

Chapter 43

Jaspers

The next day was overwhelming. Vie and I crashed in the first room we found, after I'd located the kitchen and whipped up some food for us. As much as I would have loved to extend our morning cuddles, I had a job to do. And that job consisted of first meeting with my new Beta and Gamma for my first official pack business.

"What is this?" I pointed to a spot on a map of Silver Moon territory that King had dug up. He'd had to add some rough sketches around the edges to update it, but it worked for now. He peered over my shoulder.

"That area is for training. There's a building here," He pointed, "With all our equipment."

I drew a circle around the area with a red marker. "I'll be wanting to check that out. How would you both say the warriors are?"

"Honestly? They could use some work." Ashwell said.

"What's the training schedule like?"

"Er... Well, there isn't really a schedule..." He rubbed the back of his neck. "Except for the kids, you know? Everyone else trains, kind of when they want?"

I rolled my eyes. "Okay, well that stops soon. I won't make a solid schedule yet, with everything else going on. But I'll draw one up. That'll be your area." I nodded at him.

"That works for me." Ashwell nodded.

"Excuse me, Alpha?" Tracy appeared at the door, smiling brightly. "Another stack for you."

"Great. Thanks Tracy, just put them beside the others."

We were in Warrick's old office. The room had been full of things that I'd already sent down to be added to the 'To Be Sold' pile. After a thorough once over, all that remained was the desk with the two bookshelves, a few books, a lamp, and four comfortable chairs. I had no use for any sentimental items of his. Though King did suggest I keep a few of the books, pointing out which ones Kiren liked to read. And he was welcome to them, whenever he came home.

"The pack sure is making this easy on us." King picked up the new stack of papers.

"I'll say."

Instead of making rounds as I had promised, people had taken it upon themselves to instead bring their lists right to the packhouse. Clearly, everyone was eager for a change.

King whistled as his eyes scanned a page. "Damn. I had no idea the Roy's place was in such bad shape." He frowned.

"Let me see." I held my hand out for the parchment.

Roof collapsed in bathroom

Roof collapsed in kitchen- Appliances no longer work

Shingles torn off in storms

Floors rotted

In need of new clothes- kids female, men

In need of food

The list actually wasn't all that different from many others I'd read so far.

"How are we going to pay for all this? The amount of materials we'll need don't come cheap." Ashwell said.

"Violet is working on selling stuff from the house."

"That won't cover everything."

My frown deepened. "I know." I sighed. "And the income we'll accumulate from farming again won't happen for a while either."

I sank into the chair behind the desk, rubbing my forehead. I'd been Alpha less than a week, and I already felt the stress of the job. I was running out of options. I couldn't just conger enough funds out of thin air. Sighing heavily, I reached for the phone.

"Who you calling?" Ashwell asked.

"The Alpha of Blood Moon." I dialed the number I'd memorized and put the phone to my ear.

"Hello?"

"Hey Dimitri."

"Jasper?"

"Yeah."

"How are you? How are things over there?"

I laughed once. "It's... Well, it's been interesting so far."

"How is Violet?"

"She's good."

"Good to hear. What can I do for you?"

"Uhm... Actually, I was calling for some advice."

"Oh?"

I lowered my head, embarrassed. "Yeah. Silver Moon is in worse shape than we thought. Almost everyone needs some type of repair on their

homes, and nobody has enough food, except Warrick's buddies. We're working on that though."

"Go on."

"I... I just wanted to ask you how I should go about this. Where I should start, how I should organize." I flipped through the papers on the desk. "I really hate to admit it, but I'm pretty in over my head here, and-"

"Jasper, calm down son. I get it."

I swallowed. "You do?"

"Of course I do. Do you know how much help I had when I took over as Alpha? Violets Uncle Killian was a lifesaver. You sound embarrassed to be calling me, but you don't need to be. I told you I was here for you guys, whenever."

"I know. But I've been here all of one day." I sighed again.

Dimitri laughed into the receiver. "You're already doing better than me then. I reached out to Killian about two hours after my ceremony."

I chuckled. "I guess I'm ahead of the curve then. I just figured I'd know this stuff."

"I'll let you in on a little secret- No Alpha ever knows what he's doing, not at first. Hell, there are days I still get overwhelmed."

"Thanks Dimitri. That helps, actually."

