the stronger gender in this world. Why? Because women are the ones who carry life in their bodies and then bring it into this world. The only species where the roles are reversed is a damn seahorse! Women don’t belong to men. As men, we are naturally the weaker se.x, and we should worship women! You don’t deserve Vivienne, and she sure as fvck doesn’t belong to you.”

“I WILL HAVE HER!” he screamed at me and shimmered away. I thought that he may have followed Dani to the hospital, but I was mistaken. He caught me off guard by landing on top of me and forcing me to eat the ground. I rolled over and threw him off me and quickly gave control to Gunner, allowing him to shift.

Claude shimmered away again. Gunner stayed on his toes, and I knew he was sniffing the air for a slight change in scent. If there was one thing Gunner picked up on after playing hide and seek with Vivienne a few times, it was the change in the surrounding air when they were about to appear. That was how he was able to beat her in her own game. When Gunner sensed the change from above us, he quickly ducked, and Claude missed his mark. He rolled like a tumbleweed in the desert. Gunner got to his feet quickly and charged towards him, but he was too fast. The bastard shimmered away again.

Grr!!

Calm down, Gunner. We need to think before we attack. He can shimmer, which means he has the upper hand in defense. But, if we can get a hold of him, we will have the advantage.

I want to rip him apart!

And we will. Let's be smart about this. We've trained for months now with this pack. And Dorian gave us some pointers when it came to fighting vampires. Let's use our training.

Gunner listened to what I said and calmed down. His breathing normalized, and he once again concentrated on our surroundings. When he sensed Claude was about to appear, instead of ducking, he turned just in time and was able to get a solid bite into Claude's shoulder. He chomped down as hard as he could and shook Claude vigorously like he was a chew toy. By doing so, he was able to snap off his arm. Claude screamed in agony as he held the wound with his other hand, but it was no use. Gunner had severed it completely from his body, and blood was spilling out.

"KILL HIM!"

"KILL THE TRAITOR!"

"NO MERCY FOR THE TRAITOR!"

"TUE-LE!" People from the coven shouted left and right. I noticed that the pack members had also shifted into their wolves during the fight. They, along with Giselle, howled at the night sky. Bandit looked at Gunner and nodded his head once, giving him the green light to kill Claude. Gunner looked to Adrian and Louis, and they too gave their blessing.

“If you want to k!!! me, you’ll have to find me!” Claude shouted and shimmered away. Gunner and I were caught off guard by his sudden disappearance. Gunner sniffed the air, but there was nothing. Claude ran away from the fight even though he had accepted my challenge. Gunner snarled in anger at the loss of his mark.

Gunner, he’s gone. That p.ussy ran away. Rather than face death head-on, he ran like the coward he is. Let’s take the win. Let’s get to our mate.

Mate.

Gunner didn’t even wait for anyone else before he took off towards the packhouse to get to Vivienne. Wherever Claude went, he would never heal properly. He was now an amputee and a wanted fugitive. As much as I wanted him dead, I needed to make sure that Vivienne and our pup would live. Having been starved and assaulted for weeks on end, there was no telling what kind of damage had been done.

{Dorian’s P.O.V.}

After that fvcker Claude shimmered away and didn’t come back, we knew that Jed had lost the chance to k!!! him. I hated that he had to wait for the blessing of me, his Alpha, and Adrian and Louis, which allowed Claude the chance to scamper away like the c0ckroach he is. The only good thing was that he was officially a dead man. Even if he was able to heal, he wouldn’t be able to hide. There was no one out there who would help him.

“Don’t worry about Claude,” Louis reassured me. “We will spread the word about him. With his injury, he will not be able to get far on his own. A vampire can only shimmer as far as their body will allow them. The injury sustained and the loss of bl00d will hinder his chances of getting too far. Vampires around the world will be on the lookout for him.”

“Louis, his death rightfully belongs to Jed. If he is found alive, he is to be turned over to us,” I told him.

“Alpha Shaw, you have my word. If Claude is found alive, he will be returned to you, or Jed.”

“Since you guys are unable to search during the day, I will be sending my trackers and bounty hunters to search for him as well.”

“Yes, that sounds like the best course of action. We should have a member of my coven and a member of your pack work as partners.”

“I like the sound of that,” I replied, and we shook on it. I guess having a vampire coven as an ally would come in handy one day.

With the exception of Aries, I gave instructions to the bounty hunters and Amos’ team to work with coven members to track down and find Claude. I had Aries contact Persephone and Sinbad as well since they were effective in tracking down Maya the last time we needed their help. Half of Amos’ team stayed local within the U.S. while the other half grabbed a coven member and immediately left to track down Claude. He could run, but he could no longer hide.

Before anyone could do anything else, Louis turned to the individual that had come back with Adrian and Vivienne and addressed him with a 90-degree bow,

“Marco, how may I be of service to you?” Louis asked.

“Bring me his blood so I can find my family. Now that Claude is a dead man walking, I need to find my beloved and bring her home as well.”

“My Lord, we had no idea that you or your wife had been taken. You always disappear for weeks on end going on vacations, that is where we thought you were.”

“Do not fret, Louis, everything will be alright. Mademoiselle Vivienne and her pup will survive just fine.”

“My Liege?”

“In order for her to sustain her thirst, I allowed her to feed off of me once every few days.”

“YOU WHAT!?” Adrian and Louis both exclaimed.

“But, that is against coven law!” Adrian shouted. “Vivienne will be punished by the other elders!”

“No, she will not, Adrian. Do not worry. As a Grand Elder, I have granted her immunity.” Adrian and Louis looked at Marco questionably but nodded their

heads anyway. That was an odd conversation, to overhear, but I guess it was normal for vampires. I watched as Louis got a sample of blood from the ground, and then witnessed Marco suck on Louis's finger. I wanted to gag after seeing that, but again, I safely assumed it was normal. Marco didn't even wait to say his farewells before he shimmered away with a smile on his face. I looked at Andre and he just shook his head at me, telling me to let it go and not dwell on it.

When it was time to go our separate ways, Andre, his family, and Dani's father stayed behind, and we said our goodbyes to Louis and everyone else before heading back to the packhouse to find the girls. They were still hiding out in the bunker where we had left them and the pups. When I entered the key code and scanned my retina, the door opened, and I saw my life flash before my eyes as a bat swung right at me.

"WHOA!" I shouted as I caught it.

"Oh sh!t! Dorian!" Allie shouted back. I looked down at the hellraiser holding the metal bat and saw my tiny wife.

"Allie!? What the fvck!? Why are you trying to klll me!?"

"I'm so sorry, babe! The door opened suddenly, and I thought that fvcker Claude was coming in!"

"Allie, you're a werewolf! Could you not sense me!?"

"I didn't have time to use my nose! It was a life or death situation, and two of us are pregnant! I had to think on my feet!"

"Dammit, Allie!" I shouted and yanked the bat away from her.

"Did you guys get Vivienne back?" Sin asked.

"Yes. Jed was able to mind link her after Serenity took down the wall. Adrian rescued her and Claude followed like we suspected he would," I answered.

"Sweet, so he's dead?" Sam asked. I looked at her and everyone else and shook my head.

"WHAT!?" they all exclaimed in unison.

“He got away, but not before Jed ripped his arm from his body by the shoulder. He’s officially disabled. With the amount of blood loss, Louis doesn’t think he will get far on his own. We have trackers, bounty hunters, and vampires partnering up to go find him.”

“Where’s Vivienne!?” Leah asked.

“Dani took her to the pack hospital. She fainted in Jed’s arms. We think it’s due to malnutrition and exhaustion,” I replied.

“Can we go see her?” Allie asked.

“Not tonight, baby. Jed is there now, and Dr. Quinn and Dr. Boyd will need time to treat her. Let’s give them some room and privacy, and you girls can go visit tomorrow.” They all frowned but nodded their heads.

“Come on, let’s get all of the pups and go to bed. We all have catching up to do,” Brandon suggested. The guys grabbed their respective pups who were still asleep, except Monique and Sawyer who were awake and playing together.

“Where are all of the pack members?” Allie asked, looking around.

“Oh, after we got all of you safely in this bunker, we made sure the rest were put in bunkers two and three, and everyone else was sent home for safety. Mikey already sent out a mind link to let everyone know it’s okay to go back to their regularly scheduled programming, and Andre went to open the other bunkers before he and his parents went to go see Vivienne.”

“What? But you said that—”

“Allie, they’re Vivienne’s parents and brother. They have priority over us,” I said, cutting her off.

“Yes, I’m sorry, you’re right. I’m just worried about her,” she said.

“I know, baby. Come on,” I replied and as I held the twins in my arms. Everyone went their separate ways as the packhouse started to get crowded with pack members again as if nothing happened. I was fairly certain that Claude would think twice before ever coming onto our land again. After we got to our room, I put the twins on our bed. Allie looked at me funny because she knew I never let them sleep with us.

“What?”

“Are you going to let them sleep in our bed?” she asked.

“Just for tonight. I missed them. And I want all three of our pups with us tonight,” I replied as I went to put both of my hands on her swollen stomach.

“Damn, you’ve gotten bigger since I’ve been gone.”

“WHAT!?”

“Oh sh!t, I didn’t mean it that way, Allie! I meant the pup! I meant to say that he’s gotten bigger since I’ve been away!” I felt like kicking myself for even insinuating that Allie was big. She scowled at me before turning towards the nightstand and grabbing her phone. I thought she was going to put her headphones on and ignore me because I called her big, instead, she opened her gallery and pulled up a video. She handed her phone over to me. “What’s this?” I asked her.

“Press play, and you’ll see,” she responded. I turned the phone right side up and pressed play.

