

Chapter 32 – The Clash

“Only a true best friend can protect you from your immortal enemies.” — Richelle Mead

Anthony

Do I want an alliance with the pack that brutalized my baby sister?

Could I live with that in my conscience?

Neron is a fellow Alpha that needed help. It's clear from our conversation how much his pack is suffering. Losing soldiers is hard. Watching families continue to suffer weighs on your soul as a leader.

I couldn't sit by knowing that lives were being taken and not act. Does that make me better than the selfish Alphas who leave their packs to perish?

When I look at Neron, I see a man who's been through hell and back. He was skilled at hiding his true emotions, but the eyes reveal more truth than the mouth. There is a reason eyes were

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known as the windows to the immortal soul.

He is worn out, stressed, angry, and sad. So much emotion swam in those blue eyes, some floating, some sinking. It takes a great deal of courage for an Alpha to reach out for help. Typically, Alphas pride themselves on handling devastating situations themselves. Asking for help is like a punch to the gut, but only a few could take that punch and emerge unharmed.

However, this is the same Alpha who hurt my little sister, turning her into a frail werewolf living in fear of her shadow. And rejected their mate bond—the most brutal thing a wolf could do to their other half. She suffered because of him and his pack. I couldn't help but think back to all those times Kiya woke up screaming from nightmares. The days were treads around like a monotonous zombie and days where her weight progress was threatened because she stopped eating for days.

Anger boiled in my blood. It is so frustrating, and it takes every ounce of my self-control to stop my wolf, Axel, from avenging his sister's suffering. In the past five years, Axel had been

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protective of Kiya and her wolf, Artemis. It pains him to see her suffering. He wanted Neron to hurt as bad as she did. But we both knew it wouldn't help the situation. I must remain calm and civil, and I thanked the Moon Goddess for having Alesia by my side.

Alesia went to put little Ximey down for her nap while the rest of us headed to the dining hall for lunch. I'll decide on whether to accept the alliance by the end of today before the Zircon members leave for Nevada.

“Alpha.” I hear Jacqueline through the mind-link. *“I let Kiya know that we're heading to the hall for lunch. She is heading to the kitchen with Sapphire and Phoebe.”*

“I thought she is holing herself up in her room for the day?”

“She got hungry.”

“Ah.”

Kiya was never the type to pass up on food, even when she is nervous. I think it came from being

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starved for so long through her younger years. She'll eat anything.

Arriving in the dining hall, the Omegas went all out with lunch. A balanced assortment of heavy and light foods, but with much meat and chicken. We all took our seats and ate the food once they served it. Alesia came in shortly after and joined me at the head of the table at my side.

“Alpha Anthony.” I hear my fellow Alpha speak. “I couldn’t help but notice that you train recently shifted pups for battle. Why is that?”

“Garnet Moon takes pride in cultivating our members to protect their pack from an early age. All our recently shifted wolves have a choice if they want to train or not, no matter their gender. You’d be amazed at how many pups have the desire to become powerful fighters.” I smirk proudly. “The challenge is getting the young wolves to stick with their training regimen on top of their schoolwork and social lives.”

“Our refugees have that same choice.” My Gamma, Ali, spoke up. “If they wish to begin or

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continue training, they are more welcome to do so. Some rather live simply, away from battle and war.”

“Why weaponry?” Beta Valerian inquired.

“You’d be surprised at what sort of enemies lay beyond nature that aren’t just rogue wolves.”

Beta Dwayne answered, taking a swig of his wine.

“We’re trained for any possible threat, wolf, and human. We protect our pack no matter what. It’s an honor that should be instilled in every pack, don’t you agree?”

“Unfortunately, some packs fail to protect their own,” Jacqueline spoke up sharply, her expression nothing short of indifference. “Some wolves hurt each other, sometimes without a good reason. Whether it be by a selfish Alpha or placing the blame on an innocent member. It’s a damn shame.”

“*Jacqueline,*” I warn my Beta through our mind-link. “*I know you dislike Neron, but I won’t tolerate your crude attitude.*”


“Unfortunately, not all Alphas have honor in

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their nature.” Alpha Neron added. “Some are corrupt or led astray. I’ll admit that us werewolves may not be so far from the dark nature of the humans in this world.”

“It’s difficult, isn’t it?” Jacqueline pressed on; her fork embedded deep in her chicken breast. “To understand how or why an Alpha has been led astray. The stories from our refugees and battered families are heartbreaking. When an Alpha fails, he or she fails the pack they swore by blood to protect.”

“That is the sad reality.” The Alpha nodded. “There are threats inside the pack that many failed to realize because they’ve been... blinded with emotion or anger. They cannot see the truth until it’s too late.” I notice his shoulders going rigid at that last addition. His eyes have that distant look, full of regret.

