



64 NIGHT OF THE HUNT

Xaden watched as Aurora left the pack with her things. 1

He had been thorough with her; she would return on the last day of the halo festival.

Xaden knew what the last day of the HaloHalo festival was about.

He was the Alpha of the pack, and as was mandatory, he was going to have to be the one to perform it so that they would come as an offering to the moon.

It was an old millennial tradition that every Alpha whose pack had been visited by the halo moon had to perform.

He had three days until it was carried out.

When he saw her and some of her entourage ride out, he turned away from the balcony and walked towards the hall.

He saw Belle coming in and wanted to make a quick U-turn, but she had already seen him.



"Xaden." She called out to him.

He bowed to her as it was mandatory.

"Princess Belle," He said.

"You don't need to refer to me by my title." She batted her eyelashes at him. "I think we should keep titles aside between us, don't you think?"

"Whatever you want." He said. "I have to be on my way now. I hope my pack is serving you well."

He started to leave, but she held on to his arm, stopping him from going anywhere.

"Xaden." She said. "I apologize to you for what transpired earlier this afternoon. It's not in my nature to behave in such a manner."

"I apologize for my subject being rude to you, too. If it pleases you, I have sent her away." He told her.

Belle's eye glimmered with light. "You sent her away?"

"Yes." He replied.

"To where?" Belle asked without trying to sound too excited.



"Far from the pack. She won't be here until the last day of the festival. She would not disturb you." He promised her.

He started to leave again, and she still held on to him. "I was wondering if you could take me for a stroll around the pack. You've never quite shown me around."

He knew what was being plotted.

Belle wanted him, but regardless of how beautiful she was, he did not want her.

He didn't want anyone, for that matter.

Especially a member of the royal family.

He only tolerated them because it was his duty, after all.

He smiled at her. "I have more important duties to attend to."

He saw her smile fade, and he turned and left her standing there.

One day, he would come for the royal family.

But not now.



He had a whole year to prepare for his final attack on Alpha Bale, and that brought his thoughts back to Jasmine.

He had gotten the reports on her work.

She was always able to do them one way or another.

She was a spoilt girl. 1

She shouldn't be able to handle all of this.

He despised her with everything in him.

And he was never going to see her differently.

Her blood was cursed, and that was all there was to it.

He felt his arm hurt, and he rolled up his sleeves and saw one of the tattoos on his vein, which was bright red and moving.

He groaned in pain and managed to suppress it.

Once he was done with the festival, he would go to find the witch.

It was beginning to get worse.



Once it was nighttime, all the Alphas were gathered in the forest.

There were about thirty of them.

It was the first event of the Halo festival.

The three high priestesses of the Wolf World stood in white before the blazing bonfire.

The moonlight sparkled in its halo form.

There were elevated rows and a structure similar to an amphitheater.

Several pack members were to witness this great occasion.

There was a loud drum beat and women dancing.

Xaden was shirtless, and his hair was tied in a ponytail.

From the corner of his eyes, he saw Alex.

Alex was going to try to kill him tonight.

Erik stood by Xaden's side.

"I'll keep a close eye on him," Erik said.



Three rituals were to be performed.

The first day was the hunt.

The second was the feast.

The third and last was the sacrifice.

The first hunt was for all Alphas to prove their greatest strength.

The prominent head priestess stood in the middle and said: "Welcome wolves, great and small. We bring the hundredth Halo festival and the night of the hunt."

There was an instant silence, and no one uttered a word.

"The great Celine has released the halo for us to witness after over sixty years. For us to tell our children and for them to tell our great-grandchildren." She said.

"Alphas before me, the great white elk has been set free into the forest for you to hunt and bring to us. The one bringing him to us shall be rewarded as the hunt winner."

It was tradition that a white elk, one of the rarest

and stood by the white wood.

As she set the torch to light the white fire.

It was the signal for them to go!

They shifted into their wolf forms, and all the
Alphas howled and ran off into the forest.

The crowd cheered.



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