

Chapter 54 Knox

I watched as Jake and the guys left my office, I tried to focus on the paperwork in front of me that I'd had forwarded to my office to complete the deal we'd been working on yesterday but I just couldn't focus, I ran my hand through my dark curly hair, feeling the knots as I did.

I yawned knowing I would sleep well when I eventually got to bed tonight, but first I needed to put things right with Gabe, I knew I wouldn't settle knowing he was angry at me, whether I was Alpha or not I couldn't settle knowing I'd treated him like that, he didn't deserve that and I knew it.

I stood up and stalked out of my office, locking the door behind me. Heading toward the stairs, wondering what atmosphere I'd get from Gabe when I saw him. He'd been angry, and understandably so, I'd been a total dick, I could have hurt him or worse and just because if though the worst of him when he was being a good guy, fuck I was a total tool. I hoped he'd forgive me.....

I could feel my heart pounding as I reached the top of the sweeping staircase in the pack house, I was actually nervous, that probably sounds stupid, I'm an Alpha and meeting even the harshest business man or other Alpha didn't phase me but the thought of having to face one of my best friends from childhood that I'd treated so badly and I was absolutely shitting it. I genuinely didn't know how he would be with me, I could see in his hazel eyes the hurt when he spoke, and that was worse than the anger to me, the realisation I'd hurt him was the worst feeling....

Fuck! What if he wouldn't forgive me? I'd understand if he didn't, I'd been so out of hand..... I should have given him chance to explain....., what would I have done if Dom hadn't shouted up?.....Shit....I don't even want to think about that.....

I was nearing his room now, I just hoped he hadn't fallen asleep yet. I knocked gently on the door, far from my usual forceful knock, maybe because I didn't want to wake him if he was asleep, maybe because the nerves inside of me were making stomach tie into knots. The door opened slightly, and I saw Gabe stood bare chested in a pair of shorts his jet black hair damp so I assumed he'd been in the shower.

"Hey Alpha" he muttered not opening the door further, I knew he wasn't happy if he was addressing me as Alpha rather than Knox or dude, while I was his Alpha I was his friend too and all my really close friends would call me by my name or we'd refer to each other as dude or bro, or if we were messing with each it would be dick or tool amongst others. The fact he hadn't opened his door other than the slight amount he had when I first knocked showed he didn't really want me there either..... shit..... I didn't know how to handle this....

"Gabe.....dude....." I ran my hand through my hair again "first I'm sorry, and I ain't done with the sorrys yet, but can we talk?" I look at him pleadingly. My heart pounding so hard in my chest, I really needed my friend right now to realise how bad I felt and to give me a chance.....

"Sure...."he sighed opening the door enough to let me pass through, the tone in his voice evident he didn't want me here and was likely bowing to my Alpha authority despite me approaching him as my friend.

We walked into his room, one of the basic pack house rooms, though he'd painted the walls from the standard magnolia to a dark grey, a double bed with black bedding took up half the room with a table to the side of it with a tv, and Xbox and multiple framed photos of Gabe with his family and also some of us and our group of friend, only making me feel worse than I already had.

I made my way to the edge of the bed and sat myself down at the bottom, looking to Gabe who'd walked closely behind me after closing the door, he sat at the opposite end of the bed resting his elbow on the table top avoiding eye contact with me, his lips pursed clearly unsure what he wanted to say or do.

I could well have ruined our 20 something year friendship in my actions....

"Gabe, look man, I fucked up man, I really did" I pulled my hand through my hair "I don't know why I acted like I did, I flipped and some reason Knight was involved which made it harder to fight, not that that makes it ok....." Fuck... I didn't know how to explain this mess, I dropped my head to my hands

Gabe looked to me "Too right you fucked up dude, did you really think I'd do anything to her? Not even to question what the issue you being like that over her...." he stopped himself.

I assume realising he probably shouldn't have said what he did, though he probably had a point, I wasn't really sure myself what it was about Lilah that had my attention and my instinct to protect her...

"I know Gabe and I'm sorry, I know you better than that, it was just we couldn't get hold of you at all, we started to think maybe shit has kicked off with their guards with you crossing their borders, but then time got later and we figured if that was the case we'd have their warriors crossing our borders kicking off and there was nothing so we were trying to figure out where you were....." I sighed

"Yeah I should have messaged" he shrugged in response.

"As for the situation with Lilah I don't know man..." I didn't want to think about this but I wanted to honest with my friend so he could see I was genuine with my apology and with my feelings, this guy had been my friend since we were tiny, I couldn't lose him over me losing my temper, I couldn't..... "maybe it's just my protector instinct kicking in or something" I shrug as Gabe let's put a low chuckle while raising his eyebrow as I continue.

"I guess she reminded me a little of Cleo, with the long blond hair...." I ran my hand through my hair.

It had been a long time since I spoke about my younger sister, I missed her, I hated I hadn't been able to protect her better, that she hadn't come to me for help.... I saw Gabe watching me with a small but sad smile, he moved toward me down the bed and but his hand round my shoulder knowing how hard I found it talking about my sister "I guess her shyness awkwardness reminded me a little of Cleo, and while he eyes are that beautiful blue not like Cleo's deep chocolate brown they have that same pain there....." I sniffed trying to fight back the tears that were pushing there way forward at the thought of my younger sister.

"Then you're not going to like what I got to say Knox..." Gabe sighed.

My head shot upwards to look at my friend, "What do you mean?"

