

Rejecting My Lycan Mate: The Throne

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE – Suspicious

Dimitri's POV

“My King,” I heard Alpha Ezekiel's voice behind me.

I turned around and smiled.

I gritted my teeth and tried to stop myself from standing in front of her and shielding her with my body. I didn't want his eyes on her.

“Thank you, Landon,” she said politely.

“Can I help you with something, Landon?” I asked, wanting to change the subject. “We should really get going. We are expected at the party.”

“I know, my King,” Landon said. “I just wanted to stop you to ask about a meeting regarding the punishment of our former Luna. The council is worried, my King.”

I couldn't stop the quiet growl that escaped me.

“We will have the meeting after the meeting is done, Landon,” I said, trying to get a hold of my anger. “I already told you that.”

He nodded. “You did, my King. But the Alphas are talking amongst themselves. They noticed her absence, my King. We are worried about appearances and we have a proposal for you.”

I couldn't give a shit about appearances.

“I don't care about that,” I said, tightening my jaw. “I am more than happy to tell the Alphas what happened.”

Landon's eyes widened.

“No, my King!” he exclaimed, shaking his head. “You have to think about the consequences of that action. I strongly advise you to keep it a secret.”

I forced myself to take a deep breath.

“This is not the time or place to talk about this, Landon,” I said sternly. “We will discuss this at a more appropriate time.”

We were in the middle of the forest and I could hear the rest of our guests approaching us.

Landon sighed and glanced behind his shoulder.

“Yes, my King,” he said, but I could hear the disappointment in his voice. “Can we meet tomorrow morning?”

I really didn’t want to. I didn’t fucking care about their proposal. I couldn’t even answer him.

“Of course, Landon,” Maddie said politely. “Please excuse us. We really have to go.”

She took my hand in hers and we started walking away.

“Good job, Mads,” Will whispered.

“You shouldn’t have agreed,” I mumbled. “I don’t give a fuck about their proposal.”

“I know,” Maddie sighed. “But he wasn’t going to give up, Dimitri.”

I knew that. I took another deep breath and pulled Maddie to me.

“Thank you, princess,” I said, placing a soft kiss on her temple.

“It’s my job to support you,” she said, smiling at me. “I will always be here to do that.”

I leaned in and placed a soft kiss on her lips. She was right. She would always be here to support me. She would always be right by my side. No one could take her away from me.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE – Suspicious

Dimitri’s POV

“My King,” I heard Alpha Ezekiel’s voice behind me.

I turned around and smiled.

“Alpha Ezekiel,” I said politely. “Are you enjoying the party?”

He nodded and took a small sip of his drink.

“Very much so, my King,” he said, smiling at me. “Everything is just amazing. The food is great. Please give my thanks to your cook.”

I nodded, keeping a small smile on my face.

“Thank you, Alpha,” I said. “Daniel will be thrilled to know that you liked his food.”

Alpha Ezekiel smiled again and looked around the room.

“Where is our lovely Queen?” he asked, looking back at me. “I was hoping she would grace us with her presence tonight.”

I narrowed my eyes slightly but forced myself to keep smiling. Why did he want her here? Was he the fucking traitor? Did he want to hurt my mate? Oh, I was going to rip him to pieces.

“Our Queen isn’t feeling well,” Will answered instead of me. “She is resting, but she will attend the second challenge tomorrow.”

Alpha Ezekiel looked at Will and his eyes widened a little.

“Is she okay?” he asked. “Is she sick?”

His voice sounded like he was genuinely concerned, but his interest in her pissed me off. Why was he concerned? Why did he care? Was it just because she was his Queen and the worry came from the loyalty he felt, or was there more to it? Did he want her? Did he know who she was? Was he planning to take her...

Calm down, Dimitri. Will mind-linked me and interrupted my thoughts.

I gulped and forced myself to take a deep, slow breath.

“She is more than okay, Alpha,” Will said, smiling at him. “She just needed some time to rest.”

Alpha Ezekiel nodded and looked back at me. I forced myself to smile.

“Please take good care of her, my King,” he said, bowing his head at me. “She is important to us all.”

I tightened my jaw and pushed myself to keep smiling. I was sure it looked more like I was baring my teeth at him, but there was nothing else I could have done. I wanted to grab him by his neck and ask him what he knew about the traitor. I wanted to rip him to fucking pieces. I wanted to kill every single one of them only to make sure that she was safe. I wanted them all gone.

But I couldn't do any of that. I had to remain calm and collected.

"Of course, Alpha," I said, hoping my voice sounded as calm as I intended it to be. "She is in very good hands. She is safe."

"That is very good to know, my King," he said, giving me another small smile. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go find my Beta before he talks someone's ear off."

Alpha Ezekiel bowed again before he turned around and walked away.

I drank my whiskey in one sip.

"You need to calm down a little, Dimitri," Will said quietly. "They will figure out that something is going on if you continue like this."

I felt a wave of anger wash over me. Will was right, but his words still pissed me off.

"I know," I mumbled, looking around the room. "It's just so fucking hard, Will. I want to kill them all just to make sure that she is safe."

Will sighed and gave me a small nod.

"I understand, Dimitri," Will said quietly. "I would want to do it too if this was about Ali. But that won't help. We need to remain calm and focus on finding the man who is really guilty."

I took a deep breath and gulped.

"Keep your eyes open," I said, narrowing my eyes at Alpha Lucius. "Let me know if you notice anyone acting suspicious."

Will nodded and looked around.

"Kendrick is talking to Alpha Theodore," he said.

I grabbed the whiskey bottle and poured myself another glass.

"I know," I said, glancing at them. "They've been talking for a while."

Will narrowed his eyes slightly and shook his head.

"Everything they do looks suspicious," he mumbled, taking a small sip of his drink. "I can't even believe that one of them is bold enough to go against you."

"They are hungry for power, Will," I said, tightening my jaw. "All of them would give everything they have to be in my position. All of them want the power that I have."

But none of them fucking knew that I couldn't give a crap about my power. None of them knew that I only cared about my throne because it was my father's legacy. None of them knew that my mate was the only fucking thing in this world I truly cared about.

"But why now, Dimitri?" Will asked, furrowing his brows. "They could have attacked when you were taking over the Kingdom. You were more vulnerable then than you are now. What changed?"

My stomach twisted. The only logical answer to that question was that I had found my mate.

"Maddie," I said, gulping down my whiskey again. "I am more vulnerable now, Will. I have everything to lose now. They know that."

I loved my Kingdom and my pack. I loved being a King, helping my people, and guiding them. My father had been preparing me for this role ever since I was a child. I was born to be a King and I hoped each and every day that my father was proud of me.

But I would choose Maddie over my throne and I was sure that my father would do the same if he was put in a position where he had to choose. He was the one who taught me that mates always come first. He loved my mother more than anything else in this world. I wondered if she loved him just as much as he loved her.

Will shook his head and tightened his jaw.

"Fuckers," he muttered, taking another sip of his drink.

I gulped and focused my attention on Alpha Theodore and Kendrick. I couldn't hear what they were talking about. The room was packed with guests and members of my pack. Everyone was talking, smiling, and having a good time.

"I am going to mark Ali tonight," Will said, making me look at him.

I raised an eyebrow and smiled.

"Congratulations," I said, raising my glass at him. "Will her parents come here to get to know you?"

Will shook his head. "We talked about it. I will go to her pack when things cool down a bit here."

I nodded and looked back at Alpha Theodore. Kendrick wasn't with him anymore.

"I am really happy for you, Will," I said, trying to find Kendrick in the crowd. "Ali is a great girl."

“She is,” Will said softly. “I am so in love with her. I can’t wait to mark her. I can’t wait to make her mine.”

I smiled and glanced at him. I remembered that feeling all too well. Will was lucky. I had to wait nine months until I could finally sink my canines into my mate’s neck.

“Take tomorrow off,” I told him. “Spend the day with your mate. I will see you tomorrow night at the second challenge.”

“Are you sure?” Will asked and I nodded.

“I am completely sure, Will,” I said. “You will want to stay in bed with her.”

I looked at him and smirked a little.

“Trust me,” I added, making him chuckle.

