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“So she still won’t talk to you?” Theo asks, taking out a cigarette from the pack on Tatum’s table.

“Nope, not a word. Literally deaf and dumb when I’m in the room,” Tatum replies with a frown, swirling the whiskey in his glass and staring at it like it has the solutions to all his problems.

It’s been a week since Leila woke up but the shoulders she gave him are more than just cold, they are freezing.

She desperately wants to leave but he can’t let her out of the house, not now. It’s still too dangerous for her, his house is the only place some angry pack member is not going to try and attack her.

He wants to be there for her, to explain himself to her but she won’t even let him talk or talk to him and it’s all because he banished Kelvin.

Why does she care about that dude more than him?

It burns him in the chest whenever he thinks about how much she cares about Kelvin. It’s something more than jealousy at this point.

It’s like his nerves are being burnt by poison.

“Any leads on Costner?” Tatum asks with a frown, emptying his glass.

“Since he ran away, there’s only one place he can go, his uncle’s pack, the Death Claw pack. We can’t exactly walk in there and demand a fugitive, it would lead to war,” Theo frowns, taking a long drag of his cigarette.

Tatum scrunches his nose, hating that he wants to please Leila by trying

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to bring Kelvin back and pardon him when the thought feels like a fucking hot knife being plunged into his chest.

He never wanted to banish Kelvin anyway, his plan was to lock him up for a few days till things died down, have him flogged for assaulting the head warrior and then release him but Kelvin just had to bribe the man guarding him and stowed away.

That left him with no choice, he had to declare Kelvin a fugitive, exiled to become a rogue from the blood oak pack.

"Forgive me for saying this Alpha and I do not say these words as your Beta but as your close friend but I think it's high time you make up your mind," Theo says in a curt voice.

"Your reasons make no sense to keep Leila as Luna waiting to heal Carmi's wolf. Carmi was born to be your Luna. If you somehow developed feelings for Leila over the years, that's understandable, shit happens, move on from it. Who cares about a wolfless woman's bloody feelings anyway?"

A deep growl rumbles in Tatum's chest and his eyes turn completely red.

In a flash, he yanks Theo by his collar, pulling his face dangerously close, barely a breadth apart. His voice is low, cold and full of danger.

"I'm going to tell you this as a friend and not as your Alpha, the next time you speak of her in that manner, you can find yourself a new pack."

"Alpha I'm—"

"Get out," Tatum's voice turns animalistic, letting Theo go roughly.

This is all his fault. He's the reason they talk about her like this, why they

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show her no respect. When she complained about it, he thought she was overreacting but it became clear to him at Carmela's party.

He messed up, he should have protected her better.

He only asked her to come there that night because he was desperate to see her and he finally found a way to help her bring her wolf back.

Every time he has left the pack in the last two years, it has been in search of the dry scorpion lily, a rare herb vital to the potion to cure her wolf's absence but he has always met a dead end.

This time he got information that he can get it, but deep within a rival pack ground.

If things go wrong, he could lose his life but it's not himself he's worried about, it's her safety when he's gone.

He never told Leila and he can't tell her yet because he doesn't want to get her hopes up for nothing but if all goes well this time, she will have her wolf back.

"Alpha, you sent for me?" Carmela curtsies as she enters his study.


"Yes, I did. Have a seat," Tatum replies, a slight frown on his face.

"I have a task for you and depending on your performance, we can discuss our engagement," Tatum says in a straight voice, his face stoic.


Carmela lights up with joy, her face brimming with ecstasy.

"Yes Alpha, whatever you want, you know I'll do anything for you," Carmela almost shrieks, her heart pounding with joy.

Tatum grunts. "I'll be going on a trip tonight and I might be gone for a

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while. Can I trust you to look after the pack in my absence and most importantly.....to look after Leila?"  3

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