

## CH 33

### Slade

Slade had not slept well, which had led him to wake up late for the day, though no one bothered him about it or tried to wake him and drag his ass out of bed. He could only put that down to his current mood, and how mad he had been at all of them for doing this to Ori.

For putting him in the position he was now in as well with her, nothing they'd done had gone to their plan. He still couldn't really understand why they just hadn't let things play out as they would normally do. That was how things should have been done, regardless of what they'd seen or thought.

He could have handled things on his own with Ori if they turned out to be Mates tonight, though a part of him wanted to believe it, another part of him still believed it was going to be Audrey. He'd liked her and

seen the way she was with him. Unlike what they'd said, she hadn't told him or tried to get him to mark and mate her at all.

She was sweet and happy to wait for them to scent each other out. Yes, she'd gone ahead and told her father, but if he'd scented a girl out at Alpha College, he'd have told his parents, done it from the privacy of his room, so no one overheard him, but yes have told them. She'd not done one thing at all that was seen as coercion as far as he was concerned.

Unlike how his father and his unit saw it, they were worried about nothing at all as far as he was concerned. She was actually really well liked by the others at the college, and was happy and friendly at that. Got along with everyone, was a nice person and fun and outgoing. He'd not seen a single person get mad at her or even talk behind her back.

He didn't think she would lie to him. Last night he'd just let everyone get inside his



head, that was all, and now he'd had time to think about it, calm down and come to his senses. He could see all that, once again.

He pulled on that tether that was Ori's not to talk to her, but simply because he wasn't the actual Alpha and wouldn't feel it if someone severed from the pack, unless he was actively keeping a tether to that person, and he'd not been. She needed her space, and he was going to give it to her.

He could feel it, her tether inside his mind, she was still here like he thought she would be, surprised him a little that she felt to him like she was at Lindal's new place of residence. He knew where Beckham lived, on the southeastern side of the town. Pulled on Lindal's tether as well, and she was also there; same place as Ori was.

That was good, she at least had somewhere to go and stay and a friend to talk to, to confide in, something that was normally, a him and her thing, since she was like 12. Something he also knew that she was likely

going to need right now as well. He did actually feel relief that she was still inside the pack, and although he'd not thought she would bolt away, there was always a possibility of it, he supposed, with the pain of what had been done to her.

He focused himself on the surrounding area around where the two girls were and there were no roaming or stationary guards on the place, nothing like what her father would normally put in place if he was actively watching her or anyone inside this pack.

At least it did appear that Anders had listened to him, maybe that threat he'd used last night, had worked to make the man understand he meant it, when he told him to leave her alone, to give her some space.

Or maybe it was the words he'd spoken to him, stated aloud for Anders to actually hear, had made him see the light, of how over the years his and Bronnie's behaviour had affected their own daughter in a

detrimental way.

That he now understood that he nor his own Mate actually understood their own daughter, like they thought they had. Simply because she'd never actually let them see how their wanting to have, or their need to have, Hayden be the next Beta Heir, truly affected her. She'd never let them see anything other than anger or annoyance over it, not the hurt or the pain of it. She'd kept that buried down inside of her. Though where did they think that anger came from?

Maybe now, after this s\*\*t show had blown up in their faces, they saw the real damage of their own actions, across her lifetime, and realised that there was a real possibility that they were going to lose their daughter, over it.

That keeping track of her constantly, when all she wanted right this minute was to be alone, and to try and deal with all that had happened, and the way it had happened. Would only make her lash out even worse



than what she'd already done. That a guard or spying on her, would only make her want to actually get up and leave, another way of lashing out at them. To hurt them like she was hurting, though he didn't actually know if she thought her leaving would hurt them. He only knew how very angry she had been. She'd never once attacked him before, not until last night. Never even once told him where to go, hell, they'd never had a single fight at all until she'd dropped him off at Alpha College. He should have known right there something was wrong. That, that was the first sign of her not either not coping with what had happened, or maybe because he didn't remember. Now he was to her; like them. Someone that didn't love her.

He scrubbed a hand over his face and got out of bed, mind-linked to Palmer and Yuri 'I'm up, how's everything?'

'Busy, as expected.' Yuri answered him.

'Not what I meant.' Slade sighed.

'Quiet.' Palmer told him 'I don't get anything from Ori, still sleeping I believe.'

'You believe?' though he was glad the man had checked on her, knew it was just to feel her out himself. Had likely either tried to connect a mind-link or felt for her tether.

'Mm, I mind-linked to Lindal about an hour ago.' He sighed a little heavily 'she's also still mad. Though I did tell her that Yuri and I were blindsided as much as Ori herself was. And that we only found out a few minutes before your father made the actual announcement. That seemed to work to get her to talk to me. Believed me, I guess. Though she is still mad herself.'

'And?' he prompted.

'That's it. Nothing else to tell, Ori was asleep in the spare bedroom when Lindal got up. She was out cold, were the words that Lindal used. I did ask her to let me know how she was doing when she wakes up...'

'Didn't like it?' Slade sighed.



'No, told me to just leave her alone, and not to expect Ori to come tonight.'

'I already knew that wasn't going to happen.' He told them 'Likely going to avoid the packhouse and all of us altogether, anywhere we go or hang out...' he murmured 'Sorry Palmer, Yuri, I had no idea they were going to do that myself.'

He'd already apologised to them, told them that, but what else could he do right now, but apologise again? It was likely they'd just lost one of their closest friends as well as he had. Only they'd done nothing to warrant it, simply losing her because they were part of his unit was all, and she would not want to be around him, therefore them.

'Father and his unit.' He asked.

'Downstairs in his office, your mother and their mates are all with Dariah as expected on a day like today.' Yuri answered him.

'So, everything has just gone back to normal then?' he muttered.



'Yes,' Yuri murmured, 'your father said it was best for things to blow over quickly, if life moved on quickly as well. Though Anders is unhappy, stalking about the place when having to do his duties. Are you coming downstairs at all today?'

'Yes, coming now. Meet me for breakfast.'

He strolled out of his suite to find Hayden just standing in the hallway. He glared right at that boy, did not want to see him at all. "Slade, I just wanted to say..."

He was on that boy, shoving him up against the wall across the hall. "Don't you dare speak to me after what you did last night, and just so it's clear to you, I don't want you for my Beta. In case you didn't catch that last night. I may have to have you as the Beta right this minute, but that does not mean I accept it, or want it. But you will not speak to me, period, you will learn your place and learn what respect is. I will make sure of it. You, Hayden, from now on, will speak to me, only when spoken to,

otherwise I'll beat you one for irresponsible behaviour."

"I was just trying to apologise." He gasped.

Slade glared right at him, yanked him off the wall and slammed him up against it. "Did I ask you a f\*\*\*\*\*g question?" He snarled at the boy. Then he could smell fear coming off Hayden as he finally realised, that although he may have gotten what he wanted; taking over Ori's position. That Slade was not his actual friend, didn't in fact like him at all.

"I don't want to see you come and go from the Beta Suite, and you step out of line just once, smile, laugh, be happy or gloat about where you are or what you have, I'll make sure you remember who is supposed to be standing next to me. And that, ain't you." he pushed his face up close to Hayden's "Do I make myself clear, Beta?"

"Yes, Alpha," Hayden half whispered.

"Oh, and one more thing. Whatever you did



to Ori's car the day she took me to Alpha College, and I know you did something. Because we switched cars before we left the pack, I'm going to ask Lindal what it was, seeing as your sister never dobedbed your ass in.

"Despite all the things you did to sabotage her, Hayden. Not once did she tell your father, or mine, about it. That is how a Beta should be. Not piss and moan about things, like you do. She never once tried to stop you, just took it all in her stride, that you, her own brother, a whiney spoiled baby, thought you had the right to take the position of Beta, even though you don't deserve it, didn't earn it, or work for it.

"One word out of your mouth will see your life be a living hell. I'm your Alpha now, and I can and will punish you for every infraction, everything I hear or see that is considered *irresponsible*. Right down to being happy about getting what you think you are entitled to, but are not worthy of the role itself." He shoved away from the boy and

stalked off down the hall away from him.

He was going to be looking for a new Beta bloodline, he was never going to be able to accept that boy as his Beta. Not after everything he'd done to Ori, the way he'd gotten his position. Ori would be the last Vale of the Beta bloodline in this pack. He would find and bring in a new Beta if he couldn't convince Ori to come back to the position herself.

He was going to wait and see, and if the moon set, and she was not his Mate, he was going to beat the hell out of his father and the unit, demanding she be reinstated, and a full formal apology be announced. With all the facts of what his father and hers had done. Admit they were wrong, in front of the entire pack.

Try and get her back where she belonged, next to him as he'd always seen it. He knew he himself also had some explaining to do, but he would do it. He already knew he was going to, and before he left tomorrow as



well, he wasn't leaving here until she talked to him, that much he knew.



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