

The Edge Of Reason -

Chapter 5 - Damon

Damon

I slam my study door shut so hard that the sound echoes around the room. Striding towards my desk, I sweep everything from the surface, including the list of tributes I was looking at earlier.

How fucking dare he. How dare he send me a pathetic runt with a wolf that's almost feral.

I pick the phone up from the floor. Thankfully, it's still in one piece.

He can have the little shit back and I'll force him to send me a proper tribute.

I start to dial the number, but I see a flash of lightning out of the corner of my eye. There's a storm on the way.

I momentarily think of the pup chained up outside, but I push the thought away. It's my wolf who's pushing images into my head.

'A good Alpha protects the weak.'

My wolf murmurs.

It's a phrase I've heard before, and my wolf knows it.

***** Flashback – Eighteen years ago *****

I watch as my father's fists rain down on the other man in front of him. My father hasn't even bothered to shift. He doesn't need to.

I stare wide-eyed as he pummels the man. I wonder if he's going to kill him.

The man disrespected my father in front of the pack. So I'm forced to watch his punishment and perhaps even his death.

My father insisted I begin my Alpha training early. I don't even have a wolf yet, but he insists I need to learn, much to my mother's dismay.

But he is the Alpha and his word is law, even for my mother.

She thinks eight years old is too early, but I want to learn. I want to be a good Alpha like my father.

The next time the man falls to the floor, he doesn't get up.

He kneels in front of my father and bares his throat.

I half expect my father to kill him, but he doesn't. He offers the man his hand. When he takes it, he helps him to his feet.

The man is bruised, bloody and battered, but still alive.

"Go and see the healer," my father growls.

The man limps away, and my father walks towards me.

I look up at him.

"Why didn't you kill him?" I ask.

My father smiles and goes down on one knee so his face is level with mine.

"A good Alpha protects the weak. Sometimes we have to make them realise that they are weaker than us. When they do. When they submit to us, then is the time to show mercy. Then is the time to protect them, because then they learn what it means to be led by a true Alpha."

***** End of Flashback *****

I shake my head. Damn wolf. That's why he didn't kill her.

I resume dialling the number.

Conrad Stone isn't fucking weak, but he is a shit Alpha. It's time to put him in his place.

"Stone," he sighs when he answers the phone.

He doesn't know it's me, but he will soon enough.

“What the hell are you playing at Stone,” I growl, “sending me a worthless runt. Did you know her wolf was feral? Is that why you sent her?”

I can almost smell the fear down the phone, and when he answers there’s a tremor in his voice. Coward!

“Feral he gasps. Why did you let her shift? Females don’t have the strength of will to control their wolves. That’s why we rarely let them shift. If they do, we have to have our males on hand ready to subdue them.”

I roll my eyes in exasperation.

I can’t believe this piece of shit. It explains to a degree why her wolf seemed so aggressive, but even an aggressive wolf is not stupid enough to challenge another who is four times her size, and definitely not an Alpha.

“I will return her to you, and you will send me a warrior in her stead,” I demand.

The line goes quiet.

“No. I can’t... I don’t want her back. There is a situation which makes her return untenable.”

I clench my jaw. So he thinks he can turn his problems over to me.

“What situation?” I growl.

He hesitates, but he knows better than to lie.

“She was rejected by her mate. He’s a valuable asset to this pack. She is of no use now.”

I feel my wolf pushing to come out. He wants to rip this Alpha to shreds. I push him down.

Unlike little Ember James, I have full control of my wolf, but we are on the same page as far as Alpha Conrad Stone is concerned.

My nostrils flare and I take a deep breath.

“What about her family? Where are they?”

Conrad sighs.

"Her parents are dead. She has one brother. I've told him this is for the best."

I grit my teeth. Perhaps it's best for him, but not for Ember James or her brother.

"I will take him as my tribute," I growl.

Conrad stutters down the phone.

"But... No... You... He's my gamma," he finally blurts out.

I glance towards the window. She's a gamma? Why would he send her as a tribute? It doesn't make sense?

"Why did you send her, if she's a gamma? Why not send her mate?" I demand.

He scoffs.

"A female wolf has no rank in this pack, and with no mate, she is of no use to me."

I can't believe what I'm hearing, but everything that happened earlier is beginning to make sense.

"You will send her brother, or I will come and collect his personally and when I leave there will be nothing left of you or your pack," I growl.

"But... But..." he begins to stutter.

"Have him at the pickup point tomorrow at dawn, or you won't live to regret it," I growl.

I slam the phone down.

I walk to the window and stare outside. Lightning lights up the sky and rain pelts down.

I look at the wolf that is chained to the pole. It lies motionless. The pile of meat lies untouched at its feet.

'Protect the weak'.

My wolf repeats in my head. I hate him sometimes, especially when I know he's right.

I leave my office. The pack house is quiet. Most of the pack have retired, except for Joshua who sits in the sitting area, a glass of whiskey in his hand.

He looks up as I pass through.

I stop and glance over at him. Did he see what I couldn't when he questioned me earlier? I sigh. Of course he did. He's my Beta. It's his job to play devil's advocate at times. I should have listened.

"I'm taking the little wolf to the pack doctor. I need you to head back to the Cravan Moon Pack to collect another tribute."

Joshua looks at me and frowns.

"Another?"

I nod.

"That piece of shit knew exactly what he was doing when he sent that little wolf here. He didn't expect her to live. Now he either sends another tribute, or he breaks the treaty, do you understand?"

Joshua nods.

"I'll let you know if there are any issues."

I head outside and walk towards the little wolf. I can already hear her laboured breathing as I approach. She shows no sign of waking.

Water drips off the ends of my hair as the rain pelts down. Her coat is soaking wet.

As I remove the silver collar, she whimpers.

"Shift," I growl, my alpha command coming through.

Her bones crack and reform. It's slightly quicker than it was when she transformed into her wolf, but it's still painful.

Once she's shifted, she lies there naked and shivering. Small sobs escape her lips.

I lift her up. She weighs virtually nothing.

"S... Sorry," she whimpers through chattering teeth.

I hush her, and press her small body tightly against my chest, hoping that my own body heat will warm her a little. Dark purple bruises litter her body where she landed when my wolf tossed her to the ground.

I mind-link the pack doctor. He lives on-site at the hospital, so by the time I get there, he is ready and waiting.

He knows who she is. The whole pack knows who she is after her little escapade earlier.

I place her on one of the beds.

"You need to sedate her wolf. She has no control," I hesitate, "and her mate has recently rejected her."

The doctor nods in understanding. I realise now why her wolf decided to challenge me. She craved death, but I won't let her give up quite so easily.

Protect the weak, and that's exactly what I intend to do.