“Wuv you, baby,” Demarco said and k!ssed Allie’s belly.

“I lub you, baby,” Daisy said and rubbed Allie’s stomach with her tiny hand before placing a k!ss as well. I saw Allie’s smile in the video and the fact that she had tears in her eyes. I looked over at her when the video ended, and she was all smiles.

“When did you take this?” I asked her.

“A few days after you left. The twins were being extra sweet, and I just had to get it on video for you.” I put the phone down and cupped her cheeks. I placed a gentle yet loving chaste k!ss on her l!ps. I pulled away and rested my forehead against hers. “Oh, by the way, it’s not a boy.”

Desert Nightmare Chapter 56 - Tips

{Vivienne’s P.O.V.}

It felt as if I had been hit by a ten-ton truck. My head was throbbing, and my body ached in ways I didn’t think was possible. My muscles and ligaments felt as if they were torn to shreds, my bones ripped from their sockets and

rearranged. I don't think I have ever experienced this much pain before. I tried to move but couldn't; it was as if I didn't have control over my body. I opened my eyes and found that I was outside. I was able to move my head a bit and looked at my surroundings. I didn't recognize anything.

I realized that I was facedown on the ground. I tried to move my body again and, this time, I was successful. I pushed myself against the ground using my arms and legs and sat up. I found it strange that I was in a sitting position like a dog. I looked down at my body and saw something unexpected—fur. My head jerked up in complete shock. I looked down again, thinking I must be hallucinating, but I wasn't. I was, indeed, covered in fur. My hands and feet were replaced with paws. It was then I noticed that my vision was grey, and the only colors I could see were blue and yellow hues.

“Sacre bleu!” I exclaimed but realized I said it in my head. What was going on?

“Mommy!” I heard a small child call out. I turned towards the voice and saw it was coming from a young child. She looked to be three, maybe four years old, and she was running towards me. I felt my body move on its own, getting up on its feet, and my b.utt was swaying side to side. Wait, that couldn't be my b.utt. I turned around to see what it was and I discovered it was a tail. Why did I have a tail? Why did I have paws? Why was I seeing everything in shades of grey!? “Mommy! Mommy!” My attention shifted to the child again, and my tail was wagging even faster. My body moved into a stance where my paws were in front and my b.utt was high in the air. Was this a play stance?

The child came closer and closer with the biggest, sweetest smile on her face. She charged at me, and I almost wanted to growl. Instead, I held my ground, and she tackled me. It wasn't rough, but my body fell over anyway. The child began to jump and climb all over me, and she was squealing with pure joy and delight. Was I the one she was calling out to? Am I her Mommy?

I sensed that I was enjoying her touches and her laughs. I stayed on my back and watched as she used me as a personal toy. My tail was thumping on the ground while she pulled my ears and nuzzled my face with her tiny hands and adorable face. She had beautiful, platinum blonde hair just like me, but her eyes were dark grey like J.D.'s.

“Mommy! Pway with me!” she said. I thought that's what we were doing. Suddenly, I felt her being taken away from me, and a voice I'd recognize anywhere called out to her.

“Hold on there, baby girl, let Mommy change back first.” I looked up to see J.D. He glanced down at me and smiled widely. Even though I couldn’t see in color, he was just as handsome as ever. He threw the little girl into the air, and she screamed with pure happiness—it was music to my ears. Who was this child? “Are you just going to lay there, Mon Couer, or are you going to shift back so you and Bethany can have your daily playtime?” he asked me. I tilted my head.

Bethany?

I looked at him again and tilted my head even further. What was he talking about? Suddenly, a burst of gold light hit me, and they were gone. I was in a dark room that smelled vile, and I could sense blood all over.

“Mon Loup!?” I called out and realized that I had my voice again. I touched myself which confirmed I was back in human form. “MON LOUP!? BETHANY!?” I called out for him and the child whom he claimed to be our daughter.

“Bethany is a beautiful name, my love,” I heard an eerie and disgusting voice I wish to never hear again. Out from the shadows came the one man that I wish would die and burn in hell.

“Claude!? What do you want!?” I shouted at him.

“Now, now, my love. Is that any way to talk to your husband?”

“MARI!?” (HUSBAND!?) I exclaimed. He came towards me with that stupid smile of his. “RESTE LOIN DE MOI!” (STAY AWAY FROM ME!) I screamed while I held out my left arm in defense. That’s when I saw something sparkle in the tiny bit of light that was in the room. “What?” I gasped.

Claude grabbed my hand and pulled me to him as he pushed his face into the crook of my neck. He inhaled deeply and licked the spot where J.D.’s mark was. I wanted to vomit and scream, but what I felt was something I never thought I would feel—pleasure. I gasped and tried to push him away, but he held onto my arm and brought me back to him as he held me against his body. It felt revolting in my head, but my body was enjoying his touch. Why!?

“Yes, husband. How else would you explain this magnificent rock on your beautiful finger?” he asked as he pressed his lips to mine. That’s when I felt the revulsion all over my body. Whatever this was, it wasn’t real. I tried to push him away, but his hold on me intensified, and I could feel his anger at my rejection. But that’s when I noticed he only had one arm around me. I pushed him again; this time, he released me. That’s when I saw he only had one arm. “Ah, I guess you finally see what your mate has done to me. To think, after everything I have done for you and me, this is how you repay me. Not to worry though, Vivienne, I will be coming for you, and not even your mate or wretched family can’t stop me. I don’t know when, I don’t know how, but I will have you. If I can’t have you physically, I will have you in your dreams. You will never sleep again, Vivienne, for I will always be in your head. And that abomination in your womb will be nothing but a distant memory once I have you. For I will replace that ... thing ... inside of you with my offspring.”

“If you even think about touching my pup, I will kill you myself!” I shouted at him and hugged my body. “You disgust me! Seeing that Mon Loup ripped off your arm and that you’ve resorted to using dark magic to invade my dreams means that you ran away. You ran from a fight like a little b***h!” He raised his hand to strike me, but I held my ground, and his hand stopped mid-air.

“Qu’est-ce que c’est!?” (What is this!?) Claude shouted, trying to free the only hand he had. Out of the darkness emerged a figure in a white robe. The robe was so bright that it lit up the room. It was almost as bright as the sun. “AHHHH!!!” Claude screamed in pain, and I realized that the light was the sun. The sun was shining on him, and he suddenly disappeared, leaving me with the person in white. The light dimmed down, and the figure turned to me.

“Who are you?” I asked. Without saying a word, the figure removed the hood, and a very handsome young man stood before me who was maybe in his late teens or early twenties. His hair had natural curls to them, and it was a dark bluish-black, just like Mon Loup, but he had icy blue eyes like me. I c****d my head to the side, and he just smiled.

“You can call me Jacques,” he replied and gave me a warm smile. A smile filled with so much love and respect. “Don’t worry. I’ll always protect your dreams. Bethany and I, together.” My eyes widened at his words. “A bientôt ... Maman.” (See you soon ... Mom).

{Jedediah’s P.O.V.}

After Gunner brought us to the pack hospital, he quickly gave me control again as I raced inside, not caring whatsoever that I was completely indecent. Pack members just stared at me as I ran through the hallways searching for Vivienne.

“Jed! Over here!” Dani called out and flagged me down. “Geez! Put on some clothes! I don’t need to see my brother-in-law n.aked!” she shouted. “Savannah! Bring Mr. Hairless Balls here a pair of shorts, would ya!?” she yelled to the nurse’s station.

“Yes, Delta!” the nurse answered while the others snickered.

“Really!?” I exclaimed to her. She just shrugged. As soon as the nurse named Savannah brought me a pair of shorts, I quickly put them on and pushed past Dani into Vivienne’s hospital room. What I saw made my heart ache. She was connected to, at least, four different machines, and there were wires everywhere. “What the hell is all of this!?” I asked Dani.

“That one keeps track of heart rate, bl00d pressure, and temperature. That one is a transfusion machine. She needed a lot of bl00d, and simply administering it through an IV wouldn’t be enough. That machine is a fetal heart monitor. It helps keep track of the babies’ heartbeats. That’s an ultrasound machine. It allows—”

“I know what an ultrasound machine is, Dani,” I said, cutting her off.

“Well, sorry!” she enunciated, clearly offended by my interruption. I took a chair from the corner and brought it to Vivienne’s bedside. I took her hand in mine and k!ssed the back of it. I felt so fvcking*g helpless that I couldn’t do more than just sit here and pray to the moon goddess that she and our ... hold up. I looked at Dani with wide eyes. “What?” she asked.

“You said ‘babies’? As in plural!?” I asked her. She smiled and nodded her head.

“Yeah. I’m sorry to ruin the surprise. But yes, I said ‘babies’ in plural form. Vivienne is carrying twins. Dr. Quinn believes she’s about six or seven weeks along, which means she was about a month pregnant when she was taken.” I was speechless. I was already excited that I was going to be a father, but to be a father twice in one go? That made me a little nervous now. I !cked my !ps and tried to swallow the lump inside my throat, but I had freaking cottonmouth at the sudden news. I looked back at Vivienne and just scoffed.

“Do ... Does ... Did she say what they are?” I asked Dani, not knowing what else to say.

“No, it’s still too early. You don’t find out the gender until she’s about ten to twelve weeks. The last two months of the pregnancy is when the pups will grow substantially.” I just nodded my head again, trying to process the information I just received. Twins. I’m having twins. Just like Dorian and Simba. I wondered what they were going to be. Dorian constantly raves about Daisy. That having a little girl is the best thing a father can ask for. But he also can’t stop bragging about Demarco and what a great Alpha he’s going to be one day.

