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Phoenix: 1

"You wanted to see me, Alpha?" I tried to keep my voice respectful. His office smelled the same.

Paper, ink, and faintly coffee.

He didn't even bother to look up.

When he gave a short nod, his eyes stayed glued to the paper sitting before him on his desk. I stood there in silence, waiting for him to speak.

He was taking his sweet time and was busy writing something on the paper. For a moment, I wondered if he had already forgotten I was even standing.

Finally, he set the file aside and leaned back in his chair, his gaze at last lifting to mine. "Yes, Phoenix," he smiled, and for the first time, I felt like it was a forced smile. "I called you so that I can discuss your certifications... everything you earned in the last two years in this pack. You'll need those documents before you leave."

The words didn't surprise me, but they still stung. I forced myself to meet his eyes.

"I still belong to this pack, Alpha," I tried to remind him softly, "Going to a palace doesn't mean I'm not one of you."



For a split second, something flickered in Alpha Blake's eyes. Regret, maybe? Sadness?

But it was gone quickly as it appeared.

He chose to give me a faint smile instead, "You don't need a pack when you'll be going to the Royal Palace, Phoenix."

I blinked at him when I felt my stomach twisting, "Ar... Are you banishing me from my pack?"

He lifted a hand, maybe in an attempt to keep me calm, "Don't take it to your heart. You're making it sound as though I'm insulting you, Phoenix.

But no..." he shrugged with dismissive air, "You're moving to a bigger position... to the Royal palace... as a head warrior... so... you won't be needing your pack anymore."

I let his words sink in, then lifted my head, "Alpha Blake," a smirk tugged at my lips, "Would you have said the same to Kiara if she were the one leaving for her warrior duty?"

Ah! The confident Alpha mask was slipping.

For once, he didn't have an answer.

I shook my head slowly, fighting the grin that threatened to show. Even my mask couldn't cover it.

Taking a steady breath, I walked forward and pulled out the chair opposite him, lowering



myself into it without hesitation.

Alpha Blake's brows rose as surprise flashed in his eyes as if to say, *Did you just sit without my permission?*

This time I let him see the crinkles at the corners of my eyes, "I'm sorry, Blake," this time I didn't add the word Alpha to his name, "You just told me, unofficially, to leave the pack... as if... I'll never return. That means... you're no longer my alpha..." I bent ahead to place my palms on his desk, "If I'm a Royal warrior, why should I need your permission to sit?"

I placed my fist under my chin, letting my elbow lean on the desk. A flush crept across his face, darkening his features.

*If you can act like a di*ck then allow me to be a bitch, sweetie.*

Blake's chair scraped back an inch as he slammed the paper against the desk, "Watch your tone, Phoenix!" his face got dark with anger, "Don't forget that you were nothing when I took you in."

I didn't let the calmness slip from my face as I crossed one leg over the other, "Oh, I haven't forgotten. It's just hard to remember my place when you're the one pushing me out of it." 1

I could see a muscle twitching as though he



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wanted to spit it in my face. But then he seemed to swallow it back as he tried to bring a little gentleness to his voice, "I have work to finish," he tapped his finger on the file, "And I want to do it without any interruption."

Cute!

He wanted me out of his office, but couldn't say it clearly because now he understood that he couldn't afford to offend the lycan king.

"Sure, Blake," I smiled, "Seems like we both are too busy. Don't worry. I'll collect the certificates from the main office."

How heartless could they be?

They were acting as if sheltering me had been some grand favor.

I gave every drop of my sweat and blood to this pack. I kept them safe, fought for them on the borders, and healed their little kid.

However, Alpha Blake seemed to be forgetting it all.

Never mind sweetheart. I'll remind you everything.

After collecting my certificates from the main office, I was leaving the building when I came to



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know that Beta Brian had his burial early morning in the presence of his brother and the pack's Alpha.

There were still some warriors who thought he did wrong by insulting me in public and didn't follow the decorum of the ceremony.

It felt good to know that at least a few people still believed in me. Alpha Blake thought that I didn't have a wolf, so for him wrist-cutting ceremony was a time waste.

We were supposed to slit our wrists and let a few drops of blood fall on the ground to cut off the pack connection.

Nobody knew that I was slowly getting my wolf, and maybe it was late because of all the trauma it had been through.

It's okay. I told my wolf. We survived everything before... We'll survive what's coming, too.

I collected my medical certificate from the reception of the Pack Hospital as I needed to submit it to the council office for my Royal Warrior permit.

I didn't know if I would ever miss this pack, but I was definitely going to miss this hospital that had been a second home to me.

Here, I got treated for my face several times. Jai



didn't let anyone misbehave with me. He had been a shield to me all this time.

I was walking out of the hospital when I heard someone call my name from behind.

I stopped right there. I knew the voice.

It can't be...

Slowly, I turned around, and my eyes went wide when I saw Jai jogging towards me. For a second, I honestly thought that I was imagining it.

"Jai," I breathed out, still trying to believe if it was real.

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