

## His Beta 376

### Chapter 376

Xander

Malachi had dismissed the rest of the leadership council and promised to get me and Mason all the information we'd asked for. He'd even had food sent in for us. Big platters of steaks and ribs, along with a couple pitchers of beer. My laptop was practically smoking from all the files being downloaded to it, and my brother had a thick stack of files and papers in front of him to sort through.

We had ourselves a tidy little command center here in the conference room. For the first time since we got to Brightsky, it finally felt like we're doing something important. Making a real contribution. Sure, it was a selfish one for the sake of our Luna, but going over all the security protocols in the enclave was going to help.

more than just us.

I was happy to feel like me and my brother were getting the chance to work together, too. Sure, we'd had our problems with each other in the past, but we'd also never really had an opportunity to find out if

we could lead side by side.

The vampire looked restless, though. He paced in front of the fake windows that made it look like we could see outside.

“You don’t have to stick around if you don’t want to,” told him. “So long as we get what we need, Mason and I can keep working on all of this without you.”

“Unless he doesn’t trust us,” Mason used the mind link to say.

“What wouldn’t he trust us with? It’s an empty room.

It’s not like we could steal anything.”

“Well, something’s wrong with him. He looks jumpier than a cat on a hot stove,” Mason thought.

I snorted soft laughter aloud at that funny old-timey saying. Malachi spun around to face me. His expression was twisted into an emotion I couldn’t read.

“What’s up?” I asked him.

The vampire waved a hand. “I don’t know.”

•

“You look nervous,” Mason said.

Malachi shook his head and put both of his hands on his hips while he stared intently out the “window.”

He didn’t say anything. My brother and I shared a look.

“Maybe you should eat something,” I suggested.

The vampire’s lips drew back to expose his suddenly much sharper fangs. I shot my brother a look.

Mason’s eyebrows were going up just like mine.

Wolves had canines, upper and lower, and of course they got sharp when we were letting our wolves

rise.

1/2

Our teeth weren’t fangs, though. They didn’t inject venom. I wasn’t sure if vampires showed their teeth

as a sign of aggression, but that’s what it felt like, and it was making my wolf unhappy.

“Dude, what the f uck is up with him?” Mason thought to me.

“No clue. But he’s making Hunter agitated.”

“Colt, too. Think we should try to calm him down or what?”

“You can both stop thinking about me,” Malachi snapped.

His fangs flashed, and spittle sprayed. His tongue slid out to swipe over his lips. He scraped both

hands through his mane of hair and tossed his head back, shaking it. He let out a weird noise, too.

“Want to tell us what’s going on?” Mason asked him.

Malachi made a visible effort at getting calmed down.

My brother and I shared another look. There was some s hit going down in this room, and both of our

wolves were reacting to it. At the same

time, it didn’t seem like his weird behavior was directed at us. Not to mention that no matter how strong

our wolves were, even the two of us together weren’t likely to be able to

take down an Ancient.

And if we did, what then? The entire enclave would be against us. We’d never be able to get our Luna

the

help she needed.

•

“My apologies,” Malachi said. “I’m feeling strangely unwell.”

“Do you need us to call someone? A doctor? Get you some blood or something?” I asked him.

Malachi rubbed his mouth but then shook his head.

“No. This isn’t physical.”

For the first time in the past few minutes, he looked at us and seemed to actually see us. “Again, my apologies. You see, when you are as old as I am, the world feels different. I am tied to it in ways I could not begin to explain.”

“We aren’t idiots,” Mason said, but not like he was trying to be a dick.

From the way Malachi smiled, it seemed like he might be thinking about disagreeing. I held myself back from saying anything. I just watched him, letting my wolf’s senses enhance mine. Vampires didn’t sweat, but I did pick up a kind of bitter scent that smelled like anxiety. No heartbeat or heavy breathing, but he was pacing and clearly focused on something internal.

“Excuse me,” Malachi said and then, like a shot, moving so fast he was a blur, he ran from the room