

Chapter 96 - Denying the Alpha

David. I can't tell you why. But do not let Ingrid out of your sight. Not even to go to sleep. If she wants to go to her room to rest, you are to follow her. Act like a concerned mate or something, I do not care what excuse you use. But do not let her out of your arms reach under any circumstances, and do not let her know that I am behind it. That's not a request, that's an order. Do you understand me?

I decide to hell with it and use the full weight of my Alpha force on my beta so there was no way he could refuse me. I wanted to be able to act normal, I really did, but I just couldn't help myself. There was no way I could let Ingrid go back now, she could possibly hurt Faith and the risk just wasn't worth taking.

Yes, alpha. David linked back immediately. I could tell he was annoyed by his tone. He couldn't see why I still didn't trust his mate. But he didn't know what I did, and I don't particularly care about hurting his feelings. If I spare his feelings now, it could be Faith and our baby who pay the price for it later. Sometimes there is just no room for diplomacy.

"Linking your beta?" James asks as we walk back to the pack house, chuckling as he gives me a knowing look.

"Yes. I am just making sure that witch doesn't go anywhere." I say with a frown. There was nothing funny about any of this to me.

"Thought you were going to act natural?" James smirks.

"Come on, what would you do?" I shove him playfully, but my heart wasn't really in it. I was too concerned with everything else to really feel any joy.

"I'm actually surprised that we made it the twenty or so paces away from the front door is all. I would have ordered it before I even crossed the threshold." He says with actual sincerity so I know he's telling the truth and he's not just winding me up.

"I'm just stressing man. I'm afraid that if I start being more on top of her so suddenly, I'll make her suspicious and she'll hurt Faith. I'm terrified that if I give her room to go back, then she will kill my girl. I literally feel like my head and heart are going to explode I'm so worried about my mate. I promised her that I would build her up, that I would love her,

and more importantly that I would keep her safe and I failed her man. I failed the most important person there is to me, and I can't take that back. I won't rest until I save her, and once I have her back, I'll do everything in my power to help her cope and recover and look forward to her life again, but brother, this is the type of thing that scars. She will never completely heal from this, even if she thinks she has. And I will never forgive myself, not even in death for being the one that put her in harm's way. Not after I gave her my word that I'd never be the source of her pain. Ingrid only wants her to hurt me. Because of me, she is being treated like some war criminal or something. Faith is innocent and kind and loving and I am absolutely petrified that this may change her." I wiped a quick tear from my eye, and coughed to clear my throat, realizing that I was coming undone once again. I had to continue to hold it together.

"I can't imagine how you feel brother." James places a strong reassuring hand on my shoulder as we walked.

"But Kyle. You have promised Faith more than you could possibly live up to. More than any mate could ever possibly live up to for that matter. Never be a source of her pain? It's admirable. I'll give you that, but you'll hurt her one way or another, just as she will you. You'll fight once in a while and maybe say a nasty thing. Maybe you'll exclude her in the name of protecting her. Or maybe your son will want Faith to chase his nightmares away and you'll feel left out. Who knows. All you can do is try your best to be supportive when she needs it. Protective when she's in danger, and a shoulder to cry on when her emotions are being unreasonable. Right now, you're doing all you can, and despite how terrible she must feel, I'm willing to bet that she still believes in you. She is likely talking to your baby and promising them that you will come for them because even after all this she still believes in you. Focus only on finding her, and not how afraid you are of failing her. Because we will find her, and we will save her." James says like it's already done.

I don't know what to say back to my brother. So, I don't say anything at all, I pat his hand that rests on my shoulder once in a silent thank you. Together we walked towards the pack house to face my father in silence.

Luckily my father left rather abruptly. All he wanted was to scold me for trusting a witch. I was already paying the price for my mistake, and so was Faith. I didn't need my old man, telling me what a fool I was. We fought and James had to step in to separate us, he almost called my Beta for help but I quickly made him think better of it. David was already busy babysitting Ingrid. So, I called Mitchell instead. James ordered my father home, which went over even worse, my father wasn't the alpha anymore but he was still an Alpha and we didn't take orders well. So, with an angry promise to never help me again, he took off. James and Mitchell still followed him to the border just in case.

From there James decided to follow Dad home to calm him down but I asked Mitchell to come straight back to my office.

“Thank you, Mitchell,” I yawned as my father-in-law strode with purpose into my office. Damn, I was tired but this couldn’t wait.

“Your Father and your brother have left peacefully,” Mitchell informed me, but I already knew. The guards on patrol mind linked as soon as they had left.

“Do you trust Declan?” Mitchell asked. I'm glad we weren't here to waste time with idle chit chat. I was eager to get this over with and message Declan.

“Trust Declan?” I repeat dumbfounded. “Hell no,” I reply equally offended.

“Look, I have made some questionable calls lately. But no, I do not trust Declan. However, I do believe he's telling the truth. He would only come to me if he were desperate.” I say knowing it's true.

“If he wasn't in over his head, he would never have come to me,” I say knowing again that I'm right.

“I think we should be cautious,” Mitchell warns me, but I can see the pain in his eyes. I can tell he wants to go in, guns blazing so to speak just as much as I do. But we had to be smart.