“Well, you don’t have to tell me twice,” he said, grinning at me.

I shook my head and looked back at the crowd. My eyes fell on Alpha Lucius and Kendrick. The fuckers were talking to each other and they both looked very concerned about something.

I tightened my jaw and forced myself to hold back a growl that tried to escape me.

I wished I could hear them talking. I wished they would say something that would justify me killing them on the fucking spot.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO – Making Her Mine

William’s POV

I knocked on the door gently as I opened it and walked inside Dimitri’s office. Ellie and Ali were sitting on the couch. Maddie was pacing around the room.

My eyes fell on my beautiful mate and I couldn’t help but smile.

“Hi, beautiful,” I said as I reached out for her.

She blushed a little and smiled. She stood up and walked into my arms. I could feel my heart skipping a beat. I buried my nose into her hair and took a deep breath. I missed her so fucking much. It didn’t matter if I was away from her for only a minute. I missed her regardless of the time I spent away from her.

“Where is Dimitri?” Maddie asked, making me look at her.

“He is still at the party,” I said, giving her a small smile. “He will be here soon.”

Maddie nodded and continued pacing around.

“Is everything okay?” I asked worriedly.

She looked worried and uneasy.

“Everything is fine,” Elie said, giving me a small smile. “Maddie is just nervous without Dimitri.”

I narrowed my eyes slightly. I wasn’t convinced, but then Ali placed a kiss on my collarbone and I completely forgot about everything else. I looked down at her and smiled. She would become forever mine tonight.

“Are you ready to leave?” I asked and she nodded.

I looked back up at Maddie and my sister.

“Good night,” I said as I took Ali’s hand in mine. “I will see you tomorrow.”

My sister smiled and waved at me.

“Good night,” Maddie mumbled, but she didn’t even look at us.

I furrowed my brows again. What the hell was that about?

Is everything really okay? I mind-linked my sister.

She rolled her eyes and nodded.

Yes. She said. Maddie is fine. Go mark your mate.

She smirked at me and I frowned. How the hell did she know? Maybe Ali told her.

Well, no. That didn’t make any sense. Ali was a bit shy. I seriously doubted that she would tell Ellie about our plans tonight. Maybe...

“Will?” my mate called me softly, interrupting my thoughts.

I looked at her and she raised her brows slightly.

“Are we leaving?” she asked and I nodded.

“Yes, beautiful,” I said, giving her a small smile. “I am sorry. I got lost in thought.”

I tightened my hold on her hand and started walking out of the office. My heart started racing as soon as we stepped out into the hallway. I pulled her to me immediately and I placed a kiss on her temple.

“Are you sure about this, my love?” I asked, running my hand down her back. “We don’t have to do it if you are not ready.”

She wrapped an arm around my waist and looked up at me.

“I am ready,” she said softly. “I want you, Will. I need you.”

My stomach did a weird flip and I growled quietly. She would have all of me. She already did have all of me. We would just confirm it tonight.

“Fuck, beautiful,” I mumbled as I leaned in and kissed her. “You already have me.”

Kissing and walking at the same time was a bit weird. Thankfully, our room wasn’t far and we were entering it just a few moments later.

I lowered my lips to her jaw as I closed and locked the door behind us. She grabbed the back of my suit jacket and pressed herself closer to me.

“You look amazing in this suit,” she mumbled quietly. “I couldn’t keep my eyes off you the entire night.”

I smiled and looked up at her.

“I noticed,” I said as I caressed her cheek with my thumb. “I saw you drooling a little.”

She frowned and shook her head.

“I wasn’t drooling,” she said, making me laugh.

I leaned in and captured her lips with mine. She maybe wasn’t, but I surely was. The dress she was wearing kept me so fucking hard the entire night. I had to keep readjusting myself so people wouldn’t notice.

I turned her around and pressed her against the door. I lowered my lips to her neck and started sucking on her marking spot.

“Will,” she moaned my name and I almost exploded.

“Fuck, beautiful,” I mumbled as I licked her neck. “You are driving me crazy.”

She cried out in pleasure and I could already smell her arousal. It made my heart skip a beat. I couldn't wait to be inside her. I couldn't fucking wait until my canines pierced her soft skin.

"Can I take the dress off?" I asked as I reached behind her and found the zipper.

"Yes," she mumbled. "Please."

I gulped as I started pulling the zipper down. The sleeve of her dress fell from her shoulder and I saw her perfect breast.

"Oh, fuck," I cried out as I leaned in and placed a soft kiss on it.

I looked up at her as I licked her nipple gently. Her eyes widened and she squirmed a little.

"Does that feel good?" I asked and she gulped.

"Yes, please," she mumbled and I licked her nipple again.

She gasped a little when I started sucking on it gently.

"Oh, Will," she mumbled, pressing herself closer to me. "Don't stop, please."

"I will never fucking stop, beautiful," I mumbled as I pulled her dress completely off.

I focused on her other breast, licking the nipple gently before I sucked on it too. I rubbed the other one with my thumb, making Ali squirm and moan quietly. I ran my hand down her belly until I reached the hem of her underwear. I looked up at her and saw a nervous look on her face.

"I can stop, beautiful," I said quietly. "Just say the words. Nothing has to happen tonight. I am yours and you are mine even without the mark."

Ali shook her head. She placed her hand over mine and pushed it down gently.

"Touch me," she said softly. "Please."

I was going to fucking pass out.

I kneeled in front of her and started pulling her underwear down. I kept my eyes on hers, watching the lust and love sparkle in them. It made my heart expand. It made my love for her grow.

I lifted her leg and placed it over my shoulder. She gasped a little as she pressed herself closer to the wall to stop herself from losing balance.

“I got you, my love,” I told her, keeping my eyes on hers still. “I won’t let you fall.”

She smiled and ran her fingers through my hair.

“I love you, Will,” she said softly and I felt a wave of emotions rush over me.

It was the first time she said it.

“Oh, I love you too, my beautiful Ali,” I whispered as I finally looked down at her pussy.

It was fucking perfect. It was wet and ready for me. It was mine and only fucking mine.

I groaned as I leaned closed and placed a soft kiss on her pubic bone. She gasped and I felt the muscles in her thigh clench.

“Are you okay, my love?” I asked, looking up at her.

There was a mixture of nervousness and desire on her face.

“Yes,” she whispered. “Don’t stop, please.”

I smiled a little as I looked back down at her pussy. Oh, she didn’t have to worry about me stopping. I was so fucking sure that I would get addicted to her juices the moment my tongue tasted them for the first time.

I lifted my hand and used my fingers to spread her lips open. She squirmed a little and I groaned. I could see the juices coming out of her and my dick twitched painfully. I needed to be inside her as soon as possible.

But I definitely needed to taste her first.

I looked up at her as I leaned in and licked her clit gently. She gasped and her eyes widened. My tastebuds exploded and I was instantly addicted to her.

Just as I knew I would be.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE – You Fucked Up

Madeline’s POV

“This is just getting ridiculous,” I said, shaking my head. “This is getting out of hand. He needs to let me help him.”

Ellie sighed, crossing her arms over her chest.

“He isn’t going to do that, Maddie,” she said. “It’s dangerous.”

I looked at her and resisted the urge to roll my eyes.

“How?” I asked. “It’s not like they can tell when I read their minds. It’s not like they can feel it. I could be reading your mind right now and you wouldn’t know.”

Ellie sighed again.

“It’s not about that, Madeline,” she said, shaking her head. “It’s about what happens after. Dimitri doesn’t want to risk it and we all agree with him. It’s not worth it. He will find him without your powers.”

I furrowed my brows in confusion.

“What could happen after?” I asked. “They will want to know how we found out? As if Dimitri would want to explain that to them. They don’t have to know how we found out. We can just...”

“It’s not about that, Maddie,” Ellie interrupted me. “It’s about you. Dimitri doesn’t want to risk you getting hurt. You saw what happened yesterday. You still don’t know what you can do. You didn’t even know you were using your powers to take away Dimitri’s anger. You could expose yourself accidentally while trying to read their minds. You could get hurt doing it. It’s not worth it, Maddie.”

I took a deep breath and released it slowly.

