Chapter 39

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Liam's eyes narrowed. "Don't you think I know that? Do you think I enjoy feeling like this?"

James held up his hands in surrender. "I'm not accusing you of anything, Liam. I just want to help. We all do. But you have to let us."

Liam let out a deep sigh and leaned back in his chair. "I don't know what to do, James. I can't stop thinking about her. I can't eat, I can't sleep. I feel like I'm losing my mind."

James nodded sympathetically. "I understand, Liam. But you have to find a way to keep it together. Nicole's actions have made it clear that she wants nothing to do with you. It's time to accept that and focus on the pack. Isn't that what you wanted?"

Gritting his teeth, Liam ran his hand through his hair. His anger flared up at James' words. He didn't understand why no one wanted to understand what he was feeling.

"You don't understand," he said, his voice strained. "I need to know what happened to her. I need to help her."

James shook his head and then held the bridge of his nose.

"You don't understand it either," he said. "She's reliving the torture every day. She can't stand to be touched or even looked at. She's afraid of everyone, including you."

Liam's heart sank. It was the truth. The truth is that he couldn't stand it. How he missed her. Her smile, the way her hazel orbs darkened when she challenged him, the sound of her laughter. Everything about her.

"What can I do?" he sighed, desperation creeping into his voice. Garrett would know, but he was also unavailable.

"Give her space," James said, crossing his large arms. "Let her come to you when she's ready. And in the meantime, pull yourself out of the slump you're in. Get Dark Moon together. Be Alpha. That's all you can do."

Liam shook his head, "I… I just wish…." He trailed off. "I thought it would be better now that my bond to her seemed to be fading away. It's not. It's only worse. My wolf cannot stand it."

James frowned. "Liam, it's the separation. You're allowing your wolf's emotions to control you. You can let the bond between her go if you control your emotions. "

Liam stood up, his fists clenched at his sides. "Don't tell me what I can and can't do, James. You don't understand." He growled.

James held up his hands in surrender. "I'm sorry, Liam. I didn't mean to upset you. But you have to focus on the pack. We need you."

Liam stared at James for a long moment before nodding. "You're right. I know you're right. I'll try to do better."

"Good," James gritted out, "we should talk about Garrett now."

Liam fell back to his position with a loud plop and wiped his forehead.

"He's not showing any rogue tendencies yet." Liam gulped,

"As a chief warrior, it would be stupid of me to disregard him as a possible threat. Even the witch can feed on his grief and attack us from within. Remember, like you, our beta has great power and sway over the people."

Liam nodded, clasping his fingers together as he ground in his teeth. The vein on his forehead jumped.

"I know you're sentimental, but whatever we're doing has to be before the next full moon."

"I have two options… no three," Liam said finally. "I have a lot of options as Alpha, but all of them are damning. I can not send him away from the pack to heal because it'll alienate him. I don't want to remove him from his position as Beta. I want him to heal…"

What are the options you are considering?" James asked, raising a brow and drawing out a seat.

Liam sighed deeply and looked up at the ceiling as if he were searching for answers.

"The first option is to keep a close eye on him, assign him a mentor or a counsellor who can help him deal with his grief and prevent him from going rogue," Liam said.

"But this will be a temporary solution, and it may not work in the long run. Especially since, like Nichole, he has refused to communicate. "

James nodded, then stroked his jaw, "What's the next option?" He inquired.

"The second option is to give him time off, allow him to take a leave of absence from his duties, and focus on his healing," Liam replied. "This way, he can deal with his grief without the added stress of being the Beta.

However, this may cause resentment among the pack members, who will feel like they're being let down. The Council is restless. They want stability. Most of us haven't recovered from the attack."

"And the third option?" James asked.

"The third option is the most drastic one," Liam said, his voice barely above a whisper. "I can challenge him for the Beta position and win, or I can have someone else challenge him and win.

This way, he can take time to heal without the added responsibility and power of being the Beta.
But this will be seen as a direct challenge to his authority, and it will cause unrest among the pack members."
"I see," James murmured, processing the information.
"That's not all. It's going to backfire on Garrett's recovery if I have him fight and lose. It would seem like a betrayal."
"Have you considered discussing these options with Garrett and getting his input on what he thinks would work best for him and the pack?"
Liam shook his head. "I haven't. I don't want to burden him with these decisions, especially since he's already dealing with so much."
"Communication is key, Liam," James said. "It's important to involve everyone in the decisionmaking process, especially when it concerns the well-being of the pack."
Liam nodded, swallowing and inhaling deeply.
"You're right. I'll talk to Garrett and see what he thinks, but that's only if he's receptive."
James raised a brow, "I don't know if everything happening has got your head messed up, Alpha. But you don't have to wait until he's receptive. You're Alpha. You should do it for Dark Moon."

With that, James walked out, leaving him with a lot to think about.

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