

Jax POV:

Driving up to the front of the church, our attention is immediately drawn to Mila's BMW that has been parked under the oak tree near the front. "Mila's car...shit!" Axton exclaims before flinging the door open and jumping out before Nova stops our vehicle.

Copying him, I leap after him and by the time he reaches Mila's car I'm close enough behind to catch the door as he pulls it open with force. Inhaling deeply, I catch the lingering scent of Bruno along with my sister's familiar scent. "Bruno was here, I can smell him" I snarl to Axton as my face contorts in fury.

"Jax search the other side" Alex orders me as he holds his phone up to his ear when he reaches us, "Nova have a look round the car park please" he adds on before stalking away to use his phone. Running to the other side, I

slide into the passenger seat while Axton rifles through the drivers side. “nothing here of note” he tells me in frustration as he then moves round to look in the boot.

Seeing the glove box, I immediately open it and my eyes fall on two phones along with some paper, all tucked under the drivers log book. Picking them up, I swiftly rise from the car seat and hold one out the Axton over the roof, “is this yours?” I check knowing the others to be my sisters.

“That’s mine” he confirms as he reaches to take it from my hand. “She wanted us to be able to find her didnt she” he states as he opens the phone up for us to see it logged in to the camera of his pack still.

“Did she know it could be traced?” I ask him.

“Yes, we spoke about how clever Axel is and I mentioned hers being done so I would stay sane, kind of as a joke but also serious. She laughed me off and said something about not

wanting her brothers to know where she was all the time, then I told her Luca and I both had it on ours and she said she would think about it” he explains.

“Look through them” I tell him quietly as I also hand him Milas phone. Seeing movement out the corner of my eye, I look up to see Alex and Nova in quiet conversation as they both continue searching the rest of the car park. Looking back down, I shuffle through the papers in my hand. The first is the copy of the invoice used by Mila to leave the territory.

“That gate guard is going to be spoken to” I snarl angrily when I note the date of the invoice was more than two weeks prior.

“The guard wont have doubted your sister” Axton says absentmindedly as he scrolls through his phone.

“He still should have done his job properly” I quickly retort as I move to the next piece of paper.

“I’m not sticking up for him, he let my f*****g mate go” Axton is fast to snap back as he puts his phone in his back pocket.

“Nothing on mine” he tells me before opening Mila’s. As I look at the last two pieces of paper which are folded over, I notice one is addressed to Axton and the other to myself.

“Mila wot have gone withut a plan” I hear Zeus pipe up from wheres he’s been watching intently in my mind. “Our sister is clever and she knows Bruno better than any of us, she wont have gone in there not thinking of something I’m sure.”

“I hope youre right” I mutter to him. My thoughts are soon interrupted by Axton’s angry outburst.

“f*****g BRUNO’ Axton yells as he slams his fist down on the car roof. “When i get my hands on that fucker, he’s going to regret everything he’s done today and in the past” he snarls as his body begins to shake with Rex’s need to shift.

“Show me” I say to him calmly, aware that my simmering rage will do no good in this situation. Holding my hand out for the phone that he is still grasping tightly in his hand, I walk round to his side.

“The top messages” he spits out as he slams the phone onto my palm. Opening it up, I look through the short conversation with the unknown number. As I read the messages I can’t stop the growls escaping me as my anger grows once more.

“Jax? Love, are you ok?” I hear Novas soft, concerned voice ask me as she nears.

“She made a deal with him” I say through gritted teeth, “her for the pack..”

“f**k, I thought as much” Alex swears grimly.

“She gave herself up Alex” I snap, angered by his lack of frustration.

“Unfortunately, it’s what many Lunas would do” he says quietly. “Especially new ones...she will have felt a duty to protect them, whether she has had her ceremony or been marked, she is the destined mate of the Alpha of the White Mountain Pack, as a result she wants to protect them. I was hoping my assumptions would be wrong, but I knew it was unlikely.”

“Well you werent wrong” I snap at him.

“Jax..” Nova warns me. “Reel it in, you have a right to be angry, but not with Alex.”

Snarling, I spin on my heels and look up only to be met with Axtons furious gaze, “hes got MY mate, YOUR sister!? We have to find them, and quickly!”

