

Chapter 142

Benjamin called everyone together. As we stand outside of the cabin, I'm shocked at just how many people are here. There's easily 60 people, possibly more, all with looks of concern on their faces as to what they felt, and why their acting Alpha called them together.

"You all remember my daughter, Molly," Benjamin says to everyone, putting his arm around me. "She's now Princess Molly, and she has been working on ways to help us form an actual, recognized pack. What you felt tonight was just that."

People look around at each other, shocked looks on their faces, but some look quite happy about the change.

"I was banished from my pack previously," Benjamin continues. "So many of you followed me out here, but as I was previously banished, I will not be your Alpha. This is Alpha Albert. You may remember his parents. His father was previously my Gamma. Albert is a fine man, the man I handpicked to guard my daughter after she was marked by the Prince and now, I'm proud to introduce him to you as your new Alpha."

Shocked whispers spread throughout the crowd. One man steps forward, anger evident on his face. "Why weren't we all consulted about this?"

"Prince Seth and I decided we needed to act quickly," I speak up, hoping to alleviate some of the tension rising. "In forming an actual, recognized pack, your Alpha will now be able to feel when the borders are breached. This is the quickest way to help you all and keep you safe."

"We've never met this man before," I hear from the back.

"He's a good man," I tell them as kindly as I can, willing them to believe me and see him for who he truly is.

"As I said," Benjamin speaks up, "He's the man I trusted with my daughter's safety when she left for the palace. I trust him with my daughter, and I trust him with my pack."

"I know you don't know me," Albert says, trying his best not to look nervous. "I do care, though. I want to help protect everyone. I want the pack to grow and succeed."

Benjamin nods and I can't help but smile at how hard Albert is trying to make them like him. "The pack is in danger. She-wolves have been kidnapped. I've been here when there were attacks to take children. They came after us while we were just trying to celebrate my birthday. I know that the crown neglected everyone out here, but it was a mistake that the Prince and I are trying to fix now. Truly, we just want the best for everyone."

"Benjamin is our Alpha," one man yells angrily and I take a deep breath, preparing myself to try to explain the situation as kindly as I can.

"No," Benjamin says loudly, surprising me. "I was banished and it was justified. I could never ask that of my daughter. I will remain here as a member of the pack, and I am more than happy to help Alpha Albert with anything he should need, but I am NOT your Alpha."

There are murmurs throughout the crowd and I finally find Alex standing towards the back. He looks shocked, and a bit angry.

"Albert will be staying with us here until we get a house built for him," Benjamin declares, a finality to his voice. "Should you need anything, we will be right here."

The crowd disperses and I can see Seth and Gus off in the distance, getting just a bit closer. Once everyone is gone I give Benjamin a hug and walk away towards Seth when I feel a hand grab my arm roughly.

"This was my pack," an angry Alex tells me. I look up to meet his eyes and truly, the look on his face is terrifying.

"They need someone new," I say to him, trying my best to pull my arm away, but his grip is too tight.

Seth is at us in an instant and he quickly reaches out, grabbing Alex around his throat. "Let. Her. Go." he growls out. As soon as Alex has released my arm Seth turns so that he's placed between us, Gus standing right next to me now.

"It's been decided," I say, trying not to let my voice waiver as Seth throws him to the ground. He places his arm around me and leads me away, anger rolling off of him in waves.

"We knew he would be mad," I say softly once I'm sure we're a safe distance away from Alex.

"He doesn't get to touch you," Seth says, his free hand balled into a fist. Suddenly, he stops walking and looks at me, looking me over. "Are you alright? I'm sorry I didn't ask before. I just wanted to get you away."

"I'll be fine," I tell him, my voice barely a whisper. "It's a little sore, but nothing bad."

We walk silently back to Lunar Falls, passing through the cave and back to the packhouse. Seth helps me into the bathtub, holding me and cleaning me from the long day before helping me to dry off and tucking me into bed.

I awake to find my mate already up and getting ready for the day. He's wearing blue slacks with a white shirt with his hair pulled back. He looks amazing and I smile at him as he puts his shoes on.

