

One Week To Respond

"What now?" I tossed the new letter on the desk and watched Kyle pick it up and scan it. "He wants us to back off? Are you kidding me?"

"It's not really news. It's what he asked for the day you let him take Emma back," Ella said quietly from her seat on the couch in the corner of my office. "Yes, and apparently he is making our decision for us. We had our own plan."

"Well, it seems to me that the wheels are turning in Crescent Moon. Something is coming," she replied with a frown. "That's exactly what's happening," I said, nodding toward the boys who still skimmed over the note.

"What else does it say?" Connor asked, leaning over Kyle's shoulder.

"He says that Crescent Moon is waiting for us to make the first move so that they can infiltrate our pack when we are weakened." Kyle looked up from the note. "But won't that weaken them as well?"

I scrubbed my hand down my face and leaned back in the chair. "Apparently, Alpha Benedict is under the impression he has enough numbers to overwhelm us. Apparently, our efforts to hide the true size of our pack have worked almost too well."

"What are we going to do?" Connor asked quietly. "We're going to give him one week."

I sent Kyle to prepare our warriors and Connor to write a hidden message for Emma to inform her that we would be coming for her in a week's time. We would be sending most of our warriors to Crescent Moon in one week, and Xaden needed to be ready for us.

I walked into the alpha suite with Ella, and she took my hand, stopping me in the center of the room. I took a deep breath and ran a hand through my hair. "I'm going to need your help making sure the pack is secure."

"Of course," she hummed as she wrapped her hands around my waist. "We'll need to make sure everyone is alerted and—"

"We'll take care of it," she replied as she pulled me closer. "It's all going to work out, love," she said softly as she stretched up and pressed a gentle kiss to my lips.

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"I'm not so sure," I said, resting my forehead against hers. "We've been through this before. And Emma knows what she's doing. Plus, she's got her mate looking out for her."

"Don't get me started on that..." I grumbled. "You would have growled and hollered about any man that claimed her," she chuckled. "She's not a baby anymore, love."

"She will always be my baby girl; I can't help it," I muttered. "I still hold to the opinion she should reject him. He can't be—"

"Zane Davis, you can't possibly be that dense," she hollered. I stared at my mate with wide eyes. "He's literally our worst enemy!"

"No," she huffed, "his father is. And what we saw at the border, he was gentle with her." I gave her a long-suffering look, and she sighed, her eyes practically rolling back into her skull.

"Okay... when he wasn't trying to kill her..." "Thank you," I nodded. "Exactly. How can we possibly trust he will ever have her best interest at heart?"

Ella shrugged. "We have to trust her own decision. And she chose to go back with him, so she must trust him to some degree to keep her safe." I shook my head, refusing to give in to this line of thought.

"What if he breaks her?" She placed a hand on my arm. "What if rejecting him breaks her?" she said softly.

My head dropped into my hands. "This isn't that." "How do you know?" "Because I wasn't a—"

"A complete utter ass?" My face snapped up at her words and I chuckled when she smirked. "Rejecting me was the biggest mistake of your life," she teased before her face turned serious. "Don't force her to do what you did and ended up regretting."

I sighed in defeat. I knew she was right. She always was.

Ella leaned against my shoulder and took a deep breath, her eyes closing in exhaustion. "She is strong, much stronger than me or you."

"I don't know where she gets it," I laughed, inhaling her scent as I pressed my face into her neck. "From your dad," Ella replied quietly, a low chuckle escaping her lips.

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