

### An Unexpected Challenge Pt. 3

I groaned. Lexi's brother was never going to like me. I noticed a note on my desk that hadn't been there before. Great Isaiah had left a note. Probably from Heath. My dad said, "Just stay away from her Chase. You need to nd your mate. We have our Beta Male, and now we need our Luna." I growled, "You do NOT run things around here anymore. I just fought you for the right to keep my title. Or did you miss that?" My dad was quiet, "I've never seen you ght like that." I said, "I never thought I would have to ght my father for his respect but here we are. There will be NO MORE of you interfering in my life. What I do in my personal time is my own business. You can bite your tongue or tell your own damn mate about how annoyed you are. I myself, don't want to hear a single f\*\*\*\*\*g word out of you about Lexi Scott. Every member of our family likes her, and now she thinks you hate her." My dad gaped, "Hate her? I don't even know her! I don't hate her; I just want you to nd your mate Chase. She's got... I think they call them strings. She belongs to him not you." I couldn't hide my growl, "I told you NOT to talk about her!" My dad looked startled. Reagan said, "Oh for Christ's sake Frank. Get a clue! Or buy a vowel. Jesus ever loving Christ! You have NO IDEA what you've done!" Cameron said, "Reagan...." Reagan said, "No Cameron! Susie loves her! Nadine and I have made COUNTLESS batches of cookies for the woman because Susie wants Lexi to have them. When the three of us went to dinner, Lexi didn't even care that a ve-year-old had crashed our girl's night. She was kind and included Susie. When we left Chase's men pulled up, and she instinctively put herself in front of Susie. Seriously, I'm going to need you to get a damn clue and fast. Honest to god. You Alpha's are truly lost without your Beta's. I don't know how you all function."

My dad said, "Look, I told her I knew she was important to all the women in my family. I know that! What she's planning with Ted for the pups is a good thing. I'm not arguing that. I'm just worried! We were all worried about Chase! Then he gets this girlfriend, and you all relax. He needs his mate. The pack needs their Luna." I said, "A Luna who would have every reason to reject me with her next breath because I'm still married." My dad frowned, "Well, I heard Sophia said this would be over in February. I didn't raise you to string a woman along until then Chase. That's cruel to her. She cares for you. I know she does. You'll hurt her. I didn't mean to hurt her feelings about her family..." I growled, "Lexi Scott is none of your concern or business. If you EVER send my men somewhere without my knowledge again; I'll have no choice but to punish you. If you EVER cry f\*\*\*\*\*g wolf about a rogue attack and disrespect the grave of my mother like that ever again.... I will come up with someone truly horrible to do to you." Nadine gasped, "You didn't!" Frank said, "I needed the girl's guards off her. Chase would've known..." Nadine stood, "Enjoy sleeping outside tonight, Frank. When you become the man, I love again you are welcome back in this home. But not a moment before! You forced Chase to assert his dominance to you today for the pack. You upset that Lexi! She's such a sweet soul. Susie is going to be distraught. The rumors will be all over this pack by now, Frank. Susie will think Lexi won't want to be her friend anymore. How could you do this to our daughter? He may not be my esh and blood, but I consider Chase my son too. How could you do this to our boy? You hurt him in so many ways. The obvious answer is staring you in the face, and you're choosing to ignore it. All because you're so hellbent on being right. You make this right with our kids before you think of darkening the door of our home. Do you hear me?"

I said, "Nadine, I do consider you my stepmother and a parental gure in my life. I love you." Nadine choked up and came over and gave me a hug, "I'm so sorry about what he's done. I love you too Chase, as if you were my own. You too Cameron." I said, "It's not your fault." My dad said, "Nadine.... You can't mean this." Nadine said, "I'll pack you some things. I meant every word Frank. You are not welcome in my home until you make this right with our kids." She stalked out while my dad sat in shock. He looked at me, "Chase... I can't be without her." I barely stopped myself from saying he'd tried to make me be without Lexi. I said, "You're going to have a better shot at making things right with Susie before you have one with me. I'm sure someone will let you stay in their house." Isaac said, "He can stay with us." I said, "There you go." My dad was crying, "Susie is coming with me." I said, "Like HELL she is. She's staying here in this house that is her home with my stepmother. You made this bed dad. Lie in it." My dad said, "I get that the rogue thing was wrong, and very bad. This is just some girl! You won't even care about her when you meet your mate." I growled, "Get out of my oce before I ght you again." Cameron stood and dragged our dad out of the oce. Isaac shued out after them. Cameron came stalking back inside. "Can someone tell me what the f\*\*k is going on?"