“I can practice here,” I said. “No one would find out.”

Ellie raised an eyebrow at me.

“What if you lose control over it?” she asked. “What if you can control the emotions of a large group of people? What if your powers got out of control and you did something that every single one of them would notice?”

I tightened my jaw and gulped.

“It’s not worth it, Maddie,” Ellie added, shaking her head at me. “Dimitri will find another way to figure it all out.”

I forced myself to take a deep breath. What Ellie was saying made sense, but I was still convinced that they were too careful. I was sure that nothing bad would happen. I was sure that I would be able to figure it out and everything would end.

“What if the traitor isn’t even here?” Ellie asked, making me furrow my brows.

“Alpha Alistair said...” I spoke, but she interrupted me again.

“He has no proof, Mads,” Ellie sighed, shaking her head. “That is just his opinion.”

I bit the inside of my cheek and gulped. I had to tell Ellie what I found out at breakfast.

“I think it’s Alpha Lucius,” I said quietly.

Ellie furrowed her brows. She was silent for a moment.

“Why do you think that?” she asked.

I glanced toward the door. I couldn’t let Dimitri know that I used my powers to read Luna Jennifer’s thoughts. At least not yet.

“I read Luna Jennifer’s mind and...,” I started speaking, but Ellie’s loud growl interrupted me.

“You what?!” she exclaimed as she stood up. “I told you not to do that, Madeline!”

I sighed and shook my head at her.

“Well, nothing bad happened, did it?” I mumbled. “I controlled it and now I know...”

“You were lucky!” Ellie exclaimed, interrupting me again. “You could have lost control over it! You could have hurt yourself!”

Ellie started pacing around and shaking her head.

“Oh, Dimitri is going to kill me,” she muttered. “He didn’t want you to go because he was afraid of you getting hurt.”

“I didn’t get hurt, Ellie,” I said, making her look at me and narrow her eyes. “Everything is fine. I am fine.”

She took a deep breath and released it slowly.

“Thank Goddess for that,” Ellie said quietly. “But you risked so much, Maddie. You fucked up.”

I sighed and crossed my arms over my chest.

“Well, it’s too late now,” I said. “I did it and I know something. Do you want me to tell you what I found out or not?”

Ellie tightened her jaw and closed her eyes. She took a deep breath and released it slowly.

“You are driving me insane,” she mumbled as she opened her eyes. “What did you find out?”

I glanced toward the door again and approached Ellie.

“Alpha Lucius thinks that Dimitri doesn’t deserve me,” I said and I felt bile rising and burning the back of my throat. “He thinks that Dimitri isn’t good enough for me and that I deserve a better, stronger mate. He would also like to...”

I stopped talking to take another deep breath. I was disgusted by what I had to say next.

“Do things to me,” I mumbled quietly. “He believes he would be a better mate for me.”

Ellie’s eyes widened.

“Oh, Dimitri is going to rip him to pieces,” she mumbled, shaking her head a little.

I nodded and took a deep breath.

“I just don’t understand why he told that to Luna Jennifer,” I said, furrowing my brows. “She is his mate. Why would he admit something like that?”

Ellie sighed and sat back down on the couch.

“Alpha Lucius is known for his adventures outside of the mate bond,” Ellie explained. “His mate can feel it every time he cheats on her so it’s not like she doesn’t know about it. I am surprised that he talks about something like that with her, though.”

“Maybe she overheard him talking to someone else,” I said, shrugging a little.

Ellie nodded. “That’s more likely.”

She sighed and narrowed her eyes slightly.

“Did you hear anything else?” she asked and I shook my head.

“No,” I said. “But that is pretty huge, isn’t it? If Alpha Lucius thinks that Dimitri doesn’t deserve me, maybe he thinks that he doesn’t deserve to be King either.”

“Maybe,” Ellie mumbled.

“We should tell Dimitri,” I said, but Ellie shook her head.

“Not yet,” she said. “Let me look into him a bit more, okay? Dimitri will rip him apart if we tell him and Alpha Lucius could be just a horny old man who is jealous of Dimitri and thinks that you are pretty.”

I raised an eyebrow at her.

“Do you think that’s possible?” I asked.

She nodded and sighed.

“He is a pervert,” she mumbled, rolling her eyes. “I wouldn’t be surprised if it was just about sex for him. He wouldn’t be a good King anyway. He always ran from any kind of responsibility. I doubt that he is interested in that.”

“Okay,” I said, taking another deep breath. “See if you can find something useful. Dimitri doesn’t need to know about it if it’s just about me. I don’t want to stress him out even more.”

Ellie nodded. He wanted to say something else, but she was interrupted when the door opened and Dimitri walked inside.

I smiled immediately. I missed him.

“Hi, princess,” he said as he closed the door and approached me. “Are you tired?”

He wrapped his arms around me and I sighed contently.

“A bit,” I said, placing a kiss on his chest. “Is the party over?”

“Mostly,” he said, placing a kiss on my temple. “A few brave ones are still drinking and talking. I excused myself. I missed you too much to stay longer.”

I smiled at him and he caressed my cheek.

“Let’s go to bed, princess,” he said softly and I nodded.

Dimitri looked up at Ellie and smiled.

“Good night, Ellie,” he said as he took my hand in his. “I will see you tomorrow.”

“Good night,” Ellie said quietly.

Dimitri started leading me out. I looked at Ellie and she gave me a small nod.

I will figure it out. She mind-linked me. Don’t worry.

I gave her a small smile just as Dimitri closed the office door. I focused on him and tried to forget about everything that was going on. He was more important than anything or anyone else.

He smiled and leaned in to kiss me softly. I melted into his arms and my body relaxed immediately.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR – Skol Knows

Dimitri's POV

Skol's whining woke me up from my peaceful sleep. I groaned and tried to shut him out.

'No, Dimitri,' he whined. 'Let me out.'

I tried to push him back, but he wouldn't budge.

'Let me out,' he growled, trying to push me to shift. 'Let me out.'

What the hell was wrong with him?

I groaned and opened my eyes slowly. It was still dark outside. Maddie was sleeping peacefully next to me.

What the fuck did Skol want?

'What the hell, Skol?' I mumbled, pulling Maddie closer to me. 'Let me sleep.'

'No, Dimitri,' he whined again. 'You need to let me out. I can feel him.'

Feel him? What the fuck was he talking about? Was someone here? Was someone on our floor?

I opened my eyes abruptly and looked at the door. I tensed up and prepared myself to jump out of bed. I was going to kill whoever it was. I was going to fucking rip them to pieces. Were they here to hurt Maddie? Were they here to...

'No, Dimitri,' Skol interrupted my thoughts. 'No one is here. I can feel our pup, Dimitri.'

My heart stopped beating.

'She is pregnant,' Skol said, his voice trembling with excitement. 'Our mate is pregnant.'

I turned to look at Maddie and I could feel the tears burning the corners of my eyes.

'Are you sure?' I asked as I removed the blanket from her body.

I looked at her lower belly and I shivered.

'Completely sure,' Skol said. 'I can feel him.'

“Oh, Goddess,” I cried out as I lowered myself until I reached her lower belly.

I placed a hand on it and I felt my heart explode with all the love that overwhelmed me.

“Hi, my beautiful little pup,” I mumbled as I leaned in and placed a soft kiss below her belly button. “It’s your dad. I love you so much.”

Maddie stirred and sighed quietly. I felt a tear fall down my cheek.

“Maddie, princess?” I called her as I caressed her lower belly with my thumb.

She furrowed her brows a little and made herself more comfortable. I smiled and caressed her lower belly again.

“Maddie?” I called her a bit louder.

She sighed and frowned a little. She opened her eyes slowly and I could tell that she was confused when she didn’t see me next to her. She looked down at me and furrowed her brows.

“What are you doing?” she asked sleepily. “Come back and hold me.”

I chuckled and gave her a small nod.

“In a minute, princess,” I said. “I need to tell you something first.”

She laid her head back down, closed her eyes, and sighed.

“It better be good,” she mumbled. “I am not happy that you woke me up.”

I had to bite my cheek to stop myself from laughing.

“Skol woke me up to tell me that he can feel our pup in here,” I said softly as I placed another kiss below her belly button.

