

ERIC VALL



THE

14

ALPHA



PROTECT. PROCREATE. PREVAIL.

**THE**  
**ALPHA**  
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**14**

**ERIC VALL**

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## Cast of Characters

**Aaron Hart:** *Human* FBI Agent. Short brown hair. Stubble. Broad build.

**Abigail:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Ginger hair. Tan fur.

**Adam:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Aiden's beta. Brown hair. Brown eyes. Muscular build. Tan and yellow fur. Short temper. Deceased.

**Aiden Jansen:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Blair's previous alpha. Tall. Blond hair in a man bun. Deceased.

**Alex:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra.

**Alfie:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon Flock. Messy black hair.

**Allison Barnes:** *Werecat (mountain lion)* Nikita's younger sister. Long brown hair. Azure eyes.

**Amber Jansen:** *Werecat omega (mountain lion)* Married to Jonathan Jansen, mother to Aiden and Max Jansen. Dark

brown hair. Dull green eyes. Deceased.

**Amy:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Brown hair. Blue eyes. Biggest Disney fan.

**Anastasia:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Long blonde hair. Brown eyes. Great singer.

**Angela:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Auburn hair. Light-brown eyes. Organized.

**Angelique:** *Werewolf beta* San Bernardino pack. Dark brown hair with blonde roots.

**Annika Roswell:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Petite. Strawberry-blonde hair. Enormous dark green eyes.

**Archie Best:** *Avian beta (hummingbird)* Shaggy brown hair. Brown eyes. Orange feathers. Red chest. Brown head. Previously known as Matthew Moss. Worked as a spy for Myles Beck. Deceased.

**Arielle:** *Werecoyote omega* Jesse's half-Filipina omega. Warm brown hair. Reddish-brown eyes. Russet brown fur, bottle brush tail. Chocolate-cinnamon scent. Rescued from Gray Mackenzie.

**Arthur Mordaine:** *Avian* Jesse's shifter lawyer. Tall and rail-thin. Curved nose. Gold, circular glasses. Short brown hair. Black feathers.

**Ashton:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon Flock. Black hair. Brown eyes. Tanned skin.

**Austin Hayes:** *Werewolf beta captain* San Bernardino pack. Long blond hair. Blue eyes. Thick, wiry beard. Broad build. Always wears a plaid shirt and cowboy boots.

**Autumn:** *Werewolf beta* San Bernardino pack. Golden hair.

**Azalea:** *Avian omega (bald eagle)* Jesse's omega. Blood-red hair. Blue-gray eyes. Coffee and caramel scent. Rescued from Reuben Dillard.

**Azarov Petrovich:** *Russian wild cat beta captain* Pale skin. Long black hair. Brown eyes. Gray-speckled fur. From the

Kamchatka Peninsula. Does most of the talking for the wild cats.

**Balabanov “Bala”:** *Russian wild cat beta* Blond hair. Blue eyes.

**Beatrice:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Curly blonde hair. Sky-blue eyes. Nickname is Bee.

**Benji Shaw:** *Werewolf beta captain* Jesse’s half-brother and best friend. Dark blond hair. Hazel eyes. Gray fur. Viola student at Everleigh University.

**Blair Avalon:** *Werecat omega (lynx)* Jesse’s omega. Dyed black hair. Honey-colored eyes. Vanilla and honey scent. Sister of Gemma Avalon. Rescued from Aiden Jansen.

**Bodhi:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Short black hair. Brown eyes. Tattoo of cat paw on right calf.

**Bok:** *Russia wild cat beta* Brown hair. Smallest member of the group.

**Brady:** *Human* SDD Intelligence Agent. Currently stationed in Canada.

**Brenden:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Mainland. Jet-black fur. Rangy build.

**Brody Miller:** *Avian infant (golden eagle)* Red hair. Ewan Miller’s son.

**Bryce Lane:** *Human* FBI Agent. Short blond hair. Chubby face. Broad build.

**Caitlin Barrera:** *Werewolf omega* Jesse’s omega. Light blonde hair. Blue-green eyes. Square rimmed glasses. Rose and lemon scent. Rescued from Myles Beck.

**Caleb Moreno:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Copper-colored skin. Black curly hair. Reddish-brown eyes. Bronze-colored fur. Smoky markings on paw and snout.

**Calvin Till:** *Human* CSIS agent. Brown hair. Green eyes.

**Cameron:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Tan and white fur. Youngest pack member. Best friends with Finn.

**Carlo Abella:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Previous alpha to Pennsylvania pack. Dark hair. Green eyes. Tanned skin. Heavy stubble and mustache. Speckled fur. White paws. Italian born. Submitted himself to Jesse. Used to work alongside Myles Beck.

**Caroline:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Straight blonde-brown hair. Gray eyes.

**Cassie:** *Human* Blonde hair. Gray eyes. Small and mouse-like. Delicate features. Wife of Kyle.

**Cayden:** *Werecoyote beta* Californian pack. Blondish-brown hair. Mechanic.

**Charlie:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Curly blond hair. Blue eyes. Tan fur with a black mark under his chin.

**Charlie Jansen:** *Werecat infant* Islander. Dirty blond hair. Green eyes. Son of Aiden Jansen and Sarah. Five years old.

**Chelsea:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Bright blonde hair. Brown eyes. Sean's younger sister by two years.

**Chloe Barrera:** *Werewolf child* New York. Child of Caitlin Barrera and Myles Beck. Sister of Zac Barrera. 13 years old. Blonde hair with pink, blue, and purple ends. Blue-green eyes. Wears glasses. Slightly distant with new people.

**Christopher:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Long dark hair. Blue eyes. Campus security.

**Clarice Osborn:** *Werewolf omega* Theo Finch's omega. Blonde hair. Blue eyes. Previous alpha was Gabriel. Wanted shifter. Deceased.

**Clay:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. 17 years old. Youngest member of Jesse's pack. Very energetic.

**Colt Lewis:** *Werecat alpha (Lynx)* Canada. Curly blond hair. Blue eyes. Bulky build. Gray-speckled fur. Previous head of the Canadian Shifter Agency. Deceased.

**Connor Mackenzie:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Previous alpha to Californian pack. Submitted himself to Jesse. Black hair. Brown eyes. Gray Mackenzie's second cousin.

**Cooper Ivan Rafe:** *Infant* First-born child of Jesse and Nikita. Brown hair. Button nose. Shifter species unknown.

**Coral:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Blonde hair. Blue eyes. Quiet but fierce. Sweet, angelic smile.

**Corey Ryan:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Previous alpha to Modoc County pride. Tanned fur. White paws. Black tips on his ears. Scars on his face. Deceased.

**Curtis:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Ginger hair. Freckles on the bridge of his nose.

**Daisy Cairns:** *Avian beta (raven)* Yukon flock. Ginger hair. Light-brown eyes. Freckles on cheeks. Very anxious. Twin sister of Ivy Cairns.

**Dallas:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Curly brown hair. Gray eyes. Calm and chill personality.

**Damien:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Long brown hair with blond highlights.

**Daniel:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Lives with East Oregon flock. African-American. Very strong. Wanted to be in the military.

**Darcy:** *Avian beta captain (raven)* Burntisland, Scotland.

**Darla:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Strawberry-blond hair. Green-blue eyes. Quite small. Always hangs around with Lucie.

**Darryl:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Buzzed brown hair.

**David Atkins:** *Werecoyote alpha* Previous alpha to Lincoln County, Nevada pack. Gray-and-black fur. Red eyes. Deceased.

**Dexter:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Messy black hair. Bright blue eyes. Tan and blond fur. One black ear.



Childish attitude. One of the youngest members of the pack.  
Nickname is Dex.

**Donald Robertson:** *Avian alpha (raven)* Never seen in person. Burntisland raven alpha. Killed by Shen Shui.

**Dr. Chase:** *Human* Jesse's professor at Everleigh University. Crow-like woman. Wrinkly face.

**Dr. Stenton:** *Werecoyote* Monroe town doctor. Black hair.

**Dudin:** *Russian wild cat beta* Curly brown hair. Green eyes. Tan skin.

**Duncan:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Ginger hair. Green eyes. Freckles across his nose.

**Dylan York:** *Avian alpha (raven)* Previous alpha to East Oregon flock. Never saw him in human form. Deceased.

**Eden:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Black-brown hair. Brown eyes. Birthmark on left side of neck. Twin sister of Ellis.

**Eleanor "Ellie" Miller:** *Avian omega (golden eagle)* Ewan Miller's wife/omega. Brown hair. Green eyes. Mother of Brody and Norah Miller.

**Eli Chambers:** *Human* CSIS agent. Brown eyes. Quite small and lanky.

**Eliza:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Sleek black hair. Pale eyes. Zane's twin sister.

**Elliot:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Curly blond hair. Greenish-brown eyes.

**Ellis:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Black-brown hair. Gray-brown eyes. Loves skateboarding. Twin brother of Eden.

**Eloise:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Reddish-blond hair in ringlets. Green eyes.

**Elsie:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Toffee-colored hair. Blue eyes.

**Ethan:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Black-brown hair.

**Eva Rafe:** *Werewolf beta captain* Jesse's aunt on his father's side. Dark brown hair. Icy-blue eyes. Silvery coat that's sleek and full.

**Ewan Miller:** *Avian alpha (golden eagle)* Head of UK European Shifter Department. Ginger hair. Green eyes. Freckles. Based in Scotland.

**Ezra:** *Human* SDD Intelligence Agent. Stationed in Canada.

**Faith:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Copper-colored hair. Very sweet and quiet.

**Farrah:** *Werewolf beta captain* British Columbia. Burgundy hair. Pierced nose and eyebrow.

**Finn:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Messy blond hair. Green eyes. Best friends with Cameron.

**Florence:** *Human* Waitress at Alice's Restaurant. Bright ginger hair. Forest green eyes. Assisted Jesse with information on the were-hunters.

**Foster:** *Werewolf beta captain* Idaho pack. Black hair. Brown eyes. Tanned skin. Gray fur. Doesn't talk much.

**Franco:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Brown hair. Orange-brown eyes.

**Frederick:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Curly brown hair. Very quiet. Boyfriend of Lily.

**Galdina:** *Russian wild cat beta captain* Long blonde hair.

**Gavyn:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Buzzed black hair. Green eyes. Broad build. Loves playing football. Bit of a jock.

**Gemma Avalon:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Brown hair. Hazel eyes. Sister of Blair Avalon. Campus security.

**George:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Ginger hair. Green eyes.

**Gia:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Californian pack. Short red hair. Italian heritage. Wanted to be a chef.

**Grace:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Short brown hair. Green-brown eyes.

**Gray Mackenzie:** *Werecoyote alpha* Arielle's previous alpha. Long, highlighted, curly hair. Blue eyes. Orange-brown fur with black-tipped hairs. Deceased.

**Gregory:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Buzzed brown hair. Gray eyes.

**Gus Dunn:** *Werewolf beta captain* Short blond hair. One green eye, one brown eye. Rotund figure. Red fur. Deceased.

**Hailey Moore:** *Werewolf omega* Jesse's omega. Brown-and-blonde streaked hair, often dyes some strands in different colors. Green eyes. Light-gray fur, white speckled chin and stomach. Ears are a darker shade of gray. Honeysuckle and lavender scent. Deceased brother was a were-hunter.

**Han Ming:** *Weretiger beta* Black hair. Brown eyes. Missing half of his left ear. From China. Previous member of Shen Shui's pride.

**Hannah Pierce:** *Human* Jesse's class partner at Everleigh University. Blonde hair. Dark brown eyes. Former cheerleader.

**Harlow:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Mahogany hair. Crystal blue eyes.

**Harrison:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Eugene, Oregon pride. Curly brown hair.

**Harry:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Short brown hair. Blue eyes. Muscular build. Dark gray fur. Like a big brother to Hailey.

**Hazel Wise:** *Human* Co-head of the Shifter Detection Department, alongside Jesse. Long mahogany hair. Almond-colored eyes. Heart-shaped face.

**Hendrix:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Curly blond hair. Very chill and relaxed.

**Henry:** *Werewolf beta captain* Idaho pack. Curly blond hair.

**Henry Ray:** *Werecat* Shifter doctor on Vancouver Island. Short, fluffy brown hair.

**Holly:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Ginger hair. Green eyes. Orange-brown fur.

**Hope:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Short golden hair. Brown eyes. Very shy.

**Hydra:** *Selkie beta (orca)* Long black hair. Soft gray eyes. Scar on left cheek. Black smudge on eyespot.

**Ivy Cairns:** *Avian omega (raven)* Jesse's omega. Long black hair. Light-brown eyes. Cinnamon and pine scent. Can make her own weapons. Twin sister of Daisy Cairns. Rescued from Zander Nevin.

**Jack Nolan:** *Human* Neat brown hair. Grayish-green eyes. Dark stubble. Previous student at Everleigh University. Musician who offered Jesse a part in his orchestra.

**Jackson:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Short dark hair. Cyan eyes. Blond and tan fur.

**Jake Woodruff:** *Human* Jesse's friend. Member of DnD group. Film Major at Everleigh University.

**Jayden Carver:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha to San Bernardino pack. Looked to be in his late-twenties. Only saw him in hybrid form. Deceased.

**Jesse Rafe:** *Werewolf alpha.* Tan skin. Dark brown hair. Blue eyes. Black fur. Violin student at Everleigh University. Parents were Ivan and Miranda Rafe.

**Joel:** *Werecat beta captain (bobcat)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Blond hair. Blue eyes. Big fan of superheroes.

**Jonah:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Bleached blond hair. Brown eyes.

**Jonathan Jansen:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Gray-blond hair. Blue eyes. Married to Amber Jansen, father of Max and Aiden Jansen. Deceased.

**Jude:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Neat and tidy. Good friends with Kora.

**Julia:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra.

**Julien:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Dark blond hair. Green eyes.

**Kahn:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Black hair with silver strands.

**Karina Barnes:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mother of Nikita and Allison. Widow of Anthony Barnes. Brown hair. Teal eyes.

**Kasia:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Red hair. Green eyes. Motherly. Girlfriend of Spencer.

**Kassidy:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Curly black hair. Brown and gray fur.

**Kiara:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Californian pack. Mahogany hair.

**Kinley Price:** *Human* Manhattan. Shifter Detection Department agent. Blonde hair. Dark blue eyes. Brown glasses. Assisted Hazel Wise and Rachel MacMillan getting information on Myles Beck.

**Kiri Everard:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Platinum-blond hair. Reddish-brown eyes. Ash-colored fur. Map enthusiast.

**Kora:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Blonde hair with silver highlights. Gray eyes. Neat. Good friends with Jude.

**Kristina:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Black hair. Pale green eyes. Campus security.

**Kyle:** *Human* Pianist in Jack Nolan's orchestra. Curly brown hair. Clothes are normally creased. Husband of Cassie.

**Kyson:** *Werewolf beta* British Columbia. Long black hair. Tanned skin. Tribal tattoos. Brown-and-white fur. Didn't appreciate Jesse's arrival.

**Lachlan Grant:** *Avian beta captain (raven)* Long brown hair. Blue eyes. Fire tattoo on shoulder and neck. Stretched ear lobes. Burntisland, Scotland.

**Laura Barrera:** *Werewolf beta* New York. Brown-black hair. Blue eyes. Younger sister of Caitlin Barrera. Wanted to be a paramedic.

**Laza:** *Russian wild cat alpha.* Previous alpha to the Kamchatka wild cat pride. Never seen in person. Killed by Shen Shui.

**Leo Williams:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Hawk-like nose. Sand-colored hair. Hazel eyes.

**Leona:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Ash-colored hair.

**Levi:** *Werewolf beta (lynx)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Black hair. Prankster.

**Lily:** *Werewolf beta (lynx)* Islander. Blonde hair. Bright green eyes. Girlfriend of Frederick. Worst vegetarian ever.

**Lorelei:** *Werewolf beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Black-spotted fur. Very determined. Nickname is Lori.

**Louise Newman:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Blonde hair. Brown eyes. Gray speckled fur. Slight Southern accent.

**Luca:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Dark buzzed hair. Thick black eyebrows. Broad build.

**Lucie:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Dyed black hair. Light-blue eyes. Always hangs around with Darla.

**Luke:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Blond hair. Blue-gray eyes.

**Lyla Jansen:** *Werewolf infant* Islander. White-blonde hair. Brown eyes. Daughter of Aiden Jansen and Olivia. Three years old.

**Maisy:** *Avian beta (raven)* Burntisland, Scotland.

**Manina:** *Russian wild cat beta* Curly black hair. Bites her nails when she's nervous.

**Marco:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Flaxen-haired. Stocky build.

**Maria:** *Werewolf omega* Washington. Theo Finch's previous omega. Older than Aunt Eva. Five teenage kids. Jesse gave the option to leave the pack if she wanted to.

**Mariam Porter:** *Werecoat beta captain (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Long, curly blonde hair. Sky blue eyes. Loves to read. Bit of a girly-girl.

**Markov:** *Russian wild cat beta captain* Short brown hair. Brown eyes. Hooked scar on chin. Doctor of the wild cat pride.

**Markus:** *Werecoat beta captain (mountain lion)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Black hair in dreadlocks. Brown eyes. Tan skin. Tall with very broad shoulders. Wanted to be a football player.

**Marley:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Turquoise eyes. White tufts of fur on ears.

**Maryin:** *Russian wild cat beta* White-blond hair. Blue eyes. Very quiet. Only knows a small amount of English.

**Masen:** *Werecoat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Black-and-gray hair. Dark eyes.

**Max Jansen:** *Werecoat alpha (mountain lion)* Golden hair. Emerald eyes. Broad build. Lived off parents' wealth. Deceased.

**Maxwell Byrne:** *Human* Caught avians shifting on camera in Teslin, Yukon.

**Molly:** *Werewolf beta* San Bernardino pack. Dirty-blonde hair in ringlets. 19 years old.

**Myles Beck:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha of New York skulk. Dark blond hair. Blue eyes. Round face. Orange fur. Yellow-gold eye. White chin, and black-tipped ears. Head of the SDD. Territory spanned over all of New York and New Jersey. Deceased.

**Nayeli:** *Werecoyote beta* Californian pack. Long black hair. Tanned skin. Native American. Yurok Tribe.

**Newt:** *Werecat beta (cougar)* Max's beta. Bald head. Scar on neck. Broken front tooth. Deceased.

**Nikita Barnes:** *Werecat omega (mountain lion)* Jesse's omega. Light tan. Caramel-brown hair. Teal eyes. Golden fur. Citrus-sweet scent. Creative writing major at Everleigh University.

**Nina:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Black hair. Forest green eyes. Square-shaped glasses.

**Noah:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Brown hair. Yellow-brown eyes.

**Norah Miller:** *Avian infant (golden eagle)* Brown hair. Ewan Miller's daughter.

**Olive:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Wildly curly brown hair. Brown-and-gray fur. Very hyper and forgetful. 19 years old, but looks 15.

**Oliver:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Short brown hair. Blue eyes.

**Olivia:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Curly, light-red hair. Brown eyes. Mother of Lyla Jansen.

**Oscar:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Californian pack. Blond hair.

**Parker Little:** *Human* Jesse's friend. Red hair. Freckles. Wire-framed glasses. Member of the DnD group.

**Paul:** *Werewolf beta* British Columbia. Brown hair. Brown Eyes. Gray fur. Didn't appreciate Jesse's arrival.

**Paige:** *Werewolf beta* British Columbia. Short silver hair shaved at one side with blue stars. Ashy blonde fur. Very small. Goth. Didn't appreciate Jesse's arrival.

**Paxton:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Ashy hair with a fringe. Hazel eyes. Gets worried quite easily.



**Peter Daughtry:** *Werecoyote* Mainland. Gray hair. Blue eyes. Retired park ranger.

**Phoebe:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Silver hair. Yellowish-brown eyes. Bit of a nerd.

**Poppy Jansen:** *Werecat infant* Islander. Black hair. Blue eyes. Always wears hair bows. Daughter of Aiden Jansen and Sophie. Four years old.

**Professor Collins:** *Human* Jesse's music professor at Everleigh University. Short brown hair.

**Quinn:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Short brown hair. Sea-blue eyes. Mother of Rebecca Jansen.

**Rachel MacMillan:** *Human* Connecticut. Shifter Detection Department agent. Dark blonde hair. Green eyes. Hazel Wise's mentor.

**Raina:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Long, curly red hair. Her brother was her previous alpha.

**Ramiro:** *Werewolf beta captain* Washington. Previous beta captain for Theo Finch.

**Randell Snyder:** *Werewolf alpha* Shoulder-length, greasy brown hair. Scar from right eye to cheek. Red fur. Deceased.

**Rebecca Jansen:** *Werecat infant* Islander. Blonde hair. Blue eyes. Speaks with a lisp. Daughter of Aiden Jansen and Quinn. Four years old.

**Reese:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Auburn hair. Brown eyes. Likes fishing.

**Reuben Dillard:** *Avian alpha (bald eagle)* Azalea's previous alpha. Patch of feathers missing on his stomach. Violet eyes. Deceased.

**Rhett:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Curly black hair. Blue eyes. Gray fur.

**Rhys:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Ginger hair. Blue eyes. Pale skin.

**Riya:** *Werecoyote beta* Californian pack. Long black hair. Tanned skin. Indian heritage. Loves to experiment with spices.

**Robin:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Long auburn-and-blond hair. Gray eyes. Pretty nerdy.

**Roman:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Sky-blue eyes. Short black hair. Neatfreak.

**Romeo Bell:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha of Maine pack. Short brown hair. Gray eyes. Dark gray fur. Scar beneath his left eye. Worked alongside Myles Beck. Territory spanned over all of Maine and Vermont. Deceased.

**Russell Banks:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Canada. Bald head. Brown beard. Beer belly. Colt Lewis' assistant. Deceased.

**Ryland:** *Werecoat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. White-blond hair.

**Sabine:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Max's beta. Blonde pixie cut. Petite build. Deceased.

**Sage:** *Werewolf beta captain* Idaho pack. Blonde hair.

**Samantha:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra. Blonde hair.

**Samuel Norris:** *Werecoat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Never saw him in his human form. ID was found in a car. Deceased.

**Sarah:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Dark blonde hair. Green eyes. Mother of Charlie Jansen.

**Scarlett:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Strawberry-blond hair. Crystal-blue eyes. Small and petite.

**Scott Williamson:** *Werecoat alpha (lynx)* Previous alpha of Eugene, Oregon pride. Gray speckled fur. One eye scarred shut. Black-tipped ears. Deceased.

**Sean:** *Werecoat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Dirty-blond hair. Older brother of Chelsea by two years.

**Sebastian Rush:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Previous alpha of Connecticut pride. Blond hair. Blue eyes. Tattoo of a lion on right hand. Tip of one ear missing. Worked alongside Myles Beck. Territory spanned over all of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Deceased.

**Serena:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Golden hair. Beauty mark on right cheek. Campus security.

**Seth:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Buzzed blond hair. Brown and gray fur.

**Shalyapina “Shal”:** *Russian wild cat beta* Brown hair. Birthmark on her neck.

**Shen Shui:** *Weretiger alpha* Siberian tiger from China. Never seen in human form. Jade-colored eyes surrounded by scars. Worked as a puppet for the Asian agency. Deceased.

**Shi Mu:** *Weretiger beta* ESD agent. Brown hair. Brown eyes. Dresses in smart suits. From China but lives in Madrid. Lives alone, and isn't part of a pride.

**Sidney May:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Cropped brown hair. Dusty-gray eyes. Bit of a tomboy. Severe nut allergy.

**Simon:** *Avian beta (raven)* Burntisland, Scotland.

**Siyanko:** *Russian wild cat* Brown-blond hair. Tall and slim. Fastest wild cat in the group.

**Skye:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Brown hair. Allergic to everything.

**Sloan:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Long ginger hair. Green eyes.

**Sobakova “Soba”:** *Russian wild cat beta* Short blonde hair.

**Sophie:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Black hair. Brown eyes. Mother of Poppy Jansen.

**Spencer:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Islander. Ginger hair. Wanted to be a football player. Boyfriend of Kasia.

**Steph:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Long blonde hair. Organized and playful.

**Steven:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra.

**Sven:** *Werewolf beta captain* New York skulk. Brown-black hair. Broad shoulders.

**Tegan:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Red-brown hair. Gray-blue eyes. Very petite.

**Tess:** *Werewolf beta*. Idaho pack.

**Thalia:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Tawny hair. Blue, doll-like eyes. Tawny fur with a fluffy tail.

**Theo Finch:** *Werewolf alpha* Black fur with patches missing and covered in scars. White triangle on chin. Murdered Jesse's parents. Deceased.

**Thomas:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Sandy hair. Blocky glasses. Wants to be an engineer.

**Tiana:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Curly black hair. Brown eyes. Diagnosed with OCD.

**Tilly:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Red hair with pink highlights. Silver eyes. Zodiac signs tattooed on her knuckles.

**Todd:** *Werecoyote beta* Monroe resident. Gray hair. Rotund build. Normally seen sitting in the diner.

**Tom:** *Werewolf beta captain* New York skulk. Dark blond hair. Broad shoulders.

**Travis Kelly:** *Human* Jesse's friend. Member of DnD group. Mexican-Irish nationality.

**Troy Watson:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha of Idaho pack. Black fur. White paws. Deceased.

**Valya:** *Russian wild cat omega* Laza's omega. Never seen in person. Killed by Shen Shui.

**Wesley:** *Werewolf beta captain* Mainland. Brown hair.

**Willow:** *Werewolf beta captain* Alberta. Brown hair. Previous beta captain for Theo Finch.

**Wren:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Always wears sunglasses.

**Wyatt Arbour:** *Werecoyote alpha* Head of the Canadian Shifter Agency. Curly brown hair. Gray eyes. Stubble. Owns nearly all of Alberta.

**Yasmin:** *Human* Manhattan. Administrative assistant for Jesse and Hazel Wise. Black hair. Brown eyes. Tanned skin. Very small. Very excitable.

**Zac Barrera:** *Werewolf child* New York. Child of Caitlin Barrera and Myles Beck. Younger brother of Chloe Barrera. 11 years old. Blond hair. Blue-green eyes. Loves video games.

**Zane:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Black hair. Pale eyes. Eliza's twin brother. Campus security.

**Zander Nevin:** *Avian alpha (raven)* Ivy's previous alpha. Blond hair. Muscular. Missing several feathers. Deceased.

**Zara:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Sandy-brown hair. Brown eyes. Square-shaped face.

**Zimin:** *Russian wild cat beta* Black hair. Heavy stubble.



# Chapter 1

I drummed my fingers against the leather interior of the car as I paid close attention to the estimated time of arrival on the GPS.

“One more hour, Jesse,” Kiri said from the backseat, almost like she’d overheard my frantic thoughts.

“It better be the quickest sixty minutes of my life,” I snorted humorlessly.

We had already been in the car for five hours, and my family and pack members around me had spent the majority of the drive to Manchester sleeping, but I hadn’t closed my eyes for a single second.

It was five in the morning, but I’d never felt more awake.

Lian Qing, the weretiger omega, was only an hour away from me, so sleeping was the last thing on my mind.

It had been a tiring, dangerous trek across Scotland in order to find the weretiger alpha, Shen Shui, and I’d added a large selection of new betas to my mixed pack along the way.

But now that his thoroughly mutilated body had been left on a mountain in Scotland, I was able to focus on the omega Shen had left behind.

“Think about this, though, bro,” Benji said from the driver’s seat while he threw a handful of Skittles into his mouth. “We wouldn’t have even been on the train yet. So driving was totally the best option.”

“You’re right.” I nodded, but it didn’t cause the nerves to die down.

We would have had to drive to Glasgow, which would have taken us a couple of hours, and then we would have had to get on the train for four hours in order to reach Manchester.

But the first train from Glasgow didn’t leave for another forty minutes, so driving was the quickest, easiest solution.

“It’s almost like I know what I’m doing,” Kiri giggled from the very back of the car.

“I never doubted your skills.” Benji threw a smirk over his shoulder at the werecoyote before he brought his focus back on the road again.

*Jesus, just fuck her already, Benji,* Azalea joked silently.



But from the lack of reaction on Kiri's face, I knew my bald eagle omega had blocked Kiri from her thoughts.

*Sorry, can't talk, Benji mumbled. I am extremely busy driving while also picking out only the green Skittles from this packet. You'll have to talk about Kiri to someone else.*

*In that case...* Azalea chuckled, which caused a smile to curl across my face. *Caitlin, how long do you think it'll be before Benji finally decides to get his dick—*

*Don't get me involved in your evil schemes, my werefox omega laughed. I'm far too excited about seeing my children again, so Benji's body parts are the last thing on my mind. Not like they're ever on my mind, for that matter, but you know what I mean.*

*Only Jesse's, I heard the smirk in Azalea's silent voice.*

*Damn right. I winked.*

Not only did the death of Shen Shui allow me to gain my eighth omega, it also meant our family could be reunited again. It felt like weeks had passed since Blair, Nikita, and our son Cooper, had traveled down to England with Laura, Gemma, and Caitlin's children, Chloe and Zac.

But now that the threat had been dealt with, there was no reason why they couldn't return, so they were making their way up to Manchester in order to meet us there.

I had a feeling Nikita and Blair were just as excited to meet the newest omega as they were to see us again. But I couldn't blame them.

I just had to make sure I found Lian first.

"Hey, Han." I turned in my seat to look at the Chinese weretiger beta who sat behind Benji.

Han had his eyes closed, like he was in deep concentration, as he tied his choppy black hair up in a knot, which revealed the scarred skin where his left ear was supposed to be.

His weretiger form also came with a missing ear, and it was the first time I'd experienced a shifter who'd lost a vital part of their body during battle.

"Han," I said again, but slightly louder than before.

Caitlin sweetly patted the beta on his tanned hand to get his attention, and his brown eyes opened as confusion washed across his face.

"Sorry?" he asked.

“Jesse was calling your name.” Caitlin smiled.

Han instantly forgot about tying up his hair and let out a sigh as he looked over at me.

“I’m so sorry, Jesse.” He motioned toward his missing ear. “When there’s a lot of noise going on, it’s very disorientating for me.”

I had only known the man for about five hours, so I was still learning everything about him.

“I didn’t realize you’re deaf,” I replied. “Or partly deaf, should I say? A shifter’s hearing is so good that I just... I just assumed it wouldn’t have been affected. So I’m sorry for spooking you.”

It made sense that his hearing had been affected, because his cartilage was completely scarred over, but it showed how much there was still to learn about the shifter world.

