


CHAPTER 31 Wintermoon Celebration

"Absolutely not!" Garrett snapped, slamming his hands down on his desk as he stood up. Jack just watched him unamused from his seat. "You can't keep pulling these power plays. I'm not a pup anymore. I won't be controlled by your whims and demands."

Jack's face hardened, lines etched deeper by the weight of expectation. "You think you're so grown up, Garrett, but you still don't understand the responsibilities that come with our bloodline. This isn't about control; it's about preserving our pack and ensuring its future." 

Garrett's eyes flared with anger as he shot back, "You've always used that excuse, Dad. But it's a convenient way to justify your domineering behavior. You've never cared about what I want or who I am as an individual."

Jack's voice turned cold, his eyes piercing through Garrett's defenses. "I've always done what's best for the pack, including pushing you to embrace your role. You're my eldest son, and it's your duty to lead."

Garrett's voice grew weary, tinged with years of pent-up frustration. "Duty, duty, duty. Is that all you care about? Isn't it enough that Bethany is a ruthless, raging bitch? You filled her mind with this awful rhetoric, and she is insufferable. What about her happiness? What about my happiness? What about the life I want to lead?"

"Happiness comes from fulfilling your obligations, Garrett. The Wintermoon Celebration is approaching, and you will attend. It's a chance to show unity, to support Matthew's claim or stake your own."

"Bullshit. You don't care about unity. You care about looking like the biggest, baddest wolf at the party. You don't give a damn about anything else."

"And what, Garrett, am I supposed to hide away like you and shirk my responsibilities? Grow up, boy. Life happens. You move on, or life moves on without you."

"I won't entertain this frivolous, fake celebration that means nothing in the long run. We have a peace treaty. There is no need for it."

"Boy, what are you afraid of? Is it because of the girl? You have claimed her. No one will touch her. Or are you afraid that she may still have feelings for Matthew? Is that it?"

"That fool has no claim on her heart."

"Then, get over your issues and get over your self-righteous bullshit. You will attend as tradition demands it."

"No,"

"Your mother will be heartbroken if you do not attend."

"Don't you dare bring her into this. I haven't been in years, and I won't be going now. No is my final answer. If you have a problem with it, you can leave. Better yet, I will have Adam escort you out."

"Are you trying to flex your strength on me? That's a dangerous game you're playing, boy! You will attend the Wintermoon Celebration. Do not make me force you."

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"You wouldn't fucking dare," Garrett snarled. The idea of his father using the Alpha call on him made his hackles rise. He and Jack both knew if Jack did that, it would be a brawl. It was a challenge. One of them would either have to submit or die.

'Let him use it. Let's settle this so we can stop being harassed by his incessant demands,' Berric growled.

'Calm down. Challenging him now would be a mistake. My father hasn't held the position of Alpha unchallenged for a century for no reason,' Garrett said. 'Don't let him rile him up, and don't let his wolf speak to you.'

Garrett hated how Jack would use his wolf to make Berric unstable. It would cause him to battle within himself to keep from retaliating against Jack, which at the time meant sleeping in the dungeon for a night or two, no matter how much his mother pleaded against it.

A flicker of regret softened Jack's features for a moment, but he quickly masked it with stern resolve. "Don't force me. Just come to the damn event and stop being foolish. It is not normal for a wolf to hide himself away from his own kind." His voice softened only for a moment, as Jack was clearly concerned for his son, even though he would never admit it.

Garrett's jaw tightened as he listened to his father's words, noting the concern in his voice. It almost made him want to apologize, but he resisted. With his voice filled with a mix of defiance and resignation, Garrett said firmly, "Fine. I'll attend your precious celebration."

Jack couldn't help but grin in satisfaction until Garrett continued

talking. "But know this: I won't be there to appease you or play your games."

Jack's eyes narrowed, and his voice carried a hint of warning. "Be careful, Garrett. You tread on dangerous ground. Our pack's unity is at stake, and your actions can have far-reaching consequences."

Garrett approached his father and towered over him with an air of newfound determination. "I refuse to live in the shadow of your expectations any longer. It's time for both of us to realize that strength lies in embracing diversity, not in enforcing conformity."

"What exactly are you getting at, boy?" Jack asked as his eyes narrowed.

"Your little plan to keep me under your thumb unraveled. You don't have control over me other than this pack bond, and if I didn't care for Mother as I do, I would have severed the connection years ago," Garrett responded.

Jack's face hardened once more, and his tone was icy. "You've always been headstrong, Garrett, with a flair for the dramatic. But mark my words, the Wintermoon Celebration will not be your stage for a temper tantrum. And if you're not careful, you may find yourself isolated and everything gifted to you taken away."

"I understand the stakes, and you should also understand what is at risk by my being there. I refuse to play nice, and if I am threatened, if she is threatened, I will do what I need to do to make sure what belongs to me is safe," Garrett warned.