“Of course, we should be cautious Mitchell. It's Declan, he's a coward and therefore will choose the coward's way out. Not to mention Faith is running out of time, we have no room here for errors. In saying that though, Declan is the only lead we have right now, and it's worth following it.” I explain.

“Why are you so sure this isn't a game he is playing with you?” Mitchell asks as he begins to pace back and forth.

“Simple. If he had Faith all to himself, he would keep her as far away from me as possible, he knows I would never give up on her and therefore coming to me would be an unnecessary stupid risk that would likely cost him everything. I mean I had no idea where he was hiding, or what state Faith was in, I had zero leads, why risk exposing himself? He's in over his head, and he's looking for a way out.”

“But Connor is dead. I don't understand why he would drag his dead brother into this.” Mitchell argues feebly.

"I think he's telling the truth." I also think it's the only reason that Declan came to me in the first place. Something must have truly freaked him out. Not much makes an Alpha second guess himself.

"Why? We all know Declan is a liar." Mitchell asked emotionally.

He must have been very close to this Connor. Duke observes.

I think so too. It's messing with his logic and his emotions. I say to Duke.

"Yes, but people usually lie to gain something. I just don't see how Declan would benefit here. I mean if his pack and family find out he's telling such lies, they will likely finally turn their backs on him for real, if he's lying then he has everything to lose wouldn't you say?" I point out.

"Look whether he's lying or telling the truth about his brother is beside the point. It will come out in the end. For now, that's not the issue we should be paying attention to." I don't mean to get frustrated but I am sick of the distractions.

"Your right. Okay, so what do we now?" Mitchell thankfully drops the Connor subject and focuses.

"We message Declan. We formulate a plan. We rescue Faith. We slaughter anyone involved and we do everything we can to move on." I say like it was simple, even though I know it's anything but.

"Okay." Mitchell sighs as he drops into the seat.

I pull out my phone and finally send that message to Declan.

It's Kyle.

Have you arrived yet? Have you told Faith that help is coming? Has anyone noticed your absence? Please respond ASAP.

And then I hit send.

"Did you send it?" Mitchell asked as he watched me type it out.

"Yes. I'll let you know as soon as he responds. In the meantime, have you told Jackson yet?" I can't remember if I had told Mitchell too or not. I had become so distracted with Ingrid and my father that I forgot.

"Did I order you too?" I asked, feeling like an idiot for forgetting something so huge.

“No, you didn't order us. But Declan did plead with us to tell his parents, and like an idiot, I agreed.” Mitchel drags his hands slowly down his face looking stressed.

“And what did they have to say?” I was curious to know whether or not Jackson recognized the witch.

“I haven't called them yet. I just can't bring myself to tell them that Connor is alive. There is no best-case scenario, if he is alive then he's spent 18 years held in captivity and not a single person looked for him. Not even his own parents. On the other hand, if he is dead, then iv tortured Jackson and Cassidy in the worst way. I have my issues with them, and we will never be friends again, but still, I like to think I'm a good person. And a good man wouldn't do that to someone.” Mitchell sighs heavily.

“Look. Declan is all sorts of messed up in the head. But I genuinely believe him. I know I have said this already but I'll say it again because I need you to let it sink in. Something big shook Declan to his very core, that's the only reason he came to me. If everything was going to plan, he never would have asked for my help. He knows it's a death sentence for him and that I will get Faith back. Not to mention the man in his own twisted way loves his parents. I don't think he would put his mom through that. His brother is alive.” I say sincerely, hoping the sympathy helps Mitchell in some way. I can't imagine how he feels.

“Go and call them. And tell Jackson about the Witch. He may recognize her.” I tell him.

“I haven't known Jackson to be involved with witches.” Mitchell's brows furrow as he loses himself deep in thought.

“Ingrid kidnapped one son and has roped the other into a very serious crime. Why target Jackson's family twice? He may not have been open about it but my best is guessing that he's screwed her over in some way.” I hope Mitchell takes me seriously. I know he has known the Smiths for a long time, and there is a lot of emotion involved. I suspect he's even still struggling with their betrayal, and whether, or not he likes to admit it, a part of him still wants to believe in their goodness. But he needs to put all that aside and look at it objectively.

“But wasn't Ingrid going to the meeting of the packs with you guys? Why would she risk exposing herself to Jackson?” Mitchell asked a very good question. I hadn't thought of that myself.

“I don't know. That one has me a bit stumped. Maybe she thinks he's forgotten about her? Maybe she wanted him to see her for some reason? She is a witch, maybe she was

wearing something to hide her identity from Jackson I don't know." I hated admitting that I didn't have all the answers. But still, I'm positive that I'm on the right track.

"Just go and call him, please. And report back to me as soon as possible. I want to know two things. One, what can he tell us about Ingrid and Two will he help us take her down?" I say before Mitchell can continue to go around in circles. I wasn't up to it at all right now. Besides I got the impression nothing I said would convince him, he was just going to have to trust me.

"Okay. Let me know as soon as Declan responds please?" Mitchell sighs. The poor man is very obviously dreading that phone call.

"I will," I promise him.