She froze for a second. Her eyes snapped open and she lifted her head abruptly. She looked at me wide-eyed and I grinned.

“Is that good enough?” I asked, trying so hard not to chuckle.

She gasped and looked at my hand on her lower belly.

“Is he sure?” she asked quietly. “Am I really pregnant?”

“He is sure, princess,” I said, reaching up and caressing her cheek. “We are going to have a little pup.”

I saw tears in her eyes and her emotions overwhelmed me completely. She was happy. She was excited. She already loved our pup more than anything else in this world. But she was also a little bit nervous and worried.

“There is nothing to be nervous about, my love,” I said, resting my head on her belly. “You two are my greatest treasure. Nothing will happen to you. I will always keep you safe.”

She ran her fingers through my hair and sniffled quietly. I looked up at her and saw her smiling softly.

“I know,” she said, caressing my cheek. “And we will always keep you safe. We both love you so much. You are going to be an amazing dad.”

Another tear fell on my cheek and Maddie wiped it away.

“And you are going to be an amazing mom,” I said softly. “Our pup will adore you. He is the luckiest pup in the world because you will be his mom.”

Maddie smiled and ran her fingers through my hair again.

‘I want to see him,’ Skol whined. ‘I want to smell him.’

‘There is nothing to see, Skol,’ I told him.

She wasn’t even showing yet and she wouldn’t be for a while. She was probably pregnant for only a few days. Lycan wolves could feel their pups very early in the pregnancy. Skol felt him even before Skye did.

‘Let me out,’ he whined, pushing me to shift again.

“Skol wants to feel the pup,” I told Maddie. “I need to let him out or he will drive me crazy.”

Maddie chuckled and gave me a small nod.

“It’s okay,” she said. “Let him out.”

I placed another soft kiss on her belly before I reluctantly stood up and took a few steps away from the bed.

‘Only a few minutes, Skol,’ I told him. ‘I want to be with her.’

He didn’t respond. He just took over before I could even blink. He whined and practically threw himself on the bed.

'Easy,' I growled at him.

Maddie chuckled and reached out for him. He gently pulled her to him, burying his snout into her neck.

"Hi, Skol," she said softly. "I missed you."

'Oh, I love her so much,' he told me and I smiled a little.

He lowered his head until his snout reached her lower belly. He whined quietly and took a deep breath.

'I can smell him!' he said excitedly. 'Our pup is in here!'

My heart skipped a beat and I felt it expand. I didn't even know that my heart could do that.

Skol placed his giant paw on her stomach and I couldn't help but chuckle. She looked so tiny compared to him. Maddie ran her fingers through his fur and he purred.

"I love you, Skol," Maddie said softly as she leaned in and placed a kiss on his giant arm.

He lifted his head and licked her cheek, making her chuckle.

'I love her too,' he told me. 'I love her with my entire heart.'

'She knows,' I told him softly.

Skol looked back down at her belly and purred again. He leaned in and licked it gently.

'My pup,' he mumbled quietly. 'My beautiful, little pup.'

Maddie kept running her finger through his fur. She kept caressing his giant body. She kept pressing herself closer to him. She kept hugging him. Skol was in heaven and I wasn't sure if he would ever let me shift back.

'Probably not,' he said, making me roll my eyes.

He licked her belly again and rested his giant head on it. Maddie scratched him behind his ears and he shivered in delight.

I chuckled and pushed for him to let me out.

'Just one more minute,' he complained.

'No,' I said sternly. 'I will let you out again tomorrow.'

He whined as he lifted his head and licked Maddie's cheek again. She placed a kiss on his snout and I was sure he was going to melt into a puddle. He somehow managed to get out of bed and I shifted back immediately.

"You will break him down if you keep spoiling him like that," I said teasingly as I got back into bed with my beautiful mate.

She chuckled and wrapped her arms around me.

"I love him so much," she said. "I can't help it."

I cupped her cheek and took a deep breath.

"We are going to be mom and dad," I mumbled quietly.

She smiled brightly and nodded.

"I love you, Dimitri," she said quietly.

I leaned in and pressed my lips against hers.

"I love you too, my princess."

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE – Not Funny

Dimitri's POV

If someone would describe me as an overprotective and an over-possessive mate I would tell them that they hadn't seen anything yet.

Now that I knew Maddie was pregnant, I would be damned if I let her out of my sight for even one second. Especially in a situation like this when everyone was here and where there was someone who wanted to take my throne. My mate and my pup were a sure way to do that. I would give up everything for them.

"Princess," I mumbled softly as I approached her and wrapped my arms around her from behind.

I placed a hand on her lower belly and kissed her shoulder. I was holding my entire world in my arms and that feeling was so fucking hard to describe.

"How are you feeling?" I asked her. "Are you nauseous? Are you uncomfortable?"

Maddie chuckled and shook her head.

"I am perfectly fine," she said, placing her hand over mine. "I am only a few days pregnant. I think that the symptoms will come a bit later."

I knew that, but I had to ask. I had to do something if she was in any kind of pain. I placed a kiss on her temple and rested my head against hers.

"There will be no breakfasts or lunches or dinners without me present," I told her as I gently caressed her lower belly. "You won't be leaving my side from now on. Not even for one second. Am I clear?"

"Really?" Maddie asked, frowning a little. "And I was just about to ask you if I could go on a three-day hike outside of our borders. Alone, of course."

My heart stopped beating even though I knew she was messing with me.

"Not funny, Madeline," I grumbled, making her chuckle.

"I thought it was funny," she said, stepping away from my embrace.

She turned around and grinned at me.

"We should work on your humor," I said as I watched her tie her hair into a ponytail. "You suck at it, princess."

She laughed and shook her head. "You are biased. We need a third party to determine that."

I rolled my eyes at her and pressed another kiss on her temple.

"Hurry up," I said as I walked out of the bathroom to finish getting ready. "Ellie is waiting for us in our office. We need to prepare everything for tonight."

Tonight was the second challenge. I still had to choose an object or a person to be hunted during the challenge. I was so focused on finding the traitor that I almost forgot about it.

"Dimitri?" Maddie called me and I turned around to look at her.

She furrowed her brows and bit her lower lip.

"Should we tell them about the pup?" she asked quietly.

I took a deep breath and released it slowly. I wasn't sure what to tell her.

"Maybe it would be best to wait a bit," she said. "Maybe a few weeks."

That actually wasn't a terrible idea. The less people knew the better.

"I agree, princess," I said, giving her a small smile. "We should wait to tell them."

She smiled back at me and I had to force myself to walk away. I wanted to take her back to our bed and just cuddle up next to her. I wanted to kiss her and caress her lower belly. I didn't want to do anything or go anywhere.

I chuckled quietly and shook my head. Finding my mate really made me a horrible worker.

I put on a sweater and jeans. We had no meeting today and I was a bit relieved. I spent the last few days in a suit and I was happy I could put on a little bit less formal outfit today.

"I am ready," Maddie said as she walked out of the bathroom.

I turned around to look at her and saw her eyeing me up and down. I smirked a little.

"How the hell do you manage to look so good in everything you put on?" she asked as she approached me. "You look amazing in a suit. You look amazing in jeans. You look amazing in sweats. You look just perfect wearing nothing."

She sighed as she wrapped her arms around my waist and looked up at me.

"How is that possible?" she mumbled, making me laugh.

I smirked a little and caressed her cheek.

"I am your mate," I said. "You are biased. We need a third party to determine if I look amazing in everything."

I bit the inside of my cheek to stop myself from grinning.

"Or nothing," I added, making her gasp.

"No freaking way," she said, growling quietly. "Only I get to see that."

I laughed and leaned in to kiss her.

"Of course, my princess," I said, pressing her closer to me. "I am all yours. No one else can see me naked. Only you."

I caressed her cheek and kissed her softly. She sighed, tightening her arms around me.

"I like it when you are jealous," I mumbled against her lips.

She chuckled and shook her head.

“Of course I’m jealous,” she said, leaning in and placing a kiss on my chest. “No one gets to have you.”

She rested her head on my chest and sighed.

“You are mine,” she added quietly and my knees buckled.