“What do the notes say?” Alex asks, directing our anger elsewhere. When I look back at Axton, I see him now tracing where Mila wrote his name with sadness filling his features.

With a grunt, I hold the note open and read it out aloud.

“Jax. I know you’ll be angry with my decision, hurt that I defied your orders and upset that I have most likely put myself at risk once more. But I want to assure you that, whatever happens, I won’t be blind any more. My eyes have been open to who Bruno truly is for a while now, and I won’t have the matebond there to sway my emotions any longer. I am an Alpha’s daughter and I will behave as such. I had to do this to protect those that are innocent, what is one person suffering to save that of many..? I love and appreciate everything you have done for me, and I’m sorry I’m putting you through this once again. But I need you to be the brilliant

Alpha I know you to be, be there for my mate and for Ma and everyone else I could possibly name. Be safe, be strong and most importantly...Always remember that life moves on, when times get tough....look up to the stars. Love, Mila xx”

“That sounds like a goodbye” Nova whispers as her eyes fill with tears. Moving closer to me, she wraps her arms around my waist as i stay quiet and focus on keepin Zeus at bay by holding on to Nova tightly and breathing in his scent.

“And yours Axton?” Alex asks, his voice gentle as our attention turns to Milas mate. Taking a shakey breath he looks at me before reading it.

“She’s really gone?” he asks brokenly as I nod slowly in response. With that his eyes drop, his hope dimishing as he pinches the bridge of his nose and takes a moment to control himself.

“Axton..?” Alex prompts quietly. Clearing his throat, he looks at the note and begins reading.

“Ax..my mate..I wish I’d gotten to spend more time with you and our pack, but the small amount of time we have had together has meant so much to me. It brought me hope, it reminded me that love can exist for me and that I am deserving of it, just as you are deserving of it. This was my decision, as the Luna of the White Mountain Pack, I did what I had to do to ensure the innocent in this would be safe. I’m sorry that my past has caught up with us, that’s it’s stopped us before we can properly begin our journey together, but I hope one day we can both be free of it. Until then, just know you will be in my thoughts and dreams each day and night. Chin up, kick some ass and do me proud. I’m looking forward to the day I can say this in person, I love you, Mila xx”

“Damn” Axton sobs before crouching down with his head in his hands as his body shakes with silent cries.

Feeling Nova hesitate to let go of me, I gently remove her hands from my waist and nudge her towards Axton. “Go, he needs someone who knows him better right now” I link her while nodding firmly towards Axton. Rushing to his side, she wraps an arm round his shoulders and speaks to him quietly.

“Was there anything in those notes that would help us?” Alex asks us as we both turn away to give Axton some privacy. “When times get tough..look up to the stars? What did she mean by that?”

“I used to take her star gazing when she was a kid, it was a distraction from the pressure my dad put me under and it made her relax when she had to put up with petty girls in our pack” I explain with a sigh. “It’s our thing” I shrug.

“Do you think she will contact us if she could?” He asks me.

“Definitely” I answer immediately. “This isn’t ideal..at all. But I don’t doubt Mila for a second, until we find her, she will hold her own.”

“No doubt about that” Alex mutters. “The matebond is what weakened her before, she’s right with that. This time she won’t have rose tinted glasses on.”

“There was nothing here” he tells me after a few moments of quiet thinking. “No clues, the scents that were left were all altered so I can only distinguish Bruno’s and Milas. He wasn’t hiding which just shows he doesn’t care that we know he took her, he knows we will be after him now. We need to discuss with Elder Martin as soon as we are back, what we should do moving forward.”

“Do you know what he wanted Mila for?” I ask him.

Sensing Axton stand behind me, we turn to look at him as he grinds his teeth together. Lifting his eyes to meet ours he growls, “to get to me.”

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Nova POV:

As we all climb into the vehicle to head back, the mood is somber as we all process what has happened to Mila. “She’s brave, she will handle this like a true Luna” Ki murmurs to me quietly as I look across at Jax. Seeing his eyes, full of sadness and concern for his sister, I feel my heart clench for my mate.

“Axton and Rex have suffered so much already, they will need our support” Ki then says to me. My eyes move from Jax to Axton, his body staying slumped in the passenger seat. His eyes that are looking out the window, are unfocused and bloodshot.

