

Force

Alpha Jaxon Tate's POV

My eye was twitching and my eyes were narrowed as I took in the sight right in front of me. My Beta Callum looked amused more than anything, but he knew how this would be taken and how this situation would develop. The other Alpha, Alpha Rowan, and his daughter Liandra seemed oblivious to the tension in the room. Or maybe they were too stupid to recognize that I was not about to be cowed into doing what they wanted. Either way, they looked too comfortable for my liking.

"Alpha Jaxon Tate" Alpha Rowan began, leaning forward in his chair to gaze at me with his dark brown eyes, a solemn expression on his face "I understand that as yet, despite your age of twenty-three years, you have yet to find or claim a chosen mate as your own?"

I gritted my teeth. This was not the first time that an arrogant Alpha had seen fit to be condescending or presumptuous in assuming they could make remarks on the lack of a Luna in the Blood Moon Pack. I forced myself to take a deep breath, even as I became aware of Liandra's green eyes on me, a sly smile on her lips.

I inclined my head, my tone even as I addressed the other Alpha in as civil a tone as I could muster. "I have not yet found my fated mate and I have no desire to take a chosen mate, simply for the sake of a Luna" I bit out.

The other Alpha looked at me incredulously "A Luna is needed in order to help keep order in the pack and to share the responsibilities between the Alpha and herself. It keeps the pack balanced and harmonizes it" he said frowning at me, as though I was some dumb kid he could frighten into submission with just a few choice words. Moron.

"This pack manages just fine without the presence of a Luna," I said, fixing my gaze on the man "My Beta Callum and my Gamma Cody manage quite fine and share the responsibilities evenly."

His lips twisted as though he found this amusing. "But an Alpha requires an heir to take over the running of the pack eventually, does he not?" he drawled.

"Only if he has plans to die in the near future and I'm afraid I have no such compunctions," I said wryly, my lips curling into a vicious grin.

He looked taken aback by this. "Well, but, things happen that are outside our control" he spluttered.

Liandra had remained silent as she observed this exchange between her father and me. She was a pretty girl, I was forced to acknowledge, with black raven hair, porcelain pale skin, and a body that was slender with curvy hips and a buxom bosom. She was attractive, I had to admit. But that was as far as the attraction went. I had it on good authority that she was dumb as a doorknob and also free with her s*** favors. I tried not to shudder at the thought of having somebody like that as my mate. It would simply not do.

"Things do happen" I acknowledged, leaning forward and raking my gaze over the other Alpha "but I will not take a mate simply out of fear. I have already made arrangements should I be killed in battle or taking over another pack" I said gravely.

"But wouldn't you prefer your own bloodline to remain the leader of the Blood Moon Pack?" he urged, "it's been in your family for generations. Would you really let another, not of your blood, run this pack?"

My eyes were glacial "Blood does not always mean family Alpha Rowan" I said tersely, "Family can be forged through the strongest of relationships and loyalty."

Another stunned silence. Liandra chose that moment to lean forward, giving me a view of her cleavage as she flipped her hair and gave me a wide smile, designed to gain my attention.

"What my father is saying Alpha Jaxon, is that a Luna can be a benefit to the pack, not just a hindrance as you are assuming" she breathed, twirling a strand of hair in her hand and blinking innocently at me.

"Not unless the Luna is planning on sleeping with every man in the pack," I said bluntly "I don't want a Luna in my bed and that's the only benefit I could see as far as I'm aware."

She gasped, turning bright red. Her father slammed his hand on the desk. "Listen here Alpha Jaxon" he snapped as I stared at him amused "There's no need to insult my daughter like that."

"There's every need," I said blithely "From what I hear, Liandra has been through half the men in your pack, give or take Alpha Callum? She's easy, she's stupid, and she has no business being a Luna of any pack. Just because she's from your Alpha bloodline, doesn't mean that anybody is going to be naive enough to take her as their chosen mate, unless they are desperate or broke. I'm neither" I informed him with a low growl "and quite frankly I find your daughter revolting" I added for good measure.

Liandra's eyes filled with tears. Her father shot daggers at me. "I came here, to offer Liandra as a way to forge an alliance and a treaty between our two packs," he said in a scornful tone "I do not see that you have to forcefully take my pack when Liandra could be the bridge between the two. Wouldn't you rather find a peaceful solution," he said angrily.

He was grasping at straws. His pack was small, only a third of the size of mine, if that. While I was willing to sign a treaty to avoid bloodshed, I was not willing to take his daughter as my Luna. That felt more like a punishment than a prize.

Alpha Rowan was weak. His pack was dwindling, rogues were easily picking him and his warriors off. He needed me. He couldn't afford to offend me. I was more than willing to forcefully take his pack instead of dealing with this nonsense and extending my boundaries.

"Alpha Rowan, listen to me and listen carefully. Your pack numbers are reducing each and every day as the rogues continue to pick you off, one by one. Your warrior's fighting skills are pathetic and weak. You cannot continue to defend your pack without losing a considerable amount of men and pack members. Your women and children are at risk of losing their lives. Your pride is getting in the way" I told him steadily as he leaned back and listened, his jaw clenching in anger "you want my help? That much is clear" I said with a certain amount of satisfaction "because without it, your pack will vanish within a couple of weeks and that's the best-case scenario."

He tightened his jaw. A treaty would ensure that his pack survived and that I ran the rogues off, but he had offended me beyond repair. Liandra was still crying in the chair. "Either willingly submit your pack and merge it with mine," I told him coldly "or I will forcibly take it after killing off the rogues. Your pack will blame you for the bloodshed and loss of lives."

"The treaty" he protested.

I shook my head "the treaty is off the table. I am not willing to defend such a weak pack. Let alone one that insults me by bringing such a pathetic suggestion as this girl to me" I nodded at Liandra, disgusted at her crying and whimpering.

"But what about me?" he stammered, no longer looking like an Alpha but rather a defeated and resigned old man.

I raised a brow "I have no need for a Beta or a Gamma. You would be merely another pack member, the same as everybody else from your pack."

"I can't do that" he continued to protest, looking annoyed and slightly panicked "I wouldn't be respected by the pack if I just did as you asked."

I chuckled and nodded my head "Alpha Rowan, you are fooling yourself if you think that your pack respects you now. It's only a matter of time before your people rebel or seek sanctuary away from your pack."

I swiftly stood. I was tired of this conversation. My eyes darkened as my wolf surged to the surface, making Alpha Rowan and his daughter tremble. "You have two days to decide the matter. After that, I'm coming for your pack" I told him calmly "I trust that you'll give me your answer. For now, I respectfully ask you to leave and consider your options."

Alpha Rowan tiredly nodded and then stood, grabbing Liandra by the arm. He turned and stormed from the room. I watched them go, feeling detached.

His pack would not be the first weak one to merge with mine. My pack, the Blood Moon Pack had become one of the largest and strongest in the country. I had a reputation for being ruthless. Of being a monster. Perhaps I was. But I refused to allow others to make the decisions for me. I did not need a Luna. I never would. That subject would remain firmly closed. Women could continue to throw themselves at me, it happened often, but I would never take any of them as a chosen mate. Love was a weakness. Love made you vulnerable. It had the ability to bring you to your knees and make reckless decisions. As long as I lived, I would never take a Luna and expose myself to being vulnerable or put my pack at risk.