

Chapter 4 - Educating the Masses

Alpha Stone

I'm sitting at my desk going through pack financials when I hear a knock. "Come in." I scent Beta Miles, and an unknown wolf. Must be our new Beta.

"Alpha." Miles is all business. "Beta Pierce has arrived." He steps to the side and allows Beta Pierce to enter.

I rise and shake the newcomer's hand to welcome him. "Ah. Beta Knight. May I call you Beta Knight?"

"Of course, Alpha."

"Good to have you on board. Come in and sit down." Miles goes to leave. "No, please join us Beta Miles." I motion to the seating in front of my desk. They both sit. "Our first official meeting." I say. "We have a lot to go over."

"First, I will be leaving a er this meeting." I shove the ledgers in my drawer and lock it. Pocketing the keys. "Beta Miles, is the prisoner ready for transport?" I know this is a sore spot for him, but he's going to have to deal with it. I am on my way to Stone Mountain City and I am taking her to stand trial.

"Yes, Alpha." He speaks through gritted teeth.

I shoot him a warning look and his face relaxes. I am not letting him get away with his BS. What they did to Paisley was horrible and before it's over with, he is going to know exactly what he did. Karen, our medical assistant, is working with Dr. Roberts to prepare and present the same workshop she attended. On Friday, a er I have returned, the entire pack is going to get a lesson in Cheating Mate Syndrome. But I have ordered her to cut out the part about the medication that helps alleviate it. Cheating b@st@rd doesn't deserve to know that.

"Good! And Enf. North is ready to go?"

"Yes, Alpha." He replies with a stoic demeanor.

I nod. "Ok. I will stop and visit the injured pack member as I head to Stone Mountain City this morning. My tech conference is tomorrow morning. With no unforeseen issues popping up, I should be back Tuesday. In the meantime, I want you two to work closely together to run this pack."

"Yes, Alpha." They answer in unison.

A er having concluded the meeting, I grab my overnight bag and head out to the helipad. We have three helicopters, so taking one will not affect any medical emergencies we may have. Our prisoner is stowed in the back with an enforcer. I sit in the cockpit with Enf. North.

Even though the helicopter is too loud for conversation, Marissa keeps trying to get my attention. She is still wearing her hot little red dress she wore to bait Miles, along with her red stilettos. However, it does look a little wrinkled and stained this morning, I notice in sick satisfaction. Miles isn't innocent in all this. He will get his comeuppance if it's the last thing I do.

"Alpha!" Marissa shrieks. North darts an angry look her way, while I turn to her and glare. "Alpha." She says quietly, but I only see her mouth move because it is too loud. "Please." She pleads with me.

As Alpha, I have the ability to mind link anyone in my pack, but she's been gone a year, so I don't even try. I just shake my head as I turn to look out the windshield.

When we finally reach the hospital, North lands the helicopter and shuts the engine. As I begin to deboard, Marissa starts again. "Alpha, please, don't do this to me."

"Marissa!" I barely leash my anger. I do not like to command people to obey me, but I will her if she doesn't stop. "You have brought this on yourself. No. You know what, I want you to see what you and Miles did to his mate. A very sweet and kind person. Gentlemen, will you escort the prisoner?" North nods, smiling in grim satisfaction.

"What do you mean, what we did to her? I have never even met her before. I have not touched her." Marissa whines in confusion.

We enter the hospital as onlookers watch. Marissa is half dragged as she struggles with her hands cued behind her. Always self-centered, she thinks of herself only. Today, I will teach her a lesson. We get to the med surg floor, and I greet the nurses. "Good morning. Is Dr. Roberts in?"

One of the ladies li s her head and rises. "I'm Dr. Roberts." It's then that I notice the white coat. "Most call me Dr. Skye." Her smile is warm. "How can I help you?"

"Dr. Skye." I shake her hand. "I'm Alpha Stone from Wind Howl Pack." Her smile fades, and her eyes cloud.

"You must be Paisley's Alpha." She says sadly. And glances to my companions, pausing as she takes in a defiant, handcued Marissa.

"Yes. While I want to check on Paisley, I wondered if you have a minute to give us a lesson on CMS, somewhere private." I grin mockingly. "You see, we have Ms. Marissa Hunt here." I pause to point. "Marissa likes to play games with people's lives, and she enticed her ex-boyfriend into a motel room last night at his bachelor party."

