

Chapter 20

***Talon's POV "Hey, you're here!" Ethan greeted me. Something about his burst of energy was a little unnerving, and I wasn't sure what was going on, but I was curious to find out why he seemed to be in a good mood. "Yes, Alpha! I left the training grounds as soon as I heard you needed me." "How is training going?" he asked, watching me with an intense gaze as he leaned back in the black leather chair behind his desk. "Very well. The new recruits are doing excellent. Perhaps if you're free tomorrow, you would like to come down and take a look? You'll be happy with their progress." He sat for a moment watching me, and couldn't help but feel like he was up to something. "That I will, but I have something else I called you here for." There it was. The true reason why he summoned me. I leaned closer, trying to be more attentive. "What is your request, Alpha?" Ethan looked at me and seemed to find amusement in my reaction. "Will you calm down? I don't need anything." I wasn't sure if Ethan was high or drunk. His actions completely baffled me, and that was something I didn't take lightly. He was acting abnormal. "What's going on?" I asked. As soon as the question left my lips, I watched his demeanor change. He crossed his arms. "Excuse me?" "No offense, Alpha. You just seem to be in a good mood this morning, and, please excuse my honesty, but that's rare." I Ethan quickly snapped his narrowing eyes to me. "I'm just glad we're prepared for the upcoming battle."

Yeah, like I believed that.

However, there was no point arguing it, so I quickly agreed, "Of course."

"We have visitors coming..." Ethan stated getting back to business, but kept his glare fixed on where I stood. "Alpha Romero from Poldesse is coming with his daughter Madalynn to visit the king. They will rest here three days before continuing on their journey." I was taken a bit by surprise because visitors were generally not welcomed by Ethan, due to security concerns and his dislike for meaningless social events. Plus, people feared us. Even if Ethan extended an invitation, they would most likely decline it anyway. "Oh...okay." I quickly adjusted my attitude. "I will make sure their rooms are sorted." Ethan looked at me, raising a brow. "What's wrong?" "Nothing. Just surprised, really. It isn't exactly like you to host anyone." "Trust me, I'm not thrilled about it— but he was adamant, and I don't want the king to be upset. I'm

not offending a guest who's helping us with the war." | I understood how things had escalated. Ethan was under quite a lot of pressure to build up the

Unwelcome Company defensive line and the alliance. We were preparing as much as we could, but Drogomor was only one pack, and we were already spread thin. This Alpha's visit wasn't something Ethan was happy about, but at this point, any help would count. Otherwise, Ethan would never allow such potential distractions into our territory. "Okay. I'll make sure dinners are properly arranged during their stay, as well," I added, knowing that it was customary to do so.

Ethan sighed. "Yes. I suppose that would be the polite thing," he gritted through his teeth. Alright, that was the Alpha I knew.

I began to turn away, and then stopped. “Alpha, may I ask a question?”

“Go ahead, but make it quick.” He gritted out again.

“Miss Rosalie... What would you like done about her situation, while the visitors are here?” He didn’t want to share her presence with anyone if he didn’t absolutely have to. Another Alpha coming in was going to complicate things. He thought over the question, and then quickly said, “She is in my wing, and can remain there for the days they are here.” “Very well. I will let Vicky know as well.”

As I turned to go, his voice stopped me. “I don’t want anyone from Poldesse to know why she’s here, Talon.” “Understood.”

As expected, the arrival of the Alpha came quickly. As their car pulled into the long driveway of the pack house, Ethan and I went to greet them. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but, of course, they were all the same in the end. Alpha Romero was a tall man, but not as big as Ethan. As he stepped from the blacked-out SUV, his wealth was on full display. From the expensive designer clothing to his shining jewelry, everything dripped money. “Alpha Romero, welcome,” Ethan said firmly. It was clear Ethan wasn’t pleased about the Alpha being on his territory, but he was doing what needed to be done to keep the peace. “Thank you for having us,” Romero replied, his grin showing off all of his pearly white teeth. As he turned, he held his hand out to a tall brunette girl that had been behind him. She was definitely pretty, and the short, revealing clothing she wore screamed ‘problem.’ There was a glint in her eyes when she stared at Ethan, and something deep down inside me told me I was going to have to run interference for Ethan, because otherwise he was likely to go off on a young girl seeking his favor. “This is my daughter, Madalynn.” Romero stated with a smile. “We are hoping to find her a good match when we go to the capital. She is of age, and has a strong bloodline to support any eager Alpha who wants an adequate mate.” The tension running through Ethan rubbed off on me, and I quickly smiled. “We welcome you both. Please follow me, and I will show you towards your rooms.” I knew better than to allow Ethan to continue with small talk. He wasn’t a chatty kind of person, and it was obvious from Romero’s comment that he was going to try and throw his daughter at Ethan

