



202 DO NOT CROSS THE BROWN PATH!

The following day, the other wolves woke up and were ready to start the journey. **1**

Xaden had spent the remainder of his early morning hours awake.

He had been unable to go back to sleep since he and Erik had killed the beast last night.

"My lord," Owen said, snapping Xaden out of his stream of thoughts. "The men are ready to leave."

Xaden got up to his feet and then climbed onto his horse before catching up to Erik, who led the way.

"Are you alright?" Erik asked him.

"Sure." Xaden nodded even though he himself did not think he was okay.

The others still did not know about the incident with the Ryliat last night.

Only Elyon, and that was because he had been awake in the early hours of the morning.

Then Erik turned back to the men.

"We are headed into the forest," Erik informed.

"We stay together no matter what. It is



dangerous. No matter what you see or hear, you do not leave the group we are in. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Gamma!" They all chorused.

"If there is anything any of you wish to ask," Erik said, looking at the eyes of all the men. "You had better ask now."

There were a couple of hands.

Erik chose who he believed had the question on their mind that all the other wolves had.

He pointed him out

"What should we be afraid of?" A high-ranking beta, Harry asked.

"There are many creatures in the forest, but then most of them are harmless, or let me just say the Ryliat has dominated them. The Ryliat is a creature that takes the image of your greatest desire," Erik explained. "They deceive you into thinking that your family, lover, wife, daughter, or someone you care about very much, is amongst them. You get called out, and then if you do not use your wolf powers enough, they can lure you away, and you will follow them into the forest."

"What happens when you follow them to the forest?" Someone asked and then all eyes turned to Erik.



"We never see you again," Erik said.

The entire space went quiet.

Then Erik added. "Once we enter the forest, the brown path that we follow is sort of a protection from the creatures. We are in their domain, but they will be unable to cross the brown path in the daylight except at night. So the best they can do is turn into

Your family or someone will call you. Once you cross that line, no one. And I mean it, no one will be able to save you. We stay on the same path until I signal you. Obey me and we all make it out alive."

The men nodded and murmured, but in general, they agreed.

Then Erik climbed onto his horse. "Block your ears from the outside. We are all from

The same pack, as you know, so only we can communicate with each other. You can hear all the wolves from our pack, even in the forest, but you can not hear from outside unless you block it. Do you understand?"

"Yes!" They all answered.

"And I repeat, under no circumstances should you open your senses to the outside world, under no circumstances should you leave the



brown path. If you do, you will not be able to be saved." He said.

And they paid heed.

Then he turned towards the forest and said to the men. "Let us go in, shall we?"

And then he led the way with Xaden staying with them at the back and as the last to protect them.

They crossed into the forest, and their horses carried them.

As Erik had said, there was a brown path, and on the left and right sides were trees and flowers of different colors.

From the outside, when they had slept, it looked like a dead forest, but now that they were inside, it was completely different.

"Erik, are you sure this is the same dark first?" Owen asked.

Xaden would have asked the same if he had not witnessed the incident with the Ryliat himself.

"Ignore the plants or how the entire appearance seems," Erik remarked. "It is just a camouflage and a way of the forest deceiving you. You think that is safe when it is just a trap."

"How do you know all of this?" Someone asked.

"You do not ask a question like that." Another



person hissed at the first interrogator.

"Why not?"

"Did you not hear that Erik originally comes from the Isle of Lycanthrope?"

"All Lycan wolves come from there."

"Yes, but he is different. He was born and bred there. Good, you need to know when and where not to ask."

Erik smiled to himself.

The men had forgotten, no matter how much genuinely whispered, he could still overbeat them on an even higher frequency because they had all tuned into their wolf.

Erik smiled to himself and said nothing.

"It is quiet," Elyon said. "Too damn quiet."

"Oh, they are around," Erik promised. "I am sure they are looking at us right now. We just can not see them yet. They probably haven't seen any wolves in years. They would be very hungry by now."

"Why can they not just attack us?" Someone asked.

There was a cold whistle in the air that chillden their bones.



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"It is the redemption from the goddess," Erik said. "You can not just have it all bad. Where there is bad, there is good. Where there is good, there is bad. All you have to do is obey what she orders. You stick with the pack and do not make the mistake of leaving, no matter what happens. Even if I am separated from the pack, keep in formation."

Erik turned behind to look at Xaden, who was literally the last of the men.

Xaden's mind was elsewhere, and Erik was sure he was thinking about Jasmine.

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