

## **His Beta 385**

### Chapter 385

Xander

Mason and I had left the conference room in such a rush that we hadn't taken the laptop or other notes.

While we were gone, Charlotte had tidied it all up. I bet that she looked through it all, too. That's what

I'd

have done. Nothing we'd been prepping was a secret, anyway.

Malachi took his seat at the head of the table and looked around as everyone settled into their chairs.

"Some of you may have already heard that our contacts in Standard have sent some information.

New arrivals. Unexpected ones."

"What other information do you have on them?" I asked bluntly.

Malachi shrugged. "What other information do we need? New faces in a town that houses only a few

hundred residents, all of whom work for the town?

Every one of them documented and a known entity?

It's clear these new people, whoever they are, present a threat."

“If nothing else, they’re putting a strain on our resources,” said Charlotte.

I pulled the laptop toward me and opened the lid. I created a new document and began typing up a

fresh

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list. “How so?”

“The town gets all of its power from the enclave,” she said like the answer was obvious.

I shot my brother a look. Mason had started scribbling notes of his own.

“That probably explains the lights,” Mason thought to me.

“We need more info about this town.”

“This is the first I’ve heard of that. Honestly, it’s the first time I’ve heard anything about Standard at all,”

I

said to the entire room. “First rule about your security team is that they should be told everything and

anythin

that could be important.”

“Sounds to me like this town is pretty important,” my brother added.

Malachi might not think too highly of wolves, but at least this time he nodded in acknowledgment.

“Of course. Standard and its proximity to Brightsky did not seem to have much importance to Lanie’s training.”

But it sure would be important to the overall security of the entire enclave, which Charlotte had asked

us

to help with.

“Looks like good old DarkLuna didn’t tell anyone else she was recruiting us,” Mason thought to me.

By the look on her face, I had to agree with him. She shot a quick glance around the rest of the room

before looking down at the table, not meeting my eyes.

“Looks to me like she doesn’t want us to mention it, either,” I thought to Mason.

Both he and his wolf rumbled out a silent chuckle.

“Standard is the town everyone passes through on their way here,” Malachi said.

“We didn’t,” I point out.

He shrugged. "You were brought here in a rather different manner than is the norm. My granddaughter and her family are allowed to bypass the general restrictions."

"Not everyone in the town is there to come to Brightsky," Charlotte said hastily. "It is the point of first entry, yes, where they can be vetted by our sources there. But others live there as well."

"So, how do you know that these new folks aren't there seeking sanctuary?" Mason asked.

Malachi waved a hand. "Because we haven't been petitioned for it."

"So that automatically means they're a threat?" I focused my attention on Malachi, but I was very aware

of the others, muttering.

Charlotte wasn't saying anything, but she did stare at me hard. Melina, on her right, leaned to whisper

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something in Charlotte's ear. On Melina's other side, her husband narrowed his eyes and looked back

and forth

from me to Malachi.

"What other reason would anyone have to show up there?" the vampire asked in an accusing tone.

“People with ties to residents of the town. Families.

Friends. New employees,” I added.

Melina leaned toward me. “Xander, what you should know about Standard is that only some who live

there know about Brightsky. We trust them to let us know of anything strange at once. We consider

them to be

our first warning, and we take anything out of the ordinary very seriously. You sound as though you

think

Malachi might be overreacting.”

I rolled my eyes. “I would never accuse a vampire of being dramatic or anything like that. Goddess

forbid.”

Mason laughed out loud this time.

Malachi scowled. “You should show respect to your elders, boy. For someone who brags about being

so

concerned about safety, you seem to be playing fast and loose with ours!”

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“But all they’ve told you is that some new people have come to town,” I replied. “Correct?”

Melina and Charlotte shared a glance. Melina nodded.

“Yes. It was part of their regular reporting.”

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“So, nobody there said anything about these new folks seeming to be out of the ordinary,” Mason confirmed.

“No,” Melina admitted.

Malachi stood, pressing his curled fists against the table’s polished wood. “Nevertheless, we must take action.”

“What kind of action?” I wanted to know.

“We supply Standard with its power, which we’ll cut in half, and then again. We can cut them off completely,” Malachi declared triumphantly. “We’ll strangle them before they have the chance to retaliate!”