I said, "Did you not catch up during that meeting?" Cameron said, "What did dad do to Lexi?" I said, "Other than assault her to plant a bug? He went back to her oce under the guise of apologizing to tell her to stay away from me. HE TRIED TO KEEP HER FROM ME!" Cameron sighed, "He wouldn't do that if you told him who she was." I said, "He never should've gone in the damn rst place. Now I've got f\*\*\*\*\*g Hood problems! He should've trusted me. He should've NEVER gone near her!" Reagan said, "Cameron, I think it's time Chase and I had our chat. We need the Alpha blood in the room to be dialed down not up. You know you'd have done what Chase did if it was me Frank had come at." Cameron looked at her startled. Reagan said, "Come on.... Don't you lie to me Cameron Daniels. If your dad made me cry..." I growled, "She had a f\*\*\*\*\*g panic attack thinking he would keep us apart. He casually threw out needing to talk to her dad. She tripped over the DAMN body of her father and broke her arm at eight years old!" Cameron winced. Reagan said, "You'd do the same Cameron. Everyone out. Chase and I need to talk." Everyone left and I picked up the note on my desk

Two hours. Come to the graves you followed Lexi to where she met her brother. Come alone.

Great. Just f\*\*\*\*\*g great. I looked at the clock. I had some time, but not a lot. Reagan said, "So, Lexi is your mate." I said, "HOW can everyone but my dad see that? Nadine even picked it up." Reagan snorted, "If the entire damn pack isn't a bunch of idiots, they picked it up. You just fought your dad on the lawn for her." I said, "To be technical she was only part of the reason... a large part, but he was undermining me at every turn lately Reagan. Since you and Cameron left.... He's been... worse." Reagan frowned, "I'm sorry about that Chase. Really." I said, "It's not your guys fault." Reagan laughed, "It is. Your dad never planned on losing Cameron to run a pack. He's proud of him, but he never planned to let him go." I said, "It's thirty minutes away." Reagan said, "Your dad's an Alpha just like you Cameron. He likes things to go according to his plan. He sees a piece of your mother leaving him. He only has two of those pieces Chase. He's scared for you, and that's why he went to Lexi. He couldn't bear to lose you or Cameron. Add to that, Cameron and I took over a territory we all know will be a target... is making him crazy." I said, "Then he should come to your pack and drive you two crazy." Reagan smiled, "Chase...Why doesn't Lexi know about Sophia?" I said, "She doesn't want to know. I was going to tell her. Hell, I was going to stay away from her. She was attacked by demons, and I had to interfere. People are coming at her from all sides. My hands are tied because of Sophia. I can't have her by my side this way Reagan. She doesn't want to know, and I respect that. I need to handle it."

Reagan said, "Did you tell Sophia?" I said, "If she said something stupid, I'd rip her head off." Reagan sighed, "So, she does not know." I said, "No." Reagan said, "Alright. I really like Lexi. You two make a hell of a lot of sense. If this is her choice when this blows up in your face, I'll remind her she didn't want to know." I said, "I'm hoping to have it resolved. I'll tell her all about it when I'm ocially single." Reagan said, "Life has a way of getting in the way of your plans, Chase. Keep her safe." My oce door ew open and Susie ran in with tears streaming down her face. My dad and Cameron stood frozen outside. "She's going to hate us now Chase! He ruined everything!" Reagan's eyes lled with tears. I motioned for her to leave. She nodded. My dad said, "Susie...." Susie cried, "NO! She is my friend! Now she won't come play with me!" I linked Matt, "Close my oce door now." Matt's arm reached out and shut the door. Susie cried, "Your princess will never come home now!" I hugged her, "Susie, Lexi still likes you. I'm sure she will come over and play with you. I'll just make sure dad isn't in the house." Susie wiped her tears, "All the kids said we probably won't get our Halloween party now. Lexi was supposed to throw it with Ted. He's friends with her. What if they don't like me anymore Chase? I want your princess to like me! She even invited mommy to talk about the Halloween party! Mommy was so happy, she cried! Your princess would make mommy feel like she really belonged here. Now she'll never come live with us!" I had no idea what to do.