Catching Alex’s eye in the mirror, I purse my lips as he does the same. Both of us aware

that the other men are suffering, but for once, we are unsure of what to say to better the situation.

“I understand why she did it” Alex links me suddenly. “Does that make me a bad person, for not being surprised?”

“I hope not, because as soon as I realised Bruno had left and Mila had also, I was fairly certain that was the case as well. It’s probably something I would have done as silly as it may have been” I reply. Shifting my eyes between Jax and Axton, I continue, “they both need this time to process it, to be upset whilst they can. Because before we step out of the vehicle, I’m going to make sure they shake it off and focus on how to find Mila.”

“They have to, they can’t allow this to consume them. “Im not too worried about Jax..considering. He knows that to rectify the situation, he needs to act, he won’t let his sister suffer longer than she has to. But

Axton, as her mate, will feel this deeply. We need to make sure he controls his anger and upset, he needs to channel it into finding her” Alex tells me.

“I can help him” I assure him. “But I’m only going to if he allows me, I don’t want to play with his emotions behind his back.”

“He’ll let you” Alex replies.

“How are you so sure?” I ask.

“Because you have always helped him” he tells me.

“What are you not telling us?” I link him after a few more minutes of silence. Seeing his eyes flash to look at me in surprise, I shrug slightly. “I can tell.”

“Wait till we are with Elder Martin” he replies, “trust you to notice. But we have a lot to discuss anyway, this just adds to it.”

“We still have the matter of Cedric and Charles’s bunkers to figure out, as well as the witches that fled. Did they all disperse or just regroup? There’s also my mum, Sophie still needs to shift and then Luca and Sophie have the Rogue Pack, never mind your replacement procedure taking place over the next few months” I ramble to him through the link.

“Like I said..a lot to discuss” he repeats quietly as his brows furrow while he thinks.

Looking at Jax, I see him also deep in thought, watching the passing trees in the darkness as we grow nearer to the White Mountain Pack. Sliding over, I lift his arm and wrap it round my shoulders, tucking myself under so I can rest my head on his chest. Feeling him lightly kiss my hair, I turn my gaze upwards and meet his green eyes. “You alright?” I ask him out loud.

Seeing his eyes soften as he gazes down at me he offers me a small smile

acknowledging my care for him, “not really. I’m worried for Mila.”

“We all are” I tell him, squeezing his hand. “But we have to work together to find her.”

“I know” he murmurs, kissing my forehead. “Axton..how are you doing?” He asks.

“s**t” he snaps.

“Talk it out” I murmur.

“f*****g talk it out?” He then snaps at me, his eyes flashing to meet mine as his anger rolls out. “What good does talking it out do?”

“Axton..” Jax starts before I shoot him a warning glance and shake my head.

“Let me, he can be quick to anger at times” I link him. His eyes narrow slightly as I hold his gaze, before he relents and leans back with a sigh.

“Well we know you feel s**t because Mila isn’t here, but what else?” I ask him,

knowing that if I keep going he'll either blow and get it out his system, or relent and give in knowing the anger he's directing to us is unjustified.

“Are you my therapist now?” He growls in annoyance.

“Smartarse” I tell him, not backing down at his anger. “You're angry..” I note.

“Really?” He asks rolling his eyes.

“Really” I snap back. “I can deal with you being a t**t Axton, I know how you react to things remember. If you need to vent and take it out on me, then do so. But get on with it, the sooner you snap out of it, the sooner you will be useful in finding Mila.”

Hearing his breath hitch as his body tenses, Alex and Jax stiffen as they sense Axtons increasing anger. “Do I need to snap at you as well Rex?” I ask c*****g my head as I look at Axton in the mirror, seeing Rex prominent in his eyes.

“Why are you baiting him?” Jax links me in shock.

“I’m not, he’ll get over it” I tell him, my tone relaxed as I link him back.

Holding Axtons gaze, I see his lips curl upwards slightly. “You call me the smartarse” Axton says after a moment, his body relaxing as he holds my gaze.

Shrugging at him, I wait for him to continue. “Thank you” he says softly.

“Do you need to punch it out?” I ask him quirking my brow. “You backed down kind of easily then..so I’m just checking” I muse as Jax and Alex both bite back a laugh.