“I am yours, my princess,” I said softly, tangling my fingers into her hair and pressing her closer. “Only yours.”

She looked up at me and smiled. I caressed her cheek and took her hand in mine.

“Come on,” I said as I started walking toward the door. “We need to go. We have a lot of work to do.”

“Did you choose an object or a person for the Pack Hunt tonight?” she asked as we walked out of our bedroom.

“Not yet,” I said, closing the door.

“Maybe they could hunt me,” she said, making me growl at her.

I looked at her and saw her smirking at me.

“As I said, you are not funny, Madeline,” I said, shaking my head at her.

She chuckled and placed a kiss on my upper arm.

“I am hilarious,” she said. “Ask anyone.”

I shook my head and rolled my eyes. Imagining someone hunting her was not funny at all. It was terrifying. Like I would ever let something like that happen. Even if it was just pretend. There was no fucking way.

We reached our office and we walked inside. Ellie was sitting at Maddie’s desk. She looked up from the file she was reading.

“What took you so long?” she asked, closing the file and standing up. “We have work to do.”

“Sorry, Ellie,” Maddie said as she let my hand go and approached her desk. “What are those?”

She picked up one of the files from the desk and opened it.

“Financial statements from every pack,” Ellie said. “I was looking through them. I wanted to see if there were any unusual transactions lately.”

“Did you find anything?” she asked.

“Nothing,” Ellie sighed. “Alpha Lincoln is in some financial trouble, but other than that there is nothing.”

“Mind if I go through them?” she asked, looking at me.

“Of course not, princess,” I said, giving her a small smile.

She smiled back at me and sat in her chair. My heart skipped a beat. I still couldn’t believe that she was carrying my pup.

“Pack Hunt,” Ellie said, drawing my attention to her.

I took a deep breath and nodded. I had to focus on the second challenge tonight. I couldn’t wait for the meeting and the tournament to be over. It seemed like it lasted forever. I wanted everyone gone so I could focus on my mate and my pup.

My pup. I was going to be a dad.

I still couldn’t believe it.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX – He Is Useless

Unknown’s POV

“Is everything ready?” I asked as I put my hands in my pockets.

I was looking through the window into the thick forest that surrounded my new home. It was just perfect. I couldn’t wait to build my future here. All of my dreams would come true in this place. I would finally get everything I always wanted to have. I would finally become everything I was always supposed to be.

“Yes, Alpha,” Brody said. “Everything will be over tonight.”

I smiled and took a deep breath. I was so excited and I could barely think about anything else other than finally seeing her tonight.

“What about Kendrick, Alpha?” Brody asked and my mood worsened instantly.

I fucking hated that man. He was nothing but a greedy, little rat who thought that he would get what he fucking wanted by sucking up to me.

“He is a useless piece of thrash,” I said, growling quietly. “We don’t need him.”

Brody was silent for a moment.

“Are you sure, Alpha?” he asked. “He has insight into...”

“What?” I interrupted him and turned around. “He has insight into what, Brody?”

“Alpha Dimitri,” Brody said, gulping. “He knows him.”

I snorted and shook my head. I approached my desk and sat down.

“Does he?” I asked mockingly. “I am beginning to think that he doesn’t know shit. The fucker didn’t even manage to get inside the fucking dungeon.”

I still couldn’t believe how incompetent he really was. He didn’t even notice that Dimitri’s men were following him everywhere he went. Stupid fucker.

Brody furrowed his brows and sighed.

“What will happen to him?” he asked.

“I don’t fucking care,” I said. “We don’t need him and we don’t need Janet. Their only fucking task was to keep her away from him. Janet’s only fucking task was to get her to leave the pack and she couldn’t even do that. I don’t need them. They are both fucking useless.”

The only thing Kendrick knew how to do was suck up and ask for money. He always believed that he had control over the Kingdom because he was sucking up to Janet and telling her what her mate should do. But Dimitri’s father was smarter than him. He let Janet believe that he was doing things her way when in reality he was doing the complete opposite. The funny thing was, neither Janet nor Kendrick ever noticed. They believed they were in charge and they never cared to actually look into what Alpha Dominic was really doing. Alpha Dominic was a lot of things, but he wasn’t a fucking idiot.

“So you will let Dimitri kill Janet and Savannah?” Brody asked, furrowing his brows. “What about your child? He needs his mother.”

I rolled my eyes at Brody.

“I am not even sure if that pup is mine,” I said. “Savannah fucked everything with a dick. Besides, Dimitri found him a good home. He is better off with them than with Savannah.”

I looked back out the window and smiled.

“Also, the only pups I will have will be with her,” I said and my heart skipped a beat. “She will be the mother of my children, no one else.”

“Kendrick never figured out that all of this was about her, did her?” Brody mumbled, making me look back at him.

I sighed and shook my head.

“I already told you that he is useless,” I said. “All he cares about is that throne and the power he thinks he would have over me. He completely missed the whole point.”

That throne would be mine, of course, but that was only an added bonus. My main prize was her. My main desire was her.

“And you let him believe that it was all about the throne,” Brody said, smirking a little. “That was smart.”

I laughed and leaned back in my chair.

“Of course it was smart,” I said. “I am not a stupid man, Brody. If I had told him what this whole thing is really about, he would never be so keen to help me. He wants her too. He believes that we will all have her. Do you think that he would be okay with me taking her for myself?”

Brody shook his head.

“His only motivation is power, Brody,” I added, sighing quietly. “Everyone is motivated by something. I was smart enough to use his motives to my advantage. Letting him believe that this was all about the throne and letting him believe that he would have some kind of power in my Kingdom was the best thing I could have done.”

Kendrick was so fucking easy to manipulate and so was Janet. When she saw how much she looked like her mother, Janet lost it completely. All she was talking about was Mike remembering his fated mate and wanting her. Sometimes I wondered if Janet even understood what being dead meant. But I wasn't complaining. Her jealousy served its purpose.

Too fucking bad that neither Kendrick nor Janet completed their tasks completely. Both of them fucked up.

“What about the rogues?” Brody asked after a few moments of silence.

“Kill them all,” I said. “We won't need them again after tonight and I am not paying them what I promised. I am not a fucking idiot.”

Brody furrowed his brows a little.

“Are you sure that we won’t need them?” Brody asked. “What if he attacks?”

I snorted and shook my head.

“He won’t get a chance to attack, Brody,” I said. “I will have what he treasures most. I will blackmail him and he will give me his throne in a blink of an eye.”

“And then?” Brody asked.

“And then I will kill him,” I said, smirking. “I will make him watch as I fuck his mate and then I will end his life. I will make him think that he will get her back, but that will never happen.”

I could already imagine it happening and I got hard instantly. I couldn’t fucking wait until I was buried deep inside her.

“I am excited for you, Alpha,” Brody said, giving me a small smile. “You deserve this.”

I smiled back at him.

“I deserve her,” I said. “She was always supposed to be mine. The Goddess made a mistake by giving her to him. She was meant to be mine and she would be mine.”

I looked through the window and took a deep breath.

Only a few more hours. Only a few more hours and she would finally be here. Only a few more hours and I would finally see her again. Only a few more hours and I would finally taste her lips.

I closed my eyes and tightened my jaw. Those few hours would be the longest and the slowest hours of my life.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN – Another Attack

Madeline’s POV

“Oh, I am so excited about tonight!” Luna Alice exclaimed. “Do you know who is working with whom?”

I smiled and shook my head.

“I believe they will decide that once the challenge starts,” I said. “That’s a part of it actually. They need to figure out how to work together to find the object hidden in the forest.”

Luna Alice nodded. “Oh, so exciting. I can’t wait to see who will win.”

"I am sure that everyone will want Alpha Theodore's warrior on their team," Luna Maria chuckled as she took another sip of her drink."

Luna Alice nodded. "oh, definitely. "It will be so interesting to see how they will decide."

I smiled at them and glanced at Dimitri. He was only a few steps away from me. He was talking to Alphas Theodore and Lincoln. I couldn't hear what they were talking about, but Dimitri was smiling and I relaxed a little. He was too tense ever since we came to the throne room. He refused to let go of me for the first half an hour. I barely managed to convince him to let me step away so I could talk to the Lunas.

