

The Alpha Games

Chapter 3 - Everyone knew

Ashen faces greeted her as she strode down the stairs, her face the picture of indifference. She didn't doubt that most of the ladies, who were preparing the hall, had heard her altercation with Daniel and they all stopped their activities to watch her descend. Maddie was eager to get out of there, but she didn't want to leave without saying goodbye to her friend. Rose rushed up to meet her at the base of the steps, her eyes flitting between her and the stairs behind as she blocked her path.

"Please don't leave." She whimpered. "I'm so sorry you found out like this but..."

Maddie's stomach dropped. "You knew?" For the first time, her voice weakened as she looked at her friend of three years. She had been the first friend she had made when she first moved to Red Dawn. Regret lined Rose's expression, but there was no trace of a lie as the truth finally surfaced. She took a step back, white knuckling the strap of her bag. "You knew?" The words dripped like poison from her lips, tainted with the anger she tried to keep in check.

"I'm sorry, Maddie, but he's my future Alpha." Rose mumbled, her eyes dropping to the floor.

She snorted. "And I was your friend."

Her chest clenched, but as she turned away from Rose, she found every other woman in the hall looking at her with that same expression. That same sympathy rendered useless with the traces of guilt behind each one. Bile clawed up her throat. They all knew. Maddie didn't know how many Red Dawn wolves had covered for their future Alpha, but if the civilians in the hall were aware, then so would everyone above them; the upper ranks, the warriors, their families. Hundreds of wolves keeping his secret and letting her walk blindly into becoming his mate.

Maddie had never been a Red Dawn wolf, but the familiarity and connection she felt from them snapped in that moment.

Suddenly, their eyes move off her and Maddie didn't have to guess who had swept into the hall by the way every eye dropped to the floor. Someone had told the Luna Eleanor what was going on. Despite it still being hours away, Daniel's mother had already donned her ball gown and was the pinnacle of grace as she floated across the floor, reaching them in moments.

Instantly, Maddie felt her back straighten. Luna Eleanor was the perfect depiction of a Luna. She always looked beautiful, like she had spent hours on her hair and makeup, and Maddie had never seen her in anything other than a dress or a skirt. She was always composed and was the perfect host when the pack had guests. Though Maddie had come to Red Dawn to learn from her auntie, Luna Eleanor had taken her under her wing when her relationship with Daniel had started. She trained her to take over the duties and be the perfect Luna.

Without taking a moment to take in the tight lines of Maddie's features, the Luna swept her into a hug, that had her cheek crushed against her bosom. "There, there, Dear." She cooed as if Maddie was crying. "You know how Alphas can be."

Only her many years of training kept her from breaking and wrenching herself from the Luna's arms as a shiver crawled down her spine. It shouldn't have been a surprise that his mother also knew about his indiscretions, especially under her own roof, but the condescending tone, that tried to belittle the rage inside, sickened her. How could she say such a thing about betraying the very vow a mate bond promised.

"How Alphas can be?" Maddie asked slowly, pulling herself free.

"Yes, it's in an Alpha's nature to take other women, but it's *you* who will bear his pups and rule at his side. As it should be." She nodded sagely, like it was a reassurance. "Don't worry, Dear, you will get used to it."

In that moment, Maddie hardened to them all. Not only was her fiancé a lying, cheating bastard, but his family and pack were too. Not only did they hide the truth from her, but they wanted her to accept it as a way of life. Fuck. That. She refused to become the Luna of wolves who would disrespect her. Of course, they had put their own before her and she was certain that would never change. How many other secrets would they keep to protect their precious future Alpha, if it meant they could reap the benefits out of her and Silver Moon?

“Have some self-respect.” Though shorter, Maddie looked down on the woman, her tongue sharp. The Luna reeled back as if she had been slapped. Good. “I know how Alphas should treat their Lunas and this is not it. You should be ashamed of your son and yourself, Luna Eleanor.”

Her reprimand rang in the hall, with the authority of the position that echoed her future role. A flash of anger crossed the Luna’s eyes, but she held her tongue for the same reason everyone else had done the same. They feared the consequences of angering their future Alpha and Eleanor feared the consequences of damaging the relationship with Maddie’s pack; the pack she would rule within the year. The knowledge made her stand taller, with the pride of her family, and without another word, she glided past the Luna and out of the packhouse.

It was only when Maddie was in her car, and far away from the Red Dawn territory, did she let allow the first cracks of her composure to break her mask. A single tear slipped down her cheek as she released the constraints on her emotions and let them all flood free. There was no one to pretend for anymore. She could break now that she was alone, and she really was.

Darkness wrapped around her car; its silence only punctured by her sobs and the heartbreak anthems blaring around her. For three years, she had lived at that pack, and had her whole future planned at Daniel’s side, but it had been torn away in one moment. Maddie had thought it had been a home to her. She had been foolish. Silver Moon was her only home and the further she went the more she looked forward to seeing the familiar island of her territory. She just hoped her dad wouldn’t be too pissed.