I wondered if I would produce a son of my own. A powerful Supreme Alpha to carry on my legacy. I mean, even a daughter would produce a Supreme Alpha, right? That was how genetics worked, wasn’t it? I couldn’t stop thinking of all possible outcomes. Two girls. Two boys. One of each. Oh man, and we would have to think of names. And then this whole Red Mountain bullsh!t came back into my mind. What was I going to do about Scanlan? As I was racking my brain on how I was going to confront him, one of the machines started to go off like crazy.

“What the fvck!?” I shouted. “Vivienne! Vivienne!? What the fvck is happening!?”

“Jedediah, move!” I felt a pair of arms shove me out of the way. I couldn’t stop the automatic growl that came out of my mouth. “Do not growl at me, Jedediah Brinkley! This is my hospital!” the person scolded me with a finger in my face. I looked down to see Dr. Quinn who was giving me a very scary mom look. “If you want your Luna to live, you will move out of my way so I can do my job!” I gulped, nodded my head vigorously, and stepped back.

“Never growl at her,” Dani whispered to me. I nodded my head again and we watched as Dr. Quinn examined Vivienne.

A few minutes later, the monitors calmed down, and Vivienne started to breathe normally. Her bl00d pressure dropped to a normal rate, and her heart rate did too.

“Dr. Quinn, what happened?” I asked.

“I don’t know. One minute she was about to have a heart attack, and the next everything went back to normal. Whatever was happening in her mind was

enough to cause her body to go into shock. But now, it's as if nothing happened at all," she replied, just as confused as we were.

"Look!" Dani exclaimed. We all looked at Vivienne and saw the color in her cheeks returning, and her eyes started to move.

"Vivienne!?" I shouted and pushed Dr. Quinn and the nurses out of my way. I grabbed her hand and felt tiny sparks that I didn't feel earlier. "Mon Coeur!?" I called out to her again. Her eyes slowly opened, and I watched as she took in her surroundings before they landed back on me. "Hey, you," I said with a smile. She c****d her head to the side for a second and she smiled.

"Jacques?"

Who the fvck is Jacques!?

Desert Nightmare Chapter 57 - Tips

{Vivienne's P.O.V.}

"How many times do I have to say that I am sorry, Mon Loup?!" I cried out. Ever since I regained consciousness yesterday and accidentally called him Jacques, he has been sulking because I refuse to tell him who Jacques is. I was not going to spoil the surprise that we're having a boy and a girl, nor did I want to ruin the surprise of what we apparently named our children. Or the fact that they appear to have powers. I was already upset at the fact that Dani told him we were having twins while I was out cold.

"You called me by the name of another man as soon as you woke up from being unconscious! How the hell would you feel if I called you Michaela if our roles were reversed!?" he shouted, complaining like a little girl. I could not stop the scoff that came out of my mouth hearing her name. I crossed my arms over my c.hest and gave up on trying to apologize to him. "Tell me who Jacques is!" he demanded once more.

"Non," was my only answer. "You're going to have to wait to find out."

"Vivienne, I swear to the moon goddess if he is some ex-boyfriend that I have to deal with, I will k!!! him!"

"You will do no such thing!" I exclaimed and poked his c.hest. "Jacques is not a threat to you, Mon Loup. The two of you will have an amazing relationship

when the time comes. So, just stop with your ridiculous theatrics!” He glared at me, and I glared right back, refusing to budge whatsoever. I was determined to keep the gender of our pups a secret from him. I don’t know how they did it, but both of our pups were able to enter my dreams and made it seem as if it were real. Whatever their powers are, they were pretty powerful. The only difference was that Bethany showed herself as a child while Jacques came to me as an adult. I still couldn’t understand how Jacques did what he did, but I was more than grateful. I smiled as I thought of Jacques and Bethany, and my hand instinctively went to my newly visible baby bump.

“Are you okay?” J.D. asked me. I hummed and looked at him. “You just touched your stomach. Are you okay? Are the pups okay?”

“Oui, oui, Mon Loup. We’re okay. I am just so excited. I love them so much already and I feel as if I already know them so well,” I answered. J.D. quirked an eyebrow at me. “What?”

“You’re really not going to tell me who this Jacques guy is, are you?”

“Non.”

“Gah, fine!” he shouted and threw his hands into the air in defeat. I giggled at him.

“What’s with all the shouting?” We both looked towards the door and saw Allie and Dorian.

“Allie! Wow, you’ve gotten so big!” I gushed.

“I know, right!? I feel like I’m as big as a whale!”

“What are you guys doing here?” J.D. asked them.

“Weekly check-up, since I’m going to be due soon. So we decided to stop by and check up on Viv,” Allie replied.

“HEY!” Dorian randomly yelled.

“What?” Allied responded.

“Why didn’t you get mad at her!?” Dorian asked while pointing in my direction.

“Why would I get mad at Vivienne?”

“Yeah, why would she get mad at Vivienne?” J.D. looked confused as well.

“She just ... Ah, never mind. Forget it. I’m fighting a losing battle,” Dorian insisted and gave up right away. I looked at Allie, and she just shrugged her shoulders.

“Comment ça va?” (How are you doing?) Allie asked, changing the subject.

“Bien, bien,” (Good, good,) I replied.

“And the pup?” I paused when she asked that because it appeared she was under the impression that we were only having one. I looked at her for a moment, knowing that her powers would allow her to sense that there were, in fact, two. “Why are you staring at me like that?” she asked.

“Can you not sense it?” J.D. questioned her.

“Huh?” She looked up at him and then back at me. I smiled and kept staring at her. She stared back and then c****d her head to the side. Her eyes widened at the realization.

“OH sh!t!” she finally screamed. “AHHH!!! CONGRATULATIONS!!!” she gushed at the top of her lungs and h.ugged me.

“Baby, why are you screaming!?” Dorian covered his ears emphatically.

“TWINS!” she exclaimed excitedly to him while pointing at us.

“No fvcking*g way!” he replied. “Dude, really!?” he grinned at J.D.

“Hell yeah, brother! Looks like I’m in the same boat as you!” They both started to yell and gave each other a bro h.ug, as they called it.

“So fvcking*g happy for you, man! You deserve all the happiness there is! You finally got your Luna back, and now you’re having twins of your own.”

“What?!” I exclaimed. J.D. suddenly froze and looked down at me. “Dorian, what did you just say?”

“What?” Dorian asked, utterly confused.

“Did you just say, Luna?” Allie and Dorian stared at me as if I had grown two heads, and then they looked at J.D. with wide eyes.

“YOU DIDN’T TELL HER!?” Dorian and Allie both shouted at him.

“Tell me what?” I looked at him as well, waiting for his response. “Mon Loup!? Tell me what!?” I repeated. He looked at me, then back at Dorian and Allie.

“No way, man, don’t look at me. You tell her. Come on, Allie, let’s give them some privacy,” Dorian said.

“But we just got here! And I literally just sat down!”

“Allie, now!”

“Ugh, fine!” she griped and pushed herself up from the chair. “Link me when you and your man finish talking. We have a lot of catching up to do,” she whispered as she hugged me. When they left the hospital room and closed the door behind them, I immediately shot a look at J.D. He was rubbing his neck and biting his lower lip, clearly feeling some tension.

“Is it bad?”

“Huh? No, it’s nothing bad, I promise. It’s good. Really good. But it will cause a major change, for us and the pups,” he admitted as he sat in the chair that Allie just vacated. I looked at him stoically and waited for him to continue.

“Okay, there’s a simple way of explaining this, but I’ll have to start from the beginning for it to make sense,” he said. I nodded my head. He took my hands into his and smiled at me warmly. “Right after you went missing, we received a call from Monique’s nanny, Christine—or Chrissy as you like to call her. She said that she hadn’t seen you in a few days and was worried, so she called Andre. That’s how we found out you had been taken while we were away helping Dorian’s cousin in Michigan.” He paused for a moment and shifted in his seat. “Dani shimmered me and your brother here first, for obvious reasons, while everyone tailed us and were behind us by a couple of days. What happened after your brother and I left with Dani was that Sly’s new mate—”

“Sly has a mate!?” I asked in shock.

“Oh yeah, fvck,” he muttered. “Sly found his mate while we were away, but she turned out to be a bad person, so he rejected her. Literally, a minute later, he got a second chance. An angel by the name of Annalisa, Anna for short.”

“An angel!?”

“Yes. Try to keep your questions until after I’m done. There’s a lot to go over,” he told me.

“Oui, oui, I’m sorry. Please continue, Mon Loup,” I replied.

“So, as I was saying, she’s an angel. And, apparently, as an angel, she has the ability to sense someone’s rank. Just as I was leaving to come find you, she had questioned if you were my Luna.” I furrowed my brows at him and tilted my head in confusion. “Yeah, so that was everyone’s reaction, clearly. According to Anna, she could sense that I am an Alpha by blood.” I opened my mouth to say something, but he shushed me. It was physically painful to not interrupt him. “Let me finish. That’s not all.”

“There’s more!?”

“Yes, love, keep listening. When Dorian and the others got back, we had zero luck in finding your whereabouts and I spiraled into a deep and angry depression. I wanted to kill anyone who even said a word to me. Dorian and the others were worried, so they came to find me at the townhouse, and that’s when Dorian broke the news to me. You know, about me being an Alpha and all. I didn’t believe him, of course, since I grew up as an Omega. So, to prove them wrong, we got a blood test done. That is another long story that I will not be getting into right now; however, the results did show that I am, in fact, an Alpha.”

“So, that would make me ...” I questioned and he just nodded his head. “Oh, mon Dieu,” I replied in exasperation. This was a lot of information to take in. “I ... I’m ... I’m a Luna?”