"I am so happy for you, honey," Luna Maria said as she wrapped an arm around Ali's shoulders. "Beta Will seems like an amazing man."

Ali blushed a little and nodded. "He is. I am so incredibly happy I get to call him my mate."

Will marked Ali last night and I was over the moon happy for both of them. Will was an incredible man and he deserved the best mate and Ali was surely the best. I was convinced that Ali was perfect for him. I was convinced that Will was perfect for Ali. The Goddess really made a perfect match by bonding them together.

"And he is happy he gets to call you his mate," I said, making Ali look at me. "You are his perfect match. He is incredibly lucky he has you in his life."

Ali smiled and shook her head.

"How do you know all that?" she asked.

"We talk," I said, smiling brightly. "The administrative stuff sometimes gets boring and Will loves to share."

Ali and the Lunas laughed.

"Oh, the only part of being a Luna I hate is the administration," Luna Laura said, shaking her head. "If I could just pass that along to someone else, I would be so happy."

"Well, you will get to do that soon, won't you?" Luna Alice asked, smiling. "How old is your boy now?"

"He is 17," she said, smiling proudly. "Xavier started training him a year ago. He will take over as soon as he turns 18."

"Let's hope he will find his mate soon," Luna Alice chuckled. "You will get a well-deserved break then."

Luna Laura smiled and nodded. "I can't wait, trust me."

I glanced at Luna Jennifer and saw her staring at her mate with an unreadable expression on her face. I wished that I could read her mind, but Dimitri was here and I couldn't hear anything.

"Where is your friend, my Queen?" Luna Alice asked, making me look back at them. "Ellie, right?" She is your Beta's sister?"

I smiled and nodded.

"Yes, she is," I said. "She is helping with the challenge tonight. She is in charge of the hidden object."

"I heard that she is an amazing warrior," Luna Laura said. "She completed Michael's elite warrior program, didn't she?"

"She did," Ali said and I could hear how proud she was. "She really is amazing."

"And where is Michael tonight?" Luna Alice said, looking around. "I haven't seen him yet."

"He is also helping out," I said, giving her a small smile. "He is out in the forest with our warriors. They will make sure that the contestants follow every rule."

"Oh," Luna Alice said, nodding her head. "You thought of everything, didn't you?"

I smiled and she was just about to say something else when a couple of loud growls interrupted us.

My heart raced and I looked at Dimitri. He was already standing next to me. Everyone moved at the same time.

"What happened?" I asked as he picked me up and rushed out of the throne room.

I watched as Will did the same with Ali. Everyone in the throne room started panicking.

"The rogues are attacking at the border," Dimitri growled. "There are hundreds of them."

My heart stopped beating. I wasn't even aware that we were already in our room. Dimitri put me down and cupped my cheeks.

"You will lock those doors and you won't let anyone inside," he said. "Do you understand me, Maddie?"

I grabbed his wrists tightly.

“Ellie is out there,” Will mumbled angrily as he ran inside the room, holding Ali in his arms. “Fuck. We can’t leave them alone.”

Dimitri tightened his jaw and looked at him.

“We don’t have any other choice,” he said. “Everyone we trust is out there.”

“I will keep her safe,” Ali said, hugging Will tightly. “Don’t worry. We will be okay.”

Dimitri looked back at me and gulped.

“Did you understand, Maddie?” he asked. “You will open those doors for me or for Will. No one else.”

I nodded and tightened my hold on him. I wanted to tell him to stay, but I knew he had to go. He had to defend his pack. He had to defend his Kingdom.

“Come back to me,” I mumbled as I felt tears fall down my cheeks.

Dimitri smiled and wiped the tears from my face.

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“Come back to me,” I mumbled as I felt tears fall down my cheeks.

Dimitri smiled and wiped the tears from my face.

“Always, my princess,” he said softly. “I will always come back to you.”

He leaned in and kissed me softly.

“You are my home,” he said quietly.

You and our pup are my home. He added through the mind-link as he kissed me again. Nothing will stop me from coming back to you.

“I love you,” I told him, my voice trembling.

He smiled and kissed my forehead. I thought that my heart would give out when he moved his hands from my face. I barely managed to force myself to let go of his wrists.

“Will,” he said as he rushed to the door. “We need to hurry.”

Will kissed Ali one more time before he ran out behind Dimitri. Ali took a deep breath as she approached the door. She closed and locked it before turning around to look at me.

“Everything will be okay, Maddie,” she said quietly. “They will be okay.”

I couldn't stop the tears from falling down my cheeks.

“Oh, Mads,” Ali mumbled as she approached me and pulled me into a hug.

I wrapped my arms around her and buried my nose into her neck. I sobbed quietly and she rubbed my back.

“He will come back to you, Maddie,” Ali said softly. “He is the King. Rogues have nothing on him.”

I knew that. My mate was strong. He was a great warrior. I knew that he would come back home to me. I knew that he would be okay. He had to be okay.

But I just couldn't stop the tears. They just kept coming against my will. I forced myself to take a deep breath. I released it slowly and gulped.

“I am sorry, Ali,” I mumbled as I let her go. “I don't know what came over me.”

She sighed and took my hand in hers.

“Why are you apologizing?” she asked, chuckling a little. “Friends are meant to comfort each other. I am always here for you, Mads. You know that.”

I smiled and another tear fell on my cheek. Ali wiped it away.

I took another deep breath and I was just about to tell Ali how grateful I am to have her when a knock on the door made me freeze.

Ali tensed up and looked at the door.

“Maddie?” Luna Maria’s voice made me sigh in relief. “Are you in here?”

I looked at Ali and she bit her lower lip.

“It’s Luna Maria,” I said quietly. “We know her.”

Ali furrowed her brows and looked at the door again.

“Dimitri said not to let anyone in,” she reminded me.

“Maddie?” Luna Maria called me again.

I sighed and shook my head a little.

“We can’t leave her out there,” I mumbled as I approached the door and unlocked it.

“Oh, you are okay,” she sighed in relief as I opened the door.

I glanced behind her and saw that she was alone.

“I was so worried that something happened,” she said. “All the Alphas just ran out screaming something about a rogue attack at the border.”

I opened the door a bit more and stepped aside so she could walk in.

“Where are the other Lunas?” I asked as I closed the door.

I heard a loud thump behind me. I turned around in time to see Ali falling to the floor. I didn’t have time to react before I felt something pinch my neck and everything went dark.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT – Something Isn’t Right

Dimitri’s POV

I sank my canines into another rogue's neck, biting through all the flesh and bone. His body went limp in my mouth. I grabbed him and tossed him to the side.

I looked around me and saw my warriors and my guests fighting with the rogues. We were winning, but something about all this didn't feel right. I had a bad feeling in my stomach ever since Will and I arrived at the border. I thought it was because I had to leave Maddie, but the more I thought about it the more I realized that wasn't the reason.

Will? I mind-linked him as I sank my canines into another one of the rogues coming at me.

Yes? He responded, panting a little.

Something isn't right. I mumbled. Look at how they are behaving.

A rogue came at me. He barely attacked even though he was a big wolf and he could have done some damage. He snapped his canines at me, missing my arm for only an inch. But it seemed like it was on purpose. He could have hurt me if he wanted to.

What the fuck was going on?

What are you talking about? Will asked.

I killed the rogue that was attacking me and I looked around until I saw Will. He was fighting with one of the rogues, but the rogue wasn't causing nearly as much damage as he could have.

Look at the way he is fighting, Will. I said as I started moving toward him. He is only taunting you. He isn't attacking with full force.

Will glanced at me before he finished killing the rogue.

My stomach twisted and turned. Something wasn't fucking right.

Did anyone enter the packhouse? I mind-linked the warriors I left to guard the woman and children.

I told them not to let anyone other than women and children in. I made sure that every fucking Alpha was out there fighting. I wasn't going to let anyone stay behind. I wasn't going to risk anyone getting to Maddie while I was gone.