"No problem. So, what exactly is going on?"

I filled him in on everything since we arrived. He listened carefully, and I caught the distinct sound of a pen scraping across paper as I talked.

"Hmm... I'll tell you what," He said when I was finished, "There's not a lot going on here right now. Ben and I can come to Silver Moon for a while, help out. We can discuss further when I'm there."

I wanted to say no, that I could handle it without him. But really, who was I kidding?

"You sure?"

"Yes. We can be there by this afternoon."

"Alright. Thank you, Dimitri."

"Anytime. I want you to know Jasper, that an Alpha who tries to do everything by himself, is an Alpha who will ultimately fail. Nobody can do it all by themselves."

"Thanks Dimitri. I'll remember that. See you soon."

"Bye."

We hung up. Ashwell and King looked at me expectantly, having heard the conversation.

"Guess we better get some rooms cleared out." I said.

"He's right you know." Ashwell nodded at me. "Nobody can do this alone. You're not weak for reaching out for help."

"It's not like we can't use all the help we can get." King added.

"Thanks guys." I smiled at them. "Can you see to the rooms being prepared? I'll find Vie and let her know about our coming guests."

"Sure."

"No problem."

We left the office, going our separate ways. I found Tracy, who was humming cheerily to herself, and asked her to show me where Violet was. She agreed happily, skipping ahead of me. I shook my head; The girl had to have an extremely positive outlook on things, given the circumstances. Her home had been falling apart for Goddess knew how long, yet she walked around with a smile on her face. I couldn't deny I admired that about her though.

She led me to a small room on the far side of the house where Violet was having lunch with an older pack member. She beamed up at me, dimples popping out.

"Another stack of lists should be coming soon. I'll put them on your desk Alpha."

"Thanks Tracy."

She danced away as I opened the door. Violet and her companion looked up at my entrance.

"Hey. What are you doing here?"

"I came to find you." I stood behind a chair. "May I join you?"

"Of course, Alpha." The man replied.

I took a seat. The table was laid with finger sandwiches, a salad, juice, water, and vegetables. Also, a neater pile of papers in front of Violet than what I had upstairs.

"We're expecting guests this afternoon." I told her.

"Who?"

"Your Dad actually. And Beta Ben." I grabbed a sandwich.

Vie raised her eyebrows. "You called him?"

I nodded. "Originally, for advice. He offered to come."

"Alright." She gestured to the older man. "Jasper, this is Greg. He's my go-to guy for all things farming related."

We shook hands as he chuckled. "I'm just experienced dear."

"That's what I said."

"So, the fields are useable?" I asked.

"Oh, yes. Not just the fields though." Greg said.

"I was going to find you soon. We've been discussing sources of income for the pack." Vie handed me a sheet. I looked it over.

"Fruit?" I looked at them.

Greg nodded. "The South of the pack. There is a great deal of apple trees."

"Opening a factory in the future would not only create a lot of jobs, but a great source of income for the pack." Vie smiled.

"A factory for...?" I inquired.

"That can be decided at a later date. I guess it depends on the skills of the people. You can make all sorts of things with apples."

"How did you plan to outsource it?"

"I was thinking of reaching out to human communities, as well as neighboring packs."

I raised a brow. "You want to sell to humans?"

"Why not?" She countered.

"I think that's a really great idea." I grinned at her. "Not a lot of packs sell to humans. Not a lot of competition. It's smart."

She returned my smile. "That was my thought process too."

"I think you two will do great things for Silver Moon." Greg said. "I'm glad an old fart like me is around to see it."

"Oh Greg. You're not that old!" Violet exclaimed.

"Keep saying that Luna, and I might come to believe it." He wiped his hands on a napkin, standing. "I should be off. You have the list?"

"Right here." Vie waved a paper.

"Great. Call me if you need me. Alpha." He nodded respectfully to me.

"Thank you, Greg. I hope to see you soon." I said.

"Oh, you will. I plan to utilize his knowledge greatly." Vie said.

Once we were alone, I took the time to look over everything she'd done so far. I could feel her eyes on me as she ate, and I clicked my tongue.

"Staring is rude." I teased.

"Something is bothering you." She stated. "Tell me."

I set aside her work, meeting her eyes. "I'm a little embarrassed I had to call your dad for help."

"You shouldn't be embarrassed about that."

"So, he told me."

"Then listen to him. Dad didn't get to be where he is all alone."

I smirked. "You sound just like him, you know."

She grimaced. "Ugh."

I laughed. "Honestly, I don't even know where to start. This pack..."

"Is a mess. I know."

We were silent for a while. Violet picked at her food while I was lost in my own thoughts.

"I was thinking..." She pulled my attention back to her.

"Yeah?"

She looked at the door before continuing. She lowered her voice, "I was thinking that maybe I could help. With my...magic."

"My forehead creased. "How so?"

"I'm not sure. But like Aunt Clara said, I can't leave it locked away forever. I'm going to have to learn to use it sometime." She glanced up at me through her lashes. "Unless you think it's too dangerous. The last thing I want to do is hurt the pack more."

I thought about it. "I trust you. And I trust that you wouldn't do anything that would damage anyone or anything. If the time comes, you don't need my permission."

"I'm not asking permission." She flicked a cucumber from her salad at me. I popped it in my mouth. "But I wanted to let you know. In case... I can't control it."

"I'll be there to help you. I promise."

"Okay."

She relaxed in her chair. I stood, walking around to kiss the top of her head.

"I love you."

"I love you too." She grabbed another paper, sighing. "Here. This is a list of names of the people who work here. I want to give the jobs back to the people Warrick got rid of, but that means losing some of the blondes." She huffed.

"They should know we can't keep all of them." I said taking it from her.

"I feel like more people are going to yell at me."

For the next hour and a half, we worked on the list, agreeing together on who to keep and who to lose. Both of us agreed on keeping Tracy, if she wanted to stay. Likewise, neither of us were keen on keeping Stacey. The girl creeped me out.

"What about Marian?" I asked.

"I talked to one of the families earlier, they use to work in the kitchen." She pointed to two names. "They said Marian never worked in the packhouse. They weren't even sure how she ended up out there with them."

"I see." I circled Marian's name, opting to decide about her later. Ultimately, it was her choice if she wanted a job here or not. "I'm demolishing those shacks."

"Good. They never needed to be there anyway."

"What needed to be where?" A voice came from behind us.

"Uncle Ben!" Violet jumped out of her seat, running around the table and launching herself into his arms.

"Hey kiddo!"

Ben stood in the doorway with Dimitri, and Tracy who for once looked rather intimidated.

"Do I get a hello?" Dimitri asked his daughter.

"Hi Dad."

He pouted, shaking his head. I made my way to them.

"Thanks for coming." I said as we shook hands.

"Where can we talk?" He got straight to business.

"I've been using Warrick's office. This way. Thanks Tracy, I got it from here."

She nodded, leaving us. Wrapping my arm around Vies shoulder, I led the way back to the office. The three of them looked around as we walked, until Ben snorted loudly.

"Why is there so much junk in here?"

"And and her mate had...unique tastes." Violet explained.

"We're gathering everything that can be sold." I added.

Ben stopped in front of a painting, eyeing it for a minute. Then he lifted it off the wall and tucked it under his arm. Violet shook her head, while her dad rolled his eyes.

"What? It's an original piece! Clara will love it!"

"You're paying us for that, you know." Vie threw over her shoulder.

"Seriously? I'm family."

"Which is why I'll give it to you at a lower price."

"Pfft. Fine."

Stopping at the door, I let Dimitri and Ben go in first. Violet sank into a chair, crossing her legs, while I took the seat behind the desk.

"Alright. Let's see what we're working with." Dimitri said. I handed him a few lists. He paced as he read them, handing them to Ben when he was done. "I'll be honest Jasper; I thought you were exaggerating. This..." He growled. "How could Warrick have let all this happen?"

"It's not all bad, Dad." Violet spoke up. "You should see his friends' houses." She scoffed.

"Oh, I did." He looked at me. "What's the plan for that?"

"I'm leaving that up to Violet."

"Vie?"

She put her hands behind her head. "I plan to evict them."

Dimitri raised his brows. "And then?"

"All but two will be demolished. The two closest to packhouse will be remodeled into safe houses during attacks or emergencies."

Pride radiated from the Alpha. "That's my girl." He turned back to me. "There's a lot we need to talk about. The most important thing though, will require your Beta and Gamma to be here."

I sat up in my seat. "What's that?"

"An alliance. I'll need their signatures as well as yours."