“Not just any Luna either,” he went on. I whipped my head around to face him again. “A more detailed look at my genomes found that I am what’s referred to as a Supreme Alpha.”

“What is a Supreme Alpha?” I asked.

“According to Dorian, an Alpha wolf is considered to be supreme when their bloodline is filled with nothing but immensely powerful and strong Alphas. Everything is taken into consideration. Size, strength, speed, and the ability to shift quickly.”

“Wait, are you saying that you are more powerful than Dorian?”

“That is a fair question. Don’t tell him but, according to Gunner ... Yes. We are stronger than Dorian and Bandit. Although, Gunner says he won’t overpower Bandit because he has too much respect for him. He doesn’t want to make it seem like he is challenging their authority.” I exhaled sharply, letting out a breath that I didn’t know that I was holding. “Also, Dorian found out he’s a Supreme Alpha too. A new line within his blood. He’s the first. Ben was never considered to be one. It’s hard to explain but, in my case, it would appear that my father was also a Supreme Alpha.”

“Wait, but you always said that your parents were Omegas,” I responded.

“I know.” He gave me a knowing look of pain and disappointment.

“Oh, Mon Loup. They’re not your parents?”

“I don’t know. I haven’t had time to figure things out because you were missing. But, now that you’re home and you and our kids are okay, it’s time I got to the bottom of where I actually come from.” I didn’t know how to respond to any of this. I was so shocked at the sudden turn of events in our lives.

“Mon Loup, what did you mean when you said that I am not an ordinary Luna?”

“Oh, right, that ...” he said and rubbed his neck again. I noticed that he had a tendency of doing this whenever he was about to deliver big news and was scared of my reaction. “My being a Supreme Alpha, makes you a ... Supreme ... Luna...” he whispered so softly that, had I not had wolf and vampire genes, I would have missed it. My eyes popped out of my head.

“Is there anything else you would like to tell me!?” I exclaimed. This was all getting to be too much.

“Yeah, there’s one more thing.” I scoffed at him. “We’re going to demolish the townhouse.” I honestly didn’t think that my eyes could come out of my head any further than they already had, but they did. I was rendered completely speechless.

“WHAT?!?!”

{Third Person P.O.V.}

Once Vivienne recuperated from all of the news that Jedediah piled onto her, they sat and discussed plans on what they were going to do regarding the townhouse. After explaining to her why they needed to destroy it, she finally understood. With Claude having built a safehouse underneath their property, they had to get rid of the house to access the space underneath the foundation and destroy that as well.

Vivienne was not happy that she would be losing the first home that she shared with Jedediah, but she knew it's what needed to be done. Also, given that Claude had been in their home, she didn't know what he did or didn't touch and was afraid of what he could have planted in the house or done to her personal effects. While their home was being demolished, Dorian suggested that they move into the packhouse and onto the third floor with him and Allie. Given that Jedediah and Vivienne were technically an Alpha and Luna now, it was only right that they reside on the Alpha and Luna's floor.

At first, they refused, believing that they would be intruding on Dorian and Allie's personal floor. But they wouldn't take "no" for an answer, so they finally agreed. It would also allow Dorian, Jed, and the other ranked members to ascertain where Jed truly came from.

Jed suggested that they call Red Mountain and discuss it over the phone; however, Allie pointed out that it would allow Scanlan to lie through his teeth or possibly tip him off that Jed knew something about his true identity. If Scanlan was involved in the death of Jed's birth parents, then Scanlan catching wind of that was the last thing they wanted to happen.

Rather than handling everything through a conference call, Dorian, Jed, Brandon, Vivienne, and Andre decided they would go to Red Mountain to confront Scanlan in person without announcing their arrival. Ensuring that Scanlan and Red Mountain were caught off guard was crucial to their quest of finding out how Jedediah ended up in the care of his so-called parents that showed him no love. How was it that a Supreme Alpha was raised by lower-level Omegas?

Meanwhile, at Red Mountain, Michaela has been keeping a secret, one that will have dire consequences.

"WHY ARE YOU HERE!?" Michaela screamed at her unwanted guest.

"I need you to protect me!" he shouted.

“You were supposed to get that blonde-haired Barbie wanna-be away from my mate! And what the fvck happened to your arm!? And your skin!?”

“Your so-called mate is what happened to my arm! I challenged him for Vivienne, and I lost! You said he was nothing but an Omega!”

“THAT’S BECAUSE HE IS!” Michaela shrieked.

“You must have your wires crossed because he did not fight like one. And my skin is another atrocity that occurred when I tried to turn her dream into a nightmare. Someone entered her dream as well and was able to bring the light of the sun, so I was burned! I nearly died!”

“You’re the one with your wires crossed. J.D. is an Omega, and you’re nothing but a low-level vampire freak, Claude! You looked like a mutilated version of Freddy Kreuger!” Without saying a word, Claude grabbed Michaela by the throat and lifted her into the air. “LET ME GO!” she squeaked out.

“Do not speak to me that way, mate,” Claude seethed through clenched teeth, hating the word with a passion. How he ended her up mate, he would never know, especially since she was once mated to Jedediah who is now Vivienne’s mate, and a major roadblock to his plans. As much as he hated Michaela, he also couldn’t help but be attracted to her because of their mate bond, though they both try to fight it.

“I’m not your mate!”

“That’s not what you said when we fvckingd the other day before I lost my arm, and when I told you I was on the verge of making Vivienne mine. You got so jealous, you practically threw yourself onto me and climb me like a tree,” he replied and slammed her against the brick wall of the Red Mountain packhouse.

“You’re not my mate, Claude. I rejected you the moment I realized you were a vampire, and an old one at that,” she choked as he put more pressure into his grasp around her larynx. Because he now only had one hand, Claude found it difficult to fully subdue Michaela. So, he dropped her and used his influence of dark magic to remove their clothing. He turned her around and bent her over before impaling her with his hard c0ck.

“Let’s see if you keep saying that in the next five minutes, shall we?” Claude hissed in her ear as he fvckingd her ruthlessly from behind. Neither one could

fight the fact that they felt the mate pull towards each other, yet, neither one would ever admit it when they were both in love with the people who were mated to each other. Also, what neither of them knew was that someone was watching them and was recording everything. Michaela was going to have a lot of explaining to do when this evidence came to light.

Desert Nightmare Chapter 58 - Tips

{Jedediah's P.O.V.}

The eleven-hour trip to Red Mountain was ridiculously long and went by a lot slower than I had anticipated. I was getting more and more anxious the closer we got to the pack territory. After all of the heartache I suffered under this pack's rule, I swore that once I went to Dorian's pack, I would never return—no matter what. And now, here I am, about to confront the man that helped raise me in my late teen years and would potentially have to challenge him for the pack, if the information I was looking for turned out to be true.

“Mon Loup?” I turned to face Vivienne who was holding my hand.

“Hm?”

“Are you alright? I can feel your nerves as if they were my own,” she said softly and rubbed her thumb across the back of my hand.

“Honestly, I don't know.”

“Penny for your thoughts?”

I smiled and was about to answer her when Andre chimed in. “Vivienne, he's going back to the place that was once home to confront the man that has possibly lied to him his entire life, and where his ex-mate, who ridiculed him for being an Omega, basically stomped on his heart for six years. Of course, he is not alright!”

“Je ne t'ai pas demandé!” she shouted at him behind us.

“You didn't have to ask me. It should be clear as day!” he argued back.

“Andre! Shut the fvck up!” Dorian shouted from the driver's seat.

“What did I do!?” Andre complained. “I don’t even know why I have to be here!”

“Because if our theory about Jed and Scanlan is correct, then your sister is going to be the fvcking*g Luna of the Red Mountain Pack! That’s why your a.ss is here!”

“Leave him be, Dorian, he’s just whining because he had to leave Dani and Monique, again,” Vivienne maintained, sticking up for Andre.

“Yeah? Well, guess what? I just left my heavily pregnant wife again too!” Dorian spat. “After arguing with her about why she couldn’t come with us!”

“Let me guess, Gizmo wanted to come because she wanted to see Michaela’s face when Jed announces his pedigree?” Brandon speculated from the passenger seat. Dorian looked at him once and just rolled his eyes. I couldn’t stop the snicker that came out of my mouth. Allie was an easy book to read. She was petty—there was no doubt about that—but she had a lot of love, and I was glad that she and Vivienne were friends. Allie could teach Vivienne so much about being a Luna, and I had no doubt in my mind that the moon goddess gave Vivienne to me because she was more than deserving of that role.

“Jed?” Dorian called out.

“Yeah?”

“Where the hell is the gate?”

“There is no gate. Just drive on through?”

“Where the fvck are the border guards?!” Brandon protested while turning around to look at me.

“What border guards?” I replied with the insinuation that this pack never had any.

“Are you telling me that this pack is out in the middle of nowhere and exists without any gates or guards?!” Dorian yelled while looking at me from the rearview mirror. I just nodded once.

“Hence why my pare ... I mean, the people who raised me were k!lled in a rogue attack. And why Michaela’s mom was also k!lled,” I replied.

“The fvck?” Brandon and Dorian both reacted while looking at one another.

“Bro, if you are the rightful Alpha to this pack, then you better fix that sh!t! That’s reckless and irresponsible!” Dorian growled out.

“Trust me, I know. And so does Scanlan, but he never cared, even after his mate was k!lled. He just assumed they were once-in-a-lifetime incidents,” I answered.

“If it happens more than once, then it’s not once in a lifetime!” Brandon stated the obvious. I just lifted my brow in agreement and sighed. As I watched the trees disappear and the view of the mountain became more prominent, Vivienne’s hand tightened around mine. I looked at her again, and she gave me the most loving and warm smile ever. I couldn’t help but give her a chaste k!ss. I looked down and put my hand on her small belly bump.