“Don’t tempt me” Axton mutters throwing them both a glare. “Somehow, fighting you doesn’t fill me with excitement anymore. I’d rather not have my ass kicked even worse than i used to.”

“Good decision” Jax smirks.

“Luca always has to punch it out” I tell Jax who chuckles lightly at the thought.

“Has that always worked?” Alex asks curiously. “Push him until he relents?”

Biting out a short laugh I shake my head, “that or we sparred, either way it helped. But I’ve been thinking about it, perhaps it’s because of what Kia and I are. Rex will know we are only concerned, that we want to help. I’ve always been a bit confused how an Alpha wolf in particular is happy to back down when riled up, but with me being an empath as well it seems to make more sense.”

“I think you’re right” Alex agrees, “normally when an Alpha is poked they will be more angry. Unless they have a very level head at all times which many alphas think they do but they don’t, they also have heightened emotions which can be hard to deal with. It would explain it, perhaps even unintentionally in the past you have helped calm him and others.”

“Either way it works and I’m thankful, it’s saved me from some potentially bad situations in the past” Axton sighs.

Feeling Kia’s pride at their words I smirk at her, “someone’s proud.”

“As we should be” she replies. “You did good distracting them..well done” she adds on softly.

Looking at Alex in the mirror he flashes me a grateful smile. “When we get back, we will speak with Elder Martin. I want to visit the Deep Forest Pack before getting back to Ophelia tomorrow. I doubt Bruno or Mila will be there, but he needs to know that I will be following this up and my presence will be felt in his pack” Alex explains. Before any of us can ask him anything further he adds on, “you will all be travelling with me.”

“Are you sure that’s wise?” Jax asks, his brows furrowed as he takes in Alex’s words. “I’m Mila’s sister, I demanded that their

Alpha be contacted by the council..I don't know how well that went down. Then Axton is Milas new mate, if they're loyal to their Alpha then he won't be welcome."

"None of us will be welcome" Alex shrugs.

"You're their Alpha King" Jax points out.

"Doesn't mean I'll be welcome" Alex replies.

"What do you mean by that?" Axton asks, his attention now focused on Alex.

With a sigh Alex shrugs, rubbing his head with his free hand as he begins driving up to the pack house. "I said I'd wait till we were with Elder Martin, but to be honest I don't think Bruno sees me as his Alpha King any longer."

"He's rebelling?" Axton asks as Alex's eyes flash to meet mine once again.

"He's not rebelling.." I whisper as the pieces begin to slot together.

“Not exactly how I’d put it no..but in a way yes” Alex says knowingly.

“Then what exactly?” Axton asks in confusion.

“He’s causing a divide, north vs south...” I say slowly.

“I may be the current Alpha King of both the northern and southern packs” Alex acknowledges, “but for how long? How long until there could be two? His father was the first to suggest there be another..Bruno may think the same.”

Hearing Jax swear beside me, his body tenses as a loud growl escapes him. “He wants to control the south...”

With a sharp nod, Alex purses his lips before repeating “He wants to be the Alpha King of the South.”

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Mila POV:

“We’re here” Bruno announces, snapping me from my thoughts, as the car rolls to a gentle stop.

“Where is here?” I ask him quietly. Peering out the window I see we are parked in a clearing surrounded by thick forest. There are six log cabins, varying in size on one side surrounded by large burly men all dressed in black.

Without answering, Bruno quickly opens his door and slides out, leaving me alone in the car where I can take a few calming breaths.

“Stay strong Mila, don’t let them sense your nerves” I hear a soft voice whisper to me, making me immediately sob in relief.

“Alia” I cry, “you’re here.”

“I’m always here Mila, I’m sorry I withdrew. The thought of being back with Bruno scared me. But now is not a time for us to be scared, it is a time to be strong and show them just

who we are. Our pack needs us remember” she tells me with conviction in her voice.

“Hold your head up, stand proud and remember that we are a Luna, the Luna of the White Mountain Pack, and we are going to get home, to them and to our mate” she says encouragingly.

Feeling a renewed sense of hope in me, I look out the front of the vehicle where Bruno is busy talking to two other men. Grasping the door handle, I’m quite surprised when I realise its not locked, and with a slight grunt I climb out of my seat. Feeling my muscles protest at the movement, I stand up and stretch, attempting to alleviate the soreness of my muscles.