who was not interested at all. “We will be hosting a dinner tonight to welcome you both,” Ethan said flatly as we entered the main hall of the pack house. “I have business to attend to, so I will let Talon get you settled in.” As I turned to walk up the stairs, Madalynn’s chipper voice rang from behind me. “I look forward to seeing you later, Ethan.” My eyes widened as I turned to look at them and then at Ethan. He didn’t like anyone to address him by his first name unless allowed to. I watched him stop in the middle of the hall, but I stepped in to correct her before he could react. “Miss Madalynn, in this pack he is addressed as Alpha by all. Never his first name.” Ethan hesitated, but instead of turning to confront her, he kept walking away. She got lucky this time. “But I am an Alpha’s daughter!” She exclaimed, but her father quickly held up a hand, stopping her mid-sentence. “Yes, Madalynn, you are.. But we are in Drogomor. Not our home. Be a polite young lady and respect his wishes,” Romero said. The scent of hesitation flowed off of him. “My apologies, Beta Talon... My daughter is still learning how things work.” Reaching the top of the stairs I headed left toward the wing farthest away from Ethan. He wanted them nowhere near him or Rosalie. That was clear. “Don’t worry about it.” I put on a professional

smile. “This room on the right is yours, Alpha Romero, and Miss Madalynn may take the one across from you.” “Why aren’t we being placed in the Alpha’s wing?” Madalynn asked as I turned to look at her. “Miss Madalynn, Alpha Ethan often has late meetings, and his wing may not be the quietest for our guests. Don’t worry, the rooms we have for you are equally beautiful,” I stated, trying to smooth the situation over. Romero nodded with a small smile, seemingly quite accepting of the situation, but his daughter didn’t seem happy. “I hope the rooms are nice. I was hoping to be closer to E... Alpha Ethan.” I gestured to both rooms. She huffed and brushed past me into the room I directed before slamming the door. “She will be better behaved at dinner.” Romero said roughly, staring at his daughter’s closed door. “I have no doubt. Long journeys tend to wear people’s patience out. I will leave you to get situated and see you at seven in the grand dining room.” Walking down the hall, I took a few deep breaths and loosened my face from the smiles I had forced myself to put on. Despite knowing that Ethan wasn’t one who liked to host events, Romero had still insisted on staying instead of just continuing on. It was more than obvious that they came here for a reason – and his daughter was that reason.

I sighed and walked towards the Alpha’s wing of the pack house. Now, it was even more clear that I | needed to make sure the Poldesse pack did not find out about Rosalie.

I raised my fist and knocked on the door of the Luna suite. Rosalie opened it, her smile widening upon her face. “Talon...Is everything okay?”

Unwelcome Company “Yes, Miss Rosalie...I just wanted to make sure you had everything you needed for the rest of the night.” Vicky had told her that we had visitors for a few days. Smart as Rosalie was, she immediately understood that her friend was implying she shouldn’t leave the room. I felt bad making such a request, but thankfully, she didn’t seem to be too offended. “Yes, I have everything I need. Thank you for checking.” I looked at her with some guilt. “This is out of concern for your safety. I hope you understand...” She looked me in the eye, and I had to admit, she had the clearest eyes I had ever seen. I just wished Ethan could see that, too. “*You* don’t need to explain– I understand,” she assured me. “And don’t worry, I will stay in the room.” “Well, then, in that case...have a good night.”