

## Chapter 35 - Denying the Alpha

DECLAN'S point of view

Wake up, asshole. Grayson barks at me.

My eyes snap open, and I sit up with a start.

"Where the hell am I?" I groan in mild anger and confusion. I can barely see anything that's around me. I'm surrounded by the darkness with only the littlest tendrils of light shining through.

"You are where I am," Grayson answers, but it's different. It's not in my head this time? I don't get it. And what the hell does he mean, but I am where he is? Where is he exactly?

I stand slowly and begin searching through the room. It appears to be completely empty.

"What the hell" I curse. I'm so confused. I'm never confused, and I hate it. I should know where I am. I can't fight back if need be while I'm like this. An alpha should always be ready.

"Turn around. Dipshit" Grayson's Wild voice is right behind me. I spin, shocked in his direction. His large wolf is standing a little taller than me. We were toe to toe with each other. Is this really what others saw when they met my wolf? Holy shit, he's enormous. Just a little over 7 ft to be taller than I am.

"Why can I see you?" I have never heard of a wolf contacting their human this way before.

"You hopped up on wolfsbane and chained in silver. It's doing things to us." He growls. I'm pissed myself. They really chained me in silver? Those bastards.

"What is this place?"

"Your subconscious. I live here until you let me forward. You are currently trapped in your own mind with me. The best part. I can still hurt you here." Just to demonstrate that he was the one with all the power currently, he took a paw and slashed it quickly

across the top of my right shoulder. I dropped to one knee unexpectedly. I didn't need to look to know that I was bleeding. I could feel it dampening my shirt already.

"What the hell, man, why would You do that," I shout at him. That freaking hurt. This was still technically his body too, where the hell did he get off, causing me pain.

"You cost me, my mate. Why shouldn't I kill you" he growls. His yellow eyes stare me down. I don't like what I see in them. He was right. He did have the strength to kill me in here. I couldn't shift; I was on my own, which meant that I didn't stand a chance. I had a lot of convincing to do if I was going to save my ass.

"If this is my subconscious, why is it so damn dark on here." Maybe a change of conversation would help him forget and calm down.

"Because your unconscious, there is nothing to see when your eyes are closed, stupid." He snaps at me in frustration. Wow, that's interesting, I thought.

"Still, why am I here?" Maybe if I could figure out the why instead of the how I could find my way back. At least I hoped I could because there was nothing I could do about the silver and the wolfsbane. And I did not want to remain in here with Grayson like this.

"Because I wanted you in here." He snapped right in my face, angry. Little bits of his spit hit my face. Wow, his breath was revolting. He pushed his cold, wet, disgusting snout against my Nose. We were forehead to forehead, nose to nose. This was a challenge. His eyes didn't leave mine. I felt the pressure to look away from an Alpha wolf, to submit to him, but over my dead body. If I let him win now, then there was a good chance that I may never be in charge again, and I wasn't going to live my damn life stuck in the passenger's seat.

"And why is that?" He couldn't really want to kill me. If he kills me, then he kills himself too, what then?

"You think I care about dying? I don't. Not anymore. Life won't be worth it without a mate," he snarls. Great, so he can still read my thoughts. How am I supposed to get the upper hand now?

"You don't. I do." He's so smug about it too. I was getting sick of this asshole.

"What happens now? Moon goddess joins us in brain dead land talks some sense into me. We weave little flower crowns, skip round the fire singing kumbaya, my lord, I have some grand life altering epiphany and head on out, win Faith back and live happily ever after with 500 pups." Faith was gone. She severed the bond. She wasn't coming back. I

didn't want her to. How was anyone going to change any of that? Why would they want to? They should just leave it alone. It was better this way.

"You think the moon goddess has time for you? She's omnipresent. She is the mother of millions of wolves across the globe. She is busy doing real work, searching out which souls make the perfect Alphas and deciding who would make good Lunas. Matching people with their wolves, selecting mates and her least personal favorite putting a stop to as many silly little pack wars as she can, she doesn't have time to hold some little boy's hands. They are your insecurities. You work on them on your own, and you get my mate back."

What the hell was he talking about? I don't have any insecurities.

"You can't lie to my pup. I have been with you since birth. Your body and mind may have not been ready until adulthood, but I was born with you. I grew up with you, saw every single thing you did. I know all about mother's secret drinking once dads go to bed. I know all about the many ways she's compared you to your brother and how feeling like you are second rate all the time eats you alive. He died 18 years ago, and you are still living in his shadow. I know that you fear your relationship with Faith, and yeah, your moms to blame, but it ain't because you are worried that bitch won't accept her." He snarled.

"Don't you talk about my mother like that" I'd punch him if he were a man.

"Admit It Declan. Admit to me, why did you really push Faith away, and I'll let you live." He threatens me. I still wasn't convinced he would kill me, plus I wasn't hiding anything.

"Are you so sure that you are willing to be on it?" This cocky prick is getting on my last damn nerve.

"So do something about it." I stand stock still. I could fight him, but how? How when he can still read me?

I was slow to react when his paw flashed out, quick as lightning and slashed me across the face. My head snapped with the force, but I didn't drop to my knee this time. I stood tall, strong and proud.

"You want more pup", Grayson barks.