Taking a deep breath, I close my eyes and smile as the scent of forest after some fresh rain hits my senses.

“You look happy to be here” I hear Bruno state as he appears beside me.

“Correction. Happy to have some fresh air so I don’t have to breathe in your scent in a claustrophobic vehicle any longer” I sneer back at him with a cold smile.

Flitting my eyes to Bruno’s muscular form, I take in his amused smile as he notes my attitude change. Stepping forward, he leans in so close that his warm breath fans my ear, making my body shudder with disgust. “I’ll have you know Mila the more you push me away and try to insult me, the more determined I’ll be to wear you down. I love a good challenge and I have missed your defiance surprisingly” he whispers lowly in my ear.

Keeping my stance relaxed, I don’t allow him to see the disgust I feel inside from his words. Pursing my lips, I step back and simply look at him while shaking my head. Chuckling, he straightens himself, staring down at me as he does so, trying to gage my reaction.

After a moment, he reaches out and grasps my arm roughly before he all but drags me towards a smaller cabin nearer the end.

Quickly looking around, I note that each cabin has a group of 8-12 men outside, all covered in tattoos and scars showing their experiences at fighting. Their eyes focus on me as I am forced to cross the clearing.

Narrowing my eyes, I hold my head tall and don't look away from their cold gazes. They will not see me cower away from them I tell myself.

“This is where you'll be staying” Bruno grunts as we reach the already open door. With a slight push, I'm forced inside as Bruno follows close behind, snapping the door shut. Turning around, I keep my eyes on him as he moves smoothly to the fridge, retrieving two cold drinks before passing me one. Taking it, I check the lid hasn't been opened previously before sighing and quickly opening it.

Studying Bruno over the bottle as I gulp it down, I can't deny the fact that he is an attractive Alpha. His dark brown curls frame his sun-kissed face, his dark eyes are surrounded by long lashes and his strong cheekbones and two dimples still appear when he cracks a rare smile. But unfortunately that's where the attractiveness ends, his eyes no longer have the ability to take my breath away. His smile no longer makes my knees weak, and his scent now strikes me as repulsive instead of irresistible.

"What are you thinking?" Bruno asks me with a rare grin as I realise he's caught me staring.

"That it's a shame you aren't as attractive as your appearance suggests. Outside you're a typical handsome Alpha, but really you're just a cold heartless Alpha in a shell of muscle and tattoos" I shrug at him.

“Was that a compliment?” he asks coming to stand beside me.

“Just a fact” I snap back.

Ignoring my rudeness, he steps past me into the open kitchen and living room. “This is your new home, you’ll have food brought to you so you can cook your meals. There is a bedroom back there and a bathroom. If you behave you can go and use the small patio at the back, but you will have a guard with you at all times when you are outside the cabin” he tells me while lifting his finger to point to a set of double doors facing the forest.

Taking a quick walk round I note the cabin is kitted out, not overly fancy but it has everything I could possibly need for staying in the middle of a forest. The kitchen is surprisingly light and the living room has two sofas facing a TV unit. My eyes pass over the room slowly before they focus on what is in the corner. A small pile of yoga blocks and

a mat are there along with a water bottle and a music player.

Furrowing my brows in confusion I look at Bruno who simply shrugs, looking slightly awkward. “I remember you like yoga, I thought it may help you pass the time, maybe this time together it can be easier for the both of us.”

Gulping I take a step back, “What’s going on?”

When he doesn’t reply, I press further. “I mean why are you suddenly interested in making sure I have something here I can find enjoyable. Why put me somewhere like this? Why take me in the first place?”

“So many questions” Bruno sighs.

“Answer me Bruno” I snap. “Tell me the truth for once..it’s about time you did.”

He growls as he slumps down on the sofa, for the first time I notice his eyes are heavy with tiredness, his shoulders hunched as he taps his knee nervously. This is a side of Bruno I have never seen before, in the past he was harsh, blunt and didn't care about how I or anyone else felt. I suffered through insults and betrayal pains, being openly humiliated when he paraded his chosen Luna, Rebecca, in front of me. He told his pack members I was nothing more than a simple breeder.

“You're confusing me” I admit when he doesn't move to speak. “You didn't want me Bruno, why force this?”