“Yes.” Han nodded. “I lost my ear during a fight about... five, maybe six years ago. But I was a lone shifter at that time. I didn’t have a strong pride behind me, or any pride at all, really, so I couldn’t heal as quickly as others do. So I lost the large majority of my hearing that day.”

“Did you have to learn to adapt?” Azalea asked.

“Yes.” Han glanced over to look at the omega. “I now rely on the vibrations when I’m hunting and tracking down other shifters, but sometimes I still have to rely on those around me for assistance. But to put it into perspective for you, I went from having shifter hearing, to having human hearing that’s still slightly muffled, like it’s out of focus.”

“Fuck,” Benji mumbled. “We’re so used to these heightened senses now that it’s essentially like going completely deaf.”

“How incredible,” Caitlin whispered in awe. “I had no idea.”

“Well, I once came across a shifter who’d lost his sight during battle.” Han shook his head in disbelief. “He is still an incredible fighter, but he basically had to learn to do everything all over again.”

“That’s amazing,” I replied.

“Oh, my god, does that mean you know sign language, then?” Benji gasped. “I’ve always wanted to learn that.”

“No, I had no reason to learn it,” Han laughed. “Plus, my hearing isn’t affected when I’m mentally connected to

someone. However, Lian did offer to learn the language for me, which I thought was very sweet of her.”

I smiled at the thought of the omega I still knew nothing about.

“Well, that’s actually why I got your attention in the first place,” I said. “What can you tell me about Lian?”

“I…” Han paused in thought for a moment. “I mean, I haven’t known her for that long, but I’ve learned that she’s feisty and highly protective of those she loves. She’s also one of the most intelligent people I’ve ever met. Her English seems to be better than her Chinese, and I think she’s fluent in another language as well.”

“Sounds like she’ll fit in perfectly,” Azalea chuckled.

I didn’t care how intelligent my omegas were, but I loved it when they impressed me with skills and knowledge that I didn’t have.

“I have to say, your English is also incredible,” Kiri said from the row behind Han. “I wouldn’t have known you grew up in China if you hadn’t told us.”

“You can thank my parents for that,” he laughed.

Han spent a couple of minutes talking about his family back home, and I learned that he has a younger brother who's twelve years old. Han also said that if his brother had been old enough, Shen Shui would have forced him to join the pride along with Han and the others.

"I bet you miss them," Caitlin said with a small smile.

"I do." Han nodded. "And sometimes I feel very far away from home. But I'd always hoped to join a pride if it were possible, so I don't regret being here in the slightest. I just wish Shen had been... more loving and less hateful."

"Believe me, I feel the exact same way." I rolled my eyes. "It could have saved me a lot of time and trouble. But even though I don't agree with anything Shen did, like posting shifter videos and murdering innocent alphas and an omega... We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for his sick, twisted ideas."

"Maybe every cloud does have a silver lining..." Kiri mumbled. "Some may say a very faint line, but one just the same."

Fortunately, our conversation allowed me to somewhat forget about the excitement and desire that formed in the pit of my stomach, and before I knew it, we only had ten minutes left to go until we reached Manchester Piccadilly Station.

All we knew was that Lian and one other beta had been forced to board a train to Manchester, and then they had to check into a hotel, which only Shen knew about.

But it turned out there were four train stations in the city center, so they could have been anywhere. But Kiri noted that the train from Glasgow would have arrived at Manchester Piccadilly, so we crossed our fingers and hoped it was the right one.

Unfortunately, neither Lian nor the other beta had cell phones, because Shen refused to buy them one. He often refused to buy them clothes when they needed them, too. So I just had to hope that my heightened sense of smell, and the tingling sensation I received whenever an omega was present, came in handy.

*Okay, here's the plan, I said silently to those in the car, as well as the other two cars behind us. As soon as we arrive at the station, Benji, Han, and I are going to get out of the car and search around for the omega. The rest of you will stay together, but stay in contact. If you come across anything of interest, like if you come across the omega before we do, message me instantly.*

*Of course, Jesse, Aunt Eva replied from the car directly behind mine.*

*I also need one of you to message Nikita, Blair, and the others, I added. They'll be arriving at Manchester Piccadilly within the next few hours, so they'll need to know where to meet us. I also heard that some of you had offered to get the train back to Edinburgh once it's time for us to leave?*

*Yes, Daisy said sweetly. Myself, Kiri, Laura, and Gemma are going to get the train home to make room for the omegas and the children.*

*Good, Ivy mumbled. I can spend a few hours without you.*

*You love me really, Daisy laughed.*

*Mhmm... I could just imagine Ivy rolling her eyes at her twin sister.*

*We'll also keep the others in Scotland, and back at home, up to date, too, Hailey spoke up. They know a rough idea of what's going on, but I'll make sure to message them.*

*Thank you. I smiled at my omega, even though she couldn't see me.*



There was no reason for all of us to travel down from Scotland for the day, so the majority of my pack drove back to Edinburgh along with our new avians and Russian wild cats.

My pack relied on communication, regardless of whether we were in the same country or not. So even my betas in Canada and all the way down in California needed to be kept up to date.

*And if you haven't done so already, you all need to take anosmiacs, I said finally. We're still recovering from one fight, so we definitely don't need another to occur if resident shifters catch on to our scents.*

Manchester Piccadilly came into view as that conversation ended, and I barely took in the large glass building as thoughts of my weretiger omega flitted through my mind.

Or perhaps roared, like the opening wave of a tsunami, because there was definitely nothing light and graceful about my thoughts.

I leaped from the car as soon as Benji pulled it to a stop, and Caitlin took over in the driver's seat as Han and Benji gathered around me.

“Holy shit, they have a Greggs!” Benji cried as he spotted the bakery across the road. “I can get another one of their famous sausage rolls!”

His excitement died down as he spotted my raised eyebrow.

“I can get one... once we’ve found Lian, of course,” he amended.

“Better.” I nodded. “You’ll be able to eat all the sausage rolls you want once I’ve found her.”

Because there was no way in hell I was going to be in and out of the hotel room in five minutes.

I always took my time and worshiped my omegas as I claimed them.

“Alright,” I cleared my throat before my dangerous mind got the better of me. “Han, reach out with your mental connection to see if they’re anywhere within the one-mile radius. I’ll pay attention to the scents in the air. Let’s head down this road and see where we end up.”

“Dude, there are fucking hundreds of hotels around here,” Benji grumbled as he looked at his phone. “I’ve never seen so many little red tabs on one screen before.”

“Then we better get looking,” I mumbled.

Manchester was a big city, and it appeared to be a mixture of old and new, just like the streets in Edinburgh. The buildings around us ranged from old sandstone buildings and exquisite architecture, to skyscrapers, domes, and sleeker, more streamlined buildings made from nothing but glass.

The roads were somewhat busy, and there were a few people on the sidewalks, but it was only six in the morning, so I imagined how busy the city was later on in the day.

I tried to focus solely on the scents around me, and I halted my steps whenever I had to really focus on a new scent. But I wasn't hit with the noticeable tones of an omega.

I smelled the freshly ground coffee that seeped through the air in a cloud from a local coffee shop, but then car fumes sliced through that delicate scent like a knife.

I also caught on to the scent of the people who wandered past us. Expensive aftershave, cheap perfume, and fruity shampoo. One lady even walked past me with a greasy McDonald's breakfast in hand, and even though I was hungry, the scent of salt and grease was not what I was after when I had to locate Lian.

We passed a number of hotels as we walked further and further away from the train station, but I didn't catch on to the scent of any shifters whenever we walked past one.

“Anything?” I asked as we crossed the street.

“Nothing,” Han sighed, and then he cupped his hands over his eyes like he was trying to shield them from the sun.

“According to Google, there is a large bundle of hotels about a twenty-minute walk from here.” Benji glanced up from his phone. “It's just over a mile away, which could explain the radio silence in Han's mind.”

“Let's go,” I said before Benji could even offer me some directions.

But as soon as I knew where I was going, I instantly picked up my pace. I had spent far too long camping on a mountain, and then sitting in a car, so I no longer had the patience to wait any longer.

The three of us ran through the streets of Manchester as we followed the directions on Benji's phone. I focused on any new scent I came across, as well as any sounds I heard, and I constantly reminded Han to check his mental connection over and over.

“Wait!” Han said suddenly, just as I came to a halt.

There was a faint shifter scent in the air.

It wasn't an omega, I knew that for damn sure, but there were beta tones to the scent.

“Zhang's nearby,” Han whispered, and his eyebrows came together in a soft frown. “Lian's with him... Okay, this way! We're looking for the Hilton Deansgate!”

I followed Han as he skidded around a corner and sprinted further down the street as fast as he could.

The shifter scent I picked up on became stronger with every step I took, but I couldn't smell the omega. It was just Zhang's scent.

That was, until we took another corner, and I was practically smacked in the face by one of the strongest, sweetest omega scents I'd ever come across.

It was like someone had smashed open an orange and squeezed the juice and the pulp right over me. But as well as the orange, that someone had also forced me into a flower patch. It was a beautifully soft, floral scent, like jasmine, or peony.

It was unique, gentle, and fucking mouthwatering.

My cock twitched at just the scent alone, and I hadn't even found Lian Qing yet.

But it was her scent, I was certain about that, which meant she was in touching distance, and I just had to find that damn hotel.

"Hilton Deansgate, Hilton Deansgate..." I mumbled as I glanced around frantically. "She's right here, I just know it."

I spun around as I checked every damn building I came across, but then I stopped spinning when I saw the skyscraper that seemed to just break through the buildings around us.

And then I saw the recognizable Hilton logo that just about sparkled in the morning sun.

"This way!" I cried as I took off running.

We were one street away, and that was all that separated me and my omega.

"Jesse," Han said breathlessly as he tried to catch up with me. "Zhang said they're in room one hundred and ten, but you have to have a booking in order to get in."

"Then we'll buy a fucking room." I shrugged as the hotel got closer and closer. "That can be somewhere you guys sit and wait for us."

I didn't care if I had to buy the entire fucking building in order to get to Lian. It wasn't like I was short of money given that I was a multi-multi-millionaire, and that money kept on coming my way.

I whizzed through the revolving door as we reached the hotel, and then I practically skidded right across the stone reception area on my way to the front desk.

Bright lights beamed down from above, there was a peculiar spiral staircase at the far end of the reception, and a few fucking small trees planted in silver pots.

But in all honesty, there could have been a fucking elephant playing the piano and I probably wouldn't have spotted it. Unless something was in my direct line of sight, I didn't care what else was around me.

“Good... morning, sir,” a man said in a smart dark-blue suit with an interesting expression that said he totally noticed me race into the building. “How can I help you today?”

There was a clear difference between a Scottish and English accent, but the Manchester accent was nothing like the posh English accent I automatically thought of. The man in front of me seemed to over-pronounce every vowel he used, and there was a definite twang to the accent.

“I need a room,” I said as I located my wallet from my back pocket. “One day. One room. I don’t... I don’t care which one.”

“We’d have to charge you for a full night, sir, if that’s okay?” he asked as he typed away on his computer.

“Sure.” I shrugged.

“How many people?” The man didn’t look up from his screen.

“Three adults,” I said, even though I wasn’t going to go anywhere near that hotel room until much, much later.

“Okay...” he muttered as he clicked a few things on his computer. “Can I take your name for the room, sir?”

“Jesse Rafe.” I did everything I could to keep my irritation at bay.

The guy was just doing his job, and there was no way I was going to reach Lian until the proper information had been collected, but I just wanted to give Benji my wallet so that he could finish the transaction as I ran to room one hundred and ten.

“Okay, Mr. Rafe.” The receptionist handed me a piece of paper he’d printed out, as well as three keycards. “You’ll be



in room forty-three. The total price of your stay is one hundred and fifty-two pounds. That includes breakfast in the morning, but anything from the bar in the room, or drinks and meals from the lounge, will be added to your tab. Check out is at midday tomorrow, and—”

“Thank you so much,” I said as I handed Benji the paper and keycards.

*There are apparently ten rooms per floor, boss, Benji mumbled silently. So your girl is on floor ten.*

“If you have any questions, our reception is open twenty-four hours a day, and the swimming pool and fitness center are open until eight o’clock,” the man continued. “In order to reach your room, just press level four in the lifts, and it’ll take you straight there. Can I help you with anything before—”

“No, I think everything’s perfect, thank you.” I grinned.

The receptionist looked like he was going to say something else, but Han, Benji, and I had already started to wander backward toward the elevator, which gave the receptionist the hint that we didn’t have anything else to discuss.

I'd probably have to leave him a really big tip, because I didn't want to be a dick to anyone.

But I had somewhere to be and someone to see, so I couldn't have some dude delay that any longer.

"You guys go to floor four," I said as I slammed my finger against number four, then against number ten. "I'll find Lian, and then I'll send Zhang down to meet you."

"You got it, boss." Benji nodded.

"I've told Zhang that we're in the lift," Han said as the elevator slowly started to lift us higher. "Just knock on the door when you get there."

"Knock," I chuckled. "If I have the patience to stand and wait, I'll knock on the door."

Han just laughed, and he brushed through his hair with one hand.

I clapped my hands against my sides as I willed the elevator to go faster, and I practically cried out in delight when Benji and Han stepped off on the fourth floor.

Just another six to go.

However, the hotel had twenty-one floors, so I could have been the unlucky fucker who had to climb twenty floors

just to get to bed.

A few seconds later, the elevator dinged as it arrived on floor ten, and I squeezed through the doors as they slowly opened.

“One hundred and ten... Ten...” I mumbled as I located the room numbers. “Aha!”

The blue carpet absorbed my heavy footfalls as I sprinted down the thin hallway. A lady in a white apron trundled a large cleaning trolley down one side, and she gave me a disapproving look as I slipped past her.

I had to remember that it was still very early in the morning, so I stage-whispered an apology as room one hundred and ten came into view.

I'd barely stopped running before my fist knocked against the black wood door, and then I drummed my fingers against the wood as I waited for someone to open up.

I almost fell to my knees and thanked whichever gods were up in the sky when I heard someone walking toward the door.

Seconds later, the door swung open to reveal a tall Asian man on the other side, who I assumed was Zhang. He

looked to be somewhere in his late twenties, and he was a few inches taller than me, too.

A smile curled across his lips, and he stepped forward to stop me from seeing into the room.

“Mr. Rafe?” he asked. “My name is Zhang, and it’s a pleasure to meet you after everything Han recently told us. I’m so glad you were able to find the hotel.”

“It was the best one hundred and fifty-two pounds I’ve ever spent,” I laughed. “Now... I think we both know I didn’t spend that money to stand in an open doorway.”

I just wanted to push past Zhang in order to get to Lian, but from the bulging muscles that stretched out his gray hoodie, he looked to weigh more than I did. So even though Zhang couldn’t stop me from getting to my omega, he could have easily blocked me if he really wanted to.

There was also the fact that I’d literally just murdered their alpha, and a couple other betas, too.

Even if Shen was awful, and they despised everything about him, I still wanted to tread carefully in case they were grieving, or they were upset about the deaths of the other betas.

Fortunately, Lian was just as desperate as I was, because the sweetest voice echoed behind the broad man before either of us could say anything.

“Leave Jesse alone, Zhang,” Lian ordered softly. “He’s not like Shen, so you don’t need to protect me anymore.”

I briefly frowned at that comment, but I tried to brush it off, and I’d ask about Shen later.

“Correction.” Zhang glanced over his left shoulder. “I’ll always protect you, Li-Li. But you’ve got a good man here, so I feel okay leaving you for once.”

The confusion I felt after her brief comment about Shen instantly vanished when I heard that. It was in a beta’s blood to protect their alpha and omega, so they automatically did everything they could to keep them safe.

But it sounded like Zhang saw Lian as his little sister, he didn’t even want to leave the room until he knew she was definitely safe, and it sounded like that might not have been the case when Shen was around.

“Thank you for looking after her,” I told him honestly. “I’m glad she had you here.”

“Han told me that you’re a good man, Jesse,” Zhang said. “I wouldn’t be able to live with myself if anything happened to Lian, but I know she’s perfectly safe with you.”

“She’s more than safe,” I replied.

“It’s okay, Zhang, I promise,” Lian said again. “Please. Let him in.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Zhang rolled his eyes playfully, but then he stepped aside, and I just about fell to the ground.

Because sitting on the bed in front of me, dressed in a white hoodie and with a purple blanket covering her crossed legs, was one of the most beautiful women I’d ever seen in my life. Her orange and floral scent was so thick and luscious in the air that I thought I was going to drown in it.

“Fuck,” I whispered as I took several steps forward.

Lian gave me a small, anxious smile, but then she stood up from the bed and kept the blanket wrapped around her waist.

Her black hair fell long and straight across her shoulders, and I spotted purple flecks as the light hit it just right. She had extremely delicate features, her tan skin looked

to be as soft as velvet, and her chocolate-colored eyes roamed across me, like mine roamed across her.

Lian kept her head bowed, and she scraped her bottom lip with her teeth like she was trying to fight back anxious thoughts. But I wanted nothing more than to pull her lip free, and to cradle her like something fragile, delicate, and innocent from the very start.

“Um... Zhang...” Lian motioned toward the door.

“Han said they’re in room forty-three,” the beta replied. “I’ll be there.”

“Thank you.” She smiled up at him, and then she looked back at me.

Zhang hesitated for a second, but then he reminded Lian where he’d be once more and left the room.

As soon as the door closed behind him, Lian dropped the blanket and instantly crossed her legs at the ankles like she wanted to cover herself back up again. However, it wasn’t like she was inappropriately dressed, or had nothing on underneath the blanket, because she was wearing a pair of workout shorts.

I just assumed she was self-conscious, and perhaps she was scared of my reaction to her body. But that thought was

simply laughable.

She was tall and slim, but her legs appeared to be muscular and well-toned, so I assumed she enjoyed working out.

And I needed to feel her against me.

I needed to wrap my arms around her delicate frame and protect her from any and all evils in the world.

But most importantly, I needed to pin her against the king-sized bed, a wall, or even a damn shower and claim her as my own.

From that day forward, Lian Qing was mine.

“Hi,” Lian whispered.

“Hi.” I grinned.

Then, as my short greeting lingered in the air, I slammed my lips against Lian’s.





## Chapter 2

Lian's soft, plump lips fit perfectly against mine, and her short, shallow breath became mixed with my own as I slipped my tongue against hers.

Her body felt like it had been made for my hands, and I never wanted to let go. One hand drifted up her back, the other whispered across her toned stomach, and I kept her tight against me as our kiss grew with heat and desire.

Neither of us could fight the urges we felt, and the clear connection that had formed before I even arrived in the room.

Lian planted her hands on my ass to pull me closer, but then she flinched slightly and moved her hands up to my back instead.

But as my lips curled against hers, I grabbed her wrists and placed her hands back to where they were before.

"Fuck," I whispered while my lips moved down her neck and across her collarbone. "You're beautiful."

"Thank you, Alpha," she replied with slight anxiety to her voice.

But the sound of my title rolling off her tongue caused a growl to form in the back of my throat, and I couldn't keep myself away from her for a minute longer.

Lian was slightly more hesitant, and even though I could tell she wanted something, she clearly found it harder to put those thoughts into action.

I wanted to show her that she was safe, she could trust me, and she didn't have to be scared about showing me who she was. So while I slipped my fingers through the waistband of her shorts, I told her to do the same with me.

She slowly began to pull at my t-shirt, and our one goal became known.

The real Lian Qing began to show, too, as more clothes were thrown to the floor.

My lips continued to whisper across her soft skin as I practically ripped her clothes from her body, and vice versa. The only time we had to pull away was in order to remove hoodies and t-shirts from our bodies, but like a magnet, we were instantly drawn back to each other.

My shoes were kicked off somewhere, I didn't quite care where they went, and my jeans and her shorts took no

time at all to remove, and before I knew it, my weretiger omega stood before me in nothing but her white bra and lace thong.

Lian was taller than some of my other omegas, and her forehead was in line with my mouth, which came in handy given that it was one of my favorite places to kiss.

She had a slight curve to her waist, and although she wasn't as toned as Azalea, I could tell that Lian had a lot of core strength, and she certainly wasn't weak.

"You dressed up for me," I mumbled as I locked my fingers in her sleek, black hair.

"Correct, I did," Lian giggled, and it sounded like the sweetest symphony. "As soon as I knew you were here, I changed into my favorite underwear set. So this is literally just for you. It's very unlike me, but..."

I knew there was a more adventurous Lian hidden beneath the surface, and I'd just started to discover it.

"Fuck, I love you," I coughed out a laugh.

And I did.

I fell in love with Lian as soon as I knew she was waiting for me in Manchester, and it was the same with all of

my omegas.

Her orange-peony scent washed over her skin, but that was mixed with something that tasted almost like cocoa and vanilla, which was the same scent as her hair, so I assumed it was a shampoo and bodywash.

“You smell delicious,” I mumbled as I unclasped her bra with skillful fingers.

The white lace fell from her breasts to reveal the goodness beneath, and a quick slip of the straps caused the material to fall to the floor.

Lian said it was her favorite underwear set, so I wasn't going to rip them from her body, but that didn't mean I paid attention to the bra as it fell to my feet.

Because I was far more interested in her tits, and the way her darkened nipples strained and hardened as my tongue made its way toward them. I was like a moth to a flame, but at least I knew I wasn't going to get burned.

“Oooh, Jesse!” Lian squealed as I tugged on her nipples with my teeth.

“I plan on doing so much more than that, sweetheart,” I said as I moved over to the right breast. “It's good we have

nowhere to really be right now, because I'm taking my time with you.”

While my teeth teased her nipples, my hand danced down her solid stomach until it reached the band of her thong.

“I think this needs to go.” I smirked.

Lian tried to reply, but it sounded like she was lost for words, because nothing apart from a jumble of sounds fell from her lips.

However, as Lian became lost to my teasing teeth and wandering hands, she found the ability to roam across my body, too, and it took no time at all for her to pull my boxers down my ass and over my legs.

My rigid cock cried out in delight as it was freed from its cotton prison, and Lian let out a soft gasp as one hand wandered dangerously close to my dick.

“Oh, I... You're...” She was lost for words once again, and that just made me smile.

“Yes?” I led.

“You're... so big!” Lian breathed. “And that's before the knotting process!”

“Hell yeah, it is.” I smirked. “But don’t worry. If you’re lucky, I’ll go gentle on you.”

I wanted to claim my omega, pin her against the wall and fuck her until she saw stars. But I also wanted to take my time and love her the way she deserved.

There was time to do both, of course, but it was deciding which one to go with first that caused me some dilemma.

“You don’t need to go gentle on me, Jesse,” Lian whispered as she ran one hand through my dark-brown hair. “I’m not going to break.”

It sounded like she’d confessed her deepest, darkest secret to me, and nothing made me happier.

“Good,” I growled.

Then I looped my arms around her thighs and lifted her off the ground in one swoop.

Lian let out a small shriek, but that turned into a full-on laugh as I took a few steps toward the bed and practically threw her onto it. The mattress springs clanged from the sudden weight, and the bedframe groaned as I joined Lian on the soft cover.

Tiny goosebumps erupted across Lian's body as I returned to my original position, and I teased the shit out of her nipples as my hand began to roam beneath her thong. My fingers brushed across the thin strip of hair, and my omega practically launched herself off the bed as the tip of my middle finger met the wetness of her opening.

"Jeeeeeeessse!" she moaned. "Oh, pleeeeeease!"

"Please?" I asked, like I had no idea what she wanted.

But her dripping pussy was enough of an answer for me.

"Please," she begged again. "Touch me. I... Please. Make me cum."

"Is that what you want?" I asked as I began to pull the thong further down her toned legs.

"More than anything right now," Lian replied. "Show me what I've been missing."

"Your wish is my command." I shot her a wink, then I placed my hands under her knees and lifted her legs until her feet were flat on the bed.

Lian gasped again, but realization washed over her face as I gently parted her legs with the backs of my hands.



Part of me wondered whether she'd ever experienced this before, or if I was the first person to ever fuck her with their tongue. But I also didn't care much about that, because the most important thing was that I was about to claim her, and then Lian would be mine, and someone would have to literally kill me to get her.

I also lost interest in that thought when I caught sight of her glistening pussy. She was so ready for me, and I couldn't wait to find out whether her juices were just as sweet and delicious as her scent.

So with that, I lowered my head and drew a straight line up her entrance with my tongue. I collected her juices along the way, and if I hadn't been in between her legs, Lian probably would have hauled herself off the bed from the sensation alone.

"Oh, my..." Lian bucked her hips forward softly, and she kept her hands locked together on her stomach like she was trying to resist the urge to touch herself.

The omega continued to squirm and cry out as I suckled on her delicate flesh, and as I dove deeper into her entrance, Lian's hands would clutch onto my hair for dear life.

Either it was due to the sensations that rippled through her body, or because she wanted to keep me there forever.

And I was more than okay to do just that, because I was addicted to my rare, weretiger omega.

The sweetness of her juices, her orange-floral scent, and the way her body reacted from a single touch of my fingers.

Every time my tongue hit a sensitive spot, Lian would arch her back, and her cries would fill the entire room. Her legs pressed against my head slightly, and Lian acted as though we were the only ones in the entire building, like there was no one around to hear her scream and call out my name.

And I would have paid good money to clear everyone from the hotel so that it was just us.

“Ahaaa,” Lian panted as I licked and suckled away at her delicate folds. “Yessss, Jesse!”

I lifted her ass off the bed in order to devour her from various angles, and those additional moves just made her call out more. Her body squirmed and tensed up all around me, and I knew what was about to happen, but I continued to tease her clit, and lapped up her juices as they rolled onto my tongue.

My strained cock was pressed so hard against the bed that I was almost scared it was going to break, but I didn't have it in me to care, especially not when I was lost between Lian's legs.

However, before it could break, the omega scratched at my scalp and pulled on my hair, and I felt the vibration that shot through her, which occurred seconds before Lian's body froze.

"Ooooh," Lian cooed as she was released from her frozen state, and she came all over my tongue.

I lapped up every drop of her deliciousness before it dribbled down my chin, and her body shuddered as she came down from her high. Her shallow breaths sounded broken and desperate, and her skin was warm from the heat we'd worked up.

But then, as my tongue continued to explore, and I drank from the exquisite omega, she tensed up again before she came for a second time.

That one seemed to take Lian by surprise, especially from the little shriek she let out, and I thought her body was going to go weak from how her muscles constantly jittered.

But if it was the first orgasm Lian had experienced in a while, then it made sense that she'd react like it was all brand new to her.

“Is that what you were hoping for?” I asked as I placed a kiss against her pussy lips.

“Oh!” she shrieked, but then she let out a light giggle. “That was...”

From someone who appeared to be fairly vocal, she was constantly lost for words.

“I understand,” I chuckled. “But you'll be pleased to know that was only the start of things.”

“It was?” Lian's chocolate eyes widened. “It gets better than that?”

“Well, I only used my tongue.” I winked. “And the pain in my cock is a constant reminder of that.”

A sudden expression crossed through her eyes, but it vanished before I could get a good read on it. She potentially looked excited, but also curious at the same time.

“Can I... try something?” Lian asked as a blush darkened her cheeks.

“Of course,” I replied. “You can do whatever you want.”

“Okay, well...” She ran one hand over her bottom lip. “You’ll need to get onto your back, then.”

I very much liked the sound of that, and I told Lian exactly how I felt with a smile as I flipped myself onto my back.

“And now what?” I grinned.

Without saying a word, Lian straddled my waist, and I placed my hands on her toned thighs as she slowly rocked herself against me. My cock twitched at the action, and all Lian had to do was sit back slightly and she would have been sitting right over my solid member.

“I’ve always wanted to... do this,” she confessed with a whisper.

“You’ve always wanted to ride someone?” I asked.

“Yes.” Lian nodded. “And I can tell you’re not going to... say anything, so... yeah.”

“The only words coming from my mouth are your name and various words of encouragement,” I snorted. “So please,

Lian, do whatever the fuck you want with my body. Because it's yours now."

Her little comment made it seem like Shen, or someone else, ridiculed Lian for her talents in bed, or maybe just her body in general. And if that was the case, I wanted to hunt down every fucker who ever hurt her, and recover Shen's body, kill him again, then bury him again for causing this beauty to think negatively about any part of her body.

My cock was painfully hard, but as Lian lifted herself off me and sat in position, I gave myself a quick tug. A drop of pre-cum formed on my head, and I brushed it across Lian's entrance as I blindly felt around to get it into position.

I let her take the ropes, and it was up to Lian to decide how fast or slow we went, but her shyness didn't appear to be an issue when she slowly dropped herself down and parted her lips with my mushroom head.

I stared deep into her warm, chocolaty eyes, and we both sucked back a breath as the omega dropped all the way down and took in my length with a soft rock of her hips.

"Holy fuck," I grunted as she sat further down on my waist.

Her warm, tight tunnel squeezed around me as it adjusted to my size, and Lian's face curled up in a pleased wince while her teeth sunk down into her bottom lip.

“Hoooo,” she cooed. “I... Yes, Jesse!”

I gently guided Lian with my words, and I kept my hands placed on the curve of her hips as she slowly began to bounce. Our hips rocked in time with each other, and I kept up a steady pace until I could tell that Lian was more comfortable.

She was pleurably tight, which I had expected, and her heat engulfed me as I drank in her delicious and unique scent.

Then, as Lian became more comfortable, she started to rock and roll her hips while her hands became lost in her hair. It was like she was performing some sort of sensual and passionate dance as her speed picked up even more.

“Fuuuck,” I growled.

The sounds of the mattress springs and the bedframe were soon washed out by our hot, sweaty skin slapping together, and we muttered each others' names as our bond and connection grew even more.

Lian appeared to be unlike some of my other omegas who loved to take charge and wanted to dominate the fuck out of me, which I never complained about. She also didn't seem to love being the submissive in the relationship, who were happy to do whatever I said.

In fact, from what I could tell, Lian was a very passionate lover, and she would take the wheel, but she also just wanted to take in the moment, too.

And that hot, passionate side of her became even clearer when she began to mumble in Spanish, and then in French.

I knew a couple of the words, so I knew she was talking about how much she loved this and me, but hearing it in a foreign language was one of the hottest things I'd ever witnessed.

“You're fucking incredible,” I said as I lifted my hips against hers.

I never wanted to hear her speak English again.

Then Lian mumbled something else in another language, but it was one I wasn't sure of, and she groaned out the words as she lifted herself off me, and then sat back down in a rush.



“Shiiiiit!” I cried.

“Yessss, yesss, Jesse!” She moaned.

Her full breasts bounced with each move, she rolled her hips, played with her hair, and ran her tongue across her lips.

I thought my mind was going to explode with just how fucking hot she was.

