

## His Beta 274

### Chapter 274

Xander

I watched our mate and pups, busy with a few learning games my mother had been teaching them.

Counting, alphabet, stuff like that. It was hard to believe the three pups had gone from infants to toddlers in what felt like a few hours. But, in the way of our kind, they'd continue growing and maturing at an even faster pace now.

"If they're getting older, what does that mean about us?" I laughed as Zane brought me a mug of black coffee

"You're o

old," my mother shot over to me with a wry grin. "And I'm even older."

"Well," my mate said as she got up to greet us both with a kiss, "I'm not old yet. Morning, my loves."

Zane gave her a mug, too, along with a kiss. Watching the two of them together lifted my heart in ways

I'd never known it could feel. For a second, I shot back to the Mating Day when we'd found out she'd

been given us. Hot shame washed through me at the memory of how stupid we'd been. How arrogant

and...yes, even

cruel.

“All forgiven,” Lanie thought-whispered.

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“But not forgotten,” I replied firmly. “I will never allow myself to forget how badly I behaved. I never want

to be that way again.”

A tendril of her emotions wound through me. She was touched. Lanie pushed up on her toes to her

mouth. The sensation of feeling her emotions faded, and I gave her a curious look

Since our conversation the night before, I'd gotten a few wisps this morning. Unformed thoughts, like

hints of ideas or stream-of-consciousness pictures. Not like when she communicated with purpose

through the link

I could tell it bothered her, but I was careful not to say anything and tried my best not

even to think anything about it. I wasn't sure I was sending the way she was, but I didn't want her to

know that I was receiving her. Not if it was going to bother her.

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It was something we were going to have to figure out how to work with, though. I thought of it as a gift,

something unique to us because of our unique relationship, but I guess being so connected to Lanie

also let me understand how she could feel like it was an invasion of her privacy.

“It’s all a puzzle still missing some pieces,” Zane thought to me.

That was the best way to describe it.

“Daddy!” Stella waved me over to the small, child-sized table to show me the blocks she’d been sorting.

“See what I did?”

“She’s been a very smart little girl this morning,” my mom said proudly. “She’s sorted all the blocks by color, size, and shape.”

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“Allie and Izzy did it, too,” Stella said with a wide grin

I bent to kiss the tops of each twin's head, then Stella's. "Good job, all of you. And thanks, Ma, for teaching them."

"They're all so bright." She beamed at me, but there was a hint of worry in her eyes. She lowered her voice. "How's your brother doing?"

Mason had been stalking around the house all morning, getting ready to go into town and meet up with Asher. We'd all been letting him know we were there for him but also giving him space.

"He's got a lot on his mind," I told her.

She nodded. "Of course. You all do. There've been a lot of changes around here in a very short time.

But I have faith in the Moon Goddess that her plans are all meant to come to fruition. Whatever she has in store for us, it's going to be exactly right."

I definitely did not have my mother's faith, but I knew better than to argue with her. I watched the kids playing with the blocks for a few minutes more, really studying them.

"Stella is a lot more advanced than Alaina and Isaac I thought to Lanie. "She's speaking in full sentences. She's sorting the blocks like she's been doing it for years."

"You sound worried," Lanie thought in reply.

I caught her eye from across the room and gave my head a subtle shake. "Proud. But is this normal?"

She shrugged and looked over her shoulder to Mason, who was still pacing in the kitchen. She directed

her thoughts to me. "I don't know what normal is anymore, but I don't think this family can be described

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that way"

back.

Out loud, she said, "It's almost three. Mason, love, are you leaving soon?"

"Yeah." He sounded sharp, and my instinct was to growl at him for being short with our mate, but I held

My mother gave me an approving nod.

Damn, this emotional bonding stuff was hard.

"Tell Hank I said 'hi,'" Lanie said with deliberate cheerfulness.

"Asher texted me to meet him at the pub, instead," Mason said. "I better get going"

Without another word, he pushed past her and headed for the front door.

Through the front windows, I saw Zane place a hand on Mason's shoulder. They spoke in low voices

for a moment, and then Mason nodded. Zane clapped him on the back.

Pride filled me at the sight that would've enraged me just a few weeks ago.

“You're a good Beta,” I thought to Zane

“I hope so,” he thought back, sounding a little grim. “Because I think that after this conversation today