“Because I know I need you, for what I cant tell you just yet. But you should never have left me” he growls.

“Why should I have stayed? Why should I have to put up with you betraying our bond

and breaking Alia and myself down?” I ask incredulously.

“Because I was your mate” he snaps at me. “You are mine.”

“I was, and you still treated me that way” I yell at him, my patience thinning as tiredness creeps up on me. Where is Rebecca? What about her true mate? Because from what you’ve just said, Rebecca belongs to her true mate, and I now belong to Axton.”

“Not here” he replies bluntly. “You aren’t Axton’s Mila, you’re mine. You are here to help me achieve what I have been working towards for years. You are my link.”

“Are you going to hurt me Bruno?” I ask him quietly.

“No’ he grunts as his head falls in his hands. “You infuriated me before, the bond was messing with my head and making me doubt myself. I was constantly battling my wolf

and my heart. I realised when you left how harsh I had been, I regretted it. I shouldn't have gone about it the way that I did, I certainly didn't do the correct thing in keeping you around. But then I found out you had Axton as your second chance, a man I cannot stand. One who will twist your mind and make you hate me further, I couldn't have that, I knew I needed to get you back.”

“Why f**k someone right before accepting my rejection Bruno? Why not just move on with Rebecca happily?” I snarl. “You caused me so much agony, and you have no idea what danger you put me in the other evening. I had to go into battle and fight in only human form, Alia took my pain, if I hadn't fought strongly then I could easily have died that night.”

“You were fighting?” he asks slowly as surprise flits across his features. “I thought Jax would have avoided you being involved in that, Fuck.”

“You heard me, and of course I f*****g fought Bruno. I’m an Alpha’s daughter. I would never sit back and expect everyone to treat me any different because of that” I growl. “Why decide to hurt me when you had slowed down over the last few weeks to only behave the way you did.?”

“Because I felt you with Axton” he shouts. “I felt it and it f*****g hurt. I know I had no right to take that out on you. When you were at my pack, I was stuck between you and Rebecca, it was difficult and I admit I reacted badly...extremely badly. I took my frustrations out on you. But to know you were with another and that other was Axton of all people, I hated it.”

“You enjoyed seeing me in pain, you liked the fact you could make me scream from your actions with Rebecca..don’t lie to me. I saw the sick smile on your face when you f*****d that b***h in front of me” I scream as tears stream down my face at the unwanted

memory. “I find it hard to imagine you regret it and this is some type of change of heart.”

After that, there is silence between us as my words settle. “It does hurt though doesn’t it Bruno” I whisper. “Yet that was nothing, I kissed him, that’s all. Now imagine the pain I endured.”

I know” he sighs, his face dropping as my words hit home, but still he does not apologise.

“I won’t forget what you’ve done Bruno” I say after a moment as he simply nods in acceptance. “I’m not sure what this version of Bruno is right now, it’s certainly not one I recognise. But one thing I can say is you have still not apologised despite showing some recognition of your actions. You forced me to come, and you hate my new mate. I don’t think you have good intentions for me.”

“I know Mila. I’m not going to hurt you, not if you help me. Just do as I say and for your own sake...behave” he growls to me as he stalks forward, his dark eyes boring into mine. Leaning forward, he takes a deep breath of my scent before moaning slightly. “As irresistible as ever, I’ll be back in the morning, things will be clearer then” he murmurs before moving back and opening the door, leaving without another word.

“What the hell” I whisper to myself as my skin crawls from his words. Going over what he said, I end up stumped. Confused at his intentions and his reasoning, my thoughts no clearer than they were this morning. For the first time I had seen a glimpse of regret he has from his actions, but I had no more understanding as to why he behaved the way he did. Although since taking me he has warned me I need to behave, and I definitely take that seriously, he has also said he wont hurt me. Yet when I was his mate, it seemed like he would go out of his way to do just

that when he should have been treasuring me as his fated, overjoyed that the moon Goddess paired Axton and myself.

Stumbling through to the bedroom, my body suddenly extremely lethargic as the events of today finally catch up to me, I fall on the bed without taking the time to look around the room.

My last thought before darkness finally takes over is what the f**k is going on...?

[The Blessed Ones – A Blessing Or A Curse? Chapter 15](#)

Jax POV:

“So..no Luna” a grim faced Luca states as we all walk into Axton’s office where he’s sat waiting for us.

