

## #Chapter 3: An Ally

Ella POV

I could feel everyone staring at me in shock at my words. I couldn't blame them; it wasn't the kind of confident statement I would have made before. But it was true now—I would never allow David to become the Alpha of my family's pack in this life.

I would be the one to take over for my father.

"What suddenly changed your mind?" David's father said. "You always refuse to learn how to be an Alpha. Now you know nothing about leading a pack. What's wrong with letting David help you?"

The first time this happened, I was too naïve.

My father always spoiled me, thinking I could spend another few years being his innocent little girl, so I didn't know anything about what it took to run a pack.

That's why all the power was handed over to David so easily when my father died. But I wanted my pack to survive and thrive so badly after my father's death, so I learned hard to take care of a pack as David's Luna.

I had to learn because it was all too much for David to handle on his own. In fact, now that I thought about it, almost every serious issue that ever faced our pack—I was the one to solve.

"I think it's funny you would question my ability to lead when your pack is in severe financial crisis under your lead," I said, smiling at him, "Your pack income relies too much on your farmers, but you have no risk management. You spent lavishly and wasted the taxes you collected from your farmers during the last few years, now you don't have enough money to make up for the crops that were lost this harsh winter."

David's father looked like he wanted to yell, but I continued speaking.

"Meanwhile our pack is thriving. We've made sure that we have enough money put away to get us through any emergency, and we ensure that the funds our people need to do their jobs—jobs that keep our pack safe and healthy—are always available to them."

My father was nodding approvingly at my words.

"We know our people. We know when they're struggling, and we know that when we help them through their struggles, it makes our pack stronger. That's a lesson you would do well to learn," I added.

Everyone was staring at me with obvious surprise, but I kept my head held high and proud. I waited for David's father to respond, but he didn't say a word. Instead, he grabbed his wife, Lily, by the arm, and the two of them hurried out of the house.

David stepped in front of me, and I could see a pained expression on his face. "What is going on?" he asked. "Why are you embarrassing me like this?"

"I'm not trying to embarrass you," I said honestly. "I just think it's important for me to learn to lead my own pack. After all, you'll want my help once we're married, won't you?"

I could tell that he was seriously considering my words.

Clearly, I wouldn't let him win the Alpha King selection this time. But from his current point of view, he could still use my support as a strong Alpha heir to win the selection. He could promote himself by showing our united strength—that would win a lot of people over.

"I'm sorry for how poorly things have gone today," I said, putting one hand against my temple. "I'm not feeling well. I need to rest."

It's all just been a lot. I desperately needed some alone time to sort out my plans.

"Are you sick?" Amanda asked.

"It's only a headache," I replied.

"I'll make you some tea," my mother said as she left the room. My father patted me on the shoulder supportively, then followed her out, leaving just David, Amanda, and me alone.

"I should just go up to my room," I said. "I'm sure I'll feel better after a little rest."

"I'll come with you," Amanda said. "I don't want you to stumble on the stairs."

I forced myself to smile at her. "I'm fine," I insisted.

"We'll both walk you to your room," David said.

I knew I wouldn't be able to convince them otherwise, so I had to agree. David kept his hand on my back as we walked up the stairs, and I found myself disgusted by his touch. When we reached my room, I went over and sat on my bed.

"I'm fine now," I said. "Thank you."

David looked hesitant but didn't try to argue further. "I'll talk to you soon," he said as he stepped out and closed the door.

Now that David and Amanda were alone, they might be discussing something useful. I stood up and rushed to the door, pressing my ear against the wood to listen.

"I don't know what's going on with her," Amanda said.

"None of that was the way I imagined it," David replied. "Not exactly the romantic proposal I had planned."

I frowned as I listened to their idle talk and walked back to my bed.

That was when I realized I had a major problem. Whether they were having an affair now or not, they were being careful around me. I was never going to catch them easily before the wedding.

But I had to expose them. It was the only way I was going to get out of this engagement without putting my pack at risk. I wasn't going to be able to do it alone.

I couldn't go to my mother and father about this; they would never believe my story. Who could I possibly rely on?

My phone beeped in my pocket. When I unlocked it, I saw a news alert.

I clicked on it, and the image of a familiar handsome man popped up on my screen.

I recognized Alpha Alexander immediately. He had been David's biggest rival for the Alpha King election. He was young, handsome, and popular with the ladies.

The only reason David had stood a chance against him was because of his marriage to me. With our packs merged, we had the largest territory, and that gave him power.

Without our marriage, there's no way David could win, and Alexander would probably become the Alpha King. He had a lot to gain from my marriage falling apart.

Would it be possible to get him to help me take David down?

Alexander was known for being a little unserious in his personal life. I vaguely remembered some scandal towards the end of the campaign for Alpha King. It all helped David in the final debate and was probably key to him winning.

If Alexander had my support, it would surely benefit his campaign, and I could help him steer through those scandals since I knew they were coming. Not to mention, I had information about David and his pack that Alexander could use against him.

I needed help to take David down and make sure he never became king.

What better ally could I find than Alexander?