"What did they say when you told them you were coming?" I ask.

He smirks at me, holding in a chuckle. "I didn't tell them. I decided to surprise them. I find I get more information when I'm able to do that."

I smile at him, "When you're able?"

He nods and stands, shrugging on his jacket and looking at himself in the mirror. "Word always spreads that I'm coming. This time, though, they shouldn't be suspecting anything. No one finds it surprising that we're visiting your family."

I nod in understanding, climbing out of bed and wrapping my arms around his middle. "I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you," he tells me, kissing me deeply. "I won't be terribly long. I'd like you to do something for me today, though."

"What's that?" I ask, releasing him and moving to get dressed.

"There's a folder on the table," he tells me and waves his hand at the table where there's a brown folder sitting on top. "That's the work you did for the future Alpha previously at his request. I want you to look through what he provided and see just how much of a deficit they seem to be in. I'm hopeful we can figure out just how much they're being paid for letting them cross there."

"Consider it done," I tell him with a smile as I slip my arms into a black lacy bra.

Seth comes up behind me and does the hooks for me, his hands lingering on the bare skin of my back, sending shivers down my spine. His hands slowly make their way to my hips as he leans forward and kisses his mark on my neck.

"You look so beautiful, Love," he says softly, his hand snaking around to pull me flush against him while his hand rests over our babies. "I won't be too late coming back. Please stay in the packhouse. It won't be like this every time I'm gone but with the situation with Alex... just please stay put."

"I will," I tell him with a smile as I lean back into him. "I promise. Don't worry."

He releases me and hands me the dress that I had pulled out for today. I step into it and he zips it for me. After I slip my shoes on he takes my hand, leading me downstairs where we have breakfast with my family before he leaves.

I sit down in the bedroom and pull out the papers, but I find it hard to concentrate on my own in the room. After a bit, I give up and gather the papers and walk to my brother's office.

"Can I work on this in here?" I ask, poking my head in the door.

Robbie looks up at me and nods, a smile on his face. "There's always so many people in here whenever Seth is in town," he says with a small laugh. "It was starting to feel lonely in here today."

"I won't be loud," I tell him and sit down at the large conference table alone.

"Did Seth put you to work or were you bored?" he asks me, not looking up from his work.

"Both?" I say with a small giggle. "I'm sure he thought that he'd keep me out of trouble by giving me something to work on."

"He's a quick learner," he says, a smile tugging at his lips.

I pour over all the information that had previously been provided. It had been such a mess before when George and I had worked through it, but looking at it with what we now know, it seems even more of a mess than we had thought. There's no way the pack is functioning on the money that's listed here, leaving the thought that they've been receiving money from another source for quite a bit of time instead of dipping into an unknown savings account like George and I had assumed.

"Rob," I ask, and he looks up at me. "How much of the pack's money comes directly from exports? Like, a percentage of it?"

"What do you mean?" he asks, tilting his head.

"Like, I know that pack members individually have businesses and such," I say, trying to make sense of it all. "How much of that goes into the pack? And does the pack have exports that come directly back into the pack fund without running through independent members?"

"It's a little complicated," he tells me, walking over and taking a seat next to me. "Most pack members pay a percentage of their business funds back to the pack. Some pay rent for buildings they use for the business, like the girl who owns the salon and cuts your hair. She doesn't sell anything that earns the pack money from outside, but she pays rent into the pack funds for the building she uses."

He moves around some papers and furrows his brow. "None of this makes sense."

"I know," I tell him with a sigh. "If I calculated it right, they're spending over \$3,000 a month more than they're bringing in."

He nods, looking up at me. "From what I can tell, your calculations are correct. Can you tell me what it's about?"

"Seth's told you everything that's happening, right?" I ask him and he sits back and nods. "Chris asked us to look over all of this before because he was concerned with how much the pack was spending in relation to how much they are making. George and I worked out a plan with what they make and provided it to him. His dad still hasn't turned over the pack to him, though. Seth thinks that Alpha Blake may be receiving money for letting people cross into the rogue land from their border, which would make sense."

"At three grand a month? That amount is too large for just letting wolves pass."