

CHAPTER 160

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160 Ava: Eyes Wide Open It smells like him, Selene grumbles, her wet nose twitching as she sniffs around the plush rug in the center of Lucas' bedroom. Everywhere. I glance up from where I'm unpacking my suitcase, one eyebrow arched. "Well, it's his room. What did you expect?" She huffs, her tail swishing in annoyance. I expected not to be assaulted by the scent of alpha male posturing every time I breathe. Her mental words are sour, but without the bite they used to have when she spoke of Lucas. A laugh escapes me despite the heaviness still lingering in my chest from the earlier confrontation with Margot. "Posturing? Really? It's just his scent." Yes, really. She flops down on the rug, her chin resting on her paws. It's like he's marking his territory. Letting everyone know this is his space. "Is it really posturing when he just sleeps in here?" Yes. I roll my eyes, turning back to my suitcase. She's reaching for reasons to complain, but knowing that her grumbling doesn't have the fierce hatred of before helps a lot. "He's the alpha. Isn't that kind of his job?" There's a difference between being an alpha and being obnoxious about it. 17:31 100 Avax Eyes Wide Open Her complaints continue as I move about the room, hanging up clothes and arranging my toiletries in the en-suite bathroom. It's a beautiful space, all dark wood and rich fabrics, with a massive king-sized bed dominating the center. It's all masculine without a single feminine touch, which somehow pleases me. The thought of sleeping here, surrounded by Lucas' scent, makes me smile—even if my wolf hates it. But Selene's complaints nag at me, pulling me out of my reverie. I pause, a shirt dangling from my fingers, and turn to face her. "Okay, what's your deal with Lucas? I thought you were over your issues with him now that we're together." She sighs, a heavy sound that seems to deflate her entire body. It's not that simple, Ava. "Then explain it to me." I drop the shirt on the bed and move to sit beside her, my fingers sinking into her thick fur. "Because from where I'm standing, it looks like you're just being stubborn." I'm not being stubborn. She's still grouchy, but there's less heat in her voice now. I'm being cautious. "Cautious of what? Lucas has proven himself time and time again. He's been there for me, for us, through everything." He's a good man, Selene admits. Grudgingly. My lips twitch. My wolf came to me with all the wise demeanor and cryptic words of some sage, but at times like this, she's just a sassy friend in my head. "But...?" 160 Ava: Eyes Wide Open Her tail thumps against the ground. Once. Twice.. Another day, Ava. I'll explain it another day. Her mental voice is so defeated that I don't argue, just pet her head and ears. "Promise that it's not the same kind of 'another day' where you don't say anything until I'm kidnapped, rescued, and then go into a coma for three weeks?" It wouldn't have been that long if you hadn't gotten yourself kidnapped again in the first place, Selene grumbles, though it's obvious she doesn't mean what she says. "If you had rescued me quicker, it wouldn't have been that long either." Teasing her a little to get her out of her little funk, I add, "Besides, I didn't get kidnapped by the vampire this time." My heart sinks as I think that over, my heart sinking. Maybe if I had been, Lisa wouldn't be alone and we could be on our way home. Together. A lot of confidence for someone who hasn't finished training with Jericho. "Hush." Moving to the window, I glance over at the pack lands spread out before me. The small city feels stagnant, a far cry from the bustling modernity of Westwood. It's like stepping back in time by a few decades. Women scurry through the streets, their heads down and shoulders hunched. They move with a sense of urgency, as if they're afraid to linger too long in any one place. It's a stark contrast to the men who strut about, with no worries or cares. 17:33 376 Inn Ave Eyes Wide Open It's a sickening display of the gender dynamics that have always, been present in the Blackwood pack, but which I've never truly seen for what they are. I've heard about gender dynamics. I'd even seen the difference when I attended

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school in White Peak, or worked there. But I always felt, deep down, that the difference was because wolf shifters are different. Now? After experiencing the relative equality and freedom of Aspen and Westwood? It's glaringly obvious, disturbing me to my core. This is not because we're shifters; it's because of our alpha. You okay? Selene's voice echoes in my mind, her concern palpable. I don't answer right away, my eyes still fixed on the scene below. A female I recognize hurries across the street, her arms laden with bags. She has a few young pups, if I remember her right. Her mate steps into her path, forcing her to stop short. He says something, his posture aggressive, and the female shrinks back. Even from this distance, I can see the fear in her body language. It isn't until an unfamiliar male strides over, breaking up their confrontation, that I realize my shoulders are tense and drawn up, my fingers gripping the windowsill with all my strength. The male—a Westwood wolf, I'm pretty sure—saved her for the moment. But when she gets home, her mate will deal with her then. 17 4/8 160 Ava Eyes Wide Open I'm not sure what their conflict is, but I can suspect. She's probably defected without him. I see why the Blackwood situation has taken so much of Lucas' time. It's impossible to walk away from here; there's always something brewing. Even something as simple as domestic relations in a single home. "No," I say finally, my voice barely above a whisper. "I'm not okay." Talk to me. I tear my gaze away from the window, turning to face Selene. She's sitting up now, her blue eyes fixed on me with an intensity that would be unnerving if I didn't know her so well. "I don't like what I see. What do you see? I hesitate, trying to find the right words. "Inequality. Oppression. Fear. The women here have no power. Just like me." It doesn't make me feel any more benevolent toward Margot, but it does make me wonder about the other females in the pack, and the lives they lead in the shadows. It is hard to notice what is normal around you, Selene says, her tone matter-of-fact. "I know. And that's what scares me. How much more do I have to unlearn? How can I be a Luna when I don't know something this basic?" You can be a Luna, because you know in your heart right from wrong. She steps next to me, nudging against my thigh with her 17:33 516 160 Ava: Eyes Wide Open furry head. You will have others to guide you. You won't be alone. Still. It's terrifying. "But I should have known better. I should have questioned it. I should have—" Stop. Selene's voice is firm, cutting through my spiral of self-recrimination. You can't change the past, Ava. All you can do is move forward. And you are. You're not that scared little girl anymore. I rub her ears, trying to believe her words. But they ring hollow in my aching heart, @ Comentario 1 R Deja el primer comentario para este capítulo Vote FANDOM Deslizar a la izquierda para continuar > Ver todoswww.NeverLwOrM.Com