

CH 13

Slade

He took that call from his father late at night in the privacy of his own room, at least he didn't have to ask Donna to leave, she'd had her way with him and he, her. Then she'd just up, dressed and left, not interested in sticking around, just sating those alpha needs of hers was all.

He was unhappy about what he was hearing, just sat there and let them talk it out. He didn't really say anything at all until they were done telling him all the pros and cons of what they wanted, him to release Ori and step-up Hayden.

The boy had taken to training with Palmer and Yuri this last week with full gusto, listened and learned, didn't kick back once, didn't even seem to have an issue with being ordered around by the Gamma or the Delta. He'd gotten that update from his own unit as well.

Even they were surprised by the boys' sudden change of attitude, he actually was acting responsibly and like a Beta, a future Beta. He had shown he could do the job, and liked the hardcore training, no snipes about his sister, not even once.

If she wasn't around, Hayden could focus and be the acting Beta. Slade didn't much like it, knew the boy's newfound attitude would only help to sway his father. Hell, the boys' own father himself.

He lay in his bed and wondered what was going to happen inside that pack without him. That boy's week of training was up now. That's why his father had called him. And that late at night they were not risking Ori overhearing this conversation.

Private late-night chats usually meant everything was on the hush-hush side and only those that needed to know were in the know. Hayden had not been in the room and neither had Ori. The girl would blow a gasket and lose her s**t, yell and argue for her position, would be all red up about it, and well before that conversation even really got started.

If she was in the room, the minute she knew what it was all about, she would be on the defensive, about it just being that she was a girl. She was strong and dependable, t for the job, trained for the job, and though she was only 18, they still had years of training to come. She would be adamant she could stand her ground and hold her own.

He also knew she could, and his and her Alpha Beta bond was strong, as was her Alpha unit bond to Palmer and Yuri. There was no actual need to change the leadership of the future of the pack, not that he saw.

He could see their point of view, but also saw how damn hard she fought to keep her position. He saw Alpha females here at Alpha College struggling as well. Their world was male-dominated, and most were of the opinion, females would mate off out of the pack and, unfortunately, that was also the truth of the matter.

He had two weeks to think about it was all, at least here at Alpha College, he had guidance, and could talk to the Alpha Council members in private, ask for guidance on the situation. What they thought, they were not sided with him or Ori, they wouldn't be sided with his father or his unit either.

They could provide him with an unbiased opinion of the situation, and they did actively encourage everyone here, to go and talk to them about important pack related issues that they might have to deal with.

This was something he wanted to have; an unbiased opinion on. He needed a sounding board or two, and he knew it, he couldn't talk to Palmer or Yuri. If his father had wanted them in the know, they'd have been in that oce when the call was made.

His life was about to become complicated, more so than he liked. He could well lose not only his Beta, but one of his closest friends as well, if he opted for Hayden to take over Ori's position. Hell, he knew he would lose her, there would be a screaming match and the bond of trust they had for the past 18 years would be broken, and she'd never likely believe a word he said ever again.

Most thought the life of an Alpha was all hunky-dory, and they lived a carefree, happy existence, but most didn't get to see the hard decisions they had to make. All the choices made for them, behind closed doors, choices they themselves had no say in.

This was technically his choice, who his unit was, but he also knew his father was the actual Alpha, and could overrule his decision if he didn't think it was the best for the pack. He was going to have to plead a solid case in Ori's favour, to sway his father and his unit, if he decided on keeping her.

He also understood the importance of a decision like this, it wasn't to be taken lightly at all. They were right about everything they'd said, she was a she-wolf, a girl, and she would go into heat, once mated. Could be mated off at any time now, leave the pack as well. Leaving him with no Beta at all, until Hayden, the pack Beta's second heir, was trained up and ready. So, yes, he saw the logic of it; Just didn't like it.

Didn't even like the idea of her leaving the pack, he sighed again, only much more heavily this time. He saw the way the male wolves of the pack looked at his Beta, and he was willing to bet with her all dressed up as she had been, on the full moon. More eyes were on her now than before.

Hell, he didn't even need to be home in that pack, to know that the male population had all been standing around looking at her, hoping those eyes of hers would nd them, and the word mate would be growled out of them. He'd likely have been one himself, if he'd been standing right there alongside of her; if he was completely honest with himself.

Seeing her dressed up like that, even in a photo, all smiling and happy, he'd really liked it. He'd saved that photo his father had sent him, on his own phone. It was also printed out and in a frame on his desk right now. Everyone that came here saw it.

He stated it was his unit, and it was the truth, he'd also seen some of the other Alphas here give a low whistle at the sight of her 'that's your Beta?' he'd gotten many times. There were a few 'have you and she done it?' and several 'how old is she?'

They all looked to see if she was claimed, and he knew it, had seen them all really look at her. They liked what they saw, he'd snarled at a few of their lewd comments. One Alpha had raised both his hands and backed away 'sorry man' he'd murmured.

It was a good photo of the three of them, his unit all smiling and happy, he wasn't there, and they were all still closely bonded and able to hang out and have fun. But for how much longer? He honestly didn't know. He slept little that night, tossed and turned, and after class the next day, made an appointment with alpha Gretta to discuss the issue.

She heard the topic and stated "tomorrow at 3pm, I'll pull all of us into that, important it is. Lots of thoughts will be had."

He nodded and put a reminder onto his phone for the meeting. The meeting came, and he found himself in the oce with four council members; Alpha Gretta, Alpha Hailey, Alpha Tyler and Alpha Patrick. He stated his issue and was asked many questions, though not about him or his opinion, but about Ori herself, the rst being "her bloodline?" Alpha Gretta had asked him right away.

"Pure-blooded Beta, both her parents are Betas," he told them.

"Age?" Alpha Patrick asked.

"She just turned 18." He'd answered.

"She's been training as your Beta how long now?" it was Alpha Hailey,

"All her life," he answered.

"The second Beta how old?" Gretta asked him.

"17 and a half, her parents had another pup quickly, trying to get a boy," he admitted.

"What does she look like?" had been asked by Alpha Tyler, and he'd frowned instantly at the man.

"Does that matter?" he'd asked, a little annoyed.

"Likely so." Alpha Patrick had nodded "have you got a picture of her?"

Slade had nodded and pulled up the picture of her and his unit, zoomed it in on her. Alpha Gretta, he knew, had already met Ori, had seen her on his arrival day, the others had not. She also saw they'd been angry with each other.

"So, son." it was Alpha Hailey "you have got yourself a very desirable female Beta, I see, and one with the strength of a pure Beta bloodline, and she's just come of age?" she asked.

"Yes, father wants me to pass her over for her younger brother, because she's a girl, she will go into heat, have pups or move to another pack."

"Those things are all true," Alpha Gretta nodded.

"I know but," he sighed.

"Look Slade, honestly, looking at your Beta, knowing her bloodline, she's likely to nd a strong Mate, Beta or Alpha ranked." Patrick told him "And move away."

"A fully ranked member with pack leadership, like yourself, an heir or an actual Alpha or Beta to their own pack." Tyler nodded "your father and his unit, her father even, are all aware of this. They are prepping for her leaving the pack already."

He sighed "I understand that, but it doesn't need to be made to happen now. It can wait till she nds a Mate, right? That's what I want, to keep her until I have to let her go."

"Hmm." it was Hailey. "Okay, let's look at that, you say that it could take time, years even. Let's explore that a little for you. You're already bonded to her. We can clearly see that. You will take over in what 6 or 7 years from now?"

"When I'm like 30, dad says." He shrugged "there's no rush. We're a large pack with a lot of businesses for me to learn, it will likely take many years to understand and be able to manage them. I do agree with that assessment, he's made." He nodded.

"Okay, let's say that's when it happens, when she's 30ish herself, she's been your Beta for 12 years, give or take, she's suddenly mated to another, let's say an Alpha of a pack, has to leave to be his Luna. Your pack is now left in decit, and you have no Beta then, after 12 years together."

He sighed now, didn't like where this was going.

"It's not so easy to replace a Beta after all that time," Patrick stated with a sigh, "for you, your Gamma and Delta, to form a bond of trust with someone new, integrate him into your pack and your unit."

"Or her," Slade commented.

"Oh no, it will be a him," Gretta told him. "You and your unit will kind of be at a loss, and bringing another female Beta into your unit, you won't want that." she stated "Because Slade, there in the back of your mind, their minds, the way you look at her photo, you like the girl. More than you willing to admit to anyone."

"You'll choose a male Beta for the very reason your father is trying to get you to do it now." Alpha Tyler nodded "Instead of four, ve or ten years down the track. He's trying to save you and your unit that loss, and the trouble of nding a suitable replacement. One that you will all compare to her at every turn, because you miss her, likely even want her back at times."

Slade sighed heavily now as he looked at them for a long minute, "I'm not getting what I want am I?" He murmured as he looked down at Ori in the picture.

"Unlikely son." Tyler stated, "it'll also be for the best, I'm afraid." He did sound apologetic to the ear.

Slade walked out of that oce, no happier than when he'd walked in. He felt Gretta's hand on him a moment later. "Slade, you might still get what you want, just not how you expected it."

"What?" he frowned at her.

She smiled at him. "Silly boy, you haven't come across her on the full moon yet have you!" she smiled at him, "I saw you two butting heads, the way you look at her photo, you like the girl. More than you willing to admit to anyone."

"She's my Beta, nothing more." he stated simply.

"Alright," she nodded, "you're going home for the next full moon aren't you?"

He nodded, "Yes, a family thing."

"Well, you could get your Beta, have her by your side, just in a different capacity, son. I agree with the other council members, that she's likely with that bloodline. To mate off to an Alpha Wolf... You're an Alpha Wolf are you not!" she stated, and then just turned and walked away from him.