“No” Axton replies bluntly, his eyes heavy with worry as he passes him Mila’s phone and the note addressed to him. “Look through these, it’s got everything you need to know.”

“Reports on the table Alpha” Luca tells him quietly, his concerned gaze taking in the tight stance of his leader. “I’ve handled everything.”

With a silent nod, Axton lowers himself on the chair and begins reading over what Luca has readied for him.

Hearing the door open, I look to see Elder Martin enter. “Alex filled me in already at the car park” he tells us as I go to speak. “I’ve sent out notice of an emergency Alpha Meeting, two days from now, all are expected to attend.”

“Bruno won’t” I mutter.

“No, I doubt he will. But I am intrigued to see if everyone else does. His support is strong in the south wether that be by choice is to be determined, if he is planning what I think then this could give us an indication of how much support he has” Martin says calmly.

“To become an Alpha King in his own right” I murmur.

“I fear so” Martin sighs, not surprised by us knowing his assumption. “His father was the first to propose the idea of a North and South divide. But we as the council didn’t believe it to be the correct course of action, Alex has done a brilliant job at keeping unity, it is a tricky part of being Alpha King, and he has personally supported a few packs in matters over the past few years. It was part of his aim during his time as Alpha King, to increase pack relations.”

“Did any other packs agree with Bruno’s father at the time?” Nova asks curiously.

“At the time, no. But that was almost 20 years ago now, times have changed” Elder Martin says sadly. “I believe you being here is for a reason, unfortunately a Guardian Wolf is there to help and they always appear in times of great need. I doubt your

grandfather was the only obstacle you will face Nova.”

“We will face” I interject quietly as Nova smiles at me gratefully.

“One step at a time” she whispers as her eyes flicker to Luca who offers a supportive smile.

“I agree you need to visit the Deep Forest Pack, you are to make a peaceful entrance and not cause any reason to fight. Express your concern and state what their Alpha has done, I don’t believe they are aware but it may do the pack some good to know Bruno is doing a few extra curricular activities” Martin explains calmly. “I also have a personal request for for Luna Nova here.”

“To take a reading of people’s emotions, get a feel of pack members and to see when there is deceit in the air?” She asks as he chuckles at her.

“You got me” he shrugs as he holds her gaze.

“Because I was already planning to” she smirks. “I want to make this clear though, I do not intend to change people’s emotions other than when necessary. It’s something I’m struggling with, bending people true feelings, shaping them to suit me, but I will when the time is needed. I am happy to take a reading though, to gain more understanding.”

“That is something I can agree with” Martin says with a smile. “Thank you.”

“So what of Mila?” Axton asks as he comes to stand near us.

“Why don’t we speak to the witches, perhaps they have some information which will help” I muse. “It’s worth a try isn’t it. I just wish Mila had spoken to me before making this decision.”

“Jax..” Nova whispers, her hand resting over her heart as she feels my pain through the bond. “In the little time she had, I doubt we

would have managed to come up with something to save the people of this pack without causing more harm. What Mila has done is incredibly brave, but we will get her back.”

“I know” I sigh as I pinch the bridge of my nose, keeping the emotions at bay.

“He promised to leave the White Mountain Pack if Mila went with him. Mila knew we were going there so arranged to meet him away from the pack, leaving our members safe here” Axtons informs the Elder as Martins face stays expressionless while looking at the messages Luca shows him on the phone, not allowing us to see his reaction.

“I have to admit..I’m surprised Bruno kept to his side of the deal” I growl. “Bruno is not someone who values his agreements, as we all know. So why this time?”

“To save face” Alex replies. “It was already a bold move, he managed to seize control of the White Mountain Pack for a short time without any suspicion. I know it would have been different if the pack was all together but it was still a bold move. He taunted us on the phone earlier, he was enjoying himself, enjoying being the one in control. Especially because it involved a direct link to Axton I imagine. But I believe he was desperate to get Mila if he went to this length.”

“If he’d attacked more forcefully he would have gained more attention” I acknowledge.

“We need to go to the Deep Forest Pack in the morning” Alex tells Elder Martin.

“Then do” Martin tells him. “But be back within the day, you need to all prepare for the Alpha meeting.”