I did the only thing I could think of. I picked up the phone and called Lexi. She immediately answered, "Chase?" I said, "Lexi, I have someone here who needs to talk to you." Susie said, "Lexi?" Lexi was immediately concerned, "Susie? What's the matter? Are you alright?" Susie said, "My daddy was mean to you, and now you won't be Chase's princess. You won't be my friend, and we won't have our party." Lexi said, "Oh sweet little Susie. Wild bears couldn't stop me from being your friend. Tell you what. You and me this weekend. I'll come over Saturday. Ok?" Susie said, "Chase said he'd make daddy stay away if you came over." Lexi said, "Then he will make sure that's the case. Ted and I were just working on the Halloween party. I just sent your mom the details for nal cnmation." Susie said, "What about being Chase's princess? Alpha Connors got a princess. You're Chase's." Lexi laughed, "I suppose I am a kind of Princess. I am Chase's though, that's for sure." Susie said, "You're not mad at Chase?" Lexi said, "No, I'm not mad at Chase." Susie smiled, "So you'll come live with us someday?" Lexi laughed, "If your brother will have me. One day I'll come live with you." My heart soared at the thought of Lexi here. Susie squealed and clapped her hands, "YAY! We need you! You're our Princess." Lexi laughed, "I've got to get to a meeting, but I'll see you Saturday. Alright Susie?" Susie said, "OK!" I had to laugh. Lexi was able to x this entire thing with a few words. I told Lexi, "I'll see you tonight, Lexi." Lexi said, "Sounds like a plan." I hung up. Susie hugged me and opened the door. There was quite the gathering on the other side. Susie ran to Nadine. "Mommy! Chase called Lexi. She said she still wants to be my friend. We are playing together this weekend. Daddy isn't allowed!" She stuck her tongue out at him and he actually looked ashamed. I felt bad for my dad as he watched Nadine and Susie walk away. Isaac pulled him out of the house. I looked at the time. I needed to go.

Matt said, "Ahhh back to work." I handed him the note, "I have a meeting." Matt tensed, "I don't like this Chase. I can't let you go alone." I said, "You can, and you will." Matt said, "He could've gured it out." I said, "I'm sure he did. He knows Lexi is seeing her string. My dad shouted about her leaving me alone would've been a large hint I'm her string." Matt said, "You link me if you need anything." I nodded and took off. I knew Derrick was following at a distance. I had to snort about my Beta and Gamma. They were good ones. I made it to the clearing. The hood was there with shorts. He tossed them to me., "Here." Derrick linked, "I can't hear a damn thing." I linked, "Lexi probably had the area enchanted." I shifted. The hood said, "I said alone." I said, "What can you do about a Gamma looking out for his Alpha? Besides. I smell the man named Isaiah from my oce in the distance." The hood said, "I didn't say I would be alone." I said, "Neither did I. I don't have to do as you say." The hood's hand tightened into sts, "Protect Lexi Scott better." I tensed, "You know I'm her string then." The hood snorted, "I've known since you met her. You protected her from Demons. I was about to step in when your men interfered." I said, "I have men assigned to guard her. They are my best warriors." The hood said, "They let your father upset her!" I said, "He sent them away on a false errand. It won't happen again. Lexi told you about it?" The hood said, "No, and she won't. She's still one of my people. It's my job to watch out for her. Convince your wife to get an annulment and bring Lexi Scott to your side. Or so help me god Alpha Chase. I'll end you."

I said, "I'm TRYING to convince Sophia to get an annulment. Her DAMN former Gamma f\*\*\*\*d us all, but you knew that already. You tipped her off." The Hood said, "Not with the intent to keep you two married. I had no idea she would react how she did. I'm here to simply warn you. If you do not make Lexi Scott insanely happy, you will hear from me again. You won't like it. You also won't tell her about his meeting, or I'll tell her you're married." I growled, "She doesn't want to know! I was going to tell her." The hood appeared to smile, "I am aware. I know Lexi Scott well." It was maddening to not tell him I knew he was her brother. I said, "Fine if you know I'm her string, then know I'm looking into her family. At her request." The hood said, "No, you won't. I'm looking into it discreetly. Too many eyes is not what that situation needs right now. Lots of pieces are in motion. I need Lexi safe. Unfortunately, you seem to be my best option to do that. I could force her home, but she'd leave. She lets your guards stay with her; she likes them. Trusts them even if she'd leave for Sally. Much as I hate to admit it with everything going on Lexi is safest with you when she's not working for me." I said, "Why do you hate that? Why don't you like me?" The hood said, "Other than you're married?" I said, "I only got married because..." The hood interrupted me, "I know very well why you got married. Keep Lexi Scott safe from everyone, that includes your own family members. Or we WILL meet under different circumstances. Be sure to let your father know if he upsets her, and I'll do more than break his damn nose. Don't forget you tell her about this meeting, and I drop the her string is a married Alpha bomb." He took off running before I could reply. It was ocially. My mate's brother REALLY didn't like me. But why? Being married wasn't a reason to hate me. Especially if he knew why. I sighed. I shifted MORE and went to meet up with Derrick.