One of the biggest flaws of my packhouse was the absence of a safe room in case of an attack. My grandfather never built one. He believed that the war was over. He believed that we wouldn't have to hide from anyone anymore. My father thought about building it when the number of rogues started growing, but he gave up on the idea after a while. The rogues never attacked and my father was proud of the peace he kept after his

father passed away. As far as I knew, none of the packs in my Kingdom had safe rooms anymore.

I should have fucking known better. I should have built one as soon as I became the King.

But I had confidence in my warriors. They wouldn't let anyone get inside.

No, Alpha. One of the warriors responded. Everything is okay here.

A small wave of relief washed over me.

What about Kendrick or any members of the council? I asked, making my way to Will. Did they come there?

No, Alpha. The warrior responded. We haven't seen them.

I growled as another rogue jumped at me. I killed him with one swipe of my paw. I started running faster. I needed to get to Will.

I want to go back, Will. I told him. Our warriors can handle this. There aren't many left.

Will glanced at me and nodded. He finished killing the rogue he was fighting with.

Don't kill them all. I ordered through the mind-link. Capture some of them and bring them to the dungeon. We need to know who sent them.

Yes, Alpha. My warriors mind-linked me back simultaneously.

Will approached me, killing two more rogues on his way over.

Is Maddie okay? Mike mind-linked me.

Yes. I said as Will and I started running back. She is in our room with Ali. No one entered the packhouse.

Good. Mike said. Are you going back?

Yes. I answered. Make sure to take some of them to the dungeons. We need as much information as we can get.

Yes, Alpha. Mike said, cutting our mind-link.

Will and I shifted back as soon as we were away from the battlefield. I could still hear screaming, shouting, and breaking of bones. I could still smell the blood in the air.

Will and I put our sweats on and we continued running toward the house.

Maddie? I mind-linked her.

I was now finally able to mind-link her. I didn't want to do that before. I didn't want her to worry.

I expected her to respond immediately and my heart clenched when she didn't.

Maddie? I mind-linked her again. I am coming back, princess. I am okay.

My legs almost gave out when she didn't respond.

Madeline? I tried again. Answer me.

I was sure I was going to pass out when she didn't. Why the fuck wasn't she answering me?

"Mind-link Ali," I told Will as I started running faster. "Maddie isn't responding to me."

Will growled and picked up his pace. I kept glancing at him, waiting for him to tell me what Ali had told him. I knew that something was wrong when he narrowed his eyes and clenched his fists.

"What did she say?" I asked, my voice trembling slightly.

"Nothing," Will growled. "She isn't responding either."

'I can't feel Skye,' Skol mumbled and I almost fucking lost it. 'I can't feel her, Dimitri.'

No.

No, no, no, no, no!

"Madeline!" I screamed as I started running even faster. "Madeline!"

We were getting close to the packhouse. I could already see the lights. I could already see my warriors walking around. They looked up when they heard me screaming.

I ran closer, trying so fucking hard to remain focused. I could hear my warriors talking to me, but I couldn't hear what they were saying. I had to get upstairs. I had to find her.

"Madeline!" I screamed as I found myself on our floor.

I had no fucking idea how I got there. I couldn't remember climbing the stairs.

I practically broke our bedroom door down.

“Madeline!” I screamed, looking around the room.

I almost died on the spot when my eyes fell on Ali.

“Alison!” Will screamed, running past me, and throwing himself next to her.

I watched him grab her and turn her around. She was breathing, but she was passed out.

“Ali!” Will cried out, patting her cheeks and trying to wake her up.

Everything around me slowed down. My heart, my breathing, my mind. Everything felt like it was working in slow motion.

Where was she?

Where was my Maddie? Where was my princess?

Will looked up at me. I saw his lips moving, but I couldn't hear what he was telling me. All I could hear was the desperate thumping of my heart.

Where was she?

Someone ran inside the room. I didn't see who it was. My vision blurred completely. I couldn't hear anything. I couldn't see anything. I was completely overwhelmed by pain.

Someone placed their hands on my face. I didn't know who it was. I didn't even know where I was.

I lost all the feelings in my legs and I felt something hard under my knees.

Skol howled loudly and I let the pain overwhelm me completely.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE – Your Queen Is Missing

William's POV

I was pacing around the room, trying to find some fucking way to remain in focus. Dimitri hadn't stopped whining or growling. I could tell that he was struggling and that he was in immense pain. I knew that he wouldn't be able to do shit until he came out of the shock he was in.

But that was why he had me. I had to take over until he managed to focus back on what mattered the most.

“She was poisoned with wolfsbane,” the pack doctor said as he finished checking up on Ali. “The dose wasn’t big. She will be okay, Beta. The wolfsbane just needs to leave her body.”

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. I almost lost it when I found her on the floor. But at least I found her. At least she was here.

Maddie was...

Gone. She was fucking gone.

“Thank you,” I mumbled as I opened my eyes and looked at my beautiful mate. “You can leave.”

The pack doctor nodded. He glanced at Dimitri before he picked up his bag and walked out of the room.

Mike and Ellie walked inside. Both of them looked like they were crying.

“Anything?” I asked and they shook their heads.

“Her scent disappears at the edge of the forest,” Ellie said, looking at Dimitri. “There is no way to tell where they took her.”

I tightened my jaw and ran my fingers through my hair.

“Our warriors are searching the territory,” Mike said, his voice laced with fear and worry. “We covered as much of the border as we could. They won’t be able to get her out of our pack if they are still here.”

I looked at Dimitri and took a deep breath. He was standing by the window and staring at the forest. He almost left to go find her, but I stopped him. I couldn’t let him go until he was completely focused. I couldn’t let anything happen to him. I was his Beta and I needed to protect him. I couldn’t let him get hurt. Maddie would kill me if I let him get hurt.

“Dimitri...,” I called him, but he interrupted me.

“Gather every fucking Alpha and bring them into the throne room,” Dimitri said, his voice void of any emotion. “I am keeping them hostage until we find her.”

I looked at Mike and gulped.

“You can’t...,” Mike started speaking, but Dimitri interrupted him again.

“One of them took her,” he said, turning around to look at us. “They will bring her back to me, or I will burn them all. They will fucking burn together with that throne they wanted so fucking bad.”

Dimitri looked like a shell of himself. Every emotion in his eyes was gone. He looked like he aged in the last half an hour. He looked like he was on the verge of breaking.

“If you accuse them...,” I tried to reason with him, but he interrupted me with an order.

“Gather them,” he said, narrowing his eyes at me. “Right the fuck now.”

I had no other choice, but to listen to him. My body started moving on its own. I took a deep breath and released it slowly as I walked downstairs. Every packhouse worker and every single warrior I passed asked about Maddie. All of them had tears in their eyes. All of them looked so worried. I had to ignore them if I ever wanted to make my way to the throne room.

We will find her. I mind-linked them all, trying to sound confident. Just go do your jobs, okay? Your Alpha needs you to keep everything in order. That’s the best you can do to help him.

I walked inside the throne room and saw that every single one of our guests was already there.

“Will!” Alpha Theodore exclaimed. “Where is our Queen?”

They are all here, Dimitri. I mind-linked him, but he didn’t respond.

“Who took her?” Alpha Lucius asked. “How the hell did they get inside the pack?”

“We need to search the forest?” Alpha Alistair said. “Did you send anyone there yet?”

I raised my hands, motioning for them to stop. I couldn’t answer all of their questions at the same time.

“We sent our warriors to find her,” I said calmly. “We don’t know who...”

I was interrupted when the door burst open and a very angry Dimitri ran inside. He wasn’t void of any emotion anymore. He was filled with anger. Mike was behind him and he looked as angry as Dimitri.

Ali? I mind-linked Mike.

She is still asleep. He responded. Ellie stayed with her.

I gulped and forced myself to focus back on Dimitri.

“One of you took her and I want her back,” Dimitri growled loudly. “I swear to Goddess, I will fucking burn you alive if you don’t bring my mate back to me.”

He narrowed his eyes, looking around the room and growling. Some of our guests gasped. Everyone was shocked.

“I know that one of you is...,” he spoke, but he suddenly stopped talking.

I furrowed my brows and looked at him. He was looking around gritting his teeth and clenching his fists tightly.

“Where is Alpha Jack?” Dimitri asked and my heart stopped beating.

