

## **His Beta 172**

### Chapter 172

Zane

What the fuck was Xander thinking?

Realizing Mason had claimed Lainie was like taking a silver dagger in the heart, but running away from

the cabin and out of bounds of the protective barrier was plain stupid.

have

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out after him, Lanie and Mason trailing behind me.

“Dammit!” I yelled when I realized how far he’d run already. His clothes were shredded on the ground.

“I to go after him.”

“NO!” Lanie shouted, “It’s too dangerous. What if you’re caught? What if you’re-?”

“He’s not going to come back unless I track him down,” I said.

Xander was stubborn like that. He’d think he found some better place to shelter and then wind up

getting

himself thrown in prison again,

“Don’t do anything stupid,” Mason said.

I stared him down. He’d earned that fucking punch, and I was about to give him another one.

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“Don’t need your advice, thanks,” I said and sprinted off the porch, shifting just before I crossed the threshold of the enchantment.

The fur on my neck prickled as soon as I was on the other side. Even though the forest was mostly quiet, I felt exposed, like I was a moving target.

I could still detect Xander’s scent, and as I followed the trail, a vague sense of uneasiness crept over me that had nothing to do with Mason and Lanie. If I could scent Xander, then so could our enemies.

And we’d cut a path straight that led straight back to the cabin.

If what Braden said was true, everyone was safe inside. But if Orion and the Council knew our location,

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then surely they could eventually break down the enchantment.

Gods, why did Xander have to be so fucking hotheaded?

Finally, his wolf came into view ahead of me.

“Xander, slow down!” I called to him.

He threw his head back to look at me.

“No way,” he said, running faster and putting more feet of forest between us

I pushed my body forward, willing Blade to comply.

My paws thundered against the earth as I ran faster than I ever had and finally caught up to Xander. I

ran alongside him for a moment before diving sideways, knocking him off course.

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We both rolled along the forest floor, finally coming to a stop at the base

of him and jumped on top of me, pinning me down.

Xander got up

“Why the fuck couldn’t you just leave me alone?!” His voice thundered around inside my head.

I looked into his eyes, expecting them to be fiery with anger, but instead, they were full of hurt.

“I know this hit sucks, but it’s not worth getting killed over,” I reminded him.

He pushed himself off me, and I rolled over onto all fours again.

Xander paced the small clearing we'd tumbled

into.

"Sure feels like it is," Xander said. He sounded so defeated, so broken. "If we can't have Lanie, then

what is

there to live for?"

I walked toward him slowly, and he growled at me. He needed to chill.

"How about your f ucking children?" I asked.

He dropped his head, scraping his nose against the dirt. He knew he was being stupid running away

like this, but he'd never admit it.

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"This doesn't upset you?" he asked in a quiet voice. "Mason claiming her?"

I shook my head. "Of course it f ucking does. When I heard you say those words 'Did Mason f ucking

claim you?' it was like my heart shriveled up and died. That should've been us."

Xander lifted his head. "I feel the same way."

I took a few steps closer to him, only this time he didn't growl.

"But we didn't claim her when we had the chance." I hated to admit it, but it was true. "We made our bed,

and now we have to lie in it."

I stood next to him, so close our fur was almost touching.

"We can get through this together," I said, "But not here. Not out in the open like this with no protection,

We have to think about our pups,"

Xander leaned his weight into me. I never felt more connected to him than when we ran as wolves together. Right now, even though we'd just been through hell with Lanie, I felt closer to him than ever.

"He's my brother, Zane," Xander said, his voice thick with emotion. "How could he do this?"

"It had to be Lanie's decision as much as his," I reminded him.

He slumped against me. It was a hard pill to swallow that she still didn't want us like we wanted her.

"I don't know how I can live under the same roof with them, Xander said.

"We'll figure it out," I said. "But right now, we have to get back to the cabin."

Xander straightened, and without another word, he was running back the way we came

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We were almost back when we heard it.

The sound of running, of something big brushing against the limbs of trees. We were being followed.

“We have company,” I called to Xander.

“I know,” he said. “We need to move fast and throw them off our trail.

“You think it’s the Council?” I asked.

Xander looked back at me. “Don’t know who else it would be...”

He veered dramatically east for a few moments, then took another sharp turn, sprinting with insane

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speed. I struggled to keep up with his crazy bobbing and weaving.

Eventually, the sounds of other movements stopped, and Xander corrected his course back to the

cabin.

It came into view only moments later, and I watched as Xander ran the last few yards toward the line of

enchantment.

But just before he crossed it, something darted out of the woods and tackled him to the ground.

Lanie

I screamed when I saw Xander fly through the air.

hen:

okay

Without thinking, I ran outside, needing to make sure he was of

Zane sprinted toward him, but suddenly the thing dived at him, too. Whatever it was moved so

lightning-fast that I couldn't make it out.

Suddenly, the thing stopped moving. It was a man.

And he was dragging Xander and Zane by the scruff

To my horror, he marched right up to the line of enchantment and passed through.

Had Braden lied about the spell's strength?

As soon as the man saw me, his face split into a wide grin.

"Hello, granddaughter," he said. "It's nice to finally meet you."