“Perhaps.” Jacqueline smiled, but it isn’t one of the pleasantries. It is knowing, almost mocking. “Or they are just awful wolves who hide behind their honor and power and use that to abuse or even kill a helpless, innocent pup. Or even their mate.” 

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“*Jacqueline*,” I rumbled through our mind-link. She looked at me with rage and disgust swimming in her green eyes. I knew they weren’t aimed at me. They were aimed at Zircon. “*This isn’t the time for that. Hold that conversation until after lunch.*”

“I’ve suddenly lost my appetite. Maybe it’s something in the air.” She stood on her heels and walked out the double doors, anger marking her trail. Abigail politely apologized for her mate and asked if I could excuse her to go after her.


I nod and gave her permission, wasting no time jogging after Jacqueline.

“So, who wants dessert!” Olivia blurted out, hoping to ease the awkward tension in the air. “I hear the chocolate lava cake is lovely!”

Alesia took my hand into hers, giving a loving squeeze. “*Don’t be too hard on her.*” She whispers only to me. “*You know how she feels about Kiya.*”

“*I know, but now isn’t the time for childish shit like that.*” I retorted, kissing the soft skin on the back of her palm. I apologized to Neron and his team f

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or Jackie's behavior, he reassures me he took no insult. Dwayne also took the liberty to apologize on his sister's behalf. 

Part of me was glad that peace is achieved between us. But, the big brother side of me is not happy and wanted Neron to feel the painful sting he felt with Jacqueline's pointed comments. She alluded that we knew of what he and his pack did but didn't go deeper into that. Gamma Kwame suddenly got a call from back at the territory and excused himself to take it.

Regardless of what happened, lunch went about as normal.

Jacqueline

"My love, you promised to be civil."

"I can't and won't be civil with a fucking abuser!" I hissed back, fists shaking. "Should any of these she-wolves or pups who seek our help, be civil with their abusive mates? Or abusive parents? I think the fuck not!"

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Being infuriated was an underestimation. Zircon Moon is a bastard cult and they want to act honorable with my Alpha? Bullshit! Alpha Neron and his posse are assholes, and I refuse to be kind with any of those pricks.

Abigail cradled my cheeks in her deep melanated palms. I purred softly at her touch, feeling Rosaline howl in delight at the touch of her mate. I wish she was there in the very beginning when Kiya was a walking skeleton. Broken and in pain. Scared and powerless. Abi would surely side with me on why I hate Zircon Moon. The damage done to my best friend is heartbreaking, and I hated them for torturing her. I care about Kiya so much. She was a pure soul that didn't deserve the mistreatment.


Fuck the idea that the past should remain in the past. They brutalized Kiya and that trauma does not go away! That pain would always be there, awaiting the next trigger to its revival.

“Your emotions are powerful. Kiya is so lucky to have a friend like you.” The love of my life whispers to me, pressing her forehead against my own. My hands instinctively went to her tight

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coils, sinking my fingertips gently to her scalp.

“But, understand that this is pack business.

You’ve taught me that in negotiations with other packs, emotion can’t be at the forefront. The wellbeing of wolves matters the most.” 

I huffed, remembering teaching that lesson when Abigail became my Beta Female. Whether I like it or not, sometimes packs must work together when combating a common enemy. She always knows how to be rational, even when I act irrationally. She was the perfect yin to my yang.

But I couldn’t help it. I must protect those I love. I couldn’t lose anyone. I couldn’t fail.

Not again.

I lean in and kiss my mate on her lips, sweet and chaste. “You’re right. I’m just...”

“I know.” Abigail knows why I was so protective. It is not just in the Beta blood. I promised myself to protect those I care about until the day I die, and that would never change. I’ll rip through every pack if it means the safety of my beloveds.

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“Come on. Let’s go into the kitchen, my love. You need a breather.”

Abigail took me into the kitchen by the hand, where I saw the three other women eating their lunch at the large island. They were amid a conversation when their chatter halted. Kiya smiled at me, her mouth full of rice and chicken. She was like a cute chipmunk with nuts in its mouth.

I didn’t know why, but I felt like I needed to do this. I pulled my best friend in a hug, squeezing her smaller frame tight. A confused squeak came from her, but she didn’t resist my hug.

“Jackie? Why are you—”

“I’m sorry, Little Bit. Just let me have this for a moment, please?”

I feel her arms loop around my torso, squeezing me lovingly. Sighing in content, I rested my head on her shoulder, breathing in her sweet scent. I knew what depression and fear do to someone, and my heart couldn’t take losing another person. Therefore, I will never be calm and civil

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with Zircon Moon. I feel bad for their members who suffered, for they don't deserve to lose their families to the rogues.

But for the top dogs? I pray the Moon Goddess made them suffer for their sins.

Chapter Comments

POST COMMENT

Angie G. de Muñoz

I love it when you know to whom and when to spill all the...



green rose

seriously??? you didn't need to meet Neron on your packland...



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