"I'm scared for her bro" he looked on edge as he spoke "she cried so much last night as she realised that Indie would be leaving her pack, I mean yeah you'd be down your friend would be going but surely you'd be happy for your friend, but she said something that I can't shake Knox...." He ran his hand through his now dried hair, the concern clear on his face as he looked at me.

"Go on" I urged him.

"She said Indie was the only thing keeping her sane. Then said she was the only reason she was still here....." his eyes made contact with mine "I think she has tried to hurt herself or thought about it Knox."

No, no, no no another one..... I hadn't seen the signs in Cleo, it had been to late for me to help my baby sister, she'd struggled so hard and we had no clue, she'd acted like everything was good, smiled and put on a brave face said she was managing ok but behind the closed door of her room was planning ways to end her life..... a plan she ended up seeing through..... a plan to leave a gaping while in our family..... I need to help Lilah, I know she's not Cleo, I know she's not from my pack but what if we're the only ones who know? We need to help her..... Gabe was watching me, as my mind worked overtime with so many thoughts of Cleo and then of Lilah.

"I tried to find out more man, I really did, she was sobbing so hard, I had her in my arms...." He paused "I didn't do nothing I swear" I hated myself that he felt it necessary to explain that especially right now.....

"I know Gabe" I whisper.

"I hate to see girls upset, the big brother in me, you know what it's like, when Gia cries I'm straight there with a hug, same with Lexi, instinct kicked in when she started sobbing and I wanted to try to console her, I hugged her and tried to tell her it would be ok, that Dan would look after Indie, that she'd still see Indie and that's when she said all that. I asked her to speak to me, she was sobbing so much Knox, it broke my heart not being able to help, I didn't know what to say or do, I asked if I could help I, she just shook her head and carried on crying..... that's where she fell asleep..... I didn't want to disturb her so I let her sleep, she looked tired..... I was tired..... she was warm.... I fell asleep and before I knew it it was morning..... I fucked up..... you were pissed off....." his voice trailed off.

Shit, he'd done the honourable thing, he'd been there for her, he'd gone in and checked her house like I asked him to, then was there for her when she was upset, the only thing he could have done different was maybe message but I get he was tired, he'd fallen asleep, he couldn't help that..... he hadn't fucked up, I had, he had to know that....

"First Gabe, you didn't fuck up, I did, big time and I'm hoping to the goddess you can forgive me, I don't want to lose you bro.....you did the honourable thing by her, and in doing that we may have chance to help her....we need to help her....."

"You're not going to lose me you dick, just don't make a habit of it, you should know me better than that, I wouldn't touch another man's woman...." he looked at me his eye brow raised with a smirk.

I rolled my eyes at him, ok maybe I hadn't been as discreet as I thought when checking her out last night. "She isn't my woman...."

He laughed "Maybe not your mate but there's definitely some attraction there, that was clear to see and I'm not sure it was just from you either "he grinned "but all joking aside Knox I saw the vulnerability in her too, and I definitely wouldn't have took advantage, that's just wrong. I just wish you'd not jumped to conclusions, can't lie that hurt man.... a lot" he sighed.

And I felt like a complete arse now, I hate that hurt my friend the way I had, I know him better than anyone and deep down I should have known he wouldn't have laid a finger on Lilah, just that mist of being protective kicked in.

I was about to speak to explain when he continued "But I think you're right what if nobody else knows? We should see if we can help Lilah, but it will be awkward with her being at River Ash Pack, you don't want to cause problems with Alpha Grayson there"

I leant forward so my elbows were on my knees, "I know, we need to think. First I think we should try to speak to Indie and see if she'll give any info up, depending just how much she knows and see if she is willing to try to help come up with a plan to help Lilah" I look to Gabe to see if he agrees.

"Sounds like a solid plan Knox, I can't see why she wouldn't want to help her friend, it's just finding a way to help that doesn't cause issues with River Ash Pack but you know you got me, and the rest of the guys behind you to help." He put his hand on my back again "if you need to talk I'm here man, I know this could bring up thoughts of Cleo, but this isn't her Knox, I don't know if that's why you and your wolf are reacting the way you are to Lilah and how vulnerable she seems, that you're both sensing the pain she's going through, and feel you need to protect her but saving her isn't going to change what happened with Cleo....." he broke off.

I could tell from his tone he'd found that difficult to say to me, but I knew he'd meant well and I did appreciate that despite how I'd treated him less than two hours ago he was now here offering me his support.

I turn to him and hug him, I'm not an overly affectionate guy with the males in my pack, especially not being an Alpha, so Gabe seemed taken back but he gripped my back in a hug before patting my back. "I'm sorry Gabe, for earlier, I can't put into words just how much....." I say to him.

"It's done man, emotions clearly are high here with something going on, we're friends, always have been, I'm not going to hold it against you, just please don't do it again and please don't think that bad of me again cos that did hurt Knox" I sighed at that, I hated that I'd hurt him, "but we need to see if we can help Lilah..." he continued as he pulled away from our hug.

"Definitely" I said as we stood, "are we ok though Gabe? I was nervous coming to see you you know, worried I could lose one of my oldest friends..." I blurted out.

He raised his eyebrows in surprise, I expected him to take the piss like he normally does with me but instead he smiled "We're fine Knox. Knowing that makes me know you regretted what you did, let's leave it now and work on finding a way to help Lilah" he said "now can I please sleep? A nap on a lumpy sofa was not good after a heavy day at work and a night drinking" he laughed.

I laughed back "Yeah sure, I'm going to see if I can find Indie and Dan, hoping they might have finished corrupting each other or at least be taking a break..." I joked as I headed toward the door.