“What will be said at the council meeting?” Nova asks as she leans into me.

“I’m going to announce Ophelia and mine’s decision about stepping down, I will also formally announce my decision to put Jax forward as a candidate, I think it’s time to also explain the mark of the crown. It may help change a few opinions of those in the south if we are correct in what Bruno is hoping to achieve” Alex explains.

“And what about Mila?” Axton growls, his form stiff and intimidating as he stands by the window. “What about my mate? The witches cannot be our only plan.”

“A mate being taken by a vengeful ex first mate isn’t unusual, im afraid it has happened before despite our efforts to avoid it. But this is different” Martin says slowly.

“Why?” Axton growls as he steps in.

“Because he did it so blatantly in front of the council” Martin explains. “He knew I was here, he knew his Alpha King was here as well as who else was in our company. So in

taking Mila he has moved against the council and his King.”

“So what do we do?” Nova asks once again.

“We see who comes to the alpha meeting, if there are any no shows from the southern packs without a viable reason then it can be quite clear who is siding with Bruno” Martin continues. “We will also gage the Alpha’s reactions to our news.”

“Do we tell them what has happened to Mila?” Jax asks, his hand reaching for mine as he holds it for silent support. Sending a rush of love down the bond, I see his shoulders visibly relax as he lets out a long breath.

“Yes” Elder Martin says, his eyes meeting each of ours as he answers confidently. “It was known to us, and many others, that Mila wanted the bond to break. For him to follow her wishes then force her to go with him, it is essentially an act of war.”

“Then why don’t we attack the Deep Forest Pack?” Axton snarls.

With that Nova clears her throat softly before speaking, “May I?” She asks looking between Martin and Alex for confirmation to answer. As they both nod she turns her gentle gaze to Axton.

“Multiple reasons, ones I’m sure you’re aware of as well. I doubt you would have even suggested that if you weren’t suffering right now, it’s clouding your judgement and that is understandable” she says softly.

“None of us are that knowledgeable on the Deep Forest Pack other than Elder Martin and Alex perhaps, of course there are many rumours but as you know, they became an increasingly private pack in the last few years. Spending little time in the northern territory from what you have told me in the past. We don’t know what we would be going in to, we also can be fairly certain Mila isn’t there. Now I don’t know about you..but

I have a feeling if Bruno is as horrible as suggested, the pack members of his may also be suffering. Why attack if the innocent could be hurt. Going for a visit first is the right thing to do, gain some understanding and scout the pack out. I don't believe attacking them is the smartest reaction right now."

With a deep sigh Axton sits, studying Novas face long after she stops speaking, making me rather tense beside her. "Relax" she links me.

"Why do you have to be right all the time" Axton grunts as his eyes shift to Luca.

"Annoying right" his Beta says rolling his eyes at his sister, before shooting her a grateful smile when Axtons attention has moved on.

"Do you think Mila is going to be ok?" Axton asks us.

With a tight smile, Nova nods her head slowly. “You know full well I won’t promise something I’m not certain of. But what I will say is that woman is intelligent, brave and a quick thinker. It’s not an ideal situation for her, and I don’t know what Bruno’s intentions are with her. But I’m certain she will handle it like a true Luna and work to make contact with us as soon as she can.”

“I hope you’re right” Axton sighs.

“My sister is a fighter” I tell him, proud that my voice stays strong as I speak of her. “She grew up with three brothers, and she can hold her own. I don’t believe she would have gone into this without thinking the possibilities through.”

“So when do we travel to the Deep Forest Pack?” Nova asks as she moves to stand.

“We will leave at 5am” Alex answers looking at the clock above his head. “We have to go

first thing so as not to give them any more time and to ensure we are all back quickly.”

“Yes I need to be back here for the pack members” Axton says. “I have been away far too much already and I don’t see that changing any time soon.”

“Which is why I have a suggestion” Alex mentions quietly.

“That being?” Axton asks curiously.

“You need Luca right now, you need his support and his quick thinking by your side” Alex explains slowly. “You’re all aware of what we have asked of Sophie and Luca, I believe what I’m going to suggest will help strengthen this pack for the time being but also help show the Rogue Pack what Luca is truly capable of.”

“What are you suggesting?” Luca asks.

“Bring them here” Alex says simply.