

93 Lucas: With Clayton 93 Lucas: With Clayton LUCAS Challenge him. Rip him apart. My wolf’s snarling has occupied the majority of my short flight to White Peak, getting closer to the man who’s tasted my mate in ways that he never should have. My phone’s off, because I don’t know what I’ll do if he calls. The primal part of me is incensed, wanting to sink my teeth into his throat and tear it out, savoring every drop of the blood that spurts, content in knowing his soul has departed this world.” But the rest of me recognizes that Clayton is my friend and ally. What am I supposed to do with all these f@cking feelings tripping me up inside? Having Ava back is supposed to make everything easier. Make things simple. In my absence, will she begin to doubt my words? 15:20 1/7 93 Lucas With Clayton. If she sees Clayton, would she choose me over him? I don’t have that confidence. The fated bond between us is my only advantage. That, and the distance I can maintain between her and the alpha I trust with the honor of my entire pack. I can never let her return to Cedarwood. There’s no way in hell I’ll lose the little advantage I have. As the plane touches down, I take a deep breath, trying to center myself. I know Clayton will be waiting at the airport to personally escort me to the Blackwood pack lands. I can’t let him see the turmoil raging inside me. I have to maintain control. -Even knowing that, it’s a losing battle. Every step I take through the terminal feels like a countdown to an inevitable confrontation. My wolf paces restlessly beneath my skin, eager for blood. I clench my fists, my nails digging into my palms as I fight to keep the shift at bay. Mine, my wolf growls. She is ours. No one else can have her. 11:28 93 Lucas: With Clayton To him, Clayton is nothing more than competition. My wolf may look at other alphas with respect, but he never looks at them with friendship. Even so, he usually knows better than to attack another alpha. Down, I snap. There’s nothing to be done. She is not our mate yet. We can’t piss her off if we want a chance with her. His growls in the back of my head tell me that he’s unsatisfied with my reasoning, but he stops snapping for Clayton’s blood, giving me some reprieve from all the unsettled emotions swirling in my head. f@ck this shit. Even dealing with Blackwood was easier than all the bullshit I have to deal with in my head and heart. The stench of the airport crowds my nostrils as I exit the terminal, an overwhelming assault on my sensitive nose. Sweat, perfume, fast food—it all mingles into a nauseating miasma that makes me want to gag. But beneath it all, one scent stands out, instantly putting my wolf on high alert. Clayton. 13-20 317 Lucas: With Clayton He touched our mate, my wolf snarls, hackles raising. He needs to pay. Shut it, I growl back, wrestling my primal side under control. We can’t afford to lose it now. Gritting my teeth, I approach Clayton, schooling my features into a mask of calm. But as our eyes meet, I can see it in his face, in the tense set of his shoulders. He knows. He knows who Ava

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is to me. “Lucas,” he greets, his voice tight. “Clayton,” I respond, his name feeling like gravel in my mouth. Anger flares hot in my veins, the urge to lash out, to demand answers, nearly overwhelming. Why her? Why did it have to be her? -But I force the rage down, swallowing the bitter accusations. We have more pressing matters to attend to. The Blackwood situation demands our full attention. We make our way to the car in strained silence, the weight of unspoken words hanging heavy between us. As we pull out onto the highway, heading away from White Peak, the tension only grows. 13.28 03 Lucas: With Clayton I can’t take it anymore. “Why didn’t you tell me?” I ask, my voice deceptively calm. “As soon as you found out, why didn’t you call me?” Clayton sighs, his grip tightening on the steering wheel. “I only just found out myself. I came as soon as I could to help here, because I felt we would need to talk about it in person.” Help. The word feels like a slap in the face. Like he isn’t here to get a chance to see her. Like he has any right. to be involved in Ava’s life. f@ck. Jealousy, that fickle little bitch, just won’t stop. Clayton really is here to help. He’s been helping this entire time, hasn’t he? There’s no point trying to assign ulterior motives to his actions. We can’t get past this situation if I’m going to be like this. He touched her, my wolf growls again, the memory of Ava’s confession ringing in my ears. He had his hands on what’s ours. I close my eyes, fighting back the shift that threatens to overtake me, I can’t lose control. Not here, not now. “I annrosinto you coming to haln with Blackwood” I 13:20 – 517 93 Lucas: With Clayton force out, the words tasting like ash on my tongue. “But Ava is my responsibility. My mate. I’ll handle things with her myself.” Clayton glances over at me, something unreadable flickering in his eyes. “She’s not marked, Lucas. You know as well as I do that until she bears your bite, she’s fair game.” A low growl rumbles in my chest, my wolf clawing at the inside of my skin, desperate to break free. Mine, he snarls. She’s mine. “She’s my fated,” I snap, my control slipping. “I won’t let anyone else have her. Not even you.” The words hang in the air between us, heavy with implication. Clayton’s jaw clenches, his eyes fixed on -the road ahead. “That choice is for her to make. I have no intention of interfering, but I won’t step back if she wants something else, Lucas.” My mate, my wolf snarls in my head. My jaw aches from grinding my teeth together, my fingers aching as they’ve been clenched into fists too long. Every instinct screams to lash out to put Clayton 0/7 93 Lucas With Clayton in his place. To make it clear that Ava is mine. But I can’t. Not if I want any chance with her. We won’t let him have a chance, I promise my wolf. We’ll keep her close. Make her ours in every way that matters. My wolf settles slightly at that, appeased by the vow. I take a deep breath, trying to rein in my temper. Clayton’s right, but that doesn’t mean I have to like it. The rest of the drive passes in suffocating silence, the miles stretching out like an endless chasm. By the time we reach White Peak, my nerves are frayed to the breaking point, my wolf pacing restlessly beneath my skin. Comment 4 @ Post your first comment! View All > Vole

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