I looked at our guests, but I couldn’t find Alpha Jack. I couldn’t see his Beta or his Luna either.

“Where the fuck is Alpha Jack?!” Dimitri screamed, making everyone flinch and bow their heads.

His aura filled the room to the point where I started sweating. His anger was making it hard for all of us to breathe.

“They took her,” Mike mumbled. “That was why they opened the bedroom door. They trusted them.”

“I saw him on the battlefield,” Alpha Theodore mumbled quietly.

“He was there at the beginning, yes,” Alpha Lucius said. “But he wasn’t with us when we were coming back.”

“But why would they take her?” Luna Jennifer asked quietly. “What do they want to do with her?”

“They want my throne,” Dimitri said. “They want to use her as a way for me to give up my title and my Kingdom.”

Almost everyone in the room gasped.

“That is betrayal, my King!” Alpha Xavier exclaimed. “He is a traitor!”

“And he betrayed us all!” Alpha Lincoln added angrily. “If you betray our King, you betray every single one of us!”

“Yes!”

“Traitor!”

“He betrayed our King!”

“He betrayed our Kingdom!”

Everyone started shouting at the same time.

“We will find him, my King!” Alpha Lucius shouted. “He won’t get away with this!”

Dimitri tightened his jaw and looked at me.

Do you trust them? I asked. Do you think that one of them was working with him?

Dimitri didn’t get a chance to respond. The throne room door opened and Landon and Rayan ran inside.

“My King!” Landon exclaimed, his eyes wide. “Your Royal Secretary Kendrick is dead! He was killed!”

My eyes widened. The room was silent for a moment, but then everyone started shouting again.

“Betrayal!”

“We will find him and kill him!”

“He has our Queen!”

“He killed a member of the council!”

I looked at Dimitri and saw him gritting his teeth. He took a deep breath and growled so loudly that I saw a couple of Betas and Lunas cover their ears.

“Your Queen is missing,” Dimitri said, his voice cold and filled with hatred. “I want you to use every single one of your resources to find her. I want you to help me bring her home. He didn’t take her to his pack. He isn’t that stupid. Do whatever you need to do to find her.”

He didn’t wait for anyone to respond. He turned around and rushed out of the throne room.

“Show me Kendrick’s body!” he shouted on his way out.

Landon, Rayan, Mike, and I ran after him.

My entire body was shaking with anger and fear. I couldn’t even imagine what Dimitri was feeling. He looked like he was on the verge of a complete breakdown.

We needed to find Maddie. We needed to find her as soon as possible.

CHAPTER FIFTY – Your New Home

Madeline's POV

I groaned as I turned my head to my right. Every part of my body hurt.

What the hell happened to me? Was it the pregnancy? I had no idea that your body could feel like you'd been hit by a train. I had no idea that your head could hurt like someone stabbed a knife into your temples. Would I have to go through 6 months of that?

"Hello, my little bird," someone said softly.

The voice was both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. I could have sworn that I had heard it before, but I had no idea where.

I was probably dreaming.

I gulped and felt around for Dimitri. I wanted to press myself closer to him. The pain would be gone as soon as I was in his arms.

I couldn't find him, though. Did he get up already?

"I am here, little bird," the voice said and I felt a large hand cover mine.

I didn't feel tingles. I didn't feel sparks. I knew Dimitri's hand and this wasn't it. Whose hand was that? Where was I?

My heart raced a little.

The hand squeezed mine gently and I felt someone's fingers on my forehead.

"Open those beautiful eyes, little bird," the voice said quietly. "I missed them so much."

A strange feeling in my stomach made me listen to him. I wanted to know who he was. I wanted to know where Dimitri was.

I opened my eyes slowly and the first thing I saw was his small smile.

"Hello, Madeline," he said, caressing my cheek. "How are you feeling?"

I furrowed my brows a little. I knew this man. Where did I know him from?

And then it dawned on me...

“Kade,” I mumbled, my voice hoarse.

He smiled brightly and leaned in to kiss my forehead.

“Hello, my beautiful mate,” he said. “I am so happy that you recognized me. We haven’t seen each other in a while.”

Mate?

He looked back down at me and I glanced behind his shoulder. I was in a strange room. This wasn’t my room in my packhouse.

“Where am I?” I asked quietly as I looked back at him.

He sighed and smiled. “You are home, Madeline. You are finally home.”

Home? That wasn’t my home.

I felt tears burning the corners of my eyes. Dimitri wasn’t here, was he? This man took me from him, didn’t he?

“Do you remember what happened before you woke up here?” he asked as he caressed my cheek again. “I think that my mom gave you too much wolfsbane.”

I wanted to move from him, but I couldn’t feel my body. I could only feel my heart beating faster and faster as seconds went by.

I tried to focus and I tried to remember. We were getting ready to start the second challenge. I was talking to the Lunas and...

I gasped quietly as memories started rushing back. The rogue attack. Dimitri taking me to our bedroom. Dimitri telling me not to open the door for anyone other than Will or him. Dimitri leaving. Ali and I staying alone. Someone knocking on the door. Me opening the door and...

My heart felt like it fell into a bottomless pit.

“Maria,” I mumbled quietly.

Kade sighed and gave me a small nod.

“I am sorry she had to do that, my love,” he said. “But I wasn’t sure if you would agree to go with her.”

My stomach turned. It was her? She was the traitor? I trusted her. Why would she do that?

“Oh, I missed you terribly,” Kade mumbled as he leaned closer and placed a kiss on my cheek. “I couldn’t wait to have you back.”

He missed me? He couldn’t wait to have me back? I didn’t even know he knew I existed. He never spoke to me when I lived in his pack.

“You are so beautiful,” he said quietly as he rubbed his nose up and down my jaw. “You are beautiful and you are mine.”

My mind was screaming at me to move away from him, but my body was completely frozen. I couldn’t feel my arms or my legs. I was in shock. I was in denial. I was refusing to accept that this was really happening. It had to be a dream. It had to be a nightmare. I would open my eyes soon and I would wake up in my mate’s arms. Dimitri would smile at me and he would kiss me softly. He would caress my lower belly and tell me how happy he was to become a dad.

“Did you miss me too?” Kade asked, looking up at me.

He furrowed his brows and wiped the tears from my face. I didn’t even realize I was crying.

“Why are you crying, beautiful?” he asked. “Are you in pain?”

I swallowed the lump in my throat and let a small amount of air into my lungs.

“Why are you doing this, Kade?” I asked. “Why did you take me?”

He sighed and ran his fingers through my hair.

“Because you are mine, Madeline,” he said. “You belong to me. You were supposed to be my fated mate. I am just correcting a mistake the Goddess made.”

My heart clenched painfully.

“I am not...,” I spoke, but his growl interrupted me.

“Careful, Madeline,” he said, narrowing his eyes slightly. “I won’t tolerate disrespect.”

I gulped and tightened my jaw. Did he really believe that I was his mate? I tried to read his mind, but I couldn’t focus enough to do it. I was still in pain. I was still in shock. I simply couldn’t calm down enough to focus on his thoughts.

“Kade, please...,” I said quietly, but he interrupted me again.

“Nothing you say will make me change my mind, Madeline,” he said, caressing my cheek again. “You are mine and I am not giving you up. I will have everything now that I have you.”

“By everything, you mean the throne?” I asked and he smiled.

“That’s only an added bonus,” he said. “You are the main prize.”

My stomach turned again.

“It will take a while, but you will get used to everything, my beautiful mate,” he said. “I am a patient man, don’t worry. I will give you time.”

He stood up and smiled at me.

“I am going to get you some food,” he said. “You need to eat.”

I watched as he walked to the door. He looked around the room before he looked back at me.

“Feel free to get up and look around the room,” he said as he opened the door. “Tell me if you don’t like anything. We can change whatever you want. I want you to be comfortable here. This is your new home.”

He walked out and closed the door behind him.

I placed a hand over my mouth to stop a loud sob that tried to escape me. I forced myself to stand up and I walked to the window. My eyes fell on a thick forest that surrounded the house. It looked endless.

“Dimitri,” I cried out as I placed a hand on my lower belly. “Come get us, please. We need you. Your pup and I need you.”