And then my cock would have exploded shortly after that.

However, because I was about to claim her as my own for the first time, I wanted to be on top when I left the mating mark against her collarbone, and when I filled her with my cum.

“Hold on tight,” I warned her softly as I grasped her waist in my hands.

Then, before Lian knew what was going to happen, I flipped us over until her back was against the bed, pulled back, and then I slammed forward with all the energy I could muster.

“Alphaaaa!” Lian sang as the bed slammed into the wall.

A feral roar formed in the back of my throat as an animalistic monster reared its head. Lian locked her ankles

against my back, and she lifted her hips as I drove my cock deep into her damp, heated tunnel.

Her body began to tense up as Lian came for the third, and then fourth time, but I was silently praying for the knotting process to take part so that I could legitimately claim my newest omega.

“Give me everything, Jesse,” she whispered as her blunt nails scratched my shoulder blades. “Make me yours and fill me with your seed. Please!”

A drop of sweat rolled down her neck and into her cleavage, and I already couldn’t wait to take her again in the shower after this, and perhaps once more against the wall before we had to leave the room.

I felt like Lian and I were going to be inseparable, which was exactly what it was like with my other omegas, too.

Several minutes went by, and Lian came two more times, but I’d quickly started to lose my patience.

But then, because I could punch a hole in the goddamn wall, Lian’s tunnel squeezed the life out of me as my engorged cock began to swell and grow.

“Ahaaa!” Lian winced her eyes shut. “Alpha!”

I slowed down my pace slightly, but I slammed all the way in as Lian's walls started to stretch around me. She nestled herself around me completely, but the wince and the smile on her face stayed in position as we became knotted in the most primal way.

The tip of my cock pressed against her womb, but then it spread open her cervix as it settled itself where it needed to be. I continued to pump into her warm entrance, but the knot kept us tied together, and nothing was going to pull us apart.

"Give me everything, Alpha," Lian whispered as she brushed my hair away from her face. "Make me yours."

"You already are," I replied in the same hushed tone.

The sweet, yet saltiness of her glistening skin coated my tongue as I left kisses against her chest, across her collarbone, and up to her neck. Lian held me against her as tight as she could, and I made sure to remind her just how much she meant to me already with nothing but a brush of my lips.

We had both reached the rush of our climaxes, our hearts were beating wildly out of control, and I just wanted to reach that tipping point before either of us gave out.

It was something we both desperately wanted, and neither of us had the patience to wait any longer.

But before we roared in frustration, a shiver shot down my spine, and I slammed my hips against Lian's as my balls began to tighten. Then, as she reached her seventh orgasm, streams of thick, warm cum flew from my cock and filled the omega beneath me.

“Jssssse!” she squealed.

“Shiiiiit!” I groaned as her juices dribbled down my cock, and another stream was poured directly into her womb.

Stars appeared in my eyes as the trembling omega accepted every last drop of cum that gushed into her, and even though I thought my heart, lungs, and legs were going to give out, there was nothing better than having one of my omegas literally wrapped around me.

However, she was technically not my omega until I marked her.

I licked my lips as the two of us shuddered from the sensations that rushed through us, but then I pressed a kiss just below her left collarbone as I dug my teeth into her sweet flesh.

“Gaahaaa!” Lian cried as I suckled on that one particular spot.

Her body jolted into mine, and we were still securely knotted together as I poured more and more cum into her body, all while I placed the mating mark against her skin.

The crescent moon-shaped mark would soon appear boldly on her skin, a sign to any and all alphas that Lian was mine, and only mine. The previous mating mark Shen had left her had already started to fade, but that felt like a crappy piece of plastic jewelry compared to the fucking crown jewels.

Which was fitting, given that my omegas were treated like damn queens.

I held Lian securely against me as we waited for the knotting process to dissolve between us.

It genuinely constantly amazed me just how connected I felt with my omegas, even before we met for the first time. I already knew I’d do anything for Lian before I’d even arrived in Manchester, and that feeling intensified when I arrived at the hotel, then again just now.

Maybe I’d get used to those feelings as time went on, but I wasn’t going to hold my breath. My omegas constantly

amazed me, my feelings toward them blew my mind, and nothing was ever going to change.

“Okay, wow,” Lian laughed as she pressed her forehead against my shoulder.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“I’m...” she paused. “Sure, ‘okay’ works. I now know why people are so addicted to sex.”

“Oh, sweetheart,” I growled before I nibbled on her ear lobe. “This is much more than sex.”

Lian’s laugh was cut off by my lips and wandering hands, and I barely had the time to breathe once the knotting process dissolved before we started round two.

And for the next hour I proved to her just how addictive it was. I worshiped every inch of her delectable body, and I drank in her fruity-orange scent as I fucked her with my fingers, tongue, and my cock.

At one point, I thought the bed was going to break beneath us, or we were going to knock straight through the wall into the room beside us.

Lian also mentioned that we should probably apologize to the innocent guests below us and beside us, and leave the

hotel a huge tip when we checked out.

Of course, I had planned on thanking the hotel for allowing us to stay, but it made me smile when Lian was the one to mention it.

And that smile increased as we collapsed back onto the bed again, and Lian cuddled into my side as she wrapped one leg around mine.

“To think, earlier on I’d planned on checking out the leisure center,” she sighed. “I think I’ve done enough working out today.”

“You can say that again,” I chuckled. “So is that something you’re interested in? Working out?”

I knew she kept fit from her solid calves, and her toned arms and stomach, but that could have also been a result of constantly shifting and running.

“Yes, very much so.” Lian propped herself up on her elbow and looked down at me. “I’m actually a ballet dancer, and it’s incredibly important to me, so I make time for that whenever I can.”

“A ballet dancer.” I raised my eyebrows. “That explains the legs, then. Fuck, your calves could cut glass.”

“The number of people I’ve met who think it’s just twirling around in a tutu,” the omega laughed. “They wouldn’t last five minutes. They’d tap out during the warm-ups.”

I didn’t want to claim to know everything about dancing, and ballet in general, because I knew next to nothing. But I did know that it wasn’t for the weak.

Ballet dancers, gymnasts, and Navy SEALs probably all had the same workout routines.

“So, are you any good?” I teased.

“You... could say that.” Lian smiled. “In all honesty, my dream had been to move to New York and become a professional ballet dancer. My teacher even said I was good enough to reach that goal. Of course, things had to change when I realized who I was, but my new shifter side also gave me more strength and agility, so it was the best of both worlds. My parents didn’t want to say anything to me at first, so they let me have these fantasies, and I can understand that. And I can still perform for fun, even if it’s not in some prestigious ballet troupe in New York.”

“Well, you might be in luck, because I have territory in New York.” I grinned. “The Shifter Detection Department



headquarters are in Manhattan, too, so we can go there whenever you want.”

“Oh, wow.” Her chocolate eyes grew wide. “I... I can’t quite believe everything. I hadn’t even left China until recently, and now I’m traveling around the world. This is... This is going to take some time to adjust to.”

“We’ve got all the time in the world.” I brushed a kiss against her lips. “And hopefully your parents are going to be okay with this?”

I didn’t normally think twice about what parents had to say, because they all knew the relationship an alpha had with his omega, and most of my omegas didn’t have relationships with their families anyway. But things were different with Lian.

She came from a completely different background to the rest of my omegas. I imagined that her culture and traditions were very important to her, and I knew that families were very important in Chinese culture.

Lian mentioned that she’d only just left China, so I hoped she was going to be okay with being away from her parents, and vice versa.

I also had the impression that Shen didn't treat Lian properly, or any of his betas, for that matter, so I didn't want her parents to think the same thing was going to happen again with me.

“My parents have wanted the very best for me since the moment I was born.” Lian sat up properly as she explained her story, and I sat up to join her against the pillows. “In China, someone's career becomes their personality, and that's regardless of whether they're human or a shifter, so it's incredibly important to have a good career. I'm an only child, too, so my parents did everything they could to bring that passion to life. When they realized I was an omega, they wanted me to be able to blend in wherever I was in the world, so they wanted me to learn multiple languages, and to basically become a chameleon.”

“Okay.” I nodded.

“They've always supported me through everything, and now I realize how hard it must have been for them, especially as they knew I probably wasn't going to stay with them forever,” Lian sighed, and she rubbed her face as a hint of sadness crossed her face. “I'm the only weretiger omega I know of, so there's a lot of pressure with that, and my parents

just wanted to keep me safe. But then one day, Shen arrived at my house and literally kicked the door in, in order to get to me. He demanded that I leave with him immediately, and given that he was an alpha, my parents couldn't do anything about it. I also couldn't do anything about it. They had to let me leave with him, and they just hoped that everything they taught me would come in handy.”

“Motherfucker,” I growled.

Everything Lian said was true, but that didn't make it easier to hear, especially as it seemed as though Lian didn't want to leave with Shen, either.

“My parents were heartbroken that I was taken by this madman,” she continued. “I was their only child, their special daughter, and they had no say in what happened after I left that house. I'd heard stories about alphas and omegas, and part of me was excited to see what was going to happen, but that excitement was short-lived. Shen had already started his race across the country, and he'd already ordered a beta to submit themselves to him, and that mission continued as he ordered more and more betas to submit themselves, too. He was a complete psycho, who loved no one other than himself, and I thought that was how my life was going to be. We traveled all

across China, and then into Russia and over to Scotland. Shen made the rules, and we had no say in anything. Zhang instantly became my ‘big brother’ and my bodyguard, but sometimes that didn’t seem like enough.”

“I understand.” I pulled her into my arms. “I’m so glad you had him, and still have him.”

“Me, too.” Lian smiled up at me. “But now I’m free, I’ve found you, and I suddenly understand the love stories I’ve heard in the past. And in such a short amount of time, too. But in regards to my parents, I already know they’ll love you. You’ll protect me, and as long as I’m safe and loved, then they won’t mind too much where I am. Of course, they’d love for me to be in China, but my safety and happiness is their main concern.”

“I’m a new father myself, so I can now relate to how your parents must be feeling.” I felt a twinge in my chest at the thought of soon being reunited with my son.

“You have children?” Lian’s eyes lit up in excitement, and the sweetest smile appeared on her face.

But the fact Lian seemed surprised at that statement caused a sigh of relief to blow from my lips. It meant Shen had

only been focused on me, not my family and my children, so they had been somewhat safe the entire time.

“I do,” I replied. “Cooper is almost two months old. Two of my other omegas, Arielle and Blair, are both heavily pregnant, too. Then Caitlin, another omega, had two children with her previous alpha. Chloe is thirteen and Zac is eleven, so I see them like my step-kids.”

“That’s so precious.” Lian pressed her hands against her chest. “I can’t wait to meet everyone. But... How many omegas do you have? Because it’s rare for me to even come across another omega, let alone multiple in the same pack.”

“You’re technically my eighth.” I winked. “Nikita and Blair are werecats, Arielle is a werecoyote, and Hailey is a werewolf. Then Caitlin is a werefox, and Ivy and Azalea are both avians.”

“Wow,” Lian laughed. “So why not add a weretiger to the mix, too, then?”

“Exactly.” I smirked.

“And you said ‘technically my eighth,’” she said. “What does that mean?”

“Because there’s also Hazel.” I smiled. “Hazel is human, and she’s the co-head of the SDD alongside me, but we met when she was just an agent. However, she’s so much more to me now. So even though she isn’t an omega, I still love her as much as I love you and the others. I have nine women in my life, but only eight of you are omegas.”

“Only eight,” Lian laughed. “I thought I understood everything about The Alpha when Shen told us about you, but this is more than I imagined.”

“What did he say, just out of curiosity?” I frowned. “What sort of picture did he paint?”

“Well...” Lian scratched the back of her ear. “He said that it was The Alpha’s job to build the ultimate pack. That it was your job to kill off all alphas, collect all omegas and betas, and essentially take over the world.”

I couldn’t help but laugh.

I’d heard it all before.

“Shen really is the worst bullshitter in the world,” I chuckled.

“He is?” she asked. “Because I don’t mean to be... inconsiderate, but I only know what he told me, and...”

“I’m the Great Reuniter,” I explained to her softly. “So, sure, it’s my job to bring all shifter species together, to end wars between them, and to bring peace into this crazy world. But that doesn’t mean I’m going to kill innocent alphas to get my own way, or steal omegas from them. I’ve only killed those who deserved it, or who threatened my family. And my omegas all came to me in differing ways, some of whom were suffering because of their alphas. I’m actually friends with an omega, and I have no intention of taking her from her alpha.”

I had been nervous when I first met Ellie Miller, because I didn’t want my instincts to take over. But she’s in a strong, loving relationship with the head of the UK ESD, Ewan, and my friendship and partnership with Ewan was exactly the reason why I wasn’t going to turn around and stab him in the back.

“And taking over the world?” I raised an eyebrow. “I didn’t become Head of Agency of the SDD because I wanted to take over the world, or anything like that. I didn’t even know the consequences of killing Myles Beck, the previous Head of Agency. Things just... happened this way. But it gives my family the most incredible life, and that means more to me than any title or job promotion.”

“And that’s why I know my parents are going to love you.” Lian wrapped one arm across my stomach. “And I’m sure they’ll love Cooper, Chloe, Zac, and your other children, too.”

“Do you... have any children with Shen?” I asked. “Not like it matters to me, because I love Chloe and Zac like they’re my own, but I just thought to ask.”

“Thankfully no,” she laughed into my chest. “I wouldn’t have wanted to bring a child into that life, what with all the danger around every corner. But because of all of our traveling, Shen even said himself that he wanted to wait until we returned home. Wherever ‘home’ was. And he wanted to try and get me pregnant after we were finished in Scotland. So you saved me just in time.”

“Thank god for that,” I said with absolute sincerity. “And now that he’s out the way, there’s nothing stopping you from getting pregnant with my child.”

“I can’t wait,” she replied. “That’s all I’ve ever wanted, apart from dancing, of course. I just wanted to have a family, and I didn’t think it was possible with Shen. So is it... Is it bad that I feel nothing but gratitude and relief that he’s gone?”



“No,” I snorted. “He caused you misery and pain, and it’s the same for the countless betas he’s left alpha-less. He deserved a cruel death, and that was exactly what he got. Ivy even had fun playing around with his corpse, like she was playing in a sandbox. So you can think about that whenever you’re having a bad day, if you want?”

“Oh, I don’t know about that,” she laughed anxiously. “But I always thought karma works in mysterious ways. Shen got what he deserved, and I’m glad Ivy could have fun. But...”

“Trust me, Ivy would be more than happy to describe every tiny detail, but only if you want to hear it.” I smirked. “She’s... slightly different from my other omegas. Ivy’s nightmares include bright colors, sparkles, and rainbows. So that gives you an idea of what she’s like.”

“She sounds like fun,” my omega replied. “I can’t wait to meet them all.”

“Well, you’re in luck.” I smiled as my phone vibrated with a message.

Nikita, Blair, and the others had arrived in Manchester.

And it was time for my family to be reunited.



## Chapter 3

To make things easier for everyone, they all decided to meet us at the hotel, instead of on the side of the road in front of the train station.

It also allowed us to talk somewhat privately, because I knew there was going to be plenty to discuss after the last few days.

But because we had a few minutes to spare until everyone arrived, Lian and I took advantage of the hotel room, and the reasonably-sized shower it came with.

I knew for certain that I wasn't going to forget the image of Lian with her hands pressed against the misted, glass partition while I fucked her from behind. And that snapshot was instantly stored in my mind along with the other images I had of my beautiful omegas.

I had a message waiting for me when we stepped out of the bathroom, and it just said that everyone had arrived, and they were going to wait in room forty-three for us.

It had arrived five minutes ago, so Lian and I rushed to get dried and dressed as the excitement of being reunited with

my family caused every inch of me to tingle.

But as I located my clothes from the floor, Lian let out a small groan, and I turned around to see her pulling various items of clothing from a black backpack.

“Are you okay?” I asked.

“Yes, I...” she sighed and took a calming breath before she continued going through her clothes. “I can’t find anything appropriate to wear. It’s all too... None of it’s appropriate.”

A frown formed on my face as I glanced at the clothes in front of me. Lian had a mixture of cropped tops, vests, t-shirts, shirts, and even skirts and a dress. She didn’t have a lot of clothes, but she had plenty of options, so I couldn’t see where the issue was.

“I like this,” I said as I picked up the floral dress. A bow had been tied underneath where her tits would sit, and it looked just like something Arielle or Hailey would wear.

Lian caught her lip between her teeth again, and a wild blush appeared on her cheeks as she stared at the dress in my hands.

There was something on her mind, and I wanted to reassure her that she could tell me anything. She didn’t have to

be scared around me.

“What’s wrong with this dress?” I asked softly.

“It’s...” Lian tangled her fingers together. “There’s nothing wrong with that dress, apart from the fact that Shen bought it for me.”

“Burn it.” I smirked to show that I was only partly joking.

“Shen didn’t approve of our traditions,” my omega explained. “He didn’t see why a woman should cover herself in public. He bought me these clothes and ordered me to wear them, but I never felt comfortable. Low necklines, bare arms and legs, and anything too revealing is strictly forbidden where I’m from.”

It all started to make sense, and my heart broke at the fact that she felt so uncomfortable, even in the clothes she was made to wear.

But I was going to make sure she never felt uncomfortable again.

“Is that why you had the blanket around you when I walked in?” I asked.

“Yes.” Lian bowed her head and blushed. “I... I can wear... more revealing clothes in front of my partner. So it’s okay for me to wear my underwear around you. But those shorts were far too revealing to wear in front of anyone else, including Zhang. So he gave me a blanket to cover my legs, and he didn’t look at me until I was comfortable again.”

I knew I was going to like that guy, but that just proved it.

“So now you’re scared because you can’t find anything appropriate to wear when we leave the room?” I assumed.

“Exactly.” Lian nodded. “I’ll be around other betas, your family, your children. Even your omegas. My body is for me and you, no one else.”

I wanted to tell her how true that was. Lian was mine, and if she didn’t want anyone else to see her naked body, then that was more than okay with me.

“But what about when you shift?” I asked. “Or when you shift back, and before you get changed?”

“I try to do that where no one can see me,” she confessed. “And I plan ahead to make sure my clothes are waiting for me in that spot, too. There have been times where

that hasn't been the case, in which case I told the betas around me to look away, which they did anyway. But they were all very good with me and the female beta we were with. Sometimes they even stood around us like a barricade to stop others from seeing."

"Your new betas will do that for you, too," I told her. "They'll do anything you ask them to."

"Oh, I wouldn't want to impose any rules on them," Lian replied. "I can... sort something out."

"You never have to change for me, or anyone else." I held her in my arms and left a kiss on her forehead. "They'll probably even form that barrier without even asking. Now, let's go back to these clothes. How about you wear these jeans and the hoodie from earlier?"

"I would, but the hoodie shows off my stomach..." she laughed. "That's where the issue lies."

"Well..." I glanced around the room until my eyes landed on my clothes. "Is it okay for you to wear my clothes?"

"What do you mean?" Lian asked.

"I mean, could you wear your jeans and t-shirt, but wear my hoodie over the top?" I suggested. "It'll probably look like

a dress on you, but it would certainly cover everything. But we can sort something out if... y'know, if that goes against any rules or... whatever.”

“Would you do that?” she gasped. “Would you allow me to wear your hoodie?”

“Allow?” I smirked. “Sweetheart, what’s mine is yours, as cheesy as that sounds. I’d walk around in my damn boxers if it meant you were comfortable.”

“Oh, thank you, Jesse.” Lian gave me the biggest smile I’d ever seen. “Shen would’ve...”

“Let me guess, he would have told you to sort it out yourself, or to wear the clothes he bought for you?” I raised an eyebrow.

“Something along those lines, yes,” Lian sighed, but then she gave me another smile as she stepped away from my hug. “Thank you, Jesse. Really, I mean it. I know my traditions are different from yours, and sometimes you might not understand them, but I really appreciate you making such an effort.”

“I’ve learned a thing or two since I became The Alpha,” I told her honestly. “No two people are ever the same. Take my



omegas, for example. They are all completely different and unique, and they all have different needs. Even their diets are different. Azalea eats red meat, protein in every meal, and drinks protein shakes before breakfast. Blair and Hailey love sweet treats, and could live off cookies and candy if their bodies allowed them to. But then Arielle tries to find vegan and gluten-free alternatives where possible, and healthy eating is incredibly important to her.”

“Oh, really?” Lian asked.

“Yeah,” I replied. “I know diets, cultures, and traditions aren’t the same thing, but even when it comes down to the food they eat, they’re all different, and I’m more than okay with that. But you might need to go easy on me... I’m still learning.”

“Of course, I’ll go easy on you,” she laughed. “I don’t expect you to learn everything about my culture in a day.”

“I mean, I am very smart.” I grinned. “But even that is probably pushing it.”

Lian let out another sweet laugh, and a gentle silence filled the room as we focused on getting changed.

Another thing I realized as I thought over my conversation with Lian, was that I hadn't heard her curse or use foul language since the second I arrived. Even when she spoke about Shen, she never called him any bad names.

Maybe that was another part about how she grew up, or it was just a preference. But either way, I made a mental note to try my best and hold back from cursing as often as I did when I was around her.

“Do I look okay?” Lian asked nervously a few minutes later as she coiled her black-and-purple hair into a knot.

“Do you look okay?” I repeated with a smirk. “You look incredible.”

Lian had changed into a pair of blue jeans that hugged every inch of her waist and long, firm legs. She matched them with a black cropped top, but that was hidden by my gray hoodie that stopped just above her knees.

“What are your other omegas like?” she asked as she slipped her feet into a pair of white sneakers. “I know we just talked about my issues with my clothes, but... Will they think anything of my outfit?”

“Trust me.” I cupped her sweet face in my hands.

“Azalea lives in workout clothes, and Hailey is in love with her colorful leggings and baggy 90s-inspired t-shirts. Nikita will probably tell you she’s worn the same pair of sweatpants for the last few days because she’s a tired, stressed new mother, and Blair and Arielle are at the point in their pregnancies where they just wear what’s comfortable. Caitlin likes to add a bit of style to her outfits when she’s not in the house, and Ivy loves her gothic dresses and skirts, but even they dress for comfort. You are beyond beautiful, and in my pack, you can wear whatever you want. Please do not feel like you’re going to get judged for anything, especially not your outfit preferences.”

“Okay.” Lian blushed.

“And if it would make you feel better, we can go shopping before we drive back to Edinburgh,” I suggested. “Money is no object to me, and my omegas come first. So if you want to find some clothes that you like, don’t think about anyone else, then we’ll do that. But if you want to live in my hoodie... I’m okay with that, too. You look hot.”

“Oh, wow,” the omega laughed. “That’s the first time anyone’s ever told me to go on a shopping spree.”

“And I know of six women in room forty-three who would be willing to join you.” I smirked. “Ivy might even join you, too.”

“Would they go with me?” Lian gasped.

“Of course, they’ll go with you,” I replied. “You said you’re an only child, but you now have seven new sisters. My omegas do everything together. It doesn’t matter about age differences, likes or dislikes. None of that stuff. They stick together, and you’re now part of that pack.”

“I’m looking forward to it,” she giggled. “Now, shall we go downstairs? I imagine there’s a little boy waiting to see you...”

Every weight in my body seemed to drop at that exact moment, and I was confident that I probably would have dropped to the floor if I hadn’t been holding onto Lian.

It had only been about a week since Nikita, Blair, and the others went off on their English adventure, but it was the longest I had ever been away from them. And it was the longest I had ever been apart from Cooper, too.

I didn’t even need to verbally respond.

Lian knew my answer when I all but raced from the room with her fingers still linked with mine.

Her laugh followed me down the hallway as we ran toward the elevators, and now that it was nearing nine o'clock in the morning, it was more of an acceptable time to run around laughing.

I couldn't believe Lian and I had spent the better part of three hours doing nothing apart from fucking in a hotel room, but I didn't have a concept of time when she had me trapped between her legs.

"You said we were heading home today, right?" Lian asked as the elevator doors closed in front of us.

"We'll head back to Scotland today, yes," I replied. "Everyone else is still there, and I have some unfinished business to attend to in Edinburgh, but I hope it won't be too long before we can properly go home."

I'd have to sort out visas for Lian, Zhang, Han, and the other betas I'd picked up during the trip, but that was something my lawyer, Arthur Mordaine, could sort out for me.

"I'm excited to see another new country." Lian smiled.

“I think you’ll like Oregon,” I said as I pictured the beautiful scenery that surrounded Monroe. “But apart from the shopping, is there anywhere you need to go before we leave?”

“No.” She shook her head. “Everything I have is in those two bags upstairs, and it’s the same with Zhang, and Han, too. But most of those clothes will be going in the bin.”

Her whole life had been packed up in two bags.

Just the thought of that broke my fucking heart.

I imagined Lian was the sentimental type, who kept old birthday cards in boxes. She probably had her first pair of ballet slippers still, and the medals and trophies she’d collected over the years.

So to think that she had two bags of clothes and nothing else made me want to bring Shen back to life just so I could rip out his jugular again.

“Well, just let me know if there’s anything you want to have shipped over,” I told her. “Teddy bears, pictures, whatever it might be. I’ll pay for you to have everything you want.”

I’d even pay for her parents to pack up and leave China, and I’d make sure they had the best house waiting for them, if

that's what they wanted. Money and distance weren't an issue when it came to my omegas' happiness.

"You would do that?" Lian cocked her head to one side, but then realization crossed her face. "Actually, yes, I'm starting to realize you would."

"Of course, I would." I gave her a quick kiss as the elevator doors opened. "Anything and everything for you."

"Li-Li!" Zhang called out as we exited the elevator.

Seconds later, the large, bulky beta swept Lian off her feet and held her tight in his arms.

"You were away from me for only three hours, Zhang," she chuckled as he placed her back on the floor again.

"Yeah, and I hated it," he replied. "I've never been away from you for more than ten minutes. God knows how I'm going to feel when you go to bed every night."

"Unfortunately, there's probably not enough space for nine of us to share one bed, let alone ten." I smirked.

"Otherwise I'd tell you to grab your pillows."

I liked this guy.

He could joke around and have fun, but Lian's safety was his top priority, and I knew that wasn't going to change

any time soon.

He even gave her a blanket to cover her legs, and that was something I was always going to remember.

“Jesse!” A recognizable voice rang through the hallway, and I turned around just in time to see Nikita running toward me.

“Jesseeee!” Blair gasped as she ran behind Nikita.

My mountain lion omega threw her arms around my neck as she locked her legs around my waist. Nikita’s head nestled perfectly against my shoulder, and I squeezed her as tight as I could without hurting her.

“Fuck, I missed you,” I mumbled as I took in her delectable citrus-sweet scent.

“Never leave us again, okay?” Nikita sniffed and she unwrapped one arm in order to curl her caramel-colored hair behind her ear.

“I don’t plan on it,” I said with complete honesty.

Blair tucked herself into my side, and as soon as Nikita dropped down, the lynx omega took her place.

“I didn’t think I could miss someone as much as I missed you,” she said in between the kisses she left all across



my neck and shoulders.

“Likewise,” I laughed. “How are you? How’s the baby?”

“The baby’s fine,” Blair sniffed back her own tears. “Still cooking away.”

Her bump looked bigger than it was when they left, which was very possible, but it also could have been my memory playing tricks on me.

Once Blair’s feet were back on the ground, I smoothed her swollen stomach with both hands, I placed kisses all across the black t-shirt which looked like it was a week away from no longer fitting.

There was a sweet moment when Nikita and Blair were introduced to Lian, and they both apologized for crying, but Lian just laughed and said she also felt emotional just by witnessing the reunion.

“Blame it on the hormones,” Blair chuckled. “We never cry.”

“There’s nothing wrong with crying,” Lian replied, and then she thumbed over her shoulder. “Even Zhang cries.”

“Li-Li, that was one time,” Zhang sighed.

“You still cried,” she laughed.

“It reminds me of that time Benji cried watching a commercial,” Blair chuckled. “He said he had something in his eye, but we all knew it was bullshit.”

“Benji?” Lian frowned.

“He’s my half-brother, and one of my beta captains,” I explained.

“Oh!” Nikita clapped her hands against her chest. “Lian, you’re going to love Benji! Also, Azalea told me there might be progress with Benji and Kiri? Has he kissed her yet? Tell us everything!”

“No.” I rolled my eyes. “But he’s getting there... I think. He just needs time.”

“How much time does he need?” Blair slapped the air. “He’s known her for, like, a year!”

“Benji works in mysterious ways, I guess.” Nikita shook her head in light frustration, and then she looped her arm through Lian’s. “Let me tell you everything about Benji and Kiri. Do you like gossip?”

“Gossip?” she asked. “Like spreading rumors?”

“Oh, we love gossip in this pack.” Blair took Lian’s other arm. “I think kids call it ‘tea.’ So let us spill the tea on Benji and Kiri.”

“Make yourself comfortable, this might take a while,” Nikita laughed.

“Now, let’s go, let’s go!” Blair waved her free hand in the air. “Cooper is waitiiiiing! He’s grown so much, Alpha.”

“He better not have,” I snorted. “He’s not allowed to grow up.”

“He hasn’t grown,” Nikita explained. “He’s slightly more alert, but, like, that’s it. We were only away for a week.”

“And it felt like a damn century,” I mumbled.

My omegas led Lian further down the hallway toward the bedroom, and I watched them with a smile as Zhang and I followed behind them.

“Lian told me what you did with the blanket,” I said before I could forget. “I know it probably wasn’t much to you, but it means a lot to me. So I just wanted to thank you for doing that.”

“Of course, Alpha.” Zhang nodded. “Li-Li means the world to me, and I hated the way her smile vanished whenever

Shen walked into a room. So I did what I could, even if it wasn't much."

"It was everything," I told him. "Thank you."

Zhang gave me a smile, and we continued walking behind the girls as they continued to talk about Benji, Kiri, and "scalding hot tea" until they arrived at the room.

I walked into room forty-three to see Hailey, Arielle, Ivy, and Azalea on one of the double beds, Aunt Eva, Benji, Laura, and Han were on the other, and Caitlin was standing in the middle of the room with Chloe and Zac wrapped tight in her arms.

"Okay, Mom..." Chloe patted her mother's arm. "I... I kinda need to... Breathe."

"You're never leaving me again," Caitlin mumbled through her tears as she kissed her children's heads. "You had each other, and Aunt Laura, but you didn't have me. That isn't happening again."

Even though Chloe acted like a moody teenager sometimes, I knew she secretly loved her mother fussing over her, and like Zac, Chloe missed her mother desperately when she was gone.

I briefly glanced over at Caitlin's younger sister, Laura, and I spotted the werefox kick one leg over the other before she rested her head on her hands like a pillow. It looked like her job was done, and given the bottle of beer on the table beside her, I knew she was going to enjoy not having to babysit for a day or two.

It was only nine o'clock in the morning, but Laura was technically in vacation mode now.

But then my eyes traveled away from the beer bottle to the tiny baby Aunt Eva had cradled in her arms.

His dark hair was hidden underneath a white hat, but he glanced around the room with wide, blue eyes. Cooper's tiny fingers were wrapped around one of Aunt Eva's, and she stroked his cheek softly, lovingly, and she looked at him like he was the only person in the room with her.

"Lian!" Arielle gasped as she carefully climbed off the bed.

She was nearing the end of her pregnancy, and given that Nikita didn't even make it to the nine-month mark, Arielle could have her baby within the month.

"Aah, Lian!" Hailey cheered.

My omegas ran across the room to meet their new “sister,” and soon Lian was hidden under the number of arms and bodies that covered her.

“Oh, my god, you’re beautiful,” Hailey gasped.

“Look at your hair,” Azalea said. “You clearly take good care of yourself.”

“Look at those legs!” Arielle laughed. “You’re so tall!”

Ivy didn’t say anything, but she didn’t have to. A hug said more than a few words would from a woman like her.

“It’s nice to meet you all,” Lian said once everyone had given her a hug. “Oh, this is... overwhelming.”

“You’ll get used to them,” Benji said as he patted Lian on the back. “I’m Benji Shaw, by the way. Cooper’s favorite uncle, Jesse’s favorite brother, and soon-to-be your favorite beta captain.”

“Benji.” Lian smiled. “I’ve heard so much about you.”

“Only good things, I hope.” He smirked.

“Yes... sure,” she giggled. “Nikita and Blair told me—”

“Oh, shit, they told you stuff?” Benji groaned as he shot my omegas a playful glare. “Don’t listen to a word they say.”

It's all lies.”

“They just told me about Kiri,” Lian said honestly, but there was a hint of a smirk on her lips. “She sounds nice. You should ask her out on a date.”

My omegas roared with laughter as Benji glared at the floor.

“I like you,” Ivy said to Lian. “You fit in already.”

Lian's confidence was already shining through, and nothing made me happier.

Apart from perhaps one thing.

“Jesse,” Aunt Eva whispered from her position against the pillows. “I think someone wants you.”

I couldn't fight the smile that covered my face, or the emotions that swarmed through my body. I wasn't one to cry, yet my throat felt thick, and tears pricked away at my eyes.

I seemed to have tunnel vision as I crossed the room, and everything dulled around me until the moment I lifted Cooper into the air and held him against my chest.

“Hi,” I whispered as I gently twisted my body from side to side. “Did you miss me? I missed you...”

Cooper's fresh, baby scent appeared stronger than the number of omega scents in the room. He was all I could really think about, and I knew I'd missed him, but I hadn't realized exactly how much I'd missed him until I held him in my arms again.

I placed one hand under his butt, the other on his back to support him, and as I placed my head against his, everything felt right again.

At that exact moment, it no longer mattered that the Asian shifter agency had ordered Shen to go around the continent, and the rest of the fucking world, and kill off alphas and omegas as he came across them.

It no longer mattered that the Asian government had played us all like fools, to make us think one thing when in reality they were stabbing us in the back.

And it no longer mattered that there were hundreds of alpha-less betas roaming around, potentially causing fights out of grief and anger, all because some weretiger destroyed the pack, pride, and flock they had before.

A government whose job it was to protect the shifters, but who took advantage of that power.



No, nothing mattered when I had Cooper in my arms and my omegas beside me.

Of course, I had to return to the real world, and those issues were going to matter again as soon as I went from Jesse the father, to Jesse the Alpha.

But in that moment, I enjoyed the time I had with my family.

The click of a camera shutter brought me away from those thoughts, and I glanced up just in time to see Nikita slip her phone back into her pocket.

“One for the memory box.” She grinned.

“We’re going to need multiple boxes at this rate,” I laughed.

“Hi, Jesse!” Zac’s little voice sounded around the room as he ran over to me.

“Hey, bud.” I carefully gave him a hug with one arm as I kept Cooper against my chest with the other. “Hey, you’ve grown...”

“Because I’m growing, Jesse!” he laughed.

I was certain Zac had grown, and I even placed a flat hand against his head like that was going to give me an exact

measurement.

“That’s what I said!” Caitlin replied. “He’s getting too big, and I don’t like it.”

“I think you’ve both grown,” I said as Chloe took her brother’s place and gave me a hug, too. “Or are you wearing those platform sneakers again?”

“No,” she laughed. “I think there’s just something wrong with your eyes, Jesse.”

“Sure.” I smirked.

The teenager gave me a quick squeeze, and she adjusted her black glasses as she took a step back.

“It’s good to see you again, Chloe,” I said honestly. “I missed hearing your loud music around the house.”

“I surprisingly missed annoying you with my music,” she replied with a playful roll of her eyes.

She looked so much like her mother when she did that, and it just caused me to smile.

“Lian looks nice,” Chloe whispered as she looked over at the group of omegas behind her.

“She’s wonderful, and I already know you’ll love her,” I replied.

It meant so much to me that Chloe was quick to accept Lian. Caitlin had been treated so badly by Myles Beck, Chloe’s father, as he started to add more and more omegas to his pack, so now the teenager was slightly reserved and cautious when it came to other omegas joining the pack.

She had been fine when Ivy joined us, and she simply adored Cooper, so I knew she’d be okay with other omegas and children joining the family. But I didn’t want to push Chloe too much, and her insecurities were always at the back of my mind whenever changes occurred.

But the girl in front of me now was nothing like the moody, reserved teenager I first met, so at least we were taking the right steps forward.

For the next hour, my family and I sat around the room as we discussed everything that occurred throughout the last week. My omegas took up an entire bed, and there was a constant smile on Lian’s face as she joined in on the conversations.

Han, Zhang, Benji, Zac, Chloe, and Laura held their own conversations, and even though Zhang occasionally

glanced over at Lian to make sure she was okay, his guard started to drop as time went on.

He must have been so used to keeping watch to make sure Shen didn't do anything to hurt or upset Lian, or whatever it might have been, that it was going to take him time to fully relax and realize that she was okay.

Aunt Eva stayed with me as Cooper napped on my chest, and sometimes we just sat and watched the people around us.

She informed me that Gemma, Blair's sister, had joined the others outside because there wasn't enough space for everyone to stand in one room. Some of the betas were going to keep watch around the hotel, just in case, but others were going to get some breakfast and snacks for the train journey back home later.

But the discussion about the train reminded me of the real issues at hand. I'd had my morning with Lian, and my much-needed reunion with my family, but I had to break from that bubble and tackle things head-on.

"Can you look after Cooper while I call Ewan?" I asked as I reluctantly pulled the sleeping boy away from me.

“Of course.” Aunt Eva smiled. “I’ve been saving up my cuddles just for him.”

“And not for me?” I gasped sarcastically. “I’m wounded.”

“You’re old enough to get over it,” she teased.

“Says you, Great-Aunt Eva.” I winked.

I stepped off the bed just as my aunt gave me a slap, but her fingers only brushed off my t-shirt, which just made me laugh.

I told my omegas about the call I needed to make, but they all smiled up at me and told me to take my time.

“Lian is telling us all about her ballet training.” Hailey smiled.

“And she said she’ll give us lessons once I’ve had the baby!” Arielle clapped excitedly. “She’s also going to teach me how to make traditional Chinese cuisine!”

“Yes, I love Asian food!” Nikita cheered.

“Finally a gym buddy who understands my strict routine!” Azalea praised the air.

“Honestly, where do you find us, Jesse?” Blair looped her arm through Lian’s. “We’re all incredible.”

“I know, you are.” I grinned.

“I wanted to tell Lian about how I wrote my name in Shen’s blood, but she wasn’t as keen on that idea,” Ivy said with a light shrug. “But I understand my hobbies are different from others.”

“Yes, I might not need that mental picture at the moment,” Lian laughed. “But thank you for asking first.”

“Ivy is one of a kind,” Caitlin said as she gave the omega a quick hug. “And that’s why we love her so very much.”

“I tolerate you, too,” Ivy replied.

“Holy shit, Ivy just confessed her love to us!” Nikita laughed.

I gave all eight of them a kiss on their heads as I took my phone from my pocket and headed for the bathroom.

I would have headed into the hallway where it was quieter to make the call, but I didn’t want to risk any of the hotel residents overhearing my important conversation, so the bathroom had to do.

I pressed on Ewan's number and held my phone against my ear as I closed the toilet lid and took a seat.

"Heya, Jesse," Ewan's thick, Scottish accent flowed through the phone. "How's it goin'?"

"Well, I'm in Manchester with a new omega." I grinned. "So I'd say things are going alright."

"Fuckin' hell, my man!" he chuckled. "Not like I had no doubt you'd find her, though, eh? Fuck."

Fortunately, Ewan knew to dull his accent down slightly for me, otherwise it would have sounded like a jumble of words.

"I'm glad you had faith in me." I smirked. "But now that Lian is safe and mine, I suppose it's time to start dealing with the bigger issues at hand."

"Aye, you're no wrong," he sighed. "We're gonnae have to work out what to do next, with Asia, ken. Like... this isn't ae gonna be some walk in the park, eh?"

"Yeah, I've started to gather that." I nodded. "So what are you thinking?"

"Well..." Ewan paused for a second. "This isn't some fight against an opposing alpha, or shite like that. This is the

real deal now, Jesse. So we need to bring out the big guns. I'm thinking we should include the rest of the agencies, Jess. Have them on our side while we work out what the fuck we're going to do about Asia. Fool us once, cool, whatever. But fool us again? Nah, fuck that. They're goin' down."

I thought about his suggestion for a second before I gave him a proper answer.

"That's not the worst idea in the world," I mumbled. "If we can rally together, and add force behind this attack, we can show the Asian agency who's really in charge here. They've crossed the line, so we need to do something quickly, but having the other agencies on our side will assist with that."

"That's what I thought, aye," Ewan agreed. "In that case, what time are you's coming back?"

"We're going to drive back to Edinburgh today," I replied. "Probably leave within the hour, but I don't know exactly when we'll be back."

"Okay..." the avian alpha sighed. "How abouts you come by the headquarters in the mornin'? We can have the other agencies on the phone, and we can plan something together."



“Yeah, that works.” I nodded. “I’ll call Hazel Wise and Wyatt Arbour to inform them of that plan. I know Wyatt will help us without question, so at least we definitely have Canada on our side.”

“And the rest of the European agencies will help us, too,” Ewan mumbled like he was thinking something over. “I have the numbers for the other agencies, so I’ll give them all a ring now, and we can plan to have a group call at, like, nine-thirty tomorrow morning. That cool with you?”

“Yeah, of course,” I said. “It’ll be the middle of the night for some of the agencies, but that’s just part of the job.”

“Aye,” Ewan laughed. “It’s why we get paid the big bucks. Literally.”

Ewan ran through the plan once more just to be certain of everything, and once I confirmed that I was going to get in touch with Hazel and Wyatt, the head of the Canadian Shifter Agency, we ended the call.

It was daunting to think that all of the agencies, apart from Asia, were apparently going to rally together, but I knew it was for the safety of the rest of the world.

I tried not to think too much about the meeting, and instead I located Hazel's number before I became lost in my own thoughts.

It was only five o'clock in the morning in New York, but Hazel had her phone on her constantly, and she told me that time didn't matter when I had something to tell her.

The phone rang a few times, and for a second I wondered whether she was even going to answer it, but then her breathy, sleepy voice echoed through the phone.

"Jesse?" she asked, clearly still half asleep.

"Good morning, beautiful." I smiled.

"Hi!" she said, slightly more alert than before. "How's Manchester? How's Lian?"

"I'm sure Manchester is great, but I barely saw it in my rush to get here," I chuckled. "Lian, on the other hand, is stunning, intelligent, and just as beautiful as the rest of you."

"If you knew what I looked like right now, I'm not sure you'd call me beautiful," she laughed through a yawn.

I pictured Hazel tangled up in the white sheets, looking out across New York, and the bustling Manhattan streets

below. Her mahogany hair was probably tied up in a knot, and her almond eyes were probably full of sleep.

And because Hazel was alone in a hotel room, then she probably wasn't wearing pajamas, either, so a quick slip of the sheets would reveal the beauty of her body.

That's what I imagined, anyway.

"If the picture in my brain is anything like the real thing, then..." I blew out a breath. "Let's just say it's a good thing I'm in a bathroom where my half-brother can't see what you do to me..."

"Jesse!" Hazel gasped. "You're unbelievable."

"And that's why you love me," I said. "Now, unfortunately I didn't call to tell you how unbelievable I was, or to remind you how stunning you are."

"You didn't? Shame..." she teased.

"We can talk about that later," I promised her. "No, I actually called to tell you that Ewan Miller wants to have a call with all of the agencies tomorrow morning. We need to put a stop to Asia as soon as we can, and the more power behind us, the better."

“Yes, I totally agree,” Hazel replied. “Just tell me what time, and I’ll be there with my phone in hand.”

“We’re thinking nine-thirty UK time, so it’ll be about four-thirty with you...” I winced. “I know it’s early, and I’m sorry.”

“Don’t apologize to me,” she laughed. “Let’s just get these fuckers to the ground.”

“That’s my girl.” I grinned.

There was a short pause, but then Hazel sighed.

“Oh, I miss you,” she admitted. “Do you know when you’re going to come home?”

“I don’t.” I shook my head. “I hope it won’t be too long, but I can’t go anywhere right now with Asia still breathing down our necks, so I’ll have to play things by ear, I suppose.”

I also had to send another email to my professors to make up an excuse for missing classes for at least another week.

But I could handle that later.

“Well, I’ll be waiting here with open arms when you do return,” Hazel said sweetly. “And until then, I’ll keep a close

eye on the online forums, too. Shen Shui's videos have caused many conversations, so I'm keeping watch for you."

"I knew that was going to happen," I mumbled. "Is it still the same shit as before? Half of the argument thinks that shifters are real, but the other half thinks the videos are all down to clever editing and CGI?"

"Yes, pretty much," Hazel said. "But it's more than half now. People have literally gone through Shen's videos clip by clip, the vast majority think it's real, and it's not looking good for us, Jesse. I'm so sorry."

Anger seeped through my veins at the mess Shen started and left for me to clear up. It was spinning off the rails, and if we weren't careful, the entire world was going to learn about shifters, which was the last thing we needed.

"It's okay." I ran my hand over my face as I tried to calm down. "We'll handle the internet and Asia at the same time. It won't be easy, and it might not even be fun, but we'll get it done."

"We'll do what's right," Hazel said confidently. "We always do."

Hazel was right, we always made it out on the other side.

I thought it would have been impossible to take down Shen, a weretiger, the rarest, strongest shifter species in the world.

But now I had Lian, and Shen's various body parts were buried six feet under.

So even though taking down an entire government agency was going to be challenging, I had the right people on my side.

And suddenly, things no longer appeared to be impossible.



## Chapter 4

The rest of the morning was spent walking from one store to another in order to buy Lian some new clothes.

As expected, my omegas loved every second of it, and they all chose an outfit they thought Lian would appreciate, which also made the experience quicker, too.

Some of the outfits weren't quite right. Especially when Ivy brought over a black lace dress that would have only just covered Lian's nipples, and it looked to be the length of a long t-shirt instead of a dress.

It was no surprise that Lian thanked Ivy, but didn't choose the dress. So Ivy bought it for herself instead.

But by the time we arrived back at the cars, Lian had new pants, leggings, t-shirts, and flowy dresses that stopped at her ankles. She had everything she needed, and she couldn't stop thanking me for being so generous.

I also bought her, Han, and Zhang cell phones, and it blew their minds that I happily bought the phones for them without thinking twice about it.



The rest of the day was then spent driving back to Edinburgh. There was a two-hour delay before we reached the borders of Scotland, and the traffic trickled across the highway, or “motorway,” but we finally managed to get back to the rented houses at eleven o’clock that evening.

The only issue came when it was time to go to bed.

My omegas didn’t wear pajamas in bed, and neither did I, but Lian did. Because to her, she wasn’t in a room with just her partner, even though she was in a room full of omegas.

However, because she grew up in a society where people should only show off their bodies to their partners, she found it slightly strange walking into a room where we were all naked.

But my other omegas didn’t say a word. They covered themselves with the bed covers until Lian had made herself comfortable beside me, she whispered an apology, but we all said the same thing:

There was no reason for Lian to apologize for something she couldn’t control.

Then my other lovers started giggling about all the cute pjs they should buy together, and I smirked as I imagined

having a full-on slumber party with my omegas all in adorable nighties and silk shorts and tank tops.

Before I knew it, it was the following morning, and Carlo Abella and I walked past the gray and sandstone buildings of George Street as we headed for our meeting with Ewan Miller.

“This is an insult to my country, sir,” Carlo mumbled in his thick Italian accent. “You say you come from Italy, but you cannot make a good cup of coffee? Honestly! A child could make a better espresso!”

I always relied on Carlo to make me laugh when things were tense.

“I suppose that’s what you get from a pop-up shop on the side of the road,” I chuckled. “Even if it did have the Italian flag plastered all over it.”

“I should have just gone to Costa...” Carlo huffed, then he shot back his espresso with a strong wince on his face. “I’ve learned my lesson, sir.”

I had to agree, it wasn’t the best coffee in the world, but the line in Costa was out the door, and we needed something quickly before we arrived at the UK ESD headquarters.

I was exhausted, so I didn't care how bad the coffee was, or how expensive it was, either.

I just needed caffeine.

I really could have used a day in bed with my omegas, which sounded pretty fucking good to me. But the issue with Asia wasn't going to handle itself, and there was time to sleep later.

Carlo and I crossed the busy road in the middle of George Street as number eighty-two came into view. It was nearing nine o'clock in the morning, and from what I'd gathered, there were a lot of businesses and offices on George Street, so the sidewalks were covered with people rushing to work, and it was rare for us to come across a free parking space.

Fortunately, Ewan warned us about that when we first came here, so we knew to park a few streets away and walk over.

Like with all shifter agency headquarters, the building was practically camouflaged against the others around it. Unless someone knew what they were looking for, they wouldn't have been able to find these buildings. There weren't any signs above the doors, and the locations weren't even on

Google, so it was almost like the headquarters didn't even exist.

Even though we worked for secret branches of the government, when the entire world was starting to wonder whether shifters were real, it was good to have some safety and privacy.

But even when we were buzzed into the building, there were still no clear signs of what the building was used for. The red tartan carpet took us to a small, oak reception desk, and the lady on the other side wore a simple, elegant suit with a plain name badge on her chest.

“Good morning.” She smiled, and then she glanced down at her computer for a second. “Jesse Rafe and Carlo Abella, correct?”

“That’s us,” I replied as Carlo and I handed over our SDD ID cards.

“Excellent...” The receptionist typed away on her computer, and then she clicked a couple of buttons before she looked back up at us with a smile. “Mr. Miller is waiting to see you in his office. Do you remember how to get there...?”

“Up the stairs, first door on the right?” Carlo checked.

“Got it in one,” the lady laughed.

We thanked her for her help, and then we took the stairs to the first floor, which was still confusing to me, but that was just one of the subtle nuances between the UK and the US.

Before we even arrived on the first floor, Ewan Miller pulled open the door to his office and stepped out to greet us.

Ewan was tall and slender, with ginger hair and freckles all over his face, and even when shit hit the fan, he always had some sort of welcoming smile on his face.

“Mornin’, mornin’,” he said as he shook our hands.

“Thanks for comin’ so quickly.”

“Of course,” I replied. “We weren’t going to delay it.”

Ewan ushered us into the grand office. The walls were covered with paintings of eagles, stags, and various landscapes. The same red tartan carpet seeped into the room, and the rectangular windows overlooked the glorious Edinburgh castle which stood proudly on Castle Hill.

“Right, before we start, do you’s want coffee?” Ewan asked. “Or tea, fizzy juice, water?”

“Soda at nine in the morning?” Carlo chuckled. “We’ll pass, but we do need some decent coffee, please.”

“Mate, I have’nae slept a wink,” Ewan laughed, and his green eyes held the honesty behind his statement. “I’m surprised I’m no on the drink yet. But we’ll save the good shit for later, once we’ve taken down these bastards. I did, however, have a wonderful roll and square for breakfast, so that’s soothed the anger for now.”

“A roll and square?” I frowned.

“Square sausage,” Ewan explained as he typed something into his phone. “Fuckin’ banging creation, served on a morning roll... hunnars ae butter... Wee drop broon sauce. Mhmm. Right! Coffee’s ordered, and Molly’s gonnae bring them in shortly for us.”

I noticed that Ewan’s accent deepened when he was angry, but also when he was passionate about something, too.

So instead of the word “of” he used “ae.” “Brown” became “broon,” and “haven’t,” and “gonna” became “have’nae,” or sounded more like “gonnae.”

It took me a while to get used to the slang at first, but I assumed it was the same for Ewan when he came to the States.

A few minutes later, Ewan’s assistant, Molly, brought a tray of coffees into the room. The tray came with jugs of milk,

a silver bowl of sugar cubes, and even some shortbread cookies on a small China plate.

Carlo and I both drank our coffees black, unless we wanted something specific like a cappuccino, so we leaned back in our chairs as Ewan added sugar and milk to his mug.

“Okay...” Ewan said once his coffee was prepared the way he liked it. “So, Hazel and Wyatt are good to join the call?”

“Yep.” I nodded. “They have the link you created, so they’ll be calling through in fifteen minutes.”

“Braw.” Ewan gave me a thumbs up.

Even during stressful times, Ewan always tried to remain positive.

“So...” He stacked some papers into a neat pile on his desk. “Throughout the night I’ve been talkin’ to other European countries, and the Australian Shifter Agency, and they’re all happy to join us. So we’re gonna hear from Germany, Spain, Italy, France, Poland, Croatia, and Sweden. Who are all separate parts of the European Shifter Department.”

I blew out a breath as the realization seemed to hit me.

This wasn't just some friendly group chat. This was serious business.

“Now, I dunno if you's know this, but Australia's agency is split up for each province,” Ewan explained. “Hudson Helman is in charge of the entire agency, so we'll be talking to him in Sydney, New South Wales, but we'll also be talking to Felix Elliott, the Head of Agency in Western Australia.”

“Okay...” I nodded as I took in all the various names and information.

“We also have a special guest.” Ewan smirked. “Dernov Vladimirovich is joining us from Moscow, Russia.”

My jaw dropped open, but as I glanced over at Carlo, I noticed he didn't seem as excited. In fact, the frown on his face told me he was more confused than anything else.

“Are you sure having Russia join this conversation is a good idea?” Carlo asked as he ran one hand over his heavy stubble. “I mean, they are a part of the Asian agency, who we're trying to take down at the moment...”

“Aye, I get that,” Ewan chuckled lightly. “But Dernov is just as pissed as we are right now. They were fucked over by



Shen, too. If not more than we were.”

It didn't take me long to work out whose side I stood on.

“Ewan's right.” I nodded as I drank back the last of my coffee. “Having Dernov on our side is actually a smart move. They could essentially be spies for us, especially if China has no idea Dernov has moved sides. They can be our guys on the inside, so if we need any assistance with the Asian Shifter Agency, or maybe even getting to the Chinese branch specifically, Dernov might be able to help us with that.”

“You're right, sir,” Carlo replied after a minute of thought. “I never thought I'd be friends with literal Russian spies.”

“Well, now we will be,” Ewan laughed. “Just a couple more wee things before we start the call. I also thought about getting in contact with the African and South American agencies, but neither of them have fully taken off yet— unlike Asia, who made us believe they were new. Fucking backstabbing bastards... But this call is just to get the word out there, and then we'll rely on our new allied friends to spread the news further.”

“What about Shi Mu?” I asked about the Spanish weretiger. “He’s home now, right?”

“Aye, he flew home yesterday morning,” Ewan explained. “He had to complete some work in Spain. His boss will be joining in on the call, so Shi won’t be left in the dark. But he told me he could fly back if we need his help again.”

Shi had been a great help when it came down to locating Shen. Shi was the only weretiger we knew of at the time, so he was able to offer us all sorts of knowledge and information about his rare shifter species.

“Okay, excellent,” I replied. “It sounds like we’re all sorted, then.”

“Trust me, I went through everything last night.” Ewan ran his hand through his ginger hair. “Whoever we don’t talk to today, will be informed of the information through others. But when I spoke to everyone, they all seemed to be fairly on board, so let’s just see how that goes.”

I sent off a brief message to Hazel and Wyatt and told them the call was about to start, and then I made myself as comfortable as I could in my chair.

To the left of me, Carlo shrugged off his blazer, loosened the knot of his tie, and then rolled the sleeves of his white shirt up to his elbows. Ewan had his laptop set up with the screen facing us so we could see when people joined the call, and he brought out a pad of paper and a pen to take notes.

As soon as the time reached nine-thirty, the first number appeared on the screen, and it just snowballed from there.

Lukasz Bakula from Poland was the first to call in, followed by Vinko Leskovar from Croatia. Hazel and Wyatt's names appeared seconds after each other, followed instantly by Maffeo Lo Rivera from Italy.

By nine-thirty-two, all ten names and numbers had been added to the screen, and the grand office was filled with crackly connections, people clearing their throats, and the sound of paper, or something rustling on the other end of the line.

I was almost glad it was just a call and not a video conference, because it was daunting just having the various noises and voices, let alone adding the different faces to keep track of.

I was even certain that I heard the click and a spark of a cigarette lighter, which wasn't overly surprising given the

mess the Chinese agency had caused everyone, not just me.

“I think that’s everyone,” Ewan said as he leaned in closer to his laptop. “Can everyone hear me?”

A chorus of responses hit us at the same time, and a variety of languages and dialects were mixed together in the group reply. I knew everyone spoke somewhat fluent English, or they had translators to help them, which made the conversation even easier.

But it was easy to hear Hazel’s sweet voice appear from the crowd, and it took everything I had to stop myself from starting up a conversation with her and asking how she was feeling that morning.

I wasn’t there to speak to my girlfriend, and I was sure she wouldn’t have appreciated having a conversation like that in front of important alphas and Heads of Agencies.

But the realization that the vast majority of the people on the call were alphas, and hopefully we all agreed to rally together, was mind-blowing to me.

“Okay, so you should all know what’s been going on, but just in case you aren’t sure, I’ll run through it all briefly,” Ewan continued, and I noticed his accent was much, much

smoother, probably to help others understand. “Actually, Jesse, why don’t you take over?”

Ewan gave me a short nod and a small smile.

“Sure.” I returned the expression. “Um... So, thank you all for joining this call. I know it’s very late at night for some, and very early in the morning for others, but we appreciate you being here. Er, so... My name is Jesse Rafe, I’m the—”

“We know who you are, Jesse,” Rayko Pohl from Germany spoke up, but there was humor in his voice. “We’ve all heard about you.”

“Jesse is good man,” Dernov said in his thick Russian accent. “He helped shifters from Russia, and he gave them home when they were lost.”

“I did what anyone else should have done,” I replied. “Azarov and the wild cats were lost and scared, and Shen Shui, the weretiger, had just murdered his alpha and omega. Laza and Valya were good, innocent people, and they were killed without a second’s thought, all because the Chinese government decided on it. And that’s exactly why we’re here today, and why we need to do what we can to put an end to this war and rivalry the government has started.”

My anger seeped through my voice as more and more words left my lips, but I was pissed, and I didn't see a reason to hide that.

I wanted to show these additional alphas and Heads of Agencies that I might have been young, but I wasn't weak. I stood my ground when I wanted something, and I made sure to make that clear in every word I said.

“Shen was ordered by the Chinese branch of the Asian Agency to start a mad killing spree all because they wanted to prove some ridiculous point,” I explained. “The Asian agency wanted to be the strongest shifter agency in the world, and they tried to use me to get there. They thought they could get the upper hand if I was seen to be a threat, so they sent Shen across the fucking world, killing every innocent shifter he came across, just so that it would look like I did it. If I picked up betas along the way, which I did do, then it might have looked like I killed the alphas to begin with. But now that Shen's gone, what is the agency going to do next? Who are they going to weaponize or kill now? We have to get there before they try anything, so that has to stop.”

“I agree,” Elton Nilsson said firmly in his Swedish accent. “Enough is enough.”

“Apparently the agency, or maybe just the Chinese side of things, wanted the population of shifters to outnumber the population of humans, right?” Hazel asked.

“Yeah,” I snorted out a laugh. “Because in their eyes, shifters are the superior species. Which isn’t wrong, we are stronger, but that doesn’t mean we have to outnumber the humans.”

“But what if the Chinese branch started aiming for humans next?” Hazel asked anxiously. “Do you think they would stoop that low if they wanted shifters to be the superior species?”

“Murder?” Lukasz growled, then followed it by saying something angrily in Polish.

“What is the difference between killing shifters and killing humans?” Carlo shrugged. “Any of us who have taken part in a shifter fight, I’m sorry to say, have committed murder. On multiple occasions, no doubt. So it may seem different killing humans, but is it really?”

“There is a big difference!” Vinko Leskovar from Croatia shouted.

“Really?” Rayko Rohl asked before he spat something in German.

“Unfortunately, there is no real difference,” Dernov sighed. “What is difference between woman walking to shop and get killed, or omega walk to shop and get killed? Both women, both innocent, both killed in same place. One might be physically stronger, yes, but both cruel murders, and both did not deserve to die. There is no difference. Murder is murder.”

“I don’t think the Chinese branch will drop to that level,” Luca said in his thick Spanish accent.

“Do you know that for absolute certainty?” Wyatt asked. “Because they’ve already dropped to that level by sending Shen on a killing spree against innocent and completely uninvolved shifters. Why not aim for humans, too?”

“Okay, okay.” I held out my hands like everyone could see me. “Let’s not drop down this rabbit hole until we know where we’re going. We don’t know for certain if their agency will aim for humans, or if they’ll find a new alpha they can manipulate and take control of. But because of that uncertainty, that’s exactly why we need to stop them.”



“We also need to work out what we’re going to do about the humans, too,” Ewan spoke up. “We might have been able to get away with the shifter videos after Jesse put a stop to the raven alpha, Zander Nevin. But now Shen’s made it a lot worse with the two videos he posted, and we’re walking a veeeeery fine line.”

“Everyone I know has seen the videos in Italy,” Maffeo mumbled.

“Same in Sweden, too,” Elton added.

“And France,” Guillaume Baudet replied with a muffled sigh.

“The entire world knows about these videos,” I grumbled. “They were plastered everywhere, and Shen’s were another part of his government’s evil games. We can’t do much about the videos themselves now, it’s too far gone, and we can’t just remove them from the internet. But if we focus on taking down the agency, whoever it has to be, we can try and save ourselves from the videos at the same time.”

“I need to hold my hands up and admit something, Jesse...” Vinko cursed in Croatian. “I... At first, I thought you might have caused this because of everything in Canada, then

you went to UK. But I see different now, and I want to apologize.”

“You thought Jesse was responsible?” Hazel gasped.  
“Are you serious? Why?”

Hazel’s sudden defense caused me to smile.

My girls always had my back, and I hoped everyone else on the call did, too.

“Because it all started when he left America,” Vinko responded in a frank tone. “I read wrong information, and now I take back my previous thoughts.”

“I appreciate your honesty,” I told Vinko. “In fact, it shows the power of the Chinese agency. You believed everything they wanted you to believe, and if it was that easy for you to fall for their tricks, it’s going to be even easier for someone else. I don’t even care if you fucking hated me half an hour ago. The main thing is that you’ve put that behind you, and you’d rather help me than kill me now.”

“Of course, Jesse,” Vinko said. “I owned up to my mistakes, the manipulation I fell for, and now I want to show you that I meant every word I said.”

“Jesse, you are the reason we’re safe now,” Rayko said. “But like Vinko has proved to us, word of mouth is a dangerous thing. People are led to believe whatever someone wants them to believe. Whether that’s you’re a dangerous monster, who only thinks about himself, or it’s that shifters exist. Only one of those two statements are true, but China wanted us to believe both of them.”

“Yes, you’re all right,” Ewan replied as he leaned back in his seat. “With the right amount of persuasion, people can believe anything. Which leads me to another point. Vinko, you thought Jesse was dangerous at first. You’re also an alpha, with a large pride of werecats and two omegas to think about. What if you didn’t realize your mistake, and you went after Jesse in order to save your family? What if hundreds, thousands of shifters across the world are planning the same thing?”

Hazel let out a sharp gasp, and I wished I could have jumped through the laptop and pulled her into my arms.

“There could be hundreds of shifters aiming for us right now, or wherever Jesse is, so we need to keep that in mind, too,” Ewan continued. “We have to protect you, Jesse, but also

put a stop to the Asian agency, and try and sort out the fucking mess with the humans and the videos, too.”

“Then what we do?” Dernov asked. “How do we prove to shifters that Jesse is not bad guy? That is priority number one. Shifters are dangerous when provoked. We need clear-headedness among our own kind.”

“Then use your powers to your advantage,” I replied. “Spread the word to every alpha, beta, omega, and every fucking city, town, and country. If anyone thinks I’m a danger, make them think otherwise. Stop the rumors and bring the truth to light about all this Shen business. Then with that power, we work on rallying together in order to end the Asian agency. There’s power in numbers, and that’s the only way this might work.”

“We need The Alpha now, the Great Reuniter,” Hudson Helman’s Australian accent echoed through the speakers for the first time. “But Jesse, what do you think we need to do once we have the shifters on our side?”

“Do we get the next flight out to China?” Carlo suggested. “Or wherever the head department of the Asian agency is?”

“What, and storm through the gates?” I smirked humorlessly. “That’s far too dangerous.”

“What if we can try and make China believe that we’re focusing on other things?” Wyatt offered. “After all, it was meant to be a total secret that Shen was working for the shifter government, and it was made to look like the only threat he left behind were the videos. So if we can make China believe that we’re just focusing on taking down the threat and making humans believe the videos were a hoax, we could try and sneak closer toward China’s headquarters. Or the Asian agency. Whoever.”

“I might be helpful with that,” Dernov replied in his thick Russian accent, and the silence coming from all the other lines on the call suddenly seemed heavier as they waited for him to continue. “I am on your side, Jesse, but I could make China believe I am working for them as spy. If I tell China that you’re focusing on video, they might drop their guard a little bit, which could get you a bit closer.”

I looked across the desk at Ewan, and the slight nod of his head made me see that he agreed with the Russian’s idea, but Carlo had a small frown on his face.

I wanted to be cautious, but I knew too well how much Russian shifters were hurting after everything Shen did. It was natural for Dernov to take my side when his country had borne the brunt of the violence, I would've done the exact same thing. But I could tell that Carlo and all the other silent shifters on the line were thinking about how Dernov was still part of the Asian agency, which I had to keep in mind.

“That could work,” I mumbled as I scratched my jaw and decided how to keep everyone on the call happy. I figured breaking things down to minute details for now was a safe place to start. “But there is one issue when it comes to waiting around for the right time to attack. I can't stay in the UK, or even Europe, for too long. I'm still a college student, and I've missed almost two weeks of classes because of all of this, so I need to head home and show my face at some point soon. The humans at home think I'm some nerd who plays the violin, but I'm in bed seriously sick at the moment, and I can't pretend to be that sick for too long. So whatever we do, we have to do it soon. There can't be any delay.”

“Fuck,” Ewan groaned. “This seems almost impossible.”

“But that’s why you brought us here,” Guillaume, the proud Frenchman, replied. “We all have the same goal in mind, and we all will work together.”

“Cheers, boss,” Ewan snorted, but the humor didn’t reach his eyes.

Guillaume Baudet was Head of Agency for the entirety of the European Shifter Department, so it felt like that man held more power than the rest of us. Which was a soothing thought.

“Well, we could—”

Hudson’s words were cut off as my phone started to vibrate loudly against the desk, along with Carlo’s and Ewan’s, too.

“What the fuck?” Wyatt asked.

Echoed vibrations and chimes rang through the laptop, almost like everyone received a message, or a phone call at the exact same time.

“That’s weird,” I chuckled to myself as I reached for my phone.

But my laughter didn’t last for long, and before I could reach my phone, Ewan’s assistant barged into the office.

“Molly?” Ewan frowned.

She always knocked before she entered.

“I’m so sorry, sir,” she said breathlessly. “I didn’t mean to interrupt. But I really think you should check the news...”

“Oh, my god, Jesse!” Hazel shrieked through the speakers, along with various, foreign curses and cries of frustration.

“What?” I frowned as I glanced down at my vibrating phone.

In less than a minute I’d received several messages and missed calls, but a quick check of the messages stunned us all into silence.

A lump formed in my throat, and a cold sweat coated my skin as I saw the news article.

I almost couldn’t believe it at first, but the longer I stared at those menacing words, the more I realized how unfortunately real it was.

The Chinese human government had released a video and an official statement.

And my face and name were plastered all across the screen.





## Chapter 5

The only noise I heard in the room was the pounding of my quickened shifter heartbeat as it thumped away in my ears.

All I focused on was the news article and the rotund Asian man in a black suit who stood behind a black podium.

But behind him, protected on a white wall, were two pictures someone had slyly taken of me. The most noticeable picture had been taken back in St. Andrews moments before I came across the Russian wild cats. I recognized the castle ruins in the background, and whoever took the shot managed to capture the exact moment I shifted.

My head, arms, and part of my torso were covered in layers of thick, brown-black fur. My hands had turned into padded paws, and my sharp teeth shone in the early-evening light. But the other half of me was still in my human form, and I was in the process of leaping off the ground, seconds before my powerful paws slammed into the grassy hill.

At least whoever posted those pictures had the decency to blur out my fucking bare ass and dick which otherwise would have been on show for the world to see.

So maybe every cloud had a silver lining.

I didn't even know how someone managed to get such a clear picture without any of us noticing them. I even had some of my avians in the sky to keep a close eye on the area, and they hadn't noticed anything.

Even Ivy hadn't noticed them, and she had some sort of Sherlock Holmes ability to know a man's every move just by looking at his shoes.

However, the second picture caused a fresh wave of anger to storm through me. It took everything I had not to force my fist through Ewan's oak desk, then subsequently throw said desk through the fucking window.

The picture looked like nothing at first. It was a candid shot of me walking down one of the streets in Edinburgh. I was busy looking at something on my phone, but my face was clear to see, and there was no denying it was me.

The picture had been cropped to hide anyone else around me, but the rage boiled beneath my skin when I remembered that day, and who I was with when the picture was taken.

It was the day we'd first arrived in Edinburgh, and I was still in my sweatpants and hoodie from hours of traveling. My pack and I had been on our way to the rental houses, and seconds before that picture was taken, I had been pushing Cooper in his stroller. But one of my omegas took over because I had to reply to a message.

Chloe and Zac were right in front of me, and my omegas were either beside me or behind me.

My family would have been in that shot, and like with the fucking decency of the shifting picture and the blur of my ass, at least the fucker cropped everyone else out of the picture.

But they had a picture of my fucking children. Probably multiple pictures, because I couldn't imagine they'd taken just one picture.

I clutched my face with shaking hands as I tried to contain my anger, but I wanted to hunt down that motherfucker with a camera and strangle him with my bare hands.

No one took fucking pictures of my children and got away with it.

I didn't even care what happened to me. Chloe, Zac, and Cooper were, and would always be, off-limits.

I was on autopilot after that moment. I bypassed the constant stream of messages and missed calls as I opened up the group chat I had with my local pack. I let out a calming sigh as I typed out an order with both thumbs, but the anger was still very much bubbling away.

I told everyone that from that moment onward, my family wasn't allowed to leave that house. My betas had to watch every damn person, vehicle, and fucking cat that passed by the house, at least until I knew exactly what was going on, and that they were all safe.

For all I knew, the photographer could have been positioned in a car somewhere, and I wasn't going to give them the satisfaction of adding any more pictures to their collection.

"Jesse," Ewan's soothing voice caught my attention, and I put down my phone and looked over to see the friendly Scot with a sad smile on his face. "Are you okay?"

"No." I didn't even try to hide the anger in my voice. "I'm not okay. I haven't even watched the video yet, and I'm

already pissed. My kids were with me at that very moment, so they have pictures of my children!”

“Motherfucker!” Ewan snapped, and a low growl rumbled in Carlo’s throat.

Ewan had two children of his own, Brody and Norah, so he understood the pain I felt.

“Children?” Lukasz Bakula gasped, then cursed in Polish. “We do not mess with children. They are innocents.”

I hadn’t even realized the call was still connected.

“I don’t even aim for alphas if they have children,” Luca Soldado from Spain replied. “Not unless I have to. Children didn’t ask to be born, so they shouldn’t be targeted.”

“Oh, my god, Jesse...” Hazel sighed sadly. “I’m so sorry.”

“We will go for every bastard behind this, sir,” Carlo growled.

“Agreed,” Wyatt snapped. “Jesse, you’ve looked out for us, and now we’ll look out for you. They cannot get away with this. The Asian agency has run like damn cowards into the arms of the human government, and now look what’s happened.”

“Do you think so?” Lucasz asked.

“Of course, I do,” Wyatt replied.

“Me, too,” Guillaume Baudet spoke up. “We are a secret branch of the government, but that doesn’t mean no one knows about us. There have been times where I’ve had to speak to the DGSE, the French Intelligence Agency, if there have been issues with shifters in my country. But going to the human government is a clever move, although dangerous for the rest of us. The humans will obviously be watching this man’s announcement, and they’re likely to believe every word they’re told. But the shifters will be influenced by whatever is said as well. So they’ve covered both sides here.”

It made sense, and although I had been told by the FBI that shifter business was my business to sort out, and they didn’t want to be too involved if they didn’t have to be, it didn’t mean they weren’t going to get involved if a major threat had been unleashed.

After all, it was their job to keep everyone safe.

“Whenever I’ve spoken to the Direction Generale de la Sécurité Extérieure, they know to keep their mouths shut unless I say otherwise,” Guillaume continued. “But I am in charge when it comes to shifter issues and threats, and what I

say goes, so it'll be the same with the Chinese government and the Asian agency, too. They wanted to get their message across, so they chose the smartest and quickest way to do just that. But in regards to the DGSE, I've already received emails discussing this video, so it'll be the same across the world, I'm sure."

"Great..." Ewan sighed as he rubbed his tired eyes.

"Where is the Asian agency based, does anyone know?" Elton Nilsson asked. "Because wherever it is, I'm tempted to storm those gates right now."

"I don't think anyone knows the address," Guillaume Baudet said with his clear French accent. "The agency made us believe they were new, so no official location has ever been posted. But I imagine Japan, maybe even Singapore."

"Beijing," Dernov mumbled. "Each country has own base, but main Asian Shifter Agency headquarters in Beijing, China."

The two men around the desk glanced over at me, and Ewan gave me a knowing nod.

Dernov didn't have to offer the location, but the fact he'd offered us private information allowed us to see that the



Russian was on our side.

“Then let’s go!” Elton shouted through the speakers.

“Thank you, Dernov, and everyone else,” Ewan replied. “You’ve been a wonderful help. But let’s not do anything rash right now. No one is going anywhere until we’ve all agreed on a plan.”

“But they have to be held accountable,” Hazel said with fire in her voice.

“What if they leak pictures of Jesse’s children next?” Maffeo Lo Rivera asked. “Or what if they aim for us next? We are pinnacles of power among the shifter community. If we are not safe, and if The Alpha’s own family is not safe, then no one is. This has to stop!”

I balled my hands into fists until the white of my knuckles bled through my skin.

“If they do, they’re all going to die,” I growled at the Italian. “I’m already very tempted to unleash war right now, and that’s without them posting pictures of my children.”

“Right, okay, we’re going to get to the bottom of this,” Ewan said. “We’re going to find out who took those pictures, human or shifter, and we’ll deliver the appropriate

punishment, trust me. But for now I think we need to watch this video and hear exactly what that fucker in the suit has to say.”

“I agree,” Carlo added. “I think we should end the call now, but we can start it up again if we have to discuss anything once we’ve all watched it.”

Part of me still couldn’t quite believe what had happened in the span of only a few minutes. I couldn’t even recall what we were discussing before this news broke.

But now I had a human government putting out statements about shifters, with pictures of myself in the background, and if our suspicions were correct, then this meant the Asian agency was gaining more power and control by going to the human government in the first place.

So even though I was scared to watch the video, there was no way I was going to seek revenge, or even make the appropriate moves, until I heard every word they had to say.

“I think I’ll stay on the line,” Hazel said softly. “But please try not to worry, Jesse. We’ll get to the bottom of this.”

“Thank you.” I scratched the palm of my left hand.

I wished I had Hazel there in person, or any of my omegas, but knowing that Hazel was still on the line, offering her support through her words, was almost enough to calm me down.

Ewan ended the call with a few clicks on his laptop, and then he loaded up the news article we had all received. The man in the suit turned out to be the Chinese State Councilor for the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China.

“Right...” Ewan sighed. “You ready?”

“Not really,” I snorted humorlessly. “But let's get this shit over and done with.”

“I think you might need a drink after all, Ewan,” Carlo mumbled.

“Aye, you might be right.” Ewan nodded, but then he squeezed the back of his neck before he played the video.

I rolled my shoulders in an attempt to ease the tension, and then I cracked my knuckles as the Asian man started talking.

He spoke solely in Mandarin, but a man dubbed over the speech in perfect English.

“Like the rest of the world, we were stunned to see videos of people turning into birds and tigers.” The State Councilor hit his podium with one fist. “We hoped it was a hoax, or perhaps false propaganda, but new information has come to light. The information we’ve gathered has, unfortunately, given us the answers we were looking for. And I’m standing here today to tell the world that these so-called ‘shifters’ are real. Just as real as you and me.”

A low mumble rolled through the off-screen audience, and flashes of light hit off the State Councilor as hundreds and thousands of pictures were taken. The camera shutters sounded like tiny pieces of glass falling onto a solid surface, but I tried to block that out as much as I could.

“It’s recently been revealed that these creatures refer to themselves as ‘shifters’ due to their unique ability to shift into a variety of animals.” The man gave the camera a light shrug, like it was all some giant shock to him, but it seemed almost rehearsed. “The videos on the internet aren’t the only pieces of evidence we have, nor is it the only footage, either. We have proof that these videos are real. We also know that the first set of videos, where people ‘shifted’ into birds, were shot in a remote town in Canada, and the most recent set, where the

tigers were involved, were filmed in different locations in Scotland. But that's only two countries out of the entire world. Who knows how many shifters are out there?"

The man paused for a second to allow the audience to react accordingly.

"However, I am not just here to reveal that information to you," he sighed. "I need to warn you all. The people of China, and everyone else across the world, must understand that these shifters are not to be taken lightly. They are violent, feral, and murderous creatures who care about no one other than themselves. They kill for menial territorial disputes, apparently, and no one is safe. They are not human, so do not treat them like they are. They are a threat to our very way of life."

A chill ran down my spine as I imagined hearing this as a human.

This bastard was bringing our worst nightmares to life, and all over the world, humans and shifters alike were hanging on his every word.

But what he said next made my blood turn to ice in my veins.

“There is one to be feared the most,” the man declared with an almost unhinged look directly into the camera. “He apparently goes by the title of ‘The Alpha,’ and he only wants one thing. Power. He is tearing his way across the globe as I speak, claiming more territory and murdering everyone in his path.”

“He’s talking bullshit, sir!” Carlo exclaimed.

But I kept my mouth shut.

All I could do was watch as the two pictures of me filled the entire screen.

“This is Jesse Rafe,” the State Councilor said. “From what I’ve learned, he originates from Oregon in the United States of America, and he cannot be trusted. Look at these pictures. He looks like a regular man, but then he shifts into this monster. With claws and teeth sharp enough to slice through bone. It’s like something from your nightmares. He is trying to create an uprising, a shifter army with him as the leader. The Alpha is collecting these evil, murderous creatures, and men like him are never satisfied. He also claims to be the ‘Great Reuniter,’ but I see no reuniting here. I see a man who’ll trick and manipulate anyone he comes across. He doesn’t care whether you are human or ‘shifter.’ Jesse Rafe

will freely kill anyone who stops him from getting what he's truly after. And we have seen such hatred before. Too many times in history, have monsters like this been allowed to get too far in their evil schemes. So we have to stop him first! We have to put an end to his plans before a global war breaks out! A war we are unlikely to win.”

The video ended with the man leaving his podium. The cameras still flashed, and the crowds' mumbles sounded scared and angry. But if they were angry, then I didn't even know how to describe the shared emotion in Ewan's office.

Carlo launched out of his chair as he began to pace around the room, and he spat several Italian curse words as he punched the air and slapped his thighs. Ewan fell forward in his seat and wrapped both arms around his head, but I just sat there and stared at the paused image of an empty podium.

I almost couldn't believe what that guy said, and how easy it was for him to fool the crowd, and potentially the world, into thinking I was some manic serial killer.

I thought I'd felt anger before when I went up against the alphas who harmed my omegas before I brought them to safety.

I thought I was angry when I had to face my parents' killer, Theo Finch.

And I thought I was angry seconds before the video started when I imagined pictures of my children being leaked across the internet.

But as I heard and translated the bullshit that came from that man's mouth when he essentially turned the entire world against me, I realized that anger didn't just come in the form of a red face and steam blowing from my ears. Nor was it punching walls and kicking over furniture.

I realized that anger also caused me to become completely immobilized. I saw nothing apart from the laptop screen, and I heard nothing apart from the blood as it rushed to my ears. I ground my teeth together, my jaws were tense and locked in place, and I felt like I wasn't going to feel a hint of relief again until I was covered in the blood of everyone involved with broadcasting that statement.

Yet the more I thought about everything that just happened, the more the anger started to fade, and in its place was a sense of fear I'd rarely felt before.

I'd already told my betas to keep a close eye on the rented houses, and the rest of my pack back at home either



knew about the statement, or they were going to hear about it when they woke up. But it still scared me that something could happen, even with ultimate protection.

I was scared for my pack and my family, but not just from the human side of things.

I'd already seen how some shifters reacted to the power I naturally carried with me.

If shifters on a mass scale believed everything they just heard and decided to take me out, there was nothing stopping them from aiming for my children, my omegas, and my enormous mixed pack first. They'd probably keep me until last, just to make me suffer.

The news hadn't stated that I was in Edinburgh, so maybe that could work in my favor. But with my name and face out there, all it took was for one person to spot me, and then the rest of the world would know exactly where I was.

However, despite the lies that motherfucker spread, the State Councilor was right about one thing.

I was The Alpha, and a bunch of assholes on the other side of the world may have started a war, but I knew how to fucking finish one.

“Jesse,” Hazel’s voice tore me away from my thoughts, and my red vision began to clear slightly when I heard her sweet voice. “Jesse?”

“Sorry,” I said with a shake of my head. “I was... just thinking over everything.”

“I understand,” the tone she used made it sound like she was smiling sadly at me. “Are you okay, Jesse? God, how I wish I was there right now.”

“Me, too,” I agreed. “And... Yeah, I suppose I’m as ‘okay’ as I can be. I just need to work out what the hell I’m going to do next. I’m going to have to somehow clear my name, keep everyone around me safe, and also work out what the fuck I’m going to say to my human friends and professors back at home.”

I hadn’t even thought about college until that fact left my mouth.

It had been twenty-four hours since I sent my professors emails to say that I was still unwell, but they were all going to learn the truth as soon as they turned on the TV. I’d worked so hard in every class, and I’d sailed through every semester without any issues.

Of course, I didn't need to complete my courses and gain my degree, but I'd just started my last academic year before graduation, and there was no way I was going to drop out now.

Not unless they forced me out, which was absolutely a possibility if a whole fucking country singling me out as a mass murderer had anything to say about it.

Jesus Christ, no one who knew me as human would ever understand this.

How would I bounce back from this?

"I can't believe they had the nerve to blame you for such crimes, sir!" Carlo shouted as he continued to pace the floor. "It was one accusation after another, and I won't stand for it!"

I was surprised he hadn't created a hole in the red tartan carpet.

"I know everything seems dauntin' right now," Ewan sighed and scratched his forehead. "But believe me when I say that you won't be alone in this, Jesse. It actually could'nae have happened at a better time, given that we were on the phone to powerful, allied alphas and Heads of Agencies, ken.

We will do what we can, and we won't back down until your name has been cleared and justice has been served. Now, I'm no gonnae go all Scottish on ye, and shout fuckin' 'freedom' from the top of my lungs. But just imagine this is a scene from *Braveheart*, despite how inaccurate that film is, ken. We will get you this freedom, Jesse."

"Thanks, Ewan." I managed a smile. "Shall we start getting the blue and white face paint now?"

"Aye, 'course," he replied with a small smirk. "And don't even think about thanking me. This is nae bother to me, 'cause I know you'd do the same thing if the shoe was on the other foot."

"I didn't just come here for a vacation," I told him. "And it was the same in Canada, too. Wyatt needed my help with the avians, and I didn't think twice before I offered him some assistance. It's what we do for each other."

"Which is why I'm gonnae do whatever the fuck I can." Ewan nodded. "Even if that just means supplying you with enough alcohol to keep you constantly pissed as a fuckin' newt. I'm kiddin' on, I'm kiddin' on. But when it comes to me, there's always a bottle of something on the side."

I had a feeling I would have found everything extremely difficult to cope with if I didn't have Ewan's fun, almost casual approach to life right beside me. He knew to take this seriously, and he didn't hide his true emotions, but he was the definition of an optimist.

"But where do we start?" Carlo asked as he returned to his seat.

"Is there anything I can do?" Hazel queried.

"Just being there is enough," I told her. "But I'll probably need you to get in contact with my east coast betas for me. If anyone finds out where I'm from, they could charge Monroe and kill off every beta they come across. So Monroe and Everleigh essentially need to go into lockdown."

"Lockdown?" Carlo frowned.

"Yes." I nodded, and I heard Hazel typing through the speakers, so I assumed she was taking notes. "Monroe is a shifter-based town, and it's where I live. No one is allowed in or out of that town before my betas have checked them over. It's now my top priority to keep it safe. So I want every available beta to travel over there immediately. Every inch of land will be covered, and I want patrol groups in the air and on

land. Hazel, I also need you to try and get in contact with someone, if it's at all possible."

"Who?" she asked.

"Hydra." I smirked. "She's a selkie beta, an orca, to be exact. We came across her and her pod while on the superyacht between Oregon and Vancouver Island. She knows me, the real me, and maybe she can help. If I could have the orcas in the sea around Monroe, and maybe get a few seals to help them, too, we can have land, sea, and air covered. Of course, it could be hard to track her down, but we need to do everything we can."

"Yes, I have Hydra's file up on screen now," Hazel replied. "I'll send someone out to try and locate her, or I'll discuss it with Wyatt in case they travel into Canadian waters."

"Thank you." I smiled.

"Then I'll be dealing with the American human government," Hazel sighed. "They're going to have a fucking field day over this. Hiding the existence of our shifters is sort of our number one job..."

"Shit," I groaned.

“Don’t worry about them,” she said hastily. “I’m a damn good negotiator, and we’re both in positions of power in this country. When it comes to the right branches of the US government, that’s gonna stand for a lot in all of this. You let me handle them.”

“Okay,” I said as I took another steadying breath.

“But what about us, Jesse?” Carlo asked. “Shall we have some of those betas fly over to add to your numbers?”

“Potentially.” I nodded. “But I might have enough with me to do for now.”

“I think it’s quite obvious what you need to do, Jesse.” Ewan leaned back in his seat and peered down on the watch around his right wrist.

“What’s that?” I asked.

“Well, you’re right about Monroe going into lockdown,” he agreed. “But the same needs to happen here, too. If anyone spots you, it could be game over before level one has even begun.”

I instantly caught on to Ewan’s plan, and I couldn’t have agreed more.

I had to hide.

Immediately.





## Chapter 6

Carlo and Ewan instantly kicked into action as they tried to come up with a plan, and Hazel ended the call in order to sort out the mess across the pond.

But I remained motionless in my chair while every thought seemed to hit me at once.

I had to get home, I had to stay home, and that was all without anyone realizing where I was.

I used my bank card in Manchester yesterday, in the mall but also at the Hilton hotel, and that was the last time I'd used it. So if people were that desperate to find me, I hoped our quick trip to Manchester threw them off the scent, and it kept them away from Edinburgh.

As long as I could get back to the rental house, then hopefully everything else would fall into place after that.

I also made sure to swallow back two anosmiac pills, and it was a damn good thing I had an unlimited supply at the rental house.

“Carlo, you’ll need to go and collect the car,” I sighed as I remembered the vehicle wasn’t parked right outside.

“Then I’ll just have to make a quick run for it once you’re outside.”

“You’ll also have to lie behind the seats,” Carlo said anxiously. “Mamma mia...”

“I have a better idea,” Ewan said as he crossed the room and glanced out one of the windows. “Take my car.”

“Your car?” Carlo asked.

“Well, my company car, ken,” the avian explained. “I have a collection of cars ready and waiting for whenever we need them. But they also come in handy whenever I’m up shit creek. They have tinted windows, so no one can see you, and they’re parked in my private car park. The only people who’ll see you get into that car are the people in this building right now, so we can trust them. There are three cars out there right now, so leave me your keys, I’ll give you mine, and we’ll sort something out later to swap them back.”

“Are you sure?” I asked.

“Aye, ‘course.” Ewan nodded. “If you want it, it’s there.”

“Then again, if someone has been watching the house, or maybe even following me, they’d probably know our

license plates,” I added. “So driving around in a different car is probably the smartest option. Just make sure you don’t park the car right outside the house, Carlo, otherwise that could give our game away pretty quickly.”

“I could even drive it right back here and pick up our car?” Carlo suggested.

“You could.” Ewan shrugged. “But I don’t think I need all three cars for the next few days, so you’re good to keep it for now. Let me just check...”

Ewan returned to his desk and checked something on his iMac. He clicked a few buttons and ran his fingers across the touchpad as a frown formed between his eyebrows. But then it softened a moment later.

“Aye, no, you’re all good for now,” Ewan said confidently. “You can keep the car for as long as you need it. Also, don’t worry about where your car is parked right now. I’ll put a permit on the dashboard, and if there are any issues, then I’ll just speak to the council about lifting a fine, or whatever. But you’re all good.”

“Amazing.” I smiled. “Thank you so much, Ewan. I know this isn’t convenient for any of us, but you’ve been a great help today.”

“Hey, I don’t wanna hear it.” Ewan smirked. “Just as long as you’re safe at the end of the day, and we can track down those responsible, then that’s all that matters. I know you’d do the same for me.”

“I would,” I agreed. “But even more so now.”

Ewan gave me one of his winning grins, and then he stood up and tucked his phone into his pocket.

“Right.” He clapped. “Shall we get you out of here?”

“Let’s do it.” I nodded.

The *Mission: Impossible* theme tune played in my head as we left the office and headed back down the tartan-covered stairs that lead to reception.

For a moment, everything felt so normal. It was like another day in the office, and I even caught sight of people casually walking past the building seemingly without a care in the world.

But I knew that if any one of those people caught sight of me right now, all hell would break loose, and my families’ lives, and even my own, would be even more at risk.

It certainly wasn’t just another day in the office.

“I need the keys for the Audi A3,” Ewan said to the sweet receptionist behind the desk. “Mark it down that Carlo Abella has the car at the moment. He’ll be leaving his car here, so make a note that his keys are also on file.”

“Of course, sir,” the lady replied as she opened up a drawer to retrieve the car keys. “Do we have a return time or date I can include on the file?”

“Not yet.” He shook his head. “Just put ‘not applicable.’ But remind whoever is taking over from you to check the file when she starts her shift, and then everyone will be up to date.”

“Yes, sir.” The lady handed over the keys for the Audi, and Carlo did the same with his own keys.

“Usually we try and have the cars back within a couple of days so there’s always one available.” Ewan turned to face us. “But this is different. Just keep me up to date, and don’t worry about returning it until you’re certain you don’t need it anymore. And if anyone complains about that, well... they’ll have me to deal with.”

“And we wouldn’t want that,” Carlo chuckled.

Even though Ewan was an optimist, and he always had a smile or a smirk on his face, I also knew the guy meant business. I imagined he was probably terrifying when he needed to be, especially if he rarely allowed his anger to show.

Once the keys and cars had been sorted out, Ewan led us down a small hallway toward the back of the building, and we followed the tartan carpet until we came to a solid steel door. There was a small keypad on the wall to the left, and after Ewan had pressed the memorized buttons, the door unlocked with a loud click.

“I’ll open the gates for you, and then just follow the road to the right and it’ll lead you out onto George Street again,” Ewan explained as we crossed the private parking lot.

The black Mercedes, BMW, and Audi were all lined up neatly, but there was enough space for at least two more cars, so I assumed they were already in use somewhere.

“Thanks again, Ewan,” I said as I shook his hand. “I know you told me not to say it, but you’ve honestly been a great help.”

“I’m just lookin’ out for my own kind.” He smiled. “Get on the road, and don’t hesitate to give me a ring if you need anything.”

“Thanks, I won’t,” I replied.

Carlo climbed into the driver’s seat, and then I took a seat in the back of the Audi while Ewan walked over to the double gates and unlocked them with another keypad.

I gave the avian alpha a small wave as we drove past him, even though he couldn’t see into the car, and everything felt even more real as we drove back onto George Street again.

I knew no one could see me, and everyone around us were probably too concerned about completing their mundane tasks, or getting from A to B. But there was a part of me that felt like everyone knew where I was, or who was hiding in that car.

“How are you doing, sir?” Carlo asked as we came to a halt in front of a set of traffic lights.

“It’s like you can read my mind,” I snorted.

“Usually I can,” he replied. “I can sense the tense atmosphere, you know that. But don’t worry, Jesse. We’ll be home soon, and then we can plan what we’re going to do as a pack.”

“You’re right, we will.” I nodded. “That reminds me. I should probably reply to those messages I’ve received.”



“I’ll leave you to it,” Carlo said with a small nod of his head.

The Italian werecoyote messed around with the car radio while I fished out my phone and checked the mountain of missed calls and messages I’d received.

I called my omegas first to reassure them that I was okay. They were all freaking out, which wasn’t a shock to me, but Benji and Aunt Eva were doing everything they could to keep everyone calm and settled.

Apparently Arielle had baked three batches of various cookies because she was stressed, but then Blair, Nikita, and Hailey ate one batch between them because they were stressed, too.

Because Ivy wasn’t allowed to leave the house and hunt innocent squirrels, she used her sketch pad to let out her anger. Azalea and Lian completed a heavy-duty workout because that always made them feel better, and Caitlin lost herself in a book in an attempt to calm herself down.

I was glad they all had their interests and hobbies to help them, especially because shifting was totally out of the question right now. But like with Hazel, just hearing their

voices was enough to help keep me calm and grounded, and I knew I would have been lost without them.

I had a few messages from my betas back home, and they had already started the process to keep Monroe and Everleigh as safe as possible. A couple of them asked what I was going to do about college and my human friends back at home, but I hadn't thought that far ahead.

At least it was the middle of the night in Oregon, so I hoped I had time to think of a plan before my friends, and maybe even my professors started calling.

Road work in the center of Edinburgh caused a slight delay. It was something to do with the tram lines, but thirty minutes after we left the headquarters, we arrived back at the rental house.

My family knew to expect me, so as soon as I thanked Carlo for his help, I jumped from the car and rushed into the house as quickly as I could. Carlo was going to drive around for a bit before he returned to his own rental house, but at least it seemed as though we'd completed the first part of our plan without any problems.

“Oh, my god, Jesse,” Caitlin gasped as she ran over to me.

“Jesse, Jesse, Jesse,” Hailey sniffed back her tears.

Within seconds, all eight of my omegas had their arms around me, and they all spoke at exactly the same time.

“What are we going to do?” Blair asked.

“Who do I have to kill for you, Alpha?” Ivy tightened her arms around my waist.

“I’ve never been so scared,” Nikita mumbled. “And that says a lot given how Cooper was born.”

“Oh, Jesse,” Arielle muttered through her tears. “Are you okay?”

“Heads are going to fucking roll...” Azalea growled.

“Is there anything we can do for you, Jesse?” Lian asked. “Or do you just need time to yourself right now?”

“But when do we get to kill these outsiders?” Ivy questioned. “I’m itching to get my hands on a spear...”

“Okay, okay.” Aunt Eva stepped forward and gently hushed everyone. “Nothing is going to be sorted if we’re all talking at the same time. Let’s allow Jesse to sit down, and then we’ll go over everything.”

“I’m sorry, Aunt Eva.” Hailey bowed her head and tucked some of her blonde-and-brown hair behind her ear. “We’re just so worried.”

“I know you are, dear.” Aunt Eva cupped my omega’s cheek. “We’re all worried, but let’s tackle this together.”

I gave them all a hug, Benji gave me a brotherly slap on the back, and then we made our way toward the living room, but two little arrivals stopped me before I entered the room.

“Are we in trouble, Jesse?” Zac asked as he glanced up at Chloe who stood right behind him. “Mom said we are.”

I dropped down to his height and enveloped the kids in my arms. I held onto them tightly like they were my lifeline, and I made a silent promise that I wouldn’t let anything happen to any of my children, regardless of whether they were biologically mine or not.

“Things aren’t good,” I told them honestly. “There are some people who don’t like me, and that hasn’t left us in a good position. But I’m going to do everything I can to sort it out.”

“But what did you do wrong?” Zac frowned. “You only help people. You helped Mom, and then you helped us. So

what have you done wrong?”

It must have been so confusing for someone of Zac’s age. The kid was eleven, and he knew little bits about what went on, but he hadn’t experienced a proper shifter life yet, so it must have felt so foreign to him.

“Sometimes you don’t have to do anything wrong,” I replied. “No matter how hard you try, you can’t please everyone in the world. But it’s the way you handle these issues that’s important. I plan to show these people that they’ve made a mistake, but I’ll do that in the right way.”

I planned on killing every single person who threatened my family, and who started this mess in the first place. And I planned on being as creative as possible.

But I didn’t tell Zac that much.

“C’mon, Zac.” Chloe patted her brother on the shoulder. “We can talk about it in the living room.”

“Okay,” Zac mumbled as he plodded into the room.

“Hey.” I caught Chloe’s arm before she followed on behind her brother. “Thank you. I might need you to keep an eye on him for the time being, and your mom, too.”

“I know.” Chloe gave me a small smile. “Zac annoys me, and we fight most of the time, but he’s still my brother. Mom’s the same. I’ll even let her give me all her hugs and kisses if it makes her feel better.”

She rolled her eyes, but I knew Chloe secretly loved her mother’s hugs and kisses.

“You’re a good kid.” I gave her a quick hug. “Maybe you aren’t as annoying as I first thought.”

“Hey!” Chloe laughed as she slapped my stomach.

“What? It was a compliment.” I winked, and then I nudged her toward the door. “C’mon, you’re holding everyone up.”

Chloe gave me a dramatic side-eye, but then she smiled and went to take her place beside Zac on the couch.

The room fell into silence as I took my seat in between Hailey and Lian, and no one said a word until I had Cooper in my arms.

My son was peacefully asleep, and for a second I almost felt jealous that all he had to worry about was when someone was going to change his diaper, or when he was going to receive his lunch.

I explained everything as best I could. I started off by telling everyone how the call went with the other alpha Heads of Agencies, and then what happened when the news broke.

I told them how Dernov Vladimirovich had offered to help us over in Russia, and that he was going to sneak around the Asian agency like our very own Russian spy, which both Zac and Benji thought was “soooo coool!”

But the mention of the Asian agency caused Aunt Eva to ask the question we were all thinking.

“So did the agency speak out to the human government?” She frowned.

“That’s what it seems like, yes.” I nodded. “Even if the government came across this information on their own, they would have reached out to the Asian agency for more information, or for clarification. Or the agency reached out first, and then the humans agreed to create this problem for me.”

“Then what do we do now?” Nikita asked.

“There’s no denying the existence of shifters anymore, that’s for sure.” Benji rubbed his forehead with two fingers.

“No, there’s not.” I shook my head. “So unless the world can accept who we are, and who I am, then we’ll probably need to adapt to a new way of life. But in order for them to accept us, they’ll need to see that everything the Chinese government said was garbage, which looks somewhat impossible right now.”

“But what does ‘adapting to a new way of life’ mean?” Arielle frowned. “It makes me think we’ll have to stay hidden, or be cautious of when we shift, hunt, and fight. That sort of thing. But we already do all of that. We don’t shift if there are humans around, so that wouldn’t change.”

“You’re right, Arielle,” Caitlin agreed. “Unless our fights and wars need to come to an end, which I’m totally okay with.”

“Well, Jesse is the Great Reuniter.” Blair shrugged. “So ending these feuds between the shifter species is exactly what Jesse plans to do, and needs to do anyway.”

“To be honest, I’m not sure what adapting would involve right now,” I replied. “That’ll be something to keep in mind for later, but it seems likely that we’ll need to change our way of life at some point.”



“And what are we going to do about the agency?”

Azalea asked. “We have to take them down.”

“With the right information at hand, I could probably make some lethal weapons.” Ivy shrugged with a straight face. “I could make their deaths look like an accident. Or I could make some homemade bombs. Something like that.”

“Bombs!” Zac gasped. “Cooooool!”

“Don’t even get me started.” Caitlin gave her son a pointed look. “If there are bombs, you’ll be as far away from them as possible.”

“We will take them down,” I said matter-of-factly. “I don’t know how, or when that’ll happen. But I won’t keep them around for long after all of this.”

“I’m not sure if this will help, but I called my parents earlier,” Lian said while she pulled the sleeves of her hoodie over her hands. “They know I’m with you now, and they called me back, as soon as they saw the news. But don’t worry, they’re so grateful I’m here, and they know I’m safe with you.”

“Thank god,” I let out a short, relieved laugh. “The world hating me is one thing. Let alone your parents, too.”

“No, don’t worry, they’re happy for me.” Lian smiled. “But they did offer us a place to stay in their house. I know that means heading into China, which is probably the last place you want to be right now, but they want to help The Alpha as much as they can. So we have a place to go if we need it.”

“Awww.” Hailey placed her hands over her chest. “Lian, your parents honestly sound like the sweetest people ever...”

“I’m very lucky to have them,” the omega replied.

“Can you thank them for me?” I asked, to which Lian nodded. “I won’t completely brush off the idea just yet, because we might need to get into China at some point. And I’m just grateful for anyone who can offer their assistance.”

“Is there anything we can do right now?” Benji asked. “Or will it be a case of hunkering down, doing what we can, and just staying safe until further notice?”

“Right now, that’s what it feels like.” I nodded. “The pack back at home knows to keep Monroe and Everleigh safe, and they’ll have land, air, and sea covered. But the same will happen here, too. I’ll ask the betas to buy food and slyly drop it off at the house, and we’ll always have patrol groups keeping watch. I’ll also need to get in contact with Arthur

Mordaine, if he doesn't get in contact first. I think I need my lawyer more than ever right now."

"Arthur seems to know everyone," Nikita said. "Even if his lawyer skills don't come into play, he can try and get the truth out there just by using the pies he has his fingers in."

"You could also ask Parker to help you, Alpha," Arielle suggested. "He's your only human friend who knows about your secret. Or up until now he was, I suppose. But maybe because he knows, he can help others understand."

"That's a great idea, Arielle," Aunt Eva replied with a smile. "We have connections, so let's utilize them as much as we can."

All of a sudden, a car engine was heard rolling past the house before it came to a stop, and our conversation ended as we focused on the noise.

*Looks like you have a visitor, Alpha, Lachlan told us silently. Two men. I don't recognize either of them, or the car they're driving. Pretty sure they're human, or they could have masked their scents like we have. Want me to see what they're after?*

Lachlan was one of the Scottish ravens who only recently joined our pack after Shen Shui killed their alpha, Donald Robertson.

And so far I was thoroughly impressed with their talents.

*Let's just keep watch for now, I replied. We don't want to draw attention to the place unless I have to.*

*Nae bother, Jesse, Lachlan replied. The men are dawdling up the pavement, ken, so they might just be— Oh, no, they're headed right for your door now.*

Seconds after Lachlan's silent words settled, a soft knock came from the front door.

All of the curtains were closed, so we were safe in the living room. But Benji gave me a small nod as he pushed himself off the couch and left the room.

I heard the soft click as the door was unlocked, and then I heard a mumble as Benji spoke to the men outside.

*Dude, his silent voice slipped through my mind. It's the cops.*

*Fuck, I spat.*

I was essentially a serial killer by human standards, and I knew from experience that the cops didn't quite care for shifters in the States, nor did they overly appreciate the countless number of killings I'd committed.

So if the police in the UK acted the same way, then their arrival was the last thing I needed.

However, they must have been undercover cops, otherwise Lachlan would have immediately told me if he saw the blindingly obvious uniforms. So the fact they hid who they were made me think they didn't want to draw attention to the house.

*Are you good to talk to them?* Benji asked.

*Yeah, let them in,* I sighed.

If the cops were on my side, or wanted to help, then I wasn't going to turn them away.

They also had the means to come into the house if they desperately needed to, which I'd have to comply with. So there was no point in turning them away.

"Chloe, Zac, come here." Caitlin patted the spare seat beside her. "Let's leave room for the men to sit down."

“Do you want us to go into the kitchen, Jesse?” Aunt Eva asked. “Or do you want us to be here when you talk to them?”

“You can stay here,” I replied. “There’s no reason to have a private conversation with them. Plus, I like the company.”

Chloe tucked herself in beside her mother, and then Caitlin pulled Zac onto her lap and wrapped her arms around him.

There was enough space for both of the men to sit down, but as they walked into the room, only one of them took a spot on the couch.

The cops stood at roughly the same height, but the man who took a seat had quite a noticeable belly compared to the other. They also wore matching blue jeans, and the same black, waterproof Helly Hansen jackets. So either undercover cops were told to wear that uniform, or it was a strange coincidence that both men pulled the same clothes from their closets that morning.

“Mr. Rafe,” the man on the couch said in a soft, Scottish accent as he opened out his ID card. “My name is PC David Heathers, and this is my partner, PC Owen Saunders. We’re

from the Forth Valley Police Department, and Saunders and I would just like to have a wee word with you, if that's alright?"

I glanced up at Owen and caught sight of his Police Constable ID, too.

"Yeah," I tried to muffle my sigh as best I could. "I think we all know what this is about."

"Aye, I think you're right," David replied. "Your, er... Well, your face is everywhere I look right now."

*Wonderful...* Benji muttered silently.

"So you clearly know... who I am." I rubbed the back of my neck. "But how much do you actually know about me?"

"We know who you are," the constable replied. "That you're... shifters."

Just like with the FBI, the cop in front of me hesitated when it came to the word.

I also wasn't sure if Owen Saunders was going to say anything, or if he was just in the room as a witness.

"We also spoke to Ewan Miller," David Heathers continued. "He was the one who told us your address, and he had nothing but wonderful things to say about you."

“He and I have formed a close friendship,” I replied.

“He said the same thing.” David nodded. “We’ve worked with Mr. Miller a couple of times in the past, so we know to take his word.”

“So you’re not here to point fingers?” I joked lightly. “That’s good to hear.”

“No, we’re not,” the constable replied. “We aren’t going to do anything to you, Jesse. Neither myself, nor the rest of the police department, so you’re quite safe in Scotland when it comes to us. For now.”

“For now.” I nodded.

“And because of that, we need to make a few things clear,” David continued. “This whole... shifting business. None of that can happen. Even if you think you’re completely alone, don’t even think about... shifting or... hunting.”

“I hadn’t planned on doing that,” I said with complete honesty. “We know the risks, so even though it’s in our blood to shift, and it’ll be like fighting off a serious addiction, we know to control those urges for now.”

“Good, that’s good.” David nodded. “Because even though I’m personally not going to do anything, I can’t speak



for everyone in this country. I also can't speak for the police forces across the UK. I'm pretty sure people won't be best pleased if they find out where you are, and I doubt it'll take them long to find you. So if a situation unfolds, or escalates, the police will be forced to intervene for the safety and peace of mind of the residents. And they'll come first, Mr. Rafe."

It didn't take a genius to read between the lines, and I caught on to what David was saying pretty quickly.

There could be riots if people found out where I was. Riots started by both humans and shifters, and I wasn't going to be at the top of the protection list.

It also wasn't going to take long for people to find out where I was, which meant that even though I was safe when it came to the police, I wasn't completely safe in Scotland. And my safety net could break at any moment.

We needed to leave the country as quickly as we could.

"Where do we go?" I asked.

"That's for you to figure out." David shrugged. "Like I said, you're safe with us for now, but it might not be the same everywhere you go. England, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland... They all might think differently, and no amount of

praise from me is going to change their minds if they're set in their ways."

I needed to have another discussion with Ewan and maybe there were a few strings he could pull. I knew Ewan would do everything he could to keep the human government on my side, but like David Heathers said, the police had to stop things going south with their citizens, and I was just some shifter who flew into their country and disrupted everything.

"Thank you," I said to the constables. "I appreciate your help, and for you coming by the house to talk to me."

"We'll do what we can, Mr. Rafe, but only within reason," David said as he pulled himself off the couch. "I'll leave you with my number in case you need to give me a ring, but just try and find somewhere safe for you all to go."

"I will." I nodded. "Thanks."

"You have a young family." David motioned toward Cooper, and then behind him at Chloe and Zac. "I don't fully understand 'shifters,' and I don't think I ever will, but I do understand privacy and safety."

"That's the main thing I'm thinking about right now," I sighed, and then I gave the men a tight smile.

Benji walked them back to the front door, and it felt like none of us took a breath until the door was locked and bolted.

“What are we going to do?” Blair slumped into the side of the couch. “Leaving Edinburgh is one thing, but leaving Edinburgh without anyone seeing us is totally different.”

“We’ll need to go undercover,” Hailey mumbled. “Maybe even use fake names, fake IDs.”

“Hats, sunglasses, maybe even wigs...” Nikita sighed.

“Maybe not all of us,” Arielle said with a hint of positivity in her tone. “Jesse’s picture was leaked, but ours weren’t. The public might not even know who we are if we walk down the street. Not like I’m going to do that, but you know what I mean.”

“Not that we know of,” Caitlin amended. “They could have pictures of us and we just don’t know about it yet.”

“Yes.” Arielle nodded. “But right now it might be easier for Jesse to sneak around from place to place if he’s the only one that needs to stay hidden.”

“You have a point,” I replied. “But the risks are too high, so I don’t want to just assume no one knows you’re with me.”

“That’s exactly what I was going to say,” Benji added.

“We also have to think about two of the biggest issues here...” I pointed between Arielle and Blair. “It won’t be long before the two of you give birth. Arielle, if our child is anything like Cooper, you could have a child within the month. So if we’re to go into hiding, what happens when you go into labor?”

Arielle’s eyes widened, and she hugged her large bump with both arms.

“Let’s not think about that just yet.” Aunt Eva stood up and looked at everyone in the room. “We need to think about what’s going to happen tomorrow before we can think about what’ll happen in a week, or in a month.”

“What is going to happen tomorrow?” Benji frowned.

“Exactly, who knows?” Aunt Eva shrugged. “But we also can’t focus or plan anything properly without the right amount of energy. So how about we have some lunch, and then we can return to the drawing board later?”

“I’ll never say no to food,” Hailey chuckled.

“My stomach won’t stop rumbling,” Lian laughed.

“Is there still some of that vegetable soup left?” Arielle asked. “That would be delicious with the gluten free sourdough loaf I made this morning.”

There was so much to think about, and so many questions remained unanswered, but at least my family could get some enjoyment out of a quick lunch, or gluten free sourdough bread.

However, the tension was only going to appear again soon, so I needed to try and relax as much as I could before we stepped back onto the metaphorical roller coaster.

“While you guys have lunch, I’m going to take a shower,” I announced. “But don’t eat all of that soup. It sounds pretty good.”

“Of course, Alpha.” Arielle smiled.

“Well, then you’ll need to hurry up,” Benji cackled.

“Because like Lian, my stomach is also rumbling.”

“Your stomach is always rumbling,” Caitlin chuckled.

“Exactly,” Benji replied. “So Jesse needs to hurry up.”

I didn’t plan on taking long in the shower, I just wanted to allow the hot water to soothe out my tense muscles.

However, I quickly realized that wasn't going to be the case as soon as I arrived in the bathroom.

And Nikita and Blair stepped in behind me.



## Chapter 7

“We missed you, Alpha.” Nikita traced the curve of my jaw with the back of her hand.

“I missed you both, too,” I replied. “More than you even realize.”

“Hmm...” Blair smirked as she stood beside Nikita and placed one hand on the werecat’s shoulder. “We’ll see about that.”

I glanced between my two omegas and the identical coy smiles on their faces. They occasionally peered over at each other, and Nikita’s teal eyes glistened with excitement before she gave Blair a soft nod.

My omegas loved to secretly plan their moments with me, and it was just one of the benefits of being able to block others from our thoughts when we needed to have private conversations.

“Let us help you, Jesse,” Nikita said while her hands whispered down my sides until they came to a stop at the hem of my hoodie. “You’ve been through a lot, so we want to try and make it... easier for you.”



“Sooo much easier, Alpha.” Blair winked.

Before I could ask them what their plans were, Nikita pulled my hoodie up my back and over my head in one swift move. Then Blair instantly jumped in and removed my t-shirt while Nikita worked on unbuttoning my jeans.

The two of them shared a few more identical expressions, but I was more focused on how quickly they removed my clothes, and why I was the only naked one in the room.

Fortunately, once my boxers were the last item to remove, my omegas began to strip, too. Nikita made light work of her gray sweatpants before she kicked them across the tiled flooring, and Blair pulled down her leggings so that she was standing in nothing apart from her baggy Motorhead t-shirt.

Well, it was supposed to be a baggy t-shirt, but her expanding bump put that claim to the test. The black cotton stretched across her chest before it stretched again over the widest part of her pregnant stomach, but the rest of the t-shirt was loose and somewhat baggy.

But Blair looked incredible in everything she wore. Especially in nothing but the black bra and matching lace

thong she was now modeling for me.

And it was the same with Nikita, too.

Her breasts were nestled in a red lace bra, and the matching thong she wore hugged her hips and only just covered her pussy.

“Fuck,” I growled as I took in their bodies. “I’m so lucky.”

“We’re the lucky ones, Alpha,” Blair replied softly. “We’re all so lucky to have you.”

“Now, tell us, Jesse,” Nikita took over. “What had you planned to do in the shower? Before we arrived, of course.”

“Well…” I became too distracted to talk when my omegas stepped forward and pressed their bodies against me.

Nikita had her hand dangerously close to the waistband of my boxers, and my cock twitched as Blair ran her nails straight down my spine.

“Yes?” Blair led. “You were saying?”

“I was going to start by washing my hair,” I recovered from their lingering touches.

“Uh-huh...” Nikita licked her bottom lip. “And then your body?”

“Like this?” Blair smirked as her hands moved from my back to my chest.

Nikita’s hands then took a hold of my waist, and the two of them stroked, scratched, and teased my bare chest while I tried to keep a level head.

“Y-Yeah, and then... Oh, Jesus,” I blew out a deep breath.

My cock began to strain against its cotton confinement, which my werecat omegas were quick to notice.

“Keep going, Alpha,” Nikita said with a soft laugh.

“My main reason for...” I winced my eyes closed from the pleasure of Nikita’s touch. “I came up here to ease the knot in my shoulders and my neck.”

The mountain lion’s hand brushed over the obviously bulge in my boxers, and Blair decided to tease my ass at the same time. Her hands remained over the soft cotton, but she used my ass to help press herself closer against me.

But the two of them were still too far away for my liking.

“Do you need a massage, Jesse?” Blair asked sweetly.  
“Do you need us to roll out those muscles for you?”

“Blair’s the best masseuse.” Nikita stood up on her tiptoes and brushed her lips against the shell of my ear. “She has extremely talented hands.”

“You both do.” I smirked.

“You’re not wrong.” She grinned. “But Blair has this... She has this ability to roll out every knot by simply pressing on your pressure points.”

Nikita suckled on my earlobe as she explained exactly what Blair could do. She told me about the talent Blair had in her fingers, and how she used the point of her elbows to really hit the most sensitive areas.

And as she explained all of this, the issue in my boxers became tighter, more strained, and ten times more noticeable.

“I learned from the best,” Blair said innocently, even though the wicked grin on her face told me she was far from innocent. “Azalea’s learned how to heal cramps, muscle strains, and injuries just like that. So she taught me her ways. Sometimes the two of us spend hours in the home gym in Monroe, and Azalea uses that time to show me where to place

my hands... How hard to squeeze, press, and... tease. You should see some of the positions we get into, Alpha.”

I already had images of their positions in my mind, and it only made the bathroom feel hotter and stuffier. An innocent training session with additional massage therapy no longer appeared so innocent, and my omegas knew exactly what they were doing by telling me that story.

“You know what?” Nikita asked with a look of fake shock on her face. “Blair, why don’t you show Jesse what you’ve been learning?”

“Would you like that, Alpha?” Blair tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. “Would you like me to use my hands on you?”

“I, uh... Mhmm...” I wasn’t even sure my mumbles made any sort of sense, but I was surprised I even had the ability to form a response, given everything that was going on inside my body.

I was so distracted by the sudden, overwhelming urges and desires that I didn’t even realize what was happening until my omegas led me toward the large shower, and then Blair turned on the water while Nikita pushed my boxers down my legs.

“Oh, Jesse.” The tip of her tongue poked out between her lips. “I think I know what I’ll be doing with my hands while Blair is working her magic...”

That seemed to snap me out of the strange trance I’d found myself in, and I quickly ordered my omegas to remove their underwear.

Then the two of them let out excited giggles as they darted into the shower, and they watched me with eager eyes as I stepped in after them and closed the glass shower door behind me.

The rental house didn’t come with the biggest shower in the world, and it was nothing like the luxurious, spa-like shower we had in the cabin back in Monroe, but it certainly did the trick. Two of the walls were made from glass, the other two were made of marble, and the same marble tiles ran across the shower floor and the rest of the bathroom.

But the best thing about the shower, apart from the rainfall showerhead that was attached to the ceiling, was that the space was just big enough for three adults to wash themselves at the same time.

Or, in our case, it was large enough for me to tease, worship, and fuck two of my eight omegas without them

having to take turns over who stood in the shower, and who waited not-so-patiently in the bathroom.

That was always a win-win in my eyes.

Even though I could now form a word without sounding like a mumbling idiot, my omegas still decided to take control, and that was more than okay with me.

“Nikita,” Blair said as she came to stand behind me. “Do you think you can keep Jesse distracted while I do my job?”

“I’m sure I can think of something.” Nikita smirked. “What are you thinking, Blair? Shall I be on my knees?”

“Ooh, yes, let me watch you from up here!” Blair placed both hands on my chest and tucked her head against my arm.

“And... are you thinking hands... or mouth?” Nikita asked with a fake frown, like it was the million dollar question.

“Mouth, definitely mouth,” I groaned.

“I have to agree with Jesse.” Blair nodded against my arm. “Definitely your mouth.”

I silently prayed to the big man above as Nikita slowly dropped down to her knees. The water from the shower smacked against my back, but even as a few droplets landed on Nikita, she didn't back away.

She had her eyes firmly focused on my pained cock, and she settled her hands on my ass as she came closer.

While Nikita focused on one area of my body, Blair focused on another. She placed the tab of her thumbs on the base of my neck while she squeezed my shoulders at the same time, and my head automatically fell forward as I felt the pressure of her talented hands.

“Fucking hell,” I sighed under the sound of falling water.

Blair stood off to the side so that she wasn't hit by the hot water, but she still managed to work on the knot with expert precision.

Then, just as I thought it couldn't get any better, Nikita ran the tip of her tongue across the length of my cock, and she lapped up the precum that pooled from my tip before she took my length into her mouth.

“Ahaaaa!” My cry echoed around the bathroom.



“Is that good, Alpha?” Blair whispered in my ear before she caught the lobe between her teeth.

I couldn't even verbally respond. I just nodded my head before it fell forward again.

Nikita's teal eyes stared up at me as she began to bob forward, and she used her left hand to tug on the base of my cock that she couldn't reach with her mouth.

My omegas were a fucking godsend, especially when they both teased my body at the same time.

Once Blair was satisfied with the work she'd done on my shoulders, she pressed her knuckles down the notches of my spine, and she made sure to spend a second or two in each part before she lowered her hand again.

I hadn't even realized how tense I was until I felt the pleasurable pain. I knew my neck and shoulders were tight, but it now felt like my entire body was in a state of discomfort, and Blair did everything she could to relieve the pressure.

My eyes winced closed as Nikita ran her tongue across my cock again, and she squeezed my ass cheeks as she bobbed her head forward, then back, and then suckled on my leaking head.

My hands remained locked in her caramel-colored hair, but I never forced her forward, I held back the urges as I followed Nikita's movements.

An uncountable amount of time seemed to pass by. It was anywhere between five minutes and fifteen, but I was far too focused on my stunning, talented omegas to pay attention to the time we'd been in the shower for.

Everyone downstairs had probably finished their lunch already, but if they knew Nikita and Blair had joined me upstairs, then they knew not to expect us downstairs any time soon.

Which was more than okay with me, because I had no plans of rushing this intimate moment with my omegas.

Blair grasped hold of my sides as she ran her thumbs around in circles, and every time I recovered from that pleasure, Nikita did something to throw my thoughts and actions out the window again.

She suckled on my mushroom head, and she lightly used her teeth to draw a line up my shaft before her tongue would take over.

“Shit, shit, shit,” I panted as my entire body began to tingle.

As soon as Blair finished with her thumbs, she placed her lips against my spine and left a trail of light kisses down my back while her blunt nails scratched at my skin.

Even without Nikita sucking on my needy cock, I probably would have exploded with Blair’s touches alone, and I definitely needed to thank Azalea for the training she gave the werecat.

That mental note caused me to imagine Azalea in the same position, followed by the rest of my lovers, and I suddenly wished the shower was big enough to fit all ten of us in it at the same time.

All of a sudden, as tempting pictures formed in my mind, my balls began to tighten, and I barely had the chance to warn Nikita before my orgasm hit. Streams of cum shot down her throat, and not once did the werecat wince, flinch, or gag on the salty seed as she swallowed back every last drop.

“I love watching her,” Blair said as she watched Nikita drink back my cum. “I don’t think there’s anything hotter than watching someone take your cock like that, Alpha.”

“You’re right there,” I grunted as the last stream expelled from my dick.

Once Nikita had swallowed back every drop, she reluctantly shuffled back across the marble tiles and tapped the corners of her lips with her thumb.

“Now is it my turn, Alpha?” Blair asked innocently.

I slowly turned my head to look at her, and a smirk formed on my face as excitement shone in her honey-colored eyes.

“But the question is...” I cupped her cheek and placed a single kiss on her lips. “Do you want my tongue, fingers, or my cock?”

“Hmm...” She smirked. “Let’s go with your cock.”

“Then turn around and place your hands on the wall,” I growled.

Blair’s entire face lit up as she followed my orders, and she practically pressed herself against the wet tiles as I ran my fingers down her back, across the swell of her ass, and then cupped her pussy in my hand.

“Ooooh!” she cried as I parted her lips with two fingers.

It was no surprise to me that my omega was already soaking wet, and I collected her juices on my fingers as I gently prepared her for what was about to happen.

“What about me, Jesse?” Nikita asked. “What would you like me to do while I watch you fuck Blair?”

It took no time at all for me to come up with my next command.

“I want you to stay exactly where you are,” I said while my eyes roamed across her body. “But you’re going to play with yourself and imagine that your fingers are my cock. I want to see you tremble as you cum, and you’re going to scream out my name as your juices pool in your palm.”

“I think I can do that,” she teased.

“Good.” I grinned.

My fingers never moved throughout that short conversation, and Blair’s sighs and moans of desperation, as well as the juices that dribbled down my hand, were a sure sign that she was more than ready to receive everything I had to offer.

And after a week of being away from Blair and Nikita, I had a shitload to give them.

It had only been a minute since my cock fell from Nikita's lips, but I was already as hard as a fucking rock again, and all it took was a quick tug of my hand to prepare myself.

"Jesse..." Blair pressed herself back until her ass hit against my solid dick. "Fuck, pleeeeeease."

"Yes?" I smirked. One of my arms snaked around her waist and sat under her bump, and the other hand remained firmly gripped around my cock.

"I need you, Alpha," the werecat whimpered. "Please. I need... I need to feel you."

Her hands balled into fists against the tiles, and she dropped her head low like she no longer had the energy to stay standing.

I liked to tease my omegas, and I loved nothing more than when they begged and pleaded for me to fuck them. But I was still partly human, and I could only hold back for so long.

So with that, I parted her entrance with two fingers as I lined up my cock, and then placed one hand on her shoulder as I slammed forward and filled her with one swift thrust.

"Gahaaa!" Blair yelled as she steadied herself against the wall.

“Fuuuuck me,” I groaned.

I held myself in that position for a couple of seconds as I allowed her warm tunnel to stretch and settle around me. But as soon as I knew she was comfortable, I brought my hips back before I slammed in once again. Our echoed groans shattered against the shower walls, and our tempo became louder as my thrusts became harder and faster.

Down on the floor beside me, Nikita arched and rolled her head back as her wandering hand made its way between her legs. I just managed to catch sight of her teasing her pink entrance, and as her fingers slipped inside, her own cries of delight mixed with ours.

I held onto Blair’s hips to keep myself steady, and every time I pushed forward, she pushed her ass back to meet my rhythm. My cock slipped in and out of her tight tunnel with ease, and the wetter my omega became, the easier it was for me to claim her with every inch of my cock.

“Y-Yessss!” Blair let out a shattered cry, and she slapped the damp wall in front of her so hard that it probably would have shattered had it not been made of pure stone.

It was a good thing I decided to take her against the marble wall and not the fragile glass behind me, because

explaining a broken shower to the homeowner would have been rather awkward. Especially as we were all trying to keep a very low profile.

“Oh, oh, shiiiiit!” Nikita called out from the shower floor.

“That’s it,” I grunted as I slammed forward again and again. “Imagine that’s my cock fucking you.”

“Yes, yesssssss!” Nikita raised her hips in the air, and given her jerking movements, had Nikita not been on the floor already, she probably would have fallen when her legs gave out.

I was pulled away from watching Nikita when Blair’s walls clenched around me, and she screamed and begged me to fuck her harder every time I picked up the pace.

And her wish was my command.

I still had to be careful, but just because Blair was heavily pregnant, it didn’t mean she was weak, and she slammed into me almost as hard as I slammed into her.

I slapped her ass with one hand, I massaged her bouncing, sensitive breasts with the other, and I made it my



mission to touch, stroke, and fuck every inch of her body as I could.

“Jesse!” Nikita cried as she came all over her hand.

“Ohooooo...”

Her body trembled, and her eyes softly closed as she battled against the waves of her orgasm.

And Nikita’s orgasm seemed to have a rippling effect, because as soon as she came, Blair’s walls tightened, her entire body began to tense up, and she screamed out my name as she reached her climax and drenched my cock in her juices.

“Fuck,” I grunted as her juices slipped down my leg.

“Fuck, you’re both so beautiful when you come.”

I slapped my skin against hers as hard as I could as I silently begged for my own orgasm to take place. I was pretty sure I’d even left red marks on Blair’s body from where my fingers had been, but sometimes my omegas saw them as badges, and they liked to show off the fact they’d just been recently fucked.

A few agonizing minutes went by, and both Blair and Nikita came again during that time, but the primal beast inside me was still desperate for the knotting process to take place.

But then, before I could lose my shit, I felt my cock grow and swell as it made its way toward her cervix, and the two of us became connected and tied together in the most feral way.

Our shallow pants broke through the sound of the rainfall shower, and I gripped onto Blair's hips slightly tighter than before as our climaxes came into view.

Then, just as my name slipped from Blair's lips, a shot ran down my spine, and my balls tightened as streams of thick cum shot from my cock.

"Ahahaaaa!" Blair rolled her neck and tensed herself around me.

Her body shuddered, and I could just tell her eyes were winced closed with pleasure, and it was one of the most beautiful sights watching my omegas break and squeal as they accepted every droplet of cum.

"Oh, shit, Blair," I said as I tried to fill my lungs with air.

My legs were like jello, stars floated in my eyes, and my heart just about shattered my ribcage, but I was mainly focused on the omega trapped in my arms. Blair let out the

sweetest cries and shrieks as I pumped another round of cum into her, and part of me wished I hadn't taken her from behind in order for me to kiss the fucking life out of her as we remained knotted together.

Fortunately, Nikita was still desperate for her moment with me, and my cock barely had a minute to rest from the moment it slipped out of Blair, to the second I slammed it straight into Nikita.

It would have been no fun if I was human and had to wait for my cock to reload again before I could continue.

It was just another one of the benefits to being an alpha.

Nikita wrapped her legs around my waist and rocked herself against me while I pinned her against the marble wall with my needy cock. Blair still needed a moment to recover, but then she focused on washing our bodies and massaging my back while Nikita and I had our moment.

Blair used the loofah to lather up the body wash, and there was something about the slight scratch of the exfoliator mixed with the scratch of Nikita's nails that caused the primal monster to announce its arrival once again.

My omega and I grunted and groaned as our lips fought for dominance, and her walls caught my cock in a tight fist as she silently begged for me to knot with her.

Just like with Blair, I thought I was going to lose my shit, and it almost felt like I wasn't going to be patient enough to wait for the claiming process to take place.

But just like every time I fucked my omegas, my cock began to swell at exactly the right moment, and Nikita's eyes grew wide with excitement as I filled my stunning werecat omega.

"That's it, give it to me," I ordered as I slammed in a couple more times. "Coat my cock."

"Yessss," she shrieked as she caught her plump lips in between her teeth. "Jesse, Jesse!"

Her hair was a mess from my persistent hands, and Blair's was just the same, but that just caused me to smile, because I was the reason they looked like that.

My breath was deep and labored and my legs trembled, but I slammed up into Nikita once more, and then I held her there against the wall as we waited for our bodies to do the rest.

My name slipped from Nikita's lips as she filled the bathroom with her cries, and she gently rocked herself against our knotted bodies as she rode the waves of her orgasm.

It felt like neither of us were going to recover, and perhaps we'd have to spend the rest of the day stuck against the shower wall, which wouldn't have been a huge issue for me.

But as soon as the knot dissolved between us, and we somehow found the energy to move, I carefully lowered Nikita back down again, and I wrapped my arms around both of my omegas as the now-icy water fell down around us.

"Fuck, I missed you both," I laughed.

"I think it's fair to say we did, too," Blair chuckled.

"Yes, maybe slightly." Nikita winked, and then she laughed at my fake gasp. "Okay, maybe a lot."

"That's better." I smirked.

We reluctantly pulled away from each other when we remembered that we still had to wash our hair before we could leave the shower, and we each poured dollops into our hands as we battled against the freezing water.

“Maybe we should turn the water off next time?” Blair suggested as bubbles soaked down her hair and over her shoulders.

“Where’s the fun in that?” Nikita laughed.

The strong scent of shampoo was nothing in comparison to my omegas’ unique scents. Nikita’s citrus-sweet, and Blair’s honey and vanilla flavors overpowered every other aroma in the room, and I knew that no matter how much time passed, I was still going to react to those scents like it was the first time I’d ever smelled them.

The three of us took our time to dry ourselves off, brush our teeth and hair, and the girls applied some lotion to their bodies while I threw my clothes in the laundry basket before I went back into the bedroom to find a fresh outfit.

But even just the sight of the laundry basket caused my fears and worries from earlier to return.

We knew we had to leave Edinburgh and even Scotland soon, but where did we go from there?

Were we going to leave this evening or in the morning? Did we even have time to do a load of laundry before we

packed up our stuff, or did we just wait until we arrived at the next destination?

Wherever that was going to be.

But the fear of smashing through the shower wall earlier, and the awkward conversation I'd have to have with the owner, reminded me of another issue.

Kiri found and rented these houses for me, so her name was on the booking, but she'd used my card to pay for them. My name had been used for the initial deposit, and the rest of the payment was going to be charged to my card once we'd checked out.

So even though Kiri's name was on the main file, it wouldn't take much to spot my name linked in with the bookings, in which case my current location could have been discovered and spread across from person to person in no time.

It was the same with the car rentals, too. Everything my pack bought or rented during our time in the UK had been charged to my various accounts, and up until now there was no reason why we had to change that.

But now those various companies were going to know where I was living, which cars I had been driving, and it was

only going to cause my issues until I was able to put a stop to the bullshit the Asian agency started.

“Jesse?” Nikita broke me from my whirlwind of thoughts and questions.

“Are you okay, Jesse?” Blair asked.

I turned around to find my omegas standing in the doorway of the bathroom. They were dressed and ready, whereas I was still standing with a pair of boxers in one hand.

I hadn’t even made it to my closet to find an outfit before my overthinking took control.

“I’m fine.” I gave them the best smile I could. “I was just thinking about... Well, everything.”

“We understand.” My omegas stepped forward in unison and brought me in for a hug.

“Some food will help,” Blair said while she handed me the first pair of sweatpants she came across. “Did you have any breakfast?”

I thought back to my shitshow of a morning and realized I hadn’t actually eaten anything all day. Apart from a couple of coffees I’d had, and the shortbread cookies Ewan’s assistant gave us, I hadn’t had a substantial meal since the



McDonald's we ate in the car on our way home from Manchester last night.

“No wonder I'm starving,” I snickered. “Food has been the last thing on my mind until now.”

“Then how about we have a nice bowl of vegetable soup?” Nikita suggested. “Arielle made cookies earlier, so as long as Benji hasn't eaten them all, you can have some of those, too.”

“Soup and cookies sounds amazing.” I nodded.

“I also have a feeling your son will be after his lunch, too,” Nikita laughed. “Or his second lunch, I suppose.”

“Oh, my god, can you imagine the two of us together?” Blair pretended to sob. “You feeding Cooper while I'm feeding another future alpha? And Arielle will be in the middle feeding yet another? Aaaaah, fuck, I can't cope.”

“You do realize both you and Arielle could have daughters, right?” I smirked.

“Well... yeah.” Blair nodded slowly, and then she placed one hand on her stomach. “But I just have a gut feeling we're going to have a boy, Jesse.”

“I had a gut feeling Cooper was going to be a boy, and I was right.” Nikita shrugged. “So maybe you’re right.”

“I suppose we’ll find out soon!” Blair cheered. “I still can’t believe I’m going to have a baby!”

All of my omegas wanted to have children, but it had been Blair’s dream since she was a child. She spent so many months and years believing there was something wrong with her body when she didn’t fall pregnant with her previous alpha, Aiden Jansen, so she was even more excited to watch her stomach grow and swell with our child.

“Nothing makes me happier than seeing you smile.” I brushed a kiss against Blair’s forehead, and then I did the same with Nikita.

We ended our conversation there so that I could focus on getting changed. However, just as we slipped my t-shirt over my head, one of my phones began to vibrate loudly against the bed.

At first I imagined it was going to be my work phone, and perhaps Ewan had an update for me, or Hazel needed to get in contact with me. So I was somewhat surprised to see it was my personal phone vibrating.

But then my entire body froze as I saw the name on screen.

“Jesse?” Blair asked. “What’s wrong? Who is it?”

I had a feeling they were going to call at some point, but I’d hoped to have some time to relax and think about what I was going to say before I had to face the music.

Quite literally.

“Jesse?” Nikita asked.

“It’s...” I looked up at my omegas. “It’s Professor Collins.”



## Chapter 8

The vibrating phone in my hand felt like a time bomb that was nearing its last few seconds.

I stared at the device, unsure of what to do, but part of me knew I couldn't leave Professor Collins hanging. He played such a big part in my college experience, and I wouldn't have been able to live with the guilt if I just ignored him and refused to talk.

He believed in my musical abilities much more than I did at first, and it was because of him that I'd managed to achieve so much during my years at Everleigh University.

"Do and say whatever you have to, Jesse," Blair said as she and Nikita leaned up and placed kisses on my cheeks. "We'll be downstairs if you need us."

"We love you, Jesse," Nikita added. "Just allow him to do the talking if that makes it easier for you."

"I love you all, too," I said as I let out a deep breath.

Maybe there was a chance Professor Collins hadn't seen the news yet, and maybe he was calling to check up on me due

to how “sick” I’ve been. After all, it wasn’t even six o’clock in the morning back in Oregon.

But realistically, I knew exactly why he was calling.

And with that, as well as a quick hug from my omegas, I answered the call just before it went to voicemail.

“Professor Collins... Hi,” I sighed.

“Jesse?” His familiar voice was laced with concern, but I also caught a hint of confusion mixed in with it.

I sat down on the edge of the bed, and I gave my omegas a small smile as they left the bedroom and closed the door behind them. Although I needed them around for comfort, I knew their presence would have been distracting, and I just had to focus on the man on the phone.

“Jesse, what’s going on?” Collins asked. “I just turned on the news and... At first I couldn’t... It didn’t even look like you, but... It was you, and...”

I didn’t say anything, and I sat there and listened to Collins’ ramblings as he tried to complete a single sentence. He repeated the same words over and over, like he was trying to find the confidence to let out his thoughts and feelings, and I knew my interruption wasn’t going to help his anxious mind.

“The article on the news said you’re...” he paused again. “Jesse, is it true?”

I could have asked him to clarify, but I saw no reason to delay the explanation any longer, and it was only going to cause more anxiety for both of us the more I hesitated.

“It’s not completely true,” I said. “The... The reports are painting a picture, but... Most of their information is incorrect.”

“Everyone’s saying you’re...” Collins sighed, and I just imagined him brushing through his short brown hair like he always did when he was stressed. “They’re saying you’re dangerous, Jesse.”

“Again, that’s not completely true,” I said honestly. “I’m not some threat to the world, nor am I running around the country killing people for no reason. That was all made up to make me look threatening, and more dangerous than... More dangerous than I actually am.”

“The Jesse Rafe I know wouldn’t even hurt a fly,” Collins sounded slightly frustrated, but that was to be expected. “You’re one of my best students, you’re not this... monster.”

“I’m still that student,” I replied. “My work is so important to me, and I’ve always put one hundred percent into my violin. None of that has changed. But I... I can understand why you’re so confused.”

“I don’t even know if ‘confused’ covers it, Jesse,” he muttered. “Because there’s talk that you’re... That these shifters... Shifters are...”

It was like ripping off a Band-Aid.

“Shifters are real, Professor Collins,” I admitted. “That part of the reports is completely true.”

“Real...” he said, like he was testing the word. “Shifters... You’re one of those?”

“Yes.” I nodded my head slowly.

“But what is that?” Collins asked. “This is... This is all fantasy stuff!”

Professor Collins rarely raised his voice, and it was strange but also slightly scary to hear such a change in his tone.

“Shapeshifters, Professor,” I explained. “I know it sounds like we’re living in a fantasy world, and... And maybe



we are, but... They've been around for thousands of years, and—”

“But where do you come into this, Jesse?” he sighed.

“I... am one.” I gave a tight shrug, even though he couldn't see me. “I am The Alpha. I'm a... I'm a werewolf, but there are other species of shifters, like the birds and tigers you saw on the news. It's a... It's all, um... genetic. I didn't know anything about this until about a year ago.”

“A year ago?” Collins asked.

“Yes.” I nodded. “It just... It just sort of happened... one night.”

“What happened?” he sighed. “What... I don't understand what you're talking about, Jesse. A werewolf? The Alpha? What does any of that mean?”

“I know, I know,” I replied. “It's complicated, and confusing. I get that, but... I don't quite know how else to explain it.”

“How about you come to my office, and we can discuss it in person?” he suggested. “Or I could come to you, if that's easier for you.”

I fell back against the bed and grabbed my damp hair with one hand. Professor Collins always had my best interests at heart, and that small suggestion proved it.

He didn't wave me off without an explanation, and he was even willing to meet with me to discuss everything so that he could learn the truth, and understand what the fuck was going on.

That was the professor I knew, and I was glad that hadn't changed.

"Um..." I mumbled as I sat back up again. "I would very much like to meet with you, but it would... It would have to wait until, uhh, whenever I come home."

"Come home?" he asked, and I just knew there was a deep frown on his face. "What do you mean 'come home?' You're in bed sick at the... Oh, geez. You're not sick, are you?"

"No," I admitted. "Part of this life I live involves me, um... I have other shifter friends who, um, who need my help, so..."

I didn't want to throw anyone under the bus, nor did I want to add more names to the "mean and dangerous shifters"

list. But I didn't think it would be so hard to vaguely explain everything.

But Professor Collins didn't say anything, and he just waited for me to locate the words I wanted to use.

"I needed to help with addressing the shifter videos you saw online, with the birds and tigers," I continued a minute later. "It meant I had to travel, and I'm currently in Scotland after I helped my friend with the tiger issue."

"Scotland?" Collins blew out a short laugh, but it didn't hold a scrap of humor. "You can't be in Scotland. How have you managed to... How have you traveled around without anyone noticing?"

"It's been difficult," I said. "Sometimes it means days without sleeping so that I can study and look after... Well, anyway, a lot has been going on, even before the news broke today."

I definitely was not about to tell Collins about Cooper, or that I was going to have three children— all with separate women— before too long.

The entire explanation had to happen in stages, and my children and harem of loving women were not at the top of the

list.

Collins was quiet for a moment, and I glanced down at the carpet beneath my feet as I waited for him to say something.

“How long will you be in Scotland?” he finally asked.

“I don’t know.” I shook my head. “We– I... I don’t think it’s very safe for me to be seen in public right now, what with everything on the news. So I need to... I need to leave Scotland, but I don’t think I can come home just yet. I’m not sure where I’m going to go, but I imagine it’ll have to be somewhere remote without TV or internet. Or any sort of access to the outside world.”

A sarcastic joke like that would have usually caused me to laugh, or at least crack a smile, but the frightening truth of it all caused nothing but fear to trickle through me.

Maybe the only place I’d be safe was in Saldes, Yukon—where a few of my ravens still resided, and where Ivy and Daisy used to live off the land.

But we’d have to get there first.

“Jesse...” Collins’ tone changed, and now he sounded more concerned than scared. “Are you okay?”

Not a lot made me cry, but that one question from my professor was almost enough to cause some tears to form.

I imagined Professor Collins had a lot of conflicting emotions, and he probably didn't know what to do, but he still took the time to check on me, and he must have called the second he saw the article on the news.

That was something I was going to remember forever.

“In all honesty, I'm scared,” I admitted. “It's not just me out here, and if the entire world is about to turn against me, then I have to think about the people I'm with, too. However, I also know I'm strong enough to tackle everything that comes my way, so... It's overwhelming, scary, and the last thing I expected to happen, but I'm... I'm okay.”

Even if Collins never fully understood, and even if I never heard from him again after today, I appreciated the concern, and that he took the time to listen. He didn't just automatically believe everything he heard on the news.

“Good, that's...” Collins cleared his throat with a short cough. “That's good. I... I just want the best for you, Jesse. I always have.”

“I know that.” I smiled. “And I’m sorry if you feel like I’ve been lying to you, or going behind your back when I should be in class. It was... I couldn’t say anything, and I couldn’t tell anyone about this up until now.”

“I don’t understand, of course,” he paused again for a second. “But I can sort of understand why you never said anything.”

“And as soon as I can, I promise to explain everything,” I replied. “I’m not sure when I’ll be home, and it might be a while before I return to college, but I don’t plan on giving that up just yet. That is... If I’m allowed back in.”

“If it were up to me, Jesse, I’d have you finish what you started,” he said promisingly. “But try not to think too much about that at the moment. Focus on your safety, and the safety of those around you. That is what matters most.”

“Thank you, Professor Collins.” I smiled. “I really appreciate you calling me, and... I think I needed this conversation.”

“I knew I had to talk to you as soon as I saw it,” he replied. “And if it’ll help anything, I won’t tell anyone we had this conversation. I’ll act none the wiser.”

That was just another sign that showed Collins was on my side, and I hoped he always would be.

“I think you’ll know who you can and can’t talk to,” I said with a small shrug. “But keeping quiet is probably for the best right now.”

“Then that’s what I’ll do,” he responded.

I ended the call feeling brighter than before, and the weight that fell upon me when my phone first rang had now lifted.

Of course, if Professor Collins had seen the news, then it meant other professors were about to see it, and my human friends were about to find out, too, but I tried to not let that affect me negatively.

Fortunately, Jake and Travis didn’t really watch the news, and they only knew what was going on in the world because of Twitter and Facebook. They would call me as soon as they saw a hashtag on Twitter, or a friend reposted an article, but like Arielle said before, at least Parker already knew about shifters, so maybe he could help us.

But I didn’t want to be the first to reach out, so I tucked my phone away in my pocket and tried to forget about

everything else as I recovered from my call with Collins.

That conversation certainly would have been a lot harder to cope with if he wasn't as understanding, and I hoped it wouldn't be too long before I could sit down with him properly and go over everything.

I wanted to tell Collins everything, and I wanted to tell him who The Alpha was, and what my mission in life was. I'd even tell him about Nikita, Benji, and my campus security, if they wanted me to. And I knew Collins would lose his shit when he found out that I wasn't the only shifter on campus.

I also hoped that Collins would help me keep my place in college, and perhaps he'd talk to the Dean, or whoever made the final decision, and persuade them to keep me on, at least just to let me graduate.

But I knew that wasn't Collins' decision, nor was it mine, so I just had to be patient and wait and see what happened later on.

However, it wasn't like I didn't have anything to keep me distracted until that decision was finalized, and I had the care and comfort of my family downstairs to keep me focused.



And that was why, once I'd let out a few more deep sighs, I pulled myself off the bed and went to join everyone downstairs.

Rolls of laughter came from the direction of the living room, one that sounded like Zac's, and the sound of plates being stacked together came from the kitchen. The house was quite dark because all of the curtains were closed, but at least my family had found ways to keep themselves occupied, and it didn't feel like we were trapped in some dark, dank prison.

The rental house was actually very spacious, and there was a reason it was so expensive, so we could have been trapped in a place far worse than this.

My constant rumbling stomach took me into the kitchen where I found Aunt Eva cleaning up after the lunchtime rush. Chloe was at the table with a bowl of cereal in front of her and her phone held sideways in one hand. She never took her eyes off whatever she was watching, and she didn't even look down as she spooned some cereal into her mouth.

"Hi, Jesse." Aunt Eva smiled over at me as she piled some plates into the cupboard.

"Hey." I returned the smile.

“I heard that Professor Collins called you,” she said with a hint of sympathy in her tone. “It sounded like it went okay from your side of the conversation?”

“It actually went better than I expected,” I replied as I searched the fridge for something to eat. “He was confused, and he sounded concerned, but that’s more because everything hit him so suddenly, and he went from thinking I was just a regular student, to hearing all of this on the news.”

There wasn’t a lot of food on offer, but I decided to go for the last of the vegetable soup and a chicken sandwich.

I needed to send one of my betas to the store, otherwise there was going to be nothing for dinner.

“Let me do this,” Aunt Eva said, and she held out her hands to take the soup from me. “Why don’t you make yourself comfortable?”

“Thanks.” I patted her arm sweetly and went to take a seat beside Chloe.

“From the way it sounds, it seems as though Professor Collins was the best person to talk to.” Aunt Eva poured the soup into a small pot and stirred it with a wooden spoon before she placed it on the smallest ring of the stove.

“I think that now, yeah.” I nodded. “But I was terrified to talk to him at first.”

“Of course, that’s totally understandable,” she replied. “Remember how you coped with everything when you shifted for the first time?”

“Shit, don’t remind me,” I snorted. “Even now it sometimes feels like I’m living a crazy dream.”

“And it’ll probably be the same for Collins, as well as Travis and Jake,” my aunt said softly. “You had us to help you, but you still felt like we’d kept this enormous secret from you, which is exactly what we did. But it was for your own good. Your friends and the humans who know you will probably think the same thing, and it might be hard for them to fully process everything you have to tell them, but in the end they’ll realize why you never told them.”

“This is why I don’t have human friends.” Chloe slurped some milk from her spoon. “Far too much drama.”

“But you’re a teenager.” I smirked. “I thought you loved drama.”

Chloe just shrugged and returned to watching the show on her phone.

“We’ll get through this, Jesse,” Aunt Eva continued. “You have your family behind you, your pack, as well as the Heads of Agencies you spoke to this morning. Things may seem daunting right now, and you’re probably dissecting every possible option right now. But trust me, things will get easier, and soon it’ll just be a moment in the past. I mean, if I can do it, then anyone can.”

I smiled up at my aunt as she placed my soup and sandwich in front of me.

“How did you cope with the pressure?” I asked. “I know going rogue is completely different from this, but what did you do in order to deal with everything?”

“You say it’s different, but it came with just as much pressure.” Aunt Eva took the seat in front of me and crossed her arms on the table. “When Andrea and I knew we had to leave, we didn’t even stop to think. We didn’t have the entire world against us, but we had our entire worlds in our arms, and we only thought about you and Benji.”

Aunt Eva glanced down at the table, and she slyly wiped away a tear before she continued her story.

“I made a promise to your parents that I’d always look after you,” she said. “Andrea did the same with Benji, and we

knew that as long as you both were safe, then we'd kept that promise. At that moment, it didn't matter where we went, or how we got there, all that mattered was that we took you away from danger. And it's the same with you now. The idea of leaving Scotland is scary, especially as you don't know where we're going to go, or what's going to happen when we get there. But every decision you make will be based on what's best for your children, your omegas, and the rest of us. You've come so far in a short amount of time, you're only going to get stronger, and that isn't going to change just because some guy in China decided he doesn't like you."

"I think it might be more than just some guy." I smirked. "But thank you, Aunt Eva. That was exactly what I needed to hear."

Aunt Eva reached across the table and gave my hand a squeeze, and then she bowed her head and wiped more tears from her eyes.

"Look, Chloe, Aunt Eva's crying," I said in order to make light of the situation.

Chloe glanced up with a smirk, and it was nice to feel a change in the atmosphere after the serious talk.

“Oh, stop it,” my aunt huffed, but then she smiled. “I’m allowed to cry during times like these. And anyway, Chloe, shouldn’t you be doing your schoolwork?”

“I’m waiting for Zac to finish playing his game with Benji.” Chloe shrugged.

“In that case, you’re never going to return to your work,” I chuckled. “What do you have to do today?”

“I dunno,” Chloe mumbled. “Read a book and take notes. It’s all that boring stuff.”

Aunt Eva gasped theatrically and slapped one hand across her chest.

“Boring?” she asked. “Chloe, you have no idea how wonderful reading can be. It allows you to disappear into an imaginary life, to walk in someone else’s shoes, and forget about the worries in the world.”

“But this book is about some dude sitting in a basement.” The teenager rolled her eyes. “He goes through boxes of his grandfather’s stuff and looks back on his life. There’s no fun in that.”

“And what notes do you have to take?” I asked.

“I dunno.” Chloe shrugged. “Aunt Laura just told me to write down quotes that stand out to me and give a reason for it. But I’ll just Google it, or use SparkNotes, or something.”

“Um, no you won’t,” Aunt Eva said with a pointed look. “While Laura is in the other rental house, I’ll be your tutor, and I’ll show you how wonderful reading is. Now, go and get your books, and your brother, for that matter.”

“Damn, you can be scary when you want to be,” Chloe mumbled as she cleared away her empty cereal bowl.

“Correction.” I smirked. “Aunt Eva’s always scary, so it’s best if you remember that.”

I left the two of them to work and carried my lunch through to the living room where Benji and Zac were playing Mario Kart. Benji had picked Mario as his character, which was his usual go-to, and Zac was playing as Toad.

“Oh, my god, you so totally cheated!” Zac exclaimed as Benji zoomed ahead and took the lead.

“That’s not called cheating, that’s called playing the game, buddy,” Benji chuckled. “C’mon, you can still win.”

Zac angled his entire body to the side as Toad swerved around a corner, and then he lifted his controller above his

head as he made a jump from one track to the other.

“Ha-haaa!” Zac cheered as he neared Benji’s little car.  
“I’m coming after youuuuu!”

Zac’s tiny fingers tapped at the buttons angrily, the tip of his tongue sat between his lips for added concentration, and he even held the controller out in front of him, almost like he thought that was going to make Toad drive faster.

Benji remained in first place, and Zac somehow managed to zoom past another player so that he was in second. They did everything they could to knock each other off the road, but Benji was just too good, and he slipped past the finishing line seconds before Zac.

“No, no, that’s not fair,” Zac grumbled. “You totally cheated back there, and I could have won!”

“Just face it, buddy.” Benji shrugged. “I’m so much better than you.”

“I demand a retry!” Zac cried. “I’m going to show you how good I am!”

“You can show him how good you are once you’ve finished your schoolwork,” I said as I took a bite of my sandwich.



“Oh, hi, Jesse,” Zac laughed as he spotted me on the couch. “Did you see Benji cheating?”

“I saw Benji win.” I smirked. “Now, schoolwork. Go.”

“But I want another go...” Zac pouted.

“We can play again later,” Benji said. “This isn’t going to go anywhere, and if you refuse to do your work, you won’t be able to play at all.”

“Yeah, and Benji will just keep winning...” I told him.

“Fine,” Zac mumbled. “But don’t let Benji practice until I come back, Jesse. You’re The Alpha, so you make the rules. That’s how it works.”

“Sure,” I laughed. “I’ll make sure he doesn’t play until you get back.”

“I’ll even give you a Scout’s honor.” Benji held up three fingers.

“What’s that?” Zac frowned.

“I’ll tell you later.” Benji brushed the air with his hand. “But go and do your work before Aunt Laura shouts at me.”

“It’ll actually be Aunt Eva.” I slurped some soup off my spoon. “She’s taken over as their tutor for now.”

“Oh, shit.” Benji’s eyes widened. “In that case, definitely get out of here before she notices.”

Benji turned off the TV as Zac ran from the room, and the two of us lounged back in our seats while I finished the last of my lunch.

He asked me about my call with Collins, and then he told me that the omegas were upstairs giving each other manicures, or “something boring like that,” and even Ivy decided to join them.

Although it was nice when everyone was together, I also appreciated having some quality time with just Benji, even if that involved sitting in a silent room while I ate soup and a sandwich.

“So, um...” Benji ran his hand through his dark blond hair like he was nervous about something. “I kinda...”

“Yes?” I led.

“Well, after everything that’s happened recently, I, um...” Benji groaned into his hands and mumbled something to himself. “I kinda... I had a realization about... Kiri.”

“Oh?” My eyebrows practically touched my hairline. “What have you realized? Is it that she’s gorgeous and perfect

for you? Because, news flash, that's always been the case."

"I mean, sort of." Benji shrugged. "I realized that life can be damn short, y'know? We don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, the day after that, and the day after that, and the day after tha—"

"I get it." I smirked. "Nothing is set in stone."

"Exactly." My half-brother nodded. "And I... I like her, Jess. Werecoyote or werewolf, she's... Kiri's cool, so... I didn't want to look back and... regret not doing anything... So I decided to do something about it, and I... Well, I... asked her out."

"What?" I had to steady the plates on my lap before they crashed to the floor. "You asked her out?"

"Yeah." Benji shrugged, and then a shy blush swarmed across his cheeks. "We obviously can't do anything, like, now, but... Maybe at some point I could take her out, and we can... Y'know, enjoy an evening together that isn't spent talking through a headset while we play a video game. It'll be whatever she wants to do, and whenever she wants to do it."

Part of me wanted to tease Benji for blushing, but I was proud of him for taking control, and it must have taken a lot to

look past any concerns in order to tell her exactly how he felt.

Benji held off for so long because he was a werewolf, but she was a werecoyote, so their species technically shouldn't have been attracted to each other. But they were part of a mixed pack, so things were different with us, and he knew that now.

"I'm happy for you, Benji." I smiled. "Kiri's great, and I bet she was thrilled to hear about this date in the future. I'm glad you finally grew a set of balls, as Azalea would say, but I'm sorry our world had to go to shit in order for you to take that step forward."

"Nah, it's cool." He shrugged. "I mean, this totally sucks, but I would have done it anyway. It just gave me a push."

"I'm glad you did," I told him. "But have you told the omegas yet? They're going to freak out when they hear it."

"I... I kinda told them while you were on the phone with Collins." Benji smiled anxiously. "Sorry, bro, but they forced it out of me. And yes, they did freak out. I'm surprised you didn't hear the screaming."

That probably explained why the omegas were all upstairs together, because they knew Benji wanted to have this conversation with me. They loved him really, and they wanted to help as much as they could.

“I can just picture them forcing the truth from you,” I chuckled. “I also imagine they came up with various ideas for this date?”

“Hailey’s made a damn file on her laptop with date ideas,” Benji grumbled. “And Ivy said I should take Kiri knife throwing, and we could even use her knives. Lian said she’d even teach me how to dance, and then I could show off my skills to Kiri.”

“That is something I have to see,” I laughed. “Please, please let me record it.”

“Abso-fucking-lutely not!” Benji huffed. “I’m not here to make a fool out of myself.”

“Really?” I smirked.

Benji chucked a couch cushion in my direction, and I just laughed as the cushion fell to the ground before it even reached me.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” I chuckled. “But don’t worry, we’ll think of the perfect evening for you and Kiri, and it’ll all—”

My words were cut off as my work phone began to vibrate loudly beside me, but I was stunned when I saw Dernov Vladimirovich’s name on the screen.

We’d all swapped numbers before the group call earlier on, but for some reason I hadn’t even thought about the Heads of Agencies using it.

“Two seconds,” I mumbled to Benji as I picked up my phone. “Russia’s calling.”

“That’s soooo cool, bro!” he cackled.

“We’ll see...” I sighed, and then I answered the call. “Hello?”

“Jesse?” Dernov’s deep voice echoed through the phone. “It’s Dernov Vladimirovich.”

“Dernov, hi,” I replied. “How are you?”

“Good, good,” he said. “I talk to Ewan before now, and two of us make plan. Plan for you.”

“A plan?” I frowned.

“Yes,” Dernov replied. “Plan for you to leave Scotland. But it involve you travel to Russia. Undercover and without no one spot you.”





## Chapter 9

I stared across the room at my half-brother as I tried to make sense of what Dernov just told me. Benji heard everything with his heightened hearing, but the frown on his face allowed me to see that he was just as confused and potentially concerned as I was.

*Hey, guys, you might wanna come to the living room,* Benji spoke to the house silently. *Jesse's on the phone with Russia, and I think you all need to hear this.*

It sounded like a stampede charged through the house as my omegas raced downstairs, and chair legs skidded across the kitchen floor as Aunt Eva ushered Chloe and Zac away from their schoolwork.

“Jesse, are you there?” Dernov asked.

“I’m sorry.” I shook my head with disbelief. “I just need a second.”

“Of course, you take time,” he replied.

The sound of straining leather came from the other end of the phone, which made me think that Dernov was leaning back in a large office chair. For some reason I also imagined

the Russian to have a cigar in one hand which he puffed on occasionally, and perhaps a fiery glass of vodka rested on the desk in front of him.

I didn't even know what Dernov looked like, but I pictured him to be a large man, and in my mind he was sitting in a dark office with the only source of light coming from the glowing embers of his cigar and a desk lamp.

Maybe his face was shrouded in a cloud of smoke, just for an added, mysterious affect.

But just like the cigar smoke, those images drifted away as soon as my family ran into the room and took their seats. Azalea and Ivy sat on the couch beside me, and the rest of them took the first seats they came across.

I put the call on loudspeaker to allow Chloe, Zac and Lian the chance to listen in, too.

“Dernov, hi,” I said once everyone had arrived. “Sorry, I wanted my family to hear the conversation.”

“I understand,” his deep voice echoed around the room.

“So you said you want me to travel to Russia...” I let out a deep breath. “But I can't let anyone see me?”

Everyone around me reacted in the same way. Either they slapped their hands against their mouths, or they glanced around with uncertainty in their eyes.

“Yes,” Dernov replied. “It is big ask, I know. But I think it might be best option. Ewan think so, too.”

“And... why?” I asked. “Surely getting to Russia without anyone spotting me is simply impossible?”

“Difficult, but not impossible,” Dernov reassured me. And honestly, hearing the way he said this in his thick Russian accent made it sound entirely plausible all of a sudden. “Jesse, I have compound in deserted place. Drive two hours from Moscow.”

“A compound?” My eyes widened.

“Yes,” he said, and it almost sounded like he coughed out a laugh. “No one but me and trusted shifters know of compound. Not even air traffic allowed, so no one see it. Drive one hour out of Moscow, then one hour more to reach compound. It is very safe. Very safe.”

The idea of staying in a compound which no one knew about, apart from a select few, and where planes and

helicopters weren't even allowed to pass over sounded pretty idyllic to me.

“Also, Jesse,” Dernov added. “Compound is so safe that you can shift without fear.”

Benji slapped the leather couch with both hands, and a shared grin seemed to spread across every face in the room.

It had only been a couple of days since we last shifted, but the prospect of not shifting for a long time had weighed down on us greatly.

“Can the avians shift, too?” I asked.

“Yes, everyone,” the Russian replied. “The walls are high, so they can fly. But because no one around, they can fly above walls if needed.”

The plan kept on getting better and better, and I genuinely considered taking Dernov up on the offer.

But there were a few details I had to discuss with him before I came to a decision, and they were going to completely make or break the plan in mind.

“Apart from the walls and how deserted this place is, what other safety measures do you have in place?” I asked. “Is there twenty-four-hour security?”

“Twenty-four-hour security, it does have,” Dernov explained in broken English. “The compound is guarded all hours of day. I have my best men watching all four walls, also iron gates and electric fences before you even reach compound. My men have guns, impressive guns, and no one get near compound without being checked first. Also watchtowers, too.”

“Okay...” I nodded. “So I’m assuming any shifters who try to get near the site are instantly spotted and dealt with?”

“Yes, that’s right.” The sound of strained leather returned, so I imagined Dernov had relaxed back in his seat again.

“But what stops avians from getting near us?” I asked. “Stopping planes and helicopters is one thing, but what about the avians?”

“The watchtowers,” Dernov replied. “We see miles ahead so far up, so we spot birds before they arrive. I also have avian shifters who work for me, and they patrol sky.”

I wasn’t sure if Dernov was a shifter or not, but it sounded like he had an impressive army of shifters behind him, which was always a good thing when someone was on my side.

But if he was a shifter, no doubt an alpha, then I had to make sure I trusted him enough to be around my omegas.

I glanced at the people around me, and they all smiled, nodded their heads, or gave me a thumbs up to silently tell me they approved of the idea. But I also knew they'd tell me to do whatever I thought was the best but also safest option.

“What about children?” I queried. “I have two kids, a newborn baby, and two heavily pregnant omegas, so will it be safe for them, too? Because if it isn't, then I'll have to think of another plan.”

I knew Caitlin preferred to sort out different living arrangements when it came to Chloe and Zac, especially if we were going to enter dangerous territory. But during a time like this, there was no way I was going to leave them behind, and I knew Caitlin felt the same way.

“As long as kids know to be safe, then they will be okay,” Dernov said. “There are guns in compound as well as outside, so kids should not touch guns. Not ideal for them to do this.”

Benji stifled a snicker at this blunt statement.

“They will be extremely well behaved,” I told him, but then I raised my brows at the kids in question to silently confirm that with them.

Both Chloe and Zac nodded their heads. They knew the difference between right and wrong, and they knew how to act in certain situations.

“Your baby will be safe, too,” Dernov continued. “If you need, I have trusted, uh... carer who can look after baby. And Ewan tell me of pregnant omegas, so I have doctor who can live in compound with you. For omegas, or for other injury. It will all be there.”

Even though Vancouver Island wasn't a deserted plot of land, we hadn't had a doctor at hand when Nikita went into labor. We ended up waiting for him to travel across the island before he could reach us. So just knowing there would be a doctor on our front doorstep in case anything happened was a major relief to me.

I also knew we wouldn't need a babysitter, or a carer as Dernov put it, for Cooper while we were in the compound, because he was always well looked after and protected. But I still appreciated Dernov offering a babysitter's service.

“And apart from the compound, and the safety of the place you’re explaining, why do we need to go to Russia in the first place?” I asked. “Because surely there’s somewhere just as safe, but also closer to Scotland?”

“That might be case, yes,” Dernov paused for a second. “But as well as safety, and being totally and absolutely hidden, you can build number of pack members here, too. I have almost six hundred shifters who are alpha-less now because of weretiger’s attacks. They need an alpha to guide them, to show them right road. I spoke to shifters, and they all want you. They want The Alpha who killed weretiger, who made them safe again.”

My eyes widened as a sudden chill ran up my spine.

Hundreds of Russian shifters were volunteering to join my ranks?

“They specifically asked for me?” I tried to keep my voice calm

“Yes, you,” he replied. “They know you are good man, and when I speak to them this morning, they do not believe stories Chinese government tell.”



If the betas requested to see me, and they wished to be considered for a possible place in my pack, then it told me one thing:

The propaganda against me was seen as just that to them.

The reports were made up stories and threats, and it was proof to the betas that something suspicious was going on within the workings of the Asian agency. Whether it was the entire agency, or just the Chinese branch, it was hard to tell, but at least it allowed me to see that not everyone fell for their bullshit lies.

“If the betas wish to join my pack, then I’m happy to talk to them,” I said as I rubbed the back of my neck. “I’m always willing to increase the size of my pack, but I always go about it the right way, unlike what the Chinese government decided to tell the world.”

“I know what is truth, Jesse,” Dernov assured me. “Anyone who was hurt by weretiger know what is truth, too. But there is other reason behind coming here, too. You will be closer to China than you are now.”

“I’m not sure if that’s a good thing,” I snickered.

“No, maybe not this second,” the Russian agreed. “But if you get here, we can swiftly plan ambush of Asian agency, or Chinese branch. Then clear your name and go from there. There is advantage to being closer, but also disadvantage, too.”

“I suppose you’re right.” I nodded. “But now that the security questions and everything else are out of the way, I need to ask how we’re even going to get to Russia in the first place? And even more importantly, how do we get there unnoticed?”

There were so many layers to this conversation, but I knew it wasn’t going to be a short call from the second I answered the phone.

“It is good thing you are friends with ESD,” Dernov let out a loud laugh which just about rumbled through the phone, and it was actually quite terrifying. “We can, um... pull strings, as you might say. Give you tickets with fake names, and Ewan can get you identification for emergency with fake names, too. Only your name has been leaked to world, but other agencies might know names of betas and omegas, so all names must change. For safety for now.”

“Okay...” I nodded.

Dernov was right, I had plenty of files on the Heads of Agencies around the world, so they definitely would have mine. Luckily, there were advantages to working alongside the government when it came to handling the identity issues, but that didn't make the pill any easier to swallow, and just crossing the borders of Scotland already felt like a mission in itself.

“I will not lie, Jesse, the journey is long,” Dernov continued. “There are two ways to get here, one maybe easier than other. You could get train from London to Russia. Once in Moscow, my men will drive you to compound. It is long, but safer way than flying. But I will help, and ESD will help, too, so we will assist when it come to borders of countries.”

“You can take a train from London to Russia?” My jaw dropped open. “Do I even want to know how long that'll take?”

“Maybe yes, maybe no,” he laughed again. “It take you forty-eight hours to reach Moscow. You travel through France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Belarus, then into Russia. Stop overnight in Germany, but we can talk with train company and you can stay on train if you don't want to book hotel. You will

need to change trains a couple of times, but it is easiest option.”

“Alright...” I sighed. “And what’s the other option?”

“Second option is longer by a few hours,” Dernov explained. “You must take ferry from Newcastle to Amsterdam, then take train to Stockholm, Sweden. Then take ferry to Finland or Latvia and train into Russia from there. You have to change train a couple of times between Amsterdam and Sweden, but not as many as first option. If you take first option, there are other routes to take. Travel through Ukraine or Lithuania, as example, but that add on more time.”

I rubbed my tired eyes as I tried to take in everything Dernov said. There were so many countries and forms of transportation involved, and although his English wasn’t terrible, it was harder to piece every detail together when he had a slightly limited vocabulary.

“The first option might be easier, but which one do you think is safer?” I asked. “Am I less likely to be spotted on a train compared to a ferry?”

“Well...” the Russian thought for a second. “Both train and ferry just as busy, I think. But going from train to ferry, then ferry to train means more borders and security checks.

ESD can help slightly, but it means more people see you. Going from one train to another is easier, and less checks involved. Because UK still technically part of EU, passports not checked as often on train. But with ferry, passports checked when you get on and off.”

“Okay...” I mumbled.

There was a lot to consider, and I didn’t want to choose one option without thinking it over thoroughly, especially if that turned out to be the wrong choice and there was no going back from there.

It wasn’t even like there was a clear winner, because both options came with an equal amount of risks and difficulty.

I thought over everything Dernov told me, but as I thought about the finer details, I caught sight of Zac whispering something into his mother’s ear.

“He’s wondering why we can’t fly,” Caitlin told me, but Dernov heard her query, too.

“Plane out of question,” the Russian replied. “Is too dangerous. Airports are busy, busy place, and even if you take

private plane, you encounter humans, shifters, and patrol groups at airport.”

“I suppose there’s also the chance that shifters, and even opposing humans, might realize I’ll want to leave the country,” I added. “It won’t take much for them to find out where we are right now, in which case they’ll cover every airport in the country just on the off chance that I might head straight there.”

“Exactly,” Dernov said. “Also, not as many shifters patrol train stations. There is also fact that someone as affluent and rich as you travel in style. You do not take train with public when you have private plane. You are already known to use such means. So if everyone think that, they will cover airport while you step onto train.”

I knew what Dernov was saying about people as rich as I was, but I almost felt like I had to defend myself. I didn’t care about traveling with the public, and I didn’t think I was better than the humans around me. But a lot of the alphas I’d met in the past stayed as far away from the public as they could, and if my enemies thought I was anything like those sons of bitches, then staying away from the airport was the best move, most definitely.

“We also need to take into consideration that the jet would take us to one specific place.” I shrugged lightly.

“Whether we took a connecting flight or not, anyone patrolling the airport we landed in would instantly know we were there. But if we were spotted in France boarding a train to Belgium, there’s no way of knowing whether we were actually getting off in Belgium. We could get off the train at any number of the stops between the two countries. So it makes it easier for us to lose people if we travel by train.”

“It’s the same with the ferry, too,” Benji spoke up. “If you’re seen getting on the ferry, and whoever’s watching you knows the ferry’s taking you to Amsterdam, he’s going to have his men relocate at the ferry terminal to greet you the second you arrive. Unless you’re going to jump overboard mid-sail, of course, but I highly doubt you’d plan on doing that.”

“I’m all for choosing adrenaline-filled activities, but diving off the top of a ferry is not one of them,” I snickered.

“Let’s stick with the train.” Aunt Eva nodded, and I caught the playful roll of her eyes she gave us.

“I have other idea,” Dernov said suddenly. “The Asian agency still think I work on their side. They do not know I am working with you right now. But I have agents in Scotland and

other countries as well, which the agency know about. I could make them think you are flying somewhere. All agents go to airport to look for you, but instead you sneak onto train. You will be in other country before agents realize.”

My family nodded their heads in approval, and I also smiled at the clever plan.

“If we pull that off, that’ll give us a great lead,” I said. “The last thing we need is for China to find out we’re in Russia, so causing a fake diversion could help us sneak from one country to another without being caught by the agents. So we’d just need to worry about the humans.”

“But with right disguise, humans are easy to fool,” Dernov replied, and I pictured the shrug he gave that statement. “They might recognize you, but you have identification of other name, which will cause them to rethink quite a lot.”

I thought over the plan for a couple more minutes, but I felt pretty confident with my answer by the end of it.

“Okay,” I sighed. “Let’s try and get to that compound.”

“You are making right move, Jesse,” the Russian said confidently. “It will be long couple of days, but you cannot be



safer than in my compound. I promise you that.”

“It’ll be much safer than this house, that’s for sure,” I mumbled.

“Much safer than anywhere,” Dernov replied. “Now that you have agreed, you need to think of new names and talk to Ewan. He will get identification for you.”

“Okay.” I nodded. “And what do I do after that?”

“Think of how you will travel to London,” Dernov said casually. “Then talk to Ewan. He book tickets, then you are not linked to them.”

“Yes, of course,” I agreed. “We don’t want to cause more trouble before we’ve even left the country. But thank you, Dernov. You’ve been a wonderful help today, and Ewan can let you know when we’ll arrive in Moscow.”

“If there is one thing I know, Jesse, it is how to help others,” Dernov said with nothing but sincerity in his voice. “My alphas and omegas were murdered because of Shen Shui, and Chinese branch ordered him to do it. I am part of Asian agency, yes, but they treat my country like I am other. Like my country is villain, and we are not allied friends. Because of

that, I cannot remain ally, and I will help you with everything that I can.”

“I appreciate that, Dernov.” I smiled. “The alphas and omegas who lost their lives due to the Chinese branch deserve justice, and together we’re going to get that. It might take me a few days to get to Russia, and anything could happen during that time, but as soon as we’re in that compound, we’ll work out how to seek that revenge.”

“I trust you, Jesse,” the Russian replied. “We will do this together.”

I fell back against the couch as soon as the call ended. Azalea and Ivy wrapped their arms around me in comfort, and we all simply sat in silence as Dernov’s words settled.

There was a lot to take in, but the realization of what was about to occur didn’t appear to be as hard to accept as it was before.

“Are we really going to Russia in a few days?” Arielle blew out a deep breath.

“Not just Russia,” Blair mumbled. “France, Belgium, Germany...”

“I can’t believe this is happening.” Lian tucked her hands in between her crossed legs and bowed her head. “Part of me feels so guilty that so many people lost their lives.”

“Please, don’t feel bad, dear.” Aunt Eva pulled the weretiger omega in for a hug. “Shen made the rules, not you. You have done absolutely nothing wrong.”

“Technically, Shen followed the rules,” I amended. “Shen didn’t have to go on this crazy hunt across the world, and he was old enough and ugly enough to know the difference between right and wrong. Because of his stupidity when it came to following orders, you were then brought into the mix, and there was literally nothing you could have done about it. Shen was far too controlling and dangerous, and it’s a damn good thing you have Zhang and Han around you for protection.”

“I suppose...” Lian nodded. “It’s just hard.”

“Of course, I totally understand that,” I replied. “But you’re in the best place now, and those alpha-less betas will soon have order and leadership again.”

“How is Zhang coping, Lian?” Caitlin asked. “I bet he’s climbing the walls right now not being in the same house as you, right?”

“He is certainly putting his new cell phone to good use,” the omega laughed lightly. “He gets worried if I don’t respond to a text message within ten minutes. And I have to warn him beforehand if I’m going to take a shower, have a meal, and even before I go to bed, because then he’ll know there will be a delay in my response.”

“Even though you’re totally safe here, and the house is always guarded by betas?” Benji smirked. “That’s quite amusing.”

“That’s Zhang for you.” Lian smiled. “And I don’t think he’ll ever change.”

“Can we talk about the guns in Russia?” Zac leaned his head to one side.

“Absolutely not,” Caitlin said sternly. “The only guns I want you to be interested in are the ones in your video games. But even then, that’s pushing it.”

“But the man said they were impressive.” Zac shrugged. “How impressive?”

“This is Russia we’re talking about.” Chloe rolled her eyes. “I think it’s pretty self-explanatory. Just search for

Russian soldiers online, or something. That'll give you an idea of what we'll expect to see.”

“Um... Chloe.” Caitlin gave her daughter a pointed look. “I just said I didn't want him interested in any guns, so I would appreciate it if you didn't direct him straight to Google.”

“Guns are boring, Zac, like I've told you before,” Ivy mumbled from her spot beside me. “You can make far more exciting weapons, and you don't need any ammunition. I wouldn't even waste your time searching for guns.”

Caitlin mouthed a “thank you” at Ivy, to which my avian nodded her head, but she still kept a straight face.

“How about we think of what our new names are going to be,” Hailey suggested. “Are we going to go for something unique? Or are they going to be common names?”

“How about you flip your initials around, bro?” Benji chuckled. “Resse Jafe.”

“Or if we use the same initials,” Nikita suggested as she adjusted a blanket over Cooper while she fed him. “Like James... Richards. And Natalie... Burns.”

“Oh, I have an idea!” Arielle clapped. “Um... Azalea, think of a surname. Any surname. But don't tell anyone, and I'll do the same with a first name. Then on the count of three, we'll both say our names.”

“Okay...” Azalea nodded.

The two of them thought for a second, then Arielle gave them a countdown before they called out their chosen names.

“Jonah.” Arielle smiled.

“Knox,” Azalea said.

“Hmm...” My werecoyote frowned. “Actually, I don't know if I like that...”

“Then it's good that I'm not actually changing my name,” I chuckled.

“Holy shit, I've got it!” Benji clapped. “Ben Dover. Or... Buck Nekkid.”

Nearly all of us in the room quickly caught on to what Benji was saying, and none of us could hold back our laughter. But Lian and Arielle found it slightly harder to understand the joke, and the jokes flew straight over Zac's head.

“How about Hugh Jass?” Chloe smirked.

“Chloe!” Caitlin gasped.

“Mike Oxlong?” Blair shrugged.

“Mike Yushie.” Azalea smirked.

“Oh, my goodness!” Arielle slapped one hand over her mouth. “These are all innuendos!”

“Yeah, like Seymour Butts,” Benji snickered. “It’s a shame you’re not a girl, bro. You could have gone with Tess Tickles.”

“Hey, I’ll happily take that name.” Azalea smirked.

The entire room erupted into laughter, and even Lian laughed after she caught on to the joke.

“Tess Tickles!” Zac threw his head back with laughter as the penny finally dropped. “Like balls!”

“Zachary!” Caitlin tried to tell her son off, but her smile gave her game away.

“Even you find it funny, Mom!” Zac bounced on his chair. “Tess Tickles, Tess Tickles...”

“Or we could go with something slightly more generic?” Arielle shrugged. “Like... Bill Smith.”

“Richard Smith...” Benji smirked. “But we all call you Dick...”

A quick show of my middle finger told my half-brother exactly how I felt about that particular name.

“Dick and Tess Tickles!” Zac was laughing so hard that he almost fell off his chair, and that just caused our laughter to start up again.

“C’mon, Dick Tickles,” Benji snickered. “Let’s get you to Russia.”

I didn’t have the ability to see into the future, so I didn’t know what was to come.

But there was one thing I knew for sure:

It was going to be a long forty-eight hours on that train.





## Chapter 10

The second I ended the call with Dernov, everything seemed to snowball, and I thought my two phones were literally going to blow up from the amount they vibrated and chimed with calls and messages.

I spent the majority of my time on the phone with Ewan, and when I wasn't discussing travel plans and fake IDs, I had to sort out everything with my betas, and even my human friends back home in Oregon.

Everleigh and Monroe were thoroughly guarded, and my east coast betas had traveled across the country to add to the numbers. Hazel was also able to get in contact with Hydra and the pod of orcas while they were swimming around the Puget Sound, and they were more than happy to guard the sea for us.

The orcas hadn't seen the news because they hadn't been on land for a few days, but they were shocked when they heard what happened. Even though my encounter with them had only been brief, it was still enough to make a good impression, and the orcas didn't even think twice before they made their way toward Oregon.

Parker was my first human friend to call me, and he promised to do everything he could to help the others understand what was going on, and who I really was. Parker being Parker, he was probably going to add in rumors and facts that weren't true, but as long as he didn't turn more people against me, then I didn't care what he told everyone.

Within reason.

Ewan was also able to help me find out that Dernov was one of the only humans who ran a shifter agency, so at least I didn't have to worry about him being around my omegas. Even if he just wanted to help me, I had to cover both sides.

I even heard from Jack Nolan, the composer I'd toured with around California back in the summer. He was just as confused as Professor Collins, but by the end of the call, he also asked me if there was anything he could do to help, which meant a lot to me.

I even considered the idea because Jack Nolan was a famous composer who had a large following of dedicated fans. I didn't want to drag anyone into this mess with me, but people were easy to manipulate, and all it took was just one voice, so for a second I wondered whether to use his large following to my advantage.

Maybe if Jack showed his support, as well as his loyal orchestra, his fans would see that I wasn't a bad guy, and it could slowly trickle through the rest of the country, and maybe even across the globe.

But I decided against the idea when I thought about the dangers that could have caused. I didn't want anyone to get hurt because of me, and without knowing what was going to happen to innocent humans if they allied with me, I didn't want to take any risks.

But it hadn't all been doom and gloom, because as well as the stress of everything, my family and I had a lot of fun creating new names and disguises for each other.

I sent a handful of betas around Edinburgh and the surrounding towns and cities in the search for wigs, hats, glasses— anything we could use for a disguise. They came across a great wig store in Newington, an Edinburgh suburb, which sold extremely realistic wigs, and not just cheap shit people used for Halloween costumes.

Once our new identities had been created, Hailey and Arielle sorted out an area of the rental house where we could take passport photos. Arielle took the picture, Hailey loaded it onto her laptop, and then she added in the created name and

details beside it. The file was then sent to one of Ewan's colleagues who was put in charge of sorting out the passports.

Hailey also sent the local betas a "threatening" message in the group chat. They all had to take passport pictures in their rental homes, too, and my little werewolf said that she didn't have time to sort out blurry or crooked pictures, nor did she want to see a single shadow or reflection against the white backdrop.

She was so fucking hot when she took control, and if time hadn't been of the essence, I would have told one of the betas to tease Hailey slightly, just to see her get angry for a second.

As soon as the fake emergency passports arrived, Ewan got to work sorting out travel documents and tickets, and everything seemed to be set for our eye-widening trip from London to Russia.

That all happened in the span of three days, and it felt like no one had stopped to eat or sleep within that time, but the end was finally in sight. All we had to do was drive down to London later on this evening, board the train to France in the morning, and then we just had to pray that nothing went wrong from there.

“Jesse,” Zac’s young voice sounded from the hallway as the kid knocked on my bedroom door. “Can I come in?”

“Come on in, buddy.” I smiled as I threw my last few t-shirts into my suitcase.

My relationship with Chloe and Zac had blossomed since we’d left the States, and I constantly caught sight of Caitlin smiling and clutching her heart whenever she witnessed us together.

“I wanted to show you my new look.” Zac pushed open the door with his foot, and then he spun around in a circle to show off his outfit and wig. “Chloe said I looked weird, Mom said I looked charming, and Benji said I looked cool. But what do you think?”

Zac’s usual outfit of shorts and t-shirts had been replaced with black jeans, a green camo print t-shirt, a black leather jacket, and a pair of Converse. His short, spiky blond hair had been covered in a brown wig that stopped just below his ears, and a gray beanie kept the wig in place.

He looked completely different, and I wouldn’t have known it was him if he walked past me in the street.

Which was exactly what we were going for.

“You look awesome, Zac,” I told him honestly. “And you really suit brown hair.”

“My name’s not Zac, it’s Jake now.” The young boy gave me a pointed look.

“Sorry, Jake,” I chuckled.

“Also, this wig is really uncomfortable.” He scratched the crown of his head through his beanie. “But we don’t have to wear it once we get to Russia, right?”

“That’s right.” I nodded. “As soon as we get to the compound, you can remove the disguise and become Zac again. You don’t even need to wear the wig right now, just as long as you have it on before we leave for London later.”

“Yeah, I know,” Zac replied. “I just wanted to see what it looked like.”

“Well, you look great, Jake.” I smiled.

“Thanks!” he cheered. “Anyway, I better finish packing my bag. Mom said she’ll be angry if it’s not packed before lunch.”

“In that case, you don’t want to make your mom angry,” I laughed. “Also, don’t listen to what Chloe said. I think you look great.”

“Thanks, Mason.” He smirked, and then he ran from the room to complete Caitlin’s task.

It had taken us a full hour to finally come up with various new names, mainly because Benji kept on throwing innuendos into the mix. But I finally told my omegas just to think of a name for me, the first name they came up with, and that was what we went with.

So until I could be Jesse Rafe again, I was going under the alias of Mason White.

Once my suitcase was packed, I hauled it off the bed and dragged the luggage downstairs where my omegas had left their cases by the door. We