

## Chapter 89

The morning sun filtered through tall trees surrounding the pack's central clearing. It painted a warm, golden hue across the grass, creating a serene backdrop for the assembly that was about to take place. The members of the Dark Moon Pack had gathered, a sense of anticipation hanging in the air. Everyone, high and alerted, anticipation building in their bones as they waited.

At the center of it all stood Derrick, flanked by Erin, Alex, Dylan, and his trusted advisors. His eyes were heavy with determination and resolve, his presence commanding attention. As the Alpha of such great and powerful kingdom, he felt the weight of his responsibility even more than ever. The missing pack deed of the kingdom that has been stolen will shake the pack's foundation in ways that it should not and he knew, his decision and actions would shape in the coming days would shape the fate of the pack.

Erin stood still beside him, her heart heavy and anxious, her hands lightly resting on his arm. She could feel the undercurrents of uncertainty and anxiety among the pack members and it was driving her insane already, she could only wonder how Derrick still stood strong regardless. Her eyes travel through the crowd and land on one person. They stood at the very far end, clad in grey overalls, their eyes filled with curiosity and uncertainty. They lift their eyes and their gaze locks.

Maxwell lets out a small smile immediately after his eyes meet Erin's. He probably should've been up there with the rest of them as Derrick speaks to the pack but what good is it? What has been taken is something no one should take lightly. Perhaps the turn has come, seeing the heavy resignation in Derrick's eyes, he might as well be making Maxwell's decision easier. He might as well be stepping down as pack alpha. With this, he straightens his back and waits.

Derrick cleared his throat, the sound cutting through the hushed murmurs. "Pack members of the Dark Moon Pack," his deep voice carried authority, resonating through the crowd. "We have faced challenges before, but the recent events demand our unity and strength more than ever."

The crowd fell silent, all eyes focused on their Alpha. If a pin were drop, it would be heard. Erin lets out a shaky breath, her eyes flicker through the crowd again. Erin could see the tension in their postures, the mixture of worry. These were people who had stood by their pack in both good times and bad, right now, bad time is about to befall their pack with the deed gone.

“I stand before you today to address a situation that threatens the core of our pack,” Derrick continued, his gaze sweeping across the faces before him. His words hike anticipation around, the pack members looking around themselves.

Derrick closes his eyes for a brief second and swallows harshly. “Our packs deed has been stolen, an act that challenges not only the security of the kingdom but also our unity as a pack,” A series of gasps thundered through the crowd, murmurs rippling around the people. Derrick’s voice is quick to silence them.

“When I was crowned Alpha King of this kingdom, I swore to protect the pack and its entirety and I would never go back on my words. I want to assure every one of you that we are taking this matter seriously. We will leave no stone unturned in apprehending the thief.”

“How can we trust you when the pack’s deed was stolen right under your nose? What’s the use of telling us?” A man yells boldly from the crowd. Two guards rush and grab him harshly.

“No, no, leave him.” Derrick cuts in quickly.

He sighs. “Your question is very important. I’ve been Alpha of the kingdom for years and never has this sort of issue occurred so I tell you, you can trust me. I am telling you all today because there’s not use keeping it a secret. It’s better you all know what has happened and you will also be updated on our search for the perpetrator. Anyone who rises from now onwards and declares a claim to the throne will be declared a traitor and will face punishment hard.” His voice hardens, his eyes going around the crowd.

Erin felt the surge of pride as she looked at Derrick. He was a true leader, his words carrying weight and conviction. She knew that the pack would rally behind him, no matter the odds.

“We have faced adversaries before,” Derrick continued, his tone unwavering and confident. “And we have emerged stronger every time. This is no different. We will face this challenge head-on, and we will triumph.”

As Derrick spoke, Erin could see the expression around her shift from worry to determination. The pack members were drawing strength from his words, she could almost feel the unity in the air.

“But I cannot do this alone,” Derrick’s voice held a note of humility and humbleness. “I need each one of you to stand by my side. We are a pack, a family. Together, we will overcome this obstacle no matter how hard it may be.” The crowd responded with a resounding howl, their voice echoing through the clearing, a declaration of their trust and loyalty.

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The gathering was now over and everyone had gone to their homes. Amelia stood by the door, waiting for Zach and Vanessa. She wrapped her arms around her body, the chilly air sending shivers down her spine, and her tongue darts out to lick her dry chapped lips. She looks out the door for the seventh time, wondering what was holding the two up when she heard footsteps approaching the door. She looks back, eyebrows furrowed until she lands her eyes on Maxwell.

“Oh, it’s you?”

Maxwell stood opposite her, dressed in a large coat like he was heading out of the pack. Amelia quirks and eyebrow up.

“Going out in this cold?” She asks although she couldn’t give two fucks but seeing the way he looked. She couldn’t help it.

Maxwell doesn't snicker as he would usually do and then follow it up with a snarky yet creepy word. He takes two steps closer to her, his eyes stuck on hers hard.

"I fail to see how that concerns you. You've done one heck of a job avoiding me, so keep it up and stay out of my way. Now, will you excuse me or do I have to bulldoze you out of there?" His voice grew deeper with each word leaving his lips. Amelia is slightly taken aback but she makes way for him to leave. She watches as he stormed out of the pack house.

Minutes later, Zach and Vanessa walk into the house, explaining why they took longer than expected but Amelia's head was only stuck on one thing.

Zach wraps his arm around Amelia as soon as he noticed the lost gaze her eyes carried. "What's wrong? Did something happen while we were away? He asks but she shakes her head. Nothing happened but at the same time something happened.

Maxwell looked different and not in a good way. She's had her doubts about him since day one but this solidifies her doubt. She has to find out what secret he is hiding and quickly.