“How are you feeling?” I asked her.

“I am okay, Mon Loup. They are too. Do not worry about us. Let’s handle what we need to handle, and then we can deal with the fact that we are inevitably going to be parents,” she responded and k!ssed me softly on the cheek.

“Yo, we’re here,” Dorian announced. I looked up through the front window of the Tahoe, and sure enough, the packhouse came into view.

“Wow, now they have guards coming out,” Brandon retorted. I tilted my head up again, and what do you know, I saw Seth leading a few of the pack guards to the front of the packhouse. Now that I was in front of it again, it made me wonder if the packhouse was always this small. Dorian pulled up to the front of the roundabout, parked, and got out of the car.

“You’re trespassing,” Seth said to him and tried to size Dorian up. It was kind of hilarious to see, given that Dorian was a good six inches taller than him and probably weighed 100lbs more than Seth in muscle. Anyone could easily see the fear in Seth’s face along with the rest of the guards as they looked Dorian up and down.

“Come on, I think we should save them before Dorian decides to run over them like a bulldozer,” Brandon suggested as he got out of the car. I shook my head while laughing and followed his lead. Brandon went around while I opened the back door and stepped out. Vivienne followed behind me with Andre not far behind her.

“JED!?” Seth exclaimed when he saw me.

“Seth. How are you?” I greeted him.

“What the hell? What are you doing here?” he asked.

“I need to meet with Scanlan. Is he here?” I replied.

“Yeah, he’s in his office, like always. But hold on, who are these guys? And who is she!?”

“Seth, this is Dorian Shaw, Alpha of the Desert Moon pack.” Seth and others snapped their heads toward Dorian and started to tremble.

“Don’t worry, I’m not going to k!!! you for being disrespectful. Though, I should kick all of your a.sses for leaving your pack lands so fvcking*g vulnerable that anyone can drive onto it without notice!” he spat at them.

“Ignore him. He owns the biggest security company in Nevada. Security is his life,” I told them. They visibly relaxed a smidge. “That’s Brandon Kane, the Beta of Desert Moon. This is Andre, the Delta, and this beautiful specimen is my mate, Vivienne.”

“I am also Andre’s younger sister,” she replied and smiled.

“Is your mate a vampire?” one of the guards named Isaac questioned.

“She’s a hybrid,” I responded. “And I would appreciate it if you fvckers stopped ogling her!” I growled. They jumped back at my sudden outburst.

“Sorry,” they all murmured and lowered their heads.

“Seth, take us to Scanlan!” I demanded. Seth gave me a strange look, but nodded his head anyway and led us inside. As we passed through the rest of the guards who had parted like the Red Sea, Dorian tossed the keys to the Tahoe to Isaac.

“If you so much as scratch that, you’re paying for it,” he warned him.

“Either Alpha Shaw is psychic, or he just got really lucky that he tossed the keys to the one pack member who drives like sh!t,” Seth mentioned to me, and I couldn’t help but laugh.

When we walked into the packhouse, it was as if the time came to a halt as every single pack member who was inside just stared at us as we entered. It didn’t take long for the mumbling to start as single females started to giggle and gossip about how good-looking Dorian and the other guys were. And of course, single males were ogling Vivienne. I felt her go rigid and glanced down at her and her eyes were black—and I mean really black—which was strange in and of itself since her eyes could never be completely black because of her being a hybrid, but yet, they were.

“Mon Coeur, look at me,” I said to her and cupped her face. Sure enough, her eyes were pitch black. “Your eyes. They’re black.”

“Well, of course, they are, women are ogling you, and it makes me want to rip their hearts out!” she snarled. I stood up straight since she’s never snarled like that before. She has growled plenty of times, and of course, hissed when her vampire side took over but never snarled.

“Vivienne?” Andre touched her shoulder and she looked up at him. “Sacré bleu, Jed is right. Your eyes are completely black.”

“Quelle?” Andre took out his phone, snapped a photo, and showed it to her. “Sacré bleu!” she exclaimed and grabbed the phone. Her eyes immediately went back to their icy blue and she was in awe just as much as we were.

“Hey, we’ll deal with her eyes later. We’re here for a specific reason,” Dorian redirected us. We nodded our heads. Vivienne turned around to stare at the still mumbling females and hissed at them while showing her fangs. They all jumped back and avoided her gaze.

“Baby, behave,” I leaned down and whispered in her ear.

“Only if they do.” I shook my head and held her close to me. Either she was becoming even more possessive or the hormones from the pregnancy were kicking in.

Seth led us to Scanlan's office through the packhouse, but unlike Dorian and other Alphas we have met, his office was on the first floor. Dorian questioned it by looking at me. I just shrugged my shoulders. I knew Dorian did things a certain way and ran his pack a lot more strictly than others, but there were a few things that were uniform in most packs, and one of those things was the Alpha's personal office. It was always on their floor of the packhouse and should be under lock and key, but not Red Mountain.

"Don't look at me, I have no idea," I told him as Seth pushed the door open without even knocking.

"Seth, what can I ... Alpha Shaw?! Jedediah!?" Scanlan exclaimed when he saw us at the door. "What is going on here?" he asked with a slight irritation in his tone as he saw he was practically being ambushed.

"Apologies, Alpha, but they just pulled into the territory. Jed said that he needed to speak with you," Seth explained.

"Alpha Shaw, what is the meaning of this? You should have called first!"

"Well, Alpha Scanlan, I would have. But then my wife had this brilliant theory that if we told you we were coming, then it might give you a chance to fabricate a lie, and we couldn't have that," Dorian replied, refusing to beat around the bush.

"Fabricate a lie? What on earth are you talking about!?"

"Seth, get out," I ordered him. He nodded his head and closed the door behind him. But before it closed completely, the door burst open, and a screaming Michaela ran in.

"IT'S TRUE! OH, MY GODDESS! YOU'RE REALLY HERE!!" she wailed as she threw herself at me.

"The fvck!? Get off of me!" I shouted and shoved her off. She landed on her a.ss, and I dusted myself off. Vivienne growled at her, and it was then Michaela noticed her with me.

"WHY IS SHE HERE!?" Michaela yelled and got her to her feet.

"She's my mate, obviously," I snapped. She glared at Vivienne, but then I saw something flicker in her eyes. It was minute and sudden, and she quickly

composed her expression, but something definitely got her brain churning. I didn't dwell on it too much, but it was strange.

"If you're not here for me, then why are you here?" she sneered.

"Official pack business with your dad," Dorian answered on my behalf. "Now get out."

"This is my pack! You can't order me around! Just who the fvck do you think you are!" she screamed at him and poked his chest. Ah fvck.

"Michaela!" Scanlan shouted at her. "Get out."

"But dad!"

"NOW!" he roared.

"UGHGHG!!!" she grunted in frustration and stomped out of the office like a tantrum-throwing child. Brandon walked to the door that was just slammed shut and promptly locked it. He turned back around, crossed his arms, and just stayed there. Andre joined him and they stood guard, just in case.

"My apologies for my daughter's behavior, Alpha Shaw. You seem to rub her the wrong way," Scanlan said to him.

"The feeling's mutual," Dorian mocked.

"Now that we're alone—well, sort of—can you please tell me why it is you just barged onto my pack lands without notifying me?" Dorian didn't answer. He crossed his arms and then looked at me.

"What?"

"Tell him," he said to me.

"Me!?"

"No, I'm talking to Vivienne. Yes, you!"

"Jed, what is going on here?" Scanlan asked me.

"Alph, I mean, Zach, I've learned a few things recently, and I wanted to ask you a few questions about it," I told him. I watched as his stance changed. It

went from being stand-offish to defensive and worried. I looked over at Dorian and he at me, and we both knew the other noticed it as well.

“Wha ... What did you need to ask?”

“Who was the Alpha before you?” I asked him straight out.

“Wha ... What ... What do you mean?” he stuttered again.

“It’s an easy question to answer, Zach. Who was the Alpha before you?” The fact that he wasn’t answering that it was his father made me worry that perhaps Dorian’s theory was right. What if my birth father was the true Alpha of this pack, and Scanlan took it from him? His eyes darted from side to side, but he still had yet to answer me. “Zach, why won’t you answer me!?” I asked, getting more and more irritated.

“If you don’t want to answer us, how about showing us the pack hierarchy records?” Dorian suggested to him. Scanlan’s eyes widened in horror.

“The pack what?” I asked him.

“You’ll learn about it soon, but it’s basically a family tree, only for ranked members of a pack. It lists any and all ranked members from the very first, the founder of the pack, and goes all the way down to who currently runs it. Take Desert Moon, for example, it goes back several hundred years to the very first werewolf who founded Desert Moon. Ironically enough, their surname isn’t Shaw. It’s Davenport. But one of the Alphas didn’t produce a son, and their only daughter was mated to someone who was the second in line to inherit their pack. But, after being mated to an Alpha female, he became the Alpha of Desert Moon, and that’s how the Alphas of Desert Moon went from being Davenport to being Shaw. Ever since then, all Alphas proceeding Zion Shaw had sons. However, Kane and Rays have always been Beta and Gamma, respectively. Now we’re just adding Dubois to it for Delta.”

“So, you’re saying that all packs have this, what, hierarchy record?” I asked him.

“They should. It’s an absolute law for werewolf packs,” Dorian responded looking at Scanlan who was visibly shaking.

“What’s the matter, Alpha Scanlan? You look like you’ve seen a ghost,” Brandon pointed out from the door. He didn’t say anything and just kept looking around the office like he was trying to plan an escape.