I remain stoic. He isn't getting anything out of me.

He trots around my body several times, I know he's trying to psych me out, but it's not going to work.

“I’m going to break you. The way you broke me,” he roars and kicks the back of my knee out. This time I do drop, but I don’t stay down. I can’t put as much weight on it, but still, it’s better than being on the floor weak.

“I saved us. She would have been the end of me,” I grit out.

His paw slashed down my back. How much more could I bleed.

“We will find out together”, this sinister bastard is snickering.

“What do you want, Grayson? Faith isn’t coming back.” I snap furiously. She left me so easily. I honestly thought she would put up more of a fight for me. But that doesn’t matter now. To hell with her for all I care.

One paw comes out and slashes behind my ankle, and just as fast, the other sticks out and makes contact with my thigh on the opposite leg. How is the fast?

One more blow, and I’ll be on the ground. I’m losing too much blood.

“Ready to talk yet? Without the charade, I mean.”

Why don’t you just tell me what you want me to say.” I bark back.

“Silly pup”, he growls and bits down on my wounded shoulder. For the first time, I grunt in pain as he does. Fuck, I can’t believe I did that. You are never supposed to show weakness; my father’s voice rings out in my head. He always hated weakness, and so did I.

“Tell me. Why did you really reject Faith?”

“She rejected me”, I roared. Like I always knew, she eventually would. I just thought it would have taken a longer, is all.

“You forced her to, You dumbass.” He charges head down straight into my chest. My body flies through the air and hits something hard, and slides to the floor.

I use my one untouched arm to push myself back up. My legs are wobbling, and I sway from side to side. My legs give back out. I push myself into a seated position and use whatever the hard wall like thing was to lean against as support. This wasn’t good.

“You haven’t got long left. Admit to me why you really did what you did.” He drops down so that he’s at eye level with me. At least from this position, it will be harder for him to strike me.

“I wouldn’t be so sure, pup” he presses his snout back into my wounds just to prove a point.

“Why is it so important to you? Huh, if you already know, why do you need me to say it?” I’m panting. I’m weak. I’m almost done.

“Because you can’t fix a problem that you won’t even admit that is there.” he snaps in my face.

Grayson moves away from me. I watch as he paces back and forth in front of me.

“I’m almost done waiting, pup.” he doesn’t even look at me.

“I have nothing to say to you.” Sweat was running down my forehead, I was struggling to keep my eyes open, and my wounds were still seeping. I was dying, and I knew it.

“If you tell me what I want to hear, I’ll send you back. This is all in your mind. You’ll be good as new. But a mental death is the same as a physical one. You’ll never wake up again. So, tell me.”

I am dying anyway. Can I allow myself this one moment of weakness? I rest my head back against the wall, and I think of my faith. I remember when we were five. Her parents had taken us out for ice cream. I licked mine too hard, I guess, and I knocked both scoops straight to the floor. I stared at it sadly, I was about to throw my cone on the ground with me melting ice cream and storm home, but Faith grabbed my hand and held the cone steady. I watched in surprise as she pushed one of her little balled up scoops into my cone. She smiled at me with her little dimples and licked her cone.

When we were 9, Faith Samantha and I had fallen asleep in the Alpha lounge watching some movie. I felt movement beside me, and it woke me up. I watched through one half-opened eye as Faith dragged one of the blankets over her sister and tucked her in. I didn’t want her to catch me watching, so I squeezed my eyes closed. A few moments later, I felt a blanket being awkwardly dragged out from underneath me, and it was thrown over me. She then tucked the sides in and went back to her spot.

I remember when we were 14. My dad had kicked my ass in training. I was sitting in the mudroom, filthy sore and bleeding. Faith and one of the girlfriends had come through the door giggling about who knows what. She sent her little friend on ahead when she spotted me slouched and feeling sorry for myself on one of the seats. She walked to the sinks and fuddled around. She returned to me with a few bandages and a wet washcloth. I leant against the wall and closed my eyes as she began wiping away the blood and dirt. I didn’t move until I could hear the packages ripping open. I watched her

as her delicate little fingers stretched out bandages and tape. I sat still while she dressed my wounds.

“All done,” she said. I was too overwhelmed at the time. I smiled at her appreciatively and ran from the room. I didn’t even come down for dinner that night. I didn’t know how I could look at her.

I remember when I was 17, and I overheard a boy bragging to his friends at school about how he was going to ask her out. He made some vulgar jokes about taking her virginity, and I put him in the hospital. He was a stupid human boy, and my parents had to pay a lot of money to make that go away for me, but it was worth it.

Would she be sad when I died after all I have done to her recently? We still had so much history. I couldn’t have wrecked all of that, could I?

“She was always kind to us”, Grayson whispered. “She never put pressure on us as the others did. She liked us for who we were, not what we were.” He sounds as sad as I do as he watches my memories shift and change with me.

“Fine, I’ll admit it”, I murmur.

“I pushed her away. I did it on purpose. Your right. It had nothing to do with Conner. It had nothing to do with mother. It was. It was all me,” I cry. I haven’t cried since I was maybe five. Once I started, I couldn’t stop. I was sick of being angry. I was sick of hurting. I was so busy trying to protect myself that all I did was make things worse.

“I rejected her because....”