

## **His Beta 196**

### Chapter 196

Lanie

“Braden and I need to leave now and prepare for the fight ahead,” Malachi said.

The fight ahead? But we’d just killed Orion. I glanced around at everyone. They all looked exhausted

and

defeated.

This Alpha confusion didn’t help.

I thought testing the compulsion would make things simpler, not a thousand times more complicated,

but

I should’ve known better.

And what the hell was that anyway? I already felt like a hit having to hit Mason, something I never

imagined I’d do, but telling Xander “I love you” in front of him? That felt like an even bigger slap in the

face.

And the worst part was, I actually questioned whether I might’ve said it even if I hadn’t been compelled.

Feelings weren't supposed to be involved in whatever the f uck was going on between Xander, Zane, and me, but when I thought Orion might kill Xander, I'd felt like I'd do anything to save him.

later.

If that wasn't love, then what was?

I shook myself out of these complicated thoughts. The twins were the focus now. I'd deal with the guys

"What do you mean you're leaving?" Xander demanded to Malachi. "How the hell are we supposed to find the twins when we've been trapped in this f ucking cabin for days? You were the one tracking my father!"

"But unfortunately, I never located the twins, and now the treaty established in the Great Wars has been broken with Orion's murder," Malachi explained. "Plus, there are living guards who witnessed what happened

here."

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A shiver ran down my spine. Did that mean they'd tell everyone that we were responsible for starting the next war? Did that mean that there'd be nowhere for us to run now?

“Can’t you just burn Orion’s body and destroy all traces of us ever having been here? The guards can’t act without proof.”

“It’s not that simple, but I sure f ucking wish it was,” Gabriela said.

“Gabriela’s right,” Malachi said. “At the end of the last wars, the leaders of each species agreed to have a spell cast over us that would alert the Council if we or our packs or covens ever violated the treaty.”

“S hit, does that mean the Council already knows about Orion?” Zane asked.

“Yes, which is why it is imperative that we split up and all leave here,” Malachi said. “They will be hunting first, but they won’t rest until all of us pay for what we’ve done today. It’s a good idea to burn the evidence, but it won’t stop them from coming after us.”

me

My heart ski pped a beat. Silence hung in the air. How the hell would we get the twins back if we were

all 1/2

“Then we’re leaving right now,” Mason said, taking Stella from Gabriela and walking her to the car.

“Hold on to the walkie, and update us if you can I guess,” Xander said to Malachi. “I’ll take care of the

evidence.”

Zane placed a hand on Xander’s chest, stopping him from going back into the cabin. “I’ve got it,” he said.

I felt a warm rush of appreciation for Zane. He knew Orion, too, but he wasn’t family. Xander was lucky to have Zane looking out for him. And so was I.

eye.

I went to join Mason to help with Stella, but Malachi placed a hand on my shoulder, and looked me in the

“Before I go,” he said, “I need to tell you...keep trusting your instincts. What you did back there in the cabin just proves how strong you are.”

I nodded. I didn’t feel strong; I felt like s hit. But deep down, I knew we were all better off without Orion

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around.

“You’re more like me than you know,” Malachi said.

I raised my eyebrow. "Is that a good thing?" I asked.

"I sure as hell think so." He smirked. "And good for you for taking my advice." He nodded toward the guys and then winked. "It keeps life exciting."

And with that, he walked to the edge of the property, and Braden took his place. We looked at each other for a moment and then his arms were around me, hugging me tightly.

"Be safe," he whispered into my ear.

Suddenly, tears sprang to my eyes. Braden had put himself in so much danger for me, even when it became clear that we'd never be together the way he wanted us to be.

I

"You, too," I said thickly, breathing in his comforting scent. He was a good friend, and I prayed to the gods.

that he'd make it out of this.

He pulled away and flashed me the same charming smile he'd won me over with that first time we'd met

by the lake. "I don't know when I'll see you again, but I will Count on that. It'll all work out...somehow,"

I nodded as he walked over to stand by Malachi. And then they were speeding off in a blur of movement.

Xander ran his hands through his hair, grabbing fistfuls as he watched them go.

“Where the fuck are we even supposed to start?” he asked.

“I know where,” Gabriela said. “But you’re not going to like it.”