“Zach?!” No response. “ZACH!” I called out to him again. “ZACHARY SCANLAN!!!” I roared, shaking the entire office. His eyes immediately darted to me, wide as can be, and he paled even further. “Where.are.the.records?” I gritted my teeth. He took his sweet time in answering, but when he did, he squared his shoulder and scowled.

“Burnt to ash.”

Desert Nightmare Chapter 59 - Tips

{Jedediah’s P.O.V.}

His response hit me like a ton of bricks. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. The one document Dorian said was an absolute law that packs had to maintain, and Zach burned the one for Red Mountain? I guess it was naive of me to think that finding out the truth would be so simple.

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY’RE BURNT TO ASHES!?” Dorian roared.

“Do I need to spell it out for you, pup?” Zachary retorted, enunciating the last word. This was the first time he had ever called Dorian a pup. In fact, it was the first time he had been disrespectful to another Alpha.

“What did you call me!?”

“Oh, come off it. You think that just because you run a pack larger than mine, you’re better than me? Get off your high horse, Dorian Shaw, I’m not afraid of you!” Dorian took that as a challenge and was about to give Scanlan a piece of his mind when I stepped in. Dorian growled at me, but I looked at him and shook my head. It was the first and only time I’ve used my rank against him. Dorian was shocked to see what I had just done.

“What the fvck?” he mustered out.

“I’ll explain later. Let me handle this, please.” Dorian looked at me, carefully considering my reaction. His eyes darted to Scanlan, then back to me before he nodded his head and backed off. He went to stand with Brandon and

Andre in front of the door. I took a deep breath and turned to face Scanlan, who was also visibly shocked that I managed to get Dorian to back away.

“What? Surprised that my Alpha listened to me?” I confronted him. He looked me up and down and didn’t say anything. “Why did you burn the records?” I asked him with finality in my tone. “And I want the truth.”

“The truth? You want the truth! Fine, you arrogant piece of sh!t, I’ll give you the fvcking*g truth since it seems that you already know all of the answers!” he shouted at me and flailed his arms. I looked down at Vivienne, and she met my gaze at the same time.

“Who are you, and what the fvck did you do with Zachary Scanlan!?”

“What? Surprised to see that I’m not the respectable and introverted Alpha that everyone was manipulated into believing!?” he mocked, his tone full of sarcasm. I took a step back and looked him over. I was so confused.

“Goddess, it feels good to just be me for once! I’ll tell you the truth, Jedediah Brinkley,” he spoke my name with such provocation. “I burned the records because I wanted to restart it!”

“What do you mean by restart it!?” Dorian fumed from the door. “You can’t restart the records!”

“Oh, but that’s what I did. I restarted the records by making sure that Scanlan was the first Alpha on record. And that Scanlan was my great, great, great, grandfather!”

“You falsified the records!?” I uttered out in disbelief.

“So what if I did!? What are you going to do about it!?” He sounded like an immature child.

“Why would you do that?” I pressed him.

“I don’t know why you’re asking me all these damn questions, Jedediah, you already know the answers! Isn’t that why you came here!? To confront me for taking the Alpha throne from the rightful Alpha!” he bellowed at me. I was completely shell-shocked to hear him admit it in his own words. Vivienne grabbed onto my arm with just as much surprise. I couldn’t help but turn to look at Dorian whose arms had fallen to his side, and he looked completely appalled at the revelation.

“Wow, you’re a fvcking*g i***t,” Brandon directly insulted Scanlan.

“What did you just call me!?”

“An i***t. You know, stupid, dumb, dull, dimwitted, dense, unintelligent, empty-headed—”

“Do you have a death wish, you sorry excuse of a Beta!?” Scanlan threatened.

“You asked a question, and I answered you. I highly doubt that calls for a death threat,” Brandon taunted him even more. Scanlan was huffing with rage at being taunted while the rest of us were trying not to laugh, even Dorian. Brandon really knew how to press b.uttons when he wanted to. “Stop huffing and puffing like the big, bad wolf in Little Red Riding Hood. You’re not strong enough to blow this house down,” Brandon ridiculed him even further by flexing his biceps and k!ssing them. Scanlan looked like smoke was coming out of his ears, and he was going to blow his lid. He was about to open his mouth to say something, but Brandon beat him to the punch. “Anyway, like I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted,” Brandon cut him off, causing Vivienne to giggle into my c.hest while Dorian turned his head to hide his smile. “I called you an i***t because, well, you are one. You see, we came here just to ask a few questions and, hopefully, get a few honest answers along the way. But you’re just so fvcking*g full of yourself that you thought we had all the answers, and we just wanted to fvck with your head. Which we kind of did because you just told us what we actually needed to know,” Brandon explained and gave a cheesy smile that made all of us just burst out laughing.

B-rod, you’re a fvcking*g d!ck. I said to him in a mind-link. He smiled even bigger at me and nodded his head as if he were proud of it. Which he probably was.

I turned my attention back to Scanlan who looked like he had just been smacked across the face with a book for dummies as he opened and closed his mouth like a fish out of water.

“How?” I asked. He stared at me in a daze.

“How what?” he finally responded.

“How did you take the Alpha title from the rightful Alpha? There’s no way you could have beaten him! Not when you’re just a mid-level Alpha!”

“I didn’t need to challenge him. Not when I had leverage,” he replied with a d!ckwad smirk.

“What leverage?” I demanded, but he didn’t respond. He only smirked again.

“His son,” Dorian said.

“What son?” Scanlan disputed. We all looked at him confused. “Ricard didn’t have a son. He didn’t have any children.” I looked at Dorian and the others, and they were just as lost as I was.

“What did you leverage then?” I asked him.

“His mate, of course.” I could feel Gunner’s hackles stand straight up.

“Because an Alpha’s biggest weakness is his Luna,” Dorian stated.

“Exactly,” Scanlan said while clicking his teeth and winking at Dorian.

“Did you say that his surname was Ricard?” Andre clarified.

“I did, what’s it to you?” Scanlan sneered as he sat in his chair at his desk and propped his feet up like he didn’t just admit to breaking multiple laws.

“Vivienne!” Andre exclaimed.

“Oui, I know!” Vivienne gasped and looked up at me. Her eyes were filled with nothing but admiration and hearts. She straight up had heart eyes. “Mon Coeur, why are you looking at me like you want to jump my bones right now?”

“Jed.” I turned to face Andre who had the biggest smile on his face.

“Dude, why do you look like you want to jump bones too!?” I shouted at him.

“Ricard is a French surname, which means powerful and/or strong,” he explained.

“Okay?” I said, looking between the two of them and then to Dorian and Brandon, who just shrugged.

“Mon Loup, Ricard was the surname of the most powerful werewolf in France during the French Revolution. Legend has it that he had twelve sons, each one named after the disciples of Christ and in the same order that they were found,” Vivienne added.

“What does a stupid French legend have to do with anything?” Scanlan mocked. I looked back at Vivienne, and she was all smiles.

“J.D., according to the legend, the Ricard bloodline is supposed to be one of the purest in werewolf history. It does not matter who a Ricard is mated to because their mark would give their mate the power to shift, regardless if they were turned or not,” she concluded. I furrowed my brows at her, and she smiled even bigger.

“Wait, why are you guys telling me this?” I objected. Vivienne c****d her head at me and gave me a look like I was the i****t in the room. That’s when I realized what she was insinuating. “You don’t actually think—”

“Only one way to find out,” Andre insisted as he patted my shoulder and stepped back. “Vivienne, do it.”

“Do what?!” I looked at him and then back at Vivienne. She took a deep breath and closed her eyes. “Wait, what are you doing!?” I protested. “Won’t that hurt—”

“No, it won’t,” Dorian insisted. “It’s still early enough. This might be the one and only time she can do it, but she needs to try.”

“What the fvck is going on!?” Scanlan yelled at us, slamming his fists onto the desk. Before I could even entertain him, I heard the cracking of bones. I snapped my head towards Vivienne, and sure enough, she was starting to shift. “Why is she shifting in my office!?”

“To prove a theory!” Dorian shouted at him. Even though it was her first time and she was currently pregnant, she was handling the pain quite well and shifting remarkably fast. Before we knew it, Vivienne had fully shifted into Tempest.

“Whoa,” Brandon gawked.

“Holy fvck,” Dorian ululated.

“C’est Magnifique!” Andre cried out with pure excitement.

“What in the world?” Scanlan muttered, standing to his feet. Tempest walked up to me and l!cked my hand.

Hello, mate.

Tempest?

Yes, it is I.

Wow, you’re beautiful!

Thank you, Mon Loup. May I call you that?

Of course! You’re my mate as much as Vivienne is. You’re actually in wolf form!

Yes, and it is all thanks to you and your mark.

Hold on, are you telling me that ...

Oui, mon amour, you are a Ricard. That is why you are a Supreme Alpha.

I couldn’t stop the smile that took over my face, seeing Tempest for the first time. I just scoffed in complete shock and surprise.

“Dude and I thought our wives had crazy fur colors,” Brandon declared.

“I have never heard of a mint green wolf,” Dorian replied. “Allie is going to fvcking*g k!ll me when she finds out about this and didn’t get to witness it herself.”

“Oh yeah, Gizmo’s favorite color is mint green.”

“So is Monique’s,” Andre grumbled.

“What the fvck is all of this about!? Why the fvck did your mate shift in my office!?” Scanlan shouted. I had totally forgotten about him.

“As I said, she was proving a theory. And now that it’s been proven, you have a lot of explaining to do, Scanlan!” Dorian growled at him.

“I will not tolerate being disrespected in my pack!”

“It’s not really your pack though, is it? I mean, you admitted to using the rightful Alpha’s mate as leverage,” Brandon chimed in. “What did you do with her?”

“Kidnapped her, obviously. I made sure to knock her around a few times to prove to Ricard that I wasn’t kidding around when I told him that I would rip her heart out from her chest if he didn’t give up his title to me,” Scanlan answered with zero remorse.

“You physically hit a woman!?” Dorian snarled.

“Please, I’d hardly call her a woman. A w***e is more like it.” I couldn’t stop the snarl that came out of my mouth. “Oh, spare me the theatrics, the two of you are acting like women are actually worth the trouble.” I was so disgusted by him.

“You have a daughter!” I shouted.

“And she’s the biggest pain in my ass! She’s spoiled fvcking*g rotten and is a w***e just like her mother was!”

“Her mother was your mate! And the Luna of this pack, regardless of how she fvcking*g ended up as Luna. Have a little fvcking*g respect for the dead!” I hollered.

“Respect for a woman? Why? The only thing they’re good for is reproduction, and my mate couldn’t even get that right. I told her we’d have one pup, and that she had to give birth to a son. But instead, she gave me a fvcking*g daughter, and she turned out to be the biggest mistake of my life. The fact that I have to constantly coddle her and pretend that I actually love her makes me sick! Why she had to be a spoiled b***h and reject you, I’ll never know! But then you had to go and get a second chance, leaving her here with me! Then she was dumb enough to follow you to Desert Moon and pissed off the Luna there, ruining any chance I had of getting Shaw here to sign a treaty with me!”

“Are you serious right now?” Dorian spat. “You thought that just because Jed came to my pack, it would automatically give you an in to become my ally?!”

“Of course, any self-respecting Alpha wants to be allied with one of the richest packs on this side of the country.”

“Self-respect? I really hope you’re not talking about yourself?” Brandon retorted. “You beat women and think that they’re only good for giving birth. You kidnapped another man’s mate, physically harmed her, and threatened her life to steal his Alpha title. There is not a single milligram of self-respect in you. You’re the most despicable Alpha I’ve ever fvcking*g seen.” Scanlan declined to respond. He just scoffed and turned his head. There was still one nagging question that I had.

“When did you take the title?”

“When?”

“Yeah. When?”

“Mmmm ... I would say about four months before she came home with you,” he replied.

“What? What do you mean by came home with me!?” I gaped.

“Hm, I guess you don’t know that story either. Oh well, I might as well tell you since it doesn’t really fvcking*g matter anyway. After I became Alpha, I met my mate, Michaela’s mother. She went out into the mountains for her daily walk in nature. I didn’t care what she did as long as she didn’t bother me. I was too busy trying to make this pack mine. She came back later than usual, but when she came into our room, she had a fvcking*g baby in her arms. I, of course, asked her where she got it, and she said that she found it by a tree right outside of the border. Someone had abandoned it. And her being the disgusting kindhearted wolf she was, she wanted to adopt it, but I said no. I didn’t want a filthy rogue in my house, so I bummed it off to the Brinkley’s who were having trouble conceiving.”

“What?”

“That’s right, Jedediah. You were that abandoned baby. You were the rogue that my stupid mate brought in off the streets and into my pack. I got rid of you without having to klll you, but then the Brinkley’s had to go and die during a rogue attack which gave my mate the opening to bring you back into the packhouse. I wanted to get rid of you since you were a few years short of turning 18 anyway, but she convinced me to turn you into a warrior for the pack, so that’s what I did. You’re welcome.” I scoffed at what an utter a.ssh0le he really is. I didn’t know how to respond to any of this. I just wanted to take

Vivienne and leave because I didn't want to challenge Scanlan for the pack, even if I was the rightful Alpha to it.

"You said that your mate found him a few months after you had taken over?" Dorian asked.

"Are you deaf or dense!? Stop making me repeat myself!" Scanlan grumbled like a senile, old man.

"I'm just trying to figure out what happened to Alpha Ricard," Dorian asserted while raising eyebrows with curiosity.

"How the fvck am I supposed to know what happened to that mongrel?"

"Well, you took his title from him and beat his mate. I was under the impression you had them killed."

"Even if I wanted to, I couldn't order his death. He promised to rescind his title to me and leave Red Mountain if I promised to release his mate alive. I couldn't promise that she would be unharmed because, well, she was anything but unharmed. But I agreed to let her live, and he left with her that same night. We stood in front of the pack, and he handed his title over to me, in an Alpha hand-down."

"Wait, a hand-down?!" Brandon exclaimed. "Not a hand-over?!"

"What's wrong?" I asked him. Brandon looked at Dorian, and he nodded.

"Hand-downs and hand-overs are very different, Jed," Brandon explained to me. "Hand-overs are what happens when an Alpha has no choice but to give his title to a challenge winner or like in most cases, when an Alpha gives it to his successor, like his son. A 'hand-down' happens when a lower-ranked wolf is given the Alpha title because the current Alpha can't or won't execute his duties."

"I do not understand," Vivienne replied, taking the words right out of my mouth.

"Are you going to tell them or should I?" Brandon shouted at Scanlan. I had never seen Brandon so irritated or angry before. Scanlan scowled at Brandon and turned his cheek like a little schoolgirl. "Fine." Brandon turned to me and Vivienne. "Scanlan was Ricard's Beta."

Desert Nightmare Chapter 60 - Tips

{Jedediah's P.O.V.}

Either I was hallucinating, or Brandon just told me that Scanlan was the former Beta of Red Mountain. I couldn't have possibly heard him correctly. There was just no way that this was true. A Beta is an Alpha's right hand, aside from their Luna. A Beta is the Alpha's biggest support and confidant. To betray one's Alpha is unheard of. It's straight-up blasphemous. As I was lost in my thoughts, the sound of a handclap cut through the silence and got my attention. I looked up to see Zachary clapping slowly and obnoxiously. "Well done, Beta Brandon," he mocked.

"So ... It's true? You were Ricard's Beta?!" I questioned. He gave me another d!ckwad smirk and tilted his head once, indicating that it was, in fact, true. The affirmation of his betrayal had my blood boiling, and Gunner was so close to completely taking over. "YOU BETRAYED MY FATHER!?" I roared, shaking the entire office.

"Your father!? What the fvck are you talking about!?" Scanlan shouted.

"Had you been listening, instead of being the pompous d!ckhead that you are, you would have heard Vivienne and Andre telling Jed who the Ricards are and where they come from," Brandon stated.

"Also, if you had been using your werewolf hearing, you would have heard Vivienne call Jed a Supreme Alpha," Dorian added.

"And the reason why my sister, who is only a hybrid, is able to fully shift into a wolf without losing her vampire half," Andre chimed in.

"Jedediah Brinkley no longer exists because standing before you now Zachary Scanlan is the rightful heir to the Red Mountain pack. May I introduce Alpha Ricard's biological son, Jedediah Ricard," Dorian announced. Scanlan's head wh!pped towards me.

"I, JEDEDIAH RICARD, HEREBY CHALLENGE YOU, ZACHARY SCANLAN, FOR THE TITLE OF ALPHA!" I roared.

"YOU CAN'T CHALLENGE ME!"

“He has every right to challenge you, Scanlan! Even more so because he is the rightful heir to the pack! You cheated your way into becoming an Alpha and subsequently burned the pack’s most sacred document in order to keep your lies concealed. But now, everything has come to light, and you will pay for your crimes! I will see to it that the Elders of Colorado learn of your treachery, and you are stripped of your rank!” Dorian snarled.

“YOU CAN’T PROVE ANYTHING!” Scanlan cried out like a whiny baby. “It’s my word against yours! I AM THE ALPHA HERE!”

“Actually, it’s your word against yours,” Brandon said as he pointed up above him. Scanlan’s head shot up and everyone saw his face turn stark white. “You really should learn to remember where you put your security cameras,” Brandon ridiculed him. I was about to throw his stupidity in his face, but the door to his office suddenly burst open, and Seth ran in out of breath.

“ALPHA! WE’RE UNDER ATTACK! ROGUES HAVE ENTERED THE TERRITORY!” Seth howled. I turned back and snarled at Scanlan. The challenge would have to wait. The pack needed protection, and with three of the four ranked members from Desert Moon and myself here, I was sure we could beat these rogues.

“Seth!” I called out.

“What?”

“Take Vivienne to my old bedroom and stay with her at all costs!”

“But I need to get back out—”

“DO AS I fvcking*g SAY!” I screamed at him.

“Okay, geez, you don’t have to scream at me,” he argued as he took Vivienne’s hand.

“Protect her with your life, do you fvcking*g understand me!? Keep Michaela away from her!”

“I got it. Don’t worry, man, I’ll protect your mate,” he replied and took her away.

“Mon Loup!” she cried out to me.

“Go with Seth, baby, I’ll be fine.”

“But!”

“No buts. I need you to listen to me very carefully, Mon Coeur. If any rogues get in and they find you, I need you to shimmer home. Do you understand? You leave Red Mountain, and you shimmer back to Desert Moon.”

“But J.D.!”

“I cannot lose you—or the pups—do you understand me? I cannot. If you die, then I die with you. Promise me you will shimmer home if worse comes to worst.” She gulped and hesitated but nodded anyway. “Good, now go!” I pushed her towards Seth, who dragged her out of the office. I turned back to Scanlan.

“Our personal issues will have to wait! Let’s just hope the men haven’t stopped training since I left!” I shouted at him and ran out of the door. Dorian, Brandon, and Andre were right behind me. Packhouse members were scurrying all over the place like chickens with their heads cut off. There was no organization, and it was absolute mayhem. No one was escorting the women and children to the bas.ement.

“What the fvck is going on here!? There’s no order!” Brandon exclaimed.

“Where the fvck is Michaela!?” I asked, grabbing a passing pack member. “She should be leading the women and children to safety!”

“I don’t know, Jedediah!” the pack member shouted and ripped her arm away from me.

“This way, everyone! This way!” I heard a familiar voice. I turned around and saw Vivienne directing people towards the bas.ements.

“Vivienne! What the hell!?” I yelled.

“Not now, Mon Loup!” she dismissed me and kept guiding the pack members.

“SETH!” I roared at him.

“Don’t yell at me, man! She threatened to drink my bl00d if I didn’t help her!” I grunted in frustration. Seth was such a fvcking*g p.ussy. I would deal with him later.

“Leave it alone,” Dorian told me. I turned to face him and furrowed my brows. “She’s their Luna. She’s doing what she’s meant to do, and she’s doing it naturally.” He was right. I looked back at Vivienne, and I could see her moving in slow motion. She was guiding the pack members to safety, what the Luna of a pack was supposed to do in the case of an emergency.

“Come on! Let’s go!” Brandon shouted, diverting my attention. I reluctantly turned my back on Vivienne and Seth, and we ran out of the front door. Sure enough, there were at least two dozen rogues standing in the middle of the front yard. But that wasn’t what caught my attention. What stole the show was the fact that two very familiar wolves were standing to the left of the main point.

“MOM!? DAD!?” I exclaimed. Everyone gasped. The two wolves shifted back to their human forms, and sure enough, they were my adopted parents.

“Hello, Jedediah,” my mom greeted me.

“Son.” I was completely speechless. I had to be seeing ghosts. There was no way.

“You ... But ... I ...”

“I know, you’re probably really confused, but we’ve been waiting for this day for a long time, sweetheart,” my mom admitted. She never used terms of endearment on me, so hearing her call me anything but my name was a little strange.

“And what day might that be!?” I demanded.

“The day where you take your rightful place as the Alpha of this pack,” my dad answered. Everyone gasped again and shifted their gazes towards me.

“Hold up, these are your adopted parents!?” Brandon asked. I nodded my head without looking at him. “And did they just admit that they’ve known about your pedigree the entire time!?”

“Yes, we have. We knew the moment he came to us,” my mom revealed. “Or rather, Luna Lynette knew.”

“I don’t understand. You guys were killed by rogues! How are you here right now!?” My mom was about to respond, but she was cut off by Scanlan making a scene.

“WHAT IS GOING ON OUT HERE!? WHY IS NO ONE PROTECT—” he stopped mid-sentence when he saw my parents. “What!?”

“Hello, Zachary,” my father addressed him with zero enthusiasm.

“You!? You’re supposed to be dead!?”

“Yes, well, I was about to explain everything to our son here until you rudely interrupted me. Now, if you don’t mind. Jedediah, we didn’t die that day. It was all part of the plan.”

“Plan!? What plan!?” I protested. Nothing made sense anymore.

“The plan to get you back into the packhouse where you belonged,” my father answered.

“You see, sweetie, Luna Lynette knew that you weren’t just some rogue pup left at the border of the pack territory. No, no, she knew that you were more special than that, and she told us exactly how special you were,” my mother explained.

“What?”

“Allow me to explain in detail,” another feminine voice announced. The wolves separated and out walked another ghost.

“Luna?” I gasped. The pack members gasped even louder and fell to their knees in respect. Her eyes shifted for a moment and landed on Scanlan. She smirked once before saying, “Hi honey, I’m home.”

“But how?! I watched you die!” he ululated.

“No, you watched as a wolf snatched me by its mouth and dragged me away into the depths of the woods. You didn’t even bother to come after me,” she sneered.

“Ly-Lynette, I don’t—” I stuttered in utter confusion.

“Jedediah, everything that has happened over the last 31 years has been planned from the day that I found you during my walk. You see, when I found you, you weren’t actually alone. You were being watched and very carefully, I might add. When I found you, you were crying and appeared to be alone. I picked you up because I wanted to soothe you, and that’s when a white and blue wolf came to me. She snarled at me at first but then calmed down after a minute or so. I thought she wanted to kill me, but it turned out she wanted to get a sense of who I was. There was no oral communication exchanged because she stayed in wolf form. But I knew just by her reaction that she was your mother. Not a single word was said between the two of us, but she wrote something in the dirt with her paw.”

“What did she write?”

“Two words—Supreme Alpha.” I furrowed my brows. “She nudged you with her snout and licked you very gently a few times as if she were saying goodbye. I could see the sadness in her eyes. But, based on how she was acting, it appeared that she had no other choice. She bowed her head to me and then ran away. I knew what she wanted from me, so I promised her that I would take you in. I don’t think she realized that I was the Luna, but she trusted me with you anyway. When I brought you home that night, I was hoping that because you were a little boy, it would sway Zachary into adopting you. That way, you would become the Alpha when he passed his title along, but he refused to adopt a rogue pup. He told me to give you to Duke and Rayna Brinkley because they were having trouble conceiving. I didn’t tell them who you were at first. It was my little secret. But, when you turned ten, you seemed to outgrow a lot of the other males in the pack, and you were already stronger than most of the other Omegas. I didn’t think much of your size when you were a baby, because male wolves are large as it is, but you were just growing at an alarming rate. Rayna eventually came to me because she knew that a normal Omega couldn’t grow at that rate, and that’s when I told her about where I had found you and what your birth mother had written in the dirt.”

“After I told your father what the Luna had told me, that’s when we started to fight about you. Your father was afraid that if Zachary found out, he would have you killed. But I wanted to fight for you. For your birthright,” my mom disclosed to me.

“She eventually convinced me to go along with the plan. We would raise you until you were strong enough to challenge Scanlan, but things didn’t go quite as planned. Being so low in the food chain of the pack, we were never allowed

in the packhouse for very long, and Scanlan refused to let you train. Though, I could never understand why. You were so much bigger and stronger than the other males your age,” my father interjected.

“When we realized that getting you to reach your full potential wouldn’t be as easy as we’d hoped, I went back out into the woods where I found you and left a note for your mother, hoping that even after so many years she would be alive and would find it. I went back every few nights to that spot until, one day, I found a small disk in place of the note I had left. I hid it away and brought it back to my personal office in the packhouse. I put it into my computer, and it was a voice message from a man. A very powerful man from his tone,” Luna Lynette explained.

“What did it say?” I questioned.

“He said that there would be an attack on the pack and that the Brinkley’s were going to be taken, but they were to be pronounced dead. The message indicated that they would be dragged into the woods and never to be found. Once they were announced as dead to the pack, I was to take you in and convince Zachary to train you to be a warrior for the pack. And it worked. But, you went away for college, and things between Zachary and I ... Well, let’s just say I wanted out of here so badly, that I contacted your mother again and she was able to get me out with another attack on the pack. None of us had expected you to leave again for school, but you did, so we waited, yet again. But when you came back, things kept getting sidetracked. And then you left the pack. That really put a damper on our plans. So, we’ve just been waiting. We knew you would eventually figure it out and come back here.”

“YOU BETRAYED ME! YOU CONNIVING w***e!” Scanlan screamed at Lynette. The entire pack turned their heads and looked at him in disgust. “BY RIGHT, I SHOULD KILL YOU FOR YOUR TREACHERY!”

“You and what army?” she taunted. “As you can see, I have over three dozen wolves with me. What do you have?”

“I have my pack!”

“Really, because it looks like they’re not very happy with you.” Scanlan glanced around and finally saw the looks of disdain and disappointment. “And I would take a good look in the mirror before calling anybody a w***e, Zach. I’m not the one that was constantly cheating on their mate!” Pack members started to mumble and scoff at him.

“Wow, so not only do you hit women after kidnapping them, but you also cheated on your mate. The Luna of your pack. And here I thought I couldn’t hate you any more than I already do,” Brandon mocked. His comment about Scanlan’s battery and assault didn’t go unnoticed by the pack members, and I think that it was intentional. Hearing what Scanlan was capable of, everyone began to murmur even more, and some even went so far as to walk away from the packhouse to join the pack of rogues. Silently indicating that they would rather be rogues than be under his rule any longer.

“Where are you going!? Get back here!” he demanded.

“Oh, I guess the pack members would rather be with their not-so-dead Luna, than their weak, pathetic, and cheating Alpha.”

“Why you—”

“MOM!?” Everyone turned to the front door, and there stood Michaela.

“Oh, my sweet girl.”

“Mom, you ... you’re alive!?”

“Yes, honey, I am, and I am so disappointed in you!”

“Wow, that wasn’t the heartfelt hello I expected,” Brandon muttered under his breath.

“What?”

“Michaela, I know I raised you better than ... this,” Lynette scolded while gesturing towards her. “I told you that the mate bond was sacred and that you should always treasure it. Yet, the first thing you do when you find out that Jedediah is your mate is to reject him!?”

“I’m an Alpha’s daughter! I shouldn’t have been mated to an Omega! At least, that’s what I said at first. I took it back though!”

“After six years, honey. That’s not how it works. You also took it back after you had slept with every single male in the pack. You’re just like your father.”

“MOM!?” I had to admit, being away from the pack for over a decade definitely gave Luna Lynette some spunk.

“The truth hurts, doesn’t it, sweetie? I expected better from you after my death, but you got even worse. First, you steal the Alphas list from your father’s office, you stalk Jedediah to Desert Moon, you make our packs enemies because of your irresponsibility, and not only that, but you teamed up with a vampire to get Jedediah’s mate kidnapped.”

“WHAT?!?!”