First confusion and then recognition dawns. "So what you're saying is that this female is one of the reasons I had to get up in the middle of the night to come to the hospital to save a dying Paisley?"

Marissa gasps. "Dying? What the heck is wrong with you freaks? I never touched this Paisley."

"Follow me, Alpha, gentlemen." She just eyes Marissa. We enter a conference room. "Have a seat facing the screen."

"Dr. Skye." I pull her to the side. "I don't want her and her lover to know about Amra just yet. It's complicated, but trust me and leave that part out of your presentation for now."

"You're the Alpha."

The next twenty minutes, Marissa, myself, and our enforcers are educated about CMS. By the end of it, Marissa is in tears. "I had no idea. I'm so sorry." She sobs. At least she really does have a heart.

"Well, now, let's go meet Paisley." Dr. Skye grimaces. "So you can see exactly what you and her mate did to her."

"I don't want to." Marissa struggles to get out of North's grasp. "I'm so s-sorry. Please don't make me."

"I had to deal with it last night, Marissa, while she was dying on the chopper. I didn't know if she would live." North growls. "At least she's stable now and not bleeding from wounds in her stomach."

"Marissa," I order with my Alpha aura. "I command you to stop and go with us without struggle, to see your and Miles' handiwork."

Her struggles immediately cease, but you can tell by her face that she is dealing with inner turmoil.

"You know, for some people, this might be a good way to teach a lesson." Dr. Skye muses. "But believe it or not, I have had cheating mates who brought their spouses to the hospital. Pregnant mate almost died, and the pup did die, and they went right out the next day and cheated again." She shakes her head. "What you are doing here is great, Alpha! I never thought to charge the other woman with mate bond tampering, but you are right. This may be just the impetus to change laws. Thank you, Alpha. Next stop, criminalize the cheater, too. Yes, people have choices, but if they just dissolve the bond, it begins the healing process for the victim."

"I have been petitioning the territory Elder's Council to recognize CMS as abuse for months. It has been near impossible. Wolves are carnal and like to cheat. It damages mates, it damages families, and it damages relationships. I've had my fill of it, but, hey, to each their own. If that's what they want and their mate is okay with it, without the pain, we can medically intervene to make it a safer practice. Or, you can just renounce your mate bonds and cohabituate however you wish or go your separate ways. Just 10 years ago, CMS was unnamed and unknown, while the victims normally died. Today, it is preventable and even curable. The key is education. Until it is recognized as abuse, since I am the territory's foremost authority on it, my days are spent healing the victims. Good wolves shouldn't die for this reason. It has to stop."

She leads us into Paisley's room. Looking so tiny on the bed is Paisley's small, pale form. I approach and caress her head. She has tubes everywhere; breathing for her, a catheter, an IV, heart monitor, blood pressure cup, there are probes and needles, and a bank of machines chirping and beeping. Her face is covered in bruises. Dr. Skye pulls up her gown, showing her bare stomach, which is covered in stitches and dried blood. "These have to remain exposed to dry air to prevent infection." She says. There is not a place on her body without a bruise, cut, or medical implement keeping her alive. "Her wolf healing is slow on the uptake. We hope it kicks in soon. She's in a coma. It is not medically induced. It could take weeks or months for her to come out of it. We don't know."

"All that pleasure you had last night, Marissa, did this!" North spits.

The other enforcer rushes into the bathroom, and we can hear him losing his breakfast.

Marissa sobs. I hope she is a changed person a er this.

"Marissa." I speak to her in a more quiet manner. "I want you to know that your decisions have consequences. Instead of jerking Miles around for ten years, you should have settled in and mated. Stopped running until you lose what you have. You could have been chosen mates a long time ago, and then Paisley would have not been dragged into your games. She would have been paired with someone else and spared this pain. Do you see these physical wounds?"

She nods. "Yesss!"

"These are not unlike the mental wounds you have inflicted on Miles until he is at the point that he mentally and physically destroyed another that didn't deserve it." I hissed. "He may not have known about CMS, and you may not have either. But now you do. However, to respect Paisley's wishes, I command you not to speak of Paisley being in the hospital to anyone, but especially not Miles."

Understand?"

"Yes, Alpha."

"Thank you, Dr. Skye. Let me know if she needs anything."

"Thank you, Alpha. Here are some pamphlets to take back to your Beta and pack."

I nod as we leave.