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ABIGAIL

The tension between them wound tighter.

They were connected so deeply that their heartbeats were in sync, and Abby knew he wanted her as much as she wanted him. But she also knew he wanted to wait to consummate their matehood.

She stepped back with a shy smile. "Go. Run. I can feel your wolf. And if you don't, I won't be able to control myself."

Roman laughed and pulled her close for a long, lingering kiss that left them both panting.

"I want it all to be perfect," he said in a low voice.

She nodded. "Me too. Go run."

She heard him reach out through the link, seeing if anyone wanted to join him for a run. Rye and Logan immediately answered, along with a few others.

He kissed her on his mark. "Thank you, mate."

She watched him slip out the back door, then walked into their bedroom and got under the covers. She could hear Logan and Rye howling as they got closer.

When the pounding of paws on the ground surrounded the house, Abby felt a wave of comfort, allowing her to go to sleep peacefully. Her last thought was how happy she was that she was no longer in Pack Oru. Or with Carson.

She pushed the thought of him away and slammed that mental door shut.

CARSON

Carson flew out of bed, startling Taylor with his growl. He felt something, and he wasn't sure what it was. His eyes glowed red in the dark as he scented the air.

"Car?" he heard Taylor say quietly.

His growling low and feral, Carson ignored her and stalked out of the room.

He felt a strong push through the pack link but was unsure where it was coming from. He snarled in response, pushing back with untamed power in a show of force.

He'd been getting bigger and stronger as his father weakened, and training with Abigail's dad had allowed him to harness his growing power—but it was obvious the warrior hated every second of their time together.

Their sparring had a personal edge to it, and Warrior Michael took him down every chance he got with maneuvers Carson hadn't been taught yet.

At the thought of Abigail and her parents, his growls increased in intensity. He was still furious that his dad had allowed the Canavers to go to Pack Luko.

They'd argued violently about it: Carson was convinced that if they left, they'd never come back. His father disagreed because they were bonded to Pack Oru and to him.

His phone rang, and he stalked into his office. It was his father.

"Alpha," he barked into the phone.

"Carson, did you feel that? Your mom and I were both woken by a forceful push through the link. Was that you?"

"No," he snapped.

He sniffed the air but smelled nothing unusual. His nostrils flared as he tried again, inhaling deeply.

"Come to our house for coffee in the morning," his father said. "We'll figure it out then."

"Yes, Alpha." Carson rolled his eyes as he hung up the phone.

He went back to the bedroom and knelt down by Taylor's side of the bed, pushing his nose into her slightly rounded belly. "Was that you, pup?" he whispered, feeling a nudge against his face.

His pup was the only thing keeping him from losing control. His wolf was constantly on edge.

"What happened?" Taylor asked nervously.

Carson scowled. He got why she tiptoed around him now, but it also pissed him off. "I don't know. Do you need something?"

"Thank you. I wouldn't mind some water." She smiled weakly at him.

He needed a minute, so he took his time getting her the glass of water. On his way back to the bedroom, he looked out the window and saw a patrol run through the woods. He sniffed the air again, unable to shake the feeling of unease.

He gave Taylor the water but didn't stay with her. His wolf was too agitated.

"I'm going for a run. Stay in bed," he growled at her.

On his way out the door, he felt her sniffling through the link and snapped it closed.

Carson shifted and met up with his warrior group, who'd been assigned to follow him through his education and training to become alpha.

Howls sounded across the pack lands as they ran, hunting and chasing various wildlife.

Carson took down a large buck, tearing its throat out in the process, and gorged on it, blood covering his muzzle and chest. He growled as his warriors paced, waiting for their turn to feed.

When he had his fill, he chuffed and stepped back.

The sky was beginning to lighten when they made their way back home. Carson shifted and walked into the house, dirty and caked in blood. He wanted to get into the shower before he scared Taylor.

He didn't want anything to cause harm to the pup.

As he crept by the bed, Taylor's deep breathing told him she was still asleep. He could only feel her through the pack link—which he'd shut off—because he hadn't marked her. And he never would. Not even after she had his pup.

She was his consort, not his mate, and would only be *that* until he got Abby back from that wild alpha from Pack Luko.

Once in the hot shower, he scrubbed and rinsed, running his hands over his body. It had been rapidly changing: He was much larger now, his muscles more defined. He felt stronger than ever, and even his hair was longer.

And he had to constantly fight his wolf for control.

He suspected his connection to Abby was responsible for these changes. And if he was right, he could only imagine the extent of his power once he had her back as his mate.

Ironically, it was Abby's parents who'd taught him how to push back effectively against his wolf.

Speaking of, his wolf was finally settling down after their run, but Carson was still antsy to train. He wanted Michael and Fiona back on Pack Oru land immediately.

And he wanted them to bring Abby with them.

Morning was breaking when Carson left Taylor still asleep and ran with his warriors to the alpha's house. His father was waiting outside with his own group of dedicated warriors.

"Carson."

They gripped forearms.

"Alpha." He gripped his dad's arm a little harder and then let go. "Did you figure out what that was?"

"No "

"Could it have been the pup?"

"I don't know. We should ask your mother. Come have some coffee and breakfast."

"Good morning, Carson," his mom said, smiling nervously when he came into the kitchen. "How's Taylor?"

He could tell how much she hated the tension between her mate and her son. But what could he do?

He sat down heavily in the chair across from his father. "Asleep."

"I'll make something you can take back to her." She started to turn back around.

"Could that weird rush of power last night have been the pup?" He wasn't going to beat around the bush.

His mother stopped. "I don't believe so, but we can do some research," she answered quietly, then continued toward the stove.

Carson narrowed his eyes. "Alpha, what do you think it was?"

"I don't know. It could have been a fluke."

Carson took the plate his mother put in front of him, then gave his father a hard stare. "I don't think so. I want Abigail's parents back here now."

His father sighed and shifted in his chair. "I'm afraid that's going to be a problem."

"And why is that?"

"The Warriors Canaver requested an immediate transfer to Pack Luko."

"I hope you told them no!" Carson snarled.

His father leaned back but held Carson's gaze. "I told them to come back and fill out the paperwork. We can then assess the situation.

"And keep them by force if necessary."