

Chapter 30

Zander's POV

Nicola got up early this morning to go shooting with some of her friends. Part of me is jealous that pretty much all of her friends are other males, but then again, most of the ECHO pack is made up of male warriors. I'm also slightly jealous that she has friends. The only true ones I have are Kane and Rivers since it wasn't possible before to get close to anyone else without compromising my identity. She's also gotten close to Rivers over the last month, which at first I was leery of, but now I'm grateful for.

Rivers has taken the role of Nicola's guardian when I'm away and it has greatly helped to put my mind at ease. Actually stepping up as the alpha king is going to require me to travel, and as much as I want my mate by my side 24/7, that's not going to be possible. Some situations are way too dangerous for her to be in and I need to know that she's safe so I can do my job.

I get dressed and glance out the window at the clear blue morning sky. Liam is urging me to go outside and follow our mate and I'm starting to cave in to his request. I decide to go and watch from a distance, just to be sure I don't interfere. I really want to see how well she is with a gun and I'm still extremely intrigued about our new bond. I've been able to feel her wolf and emotions more and more and it's quickly becoming a drug I can't get enough of.

When I get to the range, I plant myself about 100 yards away from her. I make sure to mask my scent so she won't be able to detect me being so close as I watch her interactions with the others. She's there with her two male friends, Cameron and I think the other is named Parker. I glance left to see Rivers walking up to them and I almost let out a chuckle. I should have known he would be here, she honestly has him wrapped around her finger.

They all begin to shoot and I'm fascinated as I watch my mate. She has

pure joy and determination on her face and, just watching her, it's evident she's going to become my all time favorite show. I close my eyes as she lines up to her next target and I reach out to touch our mating bond. Calmness sweeps over my body and I can feel my heart rate start to slow down. Liam stands attentive and focused as if he's stalking his next prey, ready to pounce at any minute. Soon, I feel a slight pulse of energy through my muscles and Liam lowers his head a few inches, studying every detail. I continue to sit with my eyes closed and dig deeper to feel more of our bond, but nothing else comes.

"You've got to be kidding me." I hear Rivers booming voice and my eyes snap open.

Nicola is holding her target in the air and waving it around as if it's some victory flag. A smile grows across my face and pride surges through me, but I think the emotion is more of my own than my mates.

Not long after, everyone except for Nicola packs up and leaves and I'm debating on whether or not I should join her now that she's alone. I decide against it to give her some time to herself, plus I'm enjoying watching her do something she loves. Liam and I watch in amazement as our mate nails target after target from distances I haven't even seen our own warriors shoot from and I wonder if being connected to my wolf has helped her.

Once it looks like she's wrapping up at the range, I start to head back to my office. I sit down into my seat and turn on the computer when Rivers mind links me.

"Did you know your mate can outshoot almost everyone?"

"Did she kick your ass?" I grin already knowing the answer.

"Hell yes she kicked my ass and I'd put money on her out shooting every warrior here!"

I laugh at his outburst but it quickly dies when I open up a recent email. Attached are about a dozen pictures that were taken of Nicola and I together. All of them were taken within the last few weeks, here on packs lands too. They're a mix of different photos, from us walking while I hold her hand, to her sitting on my lap as I kiss her forehead, and

some are just captures of us looking at the other in complete adoration. I have to admit, the pictures taken are really good and have captured just how truly and utterly in love I am with this woman, but that's what scares me.

The text written in the email reads:

Beautiful mate. It's a shame you got to her before the deed could be finished last time. It's going to hurt so much more now when I tear her away from you.

My blood chills and I immediately try to mind link Nicola but I can't seem to get through to her. I growl out in frustration and pound both fists down on my desk.

"Where's Nicola?" I link both Kane and Rivers.

"I think I saw her head to the training building."

"Last I saw her was at the range."

Kane and Rivers both reply back.

I continue trying to mind link Nicola and fear spreads through me as I run down the pathways to find my mate.

"No, no, no. Please be okay." I whisper to myself. Liam is pacing back and forth in my head, desperate to know what's going on. I continue to run as fast as I can to get to her but it still feels like it's not quick enough.

I try to convince myself that's she's okay because, wouldn't I have felt something if she wasn't? As I push through the doors of the training building I'm surrounded by warriors as they grapple on the rubber mats at the bottom floor. My eyes frantically search for Nicola but I can only hear the echoes of her grunts and struggles before I can catch sight of her.

Liam goes into a frenzy and immediately shoves through to take control so we can pinpoint our mate. We finally spot her on the far side of the room, pinned to the ground and struggling to shove the male on top

away from her. In just a few strides, we make our way to the other side of the room and throw the him off her body with a low growl. I hear his body crack as he makes contact with the ground and part of me wants to finish the job, but concern for my mate has me quickly turning around. I reach out to grab Nicola and assess any wounds but am met with a hard shove that momentarily shocks me.

"What the hell Zander?" Nicola yells in my face.

I can feel Liam lay his ears back against his head, unsure why we're being scolded. I fight to take back control of the situation but Liam refuses to budge. He needs to make sure she's okay first and out of danger. Our eyes fly across the room to take in the scenario and I see Cameron laying on the floor a few yards away. He's looking at us with uncertainty, as if I'm a ticking time bomb, and he's clutching his arm that's probably broken.

When I try to take control again, Liam finally lets me. I can feel my eyes shift back as I blink and take a step towards Nicola.

"I'm-" I start forward towards her.

"You're what?" She's borderline yelling and her eyebrows are near her hairline.

"I thought you were in trouble." I say trying to keep my voice down. The room has gone silent as fifty pairs of eyes turn to look at us.

"Zander, I literally do this every single week, you know that." She glares at me.

"Please just let me explain." I beg, realizing how bad this probably looks.

"Explain later, I need to take Cameron to the pack hospital" She huffs.

"It's fine." I hear Cameron grit out, though it's obvious he's in pain.

"No, it's not fine Cam. You're hurt, come on, lets go." She gestures for him to get up.

She's mad at me and I know she has a good reason, but there's also a reason for my behavior.

"Baby please, Liam thought."

She points to me and practically spits, "Then you need to control him."

I reach out to grab her but she pulls back from me angrily. My hand drops and Liam whimpers in my head from her words. It feels as though our heart is being torn out and stomped into the dirt and I know she feels it too because her face begins to fall though she doesn't say anything else. I'm not sure what to do or what to even say back in this moment as I stare at her, but eventually I just walk away.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean for this to happen. I love her so much and I was so afraid to lose her." My wolf says to me.

"I know. I love her too." I say back as I head back to the house.

Chapter Comments



