

## His Beta 248

### Chapter 248

Xander

My mate was upset. I could smell her unease and sense it in every move she made. Lanie looked like she was being weighted down. From the look on my brother's face, he noticed the same.

"She says she's got something on her mind," he said through the link.

"What's going on, love?" I drew her close so I could nuzzle her cheek. I planted a kiss on her temple.

"Mmm. You smell good."

I was relieved when she let out a small chuckle. "It's just fabric softener."

"It's not 'just' anything," I told her. "It's you."

Lanie looked up at me, and I was glad for the tinkle in her eyes. Her expression still looked a little strained, but at least she was smiling.

"Where's Zane?" She paused, eyelids fluttering before her eyes opened fully. "What's he doing outside? Is

he okay?"

Mason and I shared a look over the top of her head. Zane had been out chopping firewood for an hour or so. He wouldn't talk about it, but clearly, his night with the witch had affected him. He claimed he couldn't remember all the details, not that I'd wanted to hear them. I hoped he'd be able to talk to me soon about what was still bothering him.

"He's working off some steam, that's all. We've all been feeling a little stagnant sitting around here."

The second the words came out, I knew I'd fucked up.

Lanie's entire expression crumbled. Mason shot me a glare. I shot him one back. Lanie shrugged me away from her and went to pick up Stella from the playpen.

"We need to talk about that," Lanie said. She kissed the baby until Stella giggled and squirmed to be put

back with the other pups.

The three of them were growing so fast, it was crazy. They might as well have been triplets, for as close as they were. Sometimes, I swore it was hard to tell them apart aside from the color of their hair.

"We can't stay here forever," Lanie said firmly. She put her hands on her hips and looked around the living room with a frown. "I...I love this house, but we can't be in Stillwood when we really need to get

back to the

mansion. You and Zane have duties to the pack, Xander.”

“There are more important things,” I began, but she held up a hand to stop me.

It was hard to think about the girl Lanie had been the day we’d been ordered to take her as our mate, but every minute I got prouder and prouder of her. That didn’t mean I appreciated her trying to shut me down, though. My growl warned her she was stepping a little too hard on my toes.

“We do need to get home,” she told me. “There are things we need to face. We can’t stay here in this

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Mason nodded. “Hate to step on your toes, bro, but she’s right.”

I scowled at hearing my own thoughts coming out in his words. Mason raised his eyebrows at me and shrugged.

“Sorry, dude, you were sending,” he said through the link. “I can’t help it if you think too loud.”

I smelled my Beta’s sweat right before the door swung open. Zane swiped an arm across his forehead.

He

looked us all over.

“Am I missing something?”

Lanie sighed. “Answers. We’re all missing answers.”

She thought at us in rapid succession, all her questions peppering our minds like hail spattering a windowpane.

Hybrids

Orion

Malachi

The Council

Rhiannon

Lanie’s thoughts whirled and rambled, almost incoherent. Everything about her screamed tension.

“She really needs to get away for a bit,” Mason shot over to me.

Zane added, “This isn’t good for her.”

“Luna,” I said sternly to get her to focus.

Lanie’s mind quieted, but her expression was still strained.

“Why don’t you do something nice for yourself?” I told her. “Something that isn’t about us or the kids.

When’s the last time you talked to Mindy?”

Lanie’s eyes lit up, but only for a second. “I can’t risk inviting her here, and I can’t exactly go back to the pack mansion just for a visit, can I?”

“You had friends here in Stillwood when you were Katie,” Mason pointed out. Something sounded weird in his tone, but he was shielding me from any thoughts he had about that.

“I don’t want to risk anyone else,” Lanie snapped at him. She looked immediately upset with herself.

“I’m

so sorry!”

“You definitely need some time out of this house.” Zane took her by the upper arms and kissed her

firmly

on the forehead, then pressed his to it. “Listen to your mates. Take a little break. Go for a run. Go shopping.

Get your nails done. Something, anything, so you can relax a little bit.”

“Chop some wood?” Lanie teased pointedly.

Lanie sighed. “I guess I could go into town and just grab a coffee. There’s that nice little use next door. I

could find something to read.”

“Perfect,” Mason said. “Get out of here, before we have to s pank you.”

A genuine giggle came out of her. “Fine. I will. Let me just get changed.”

“It’s not a permanent fix,” Mason thought to me and Zane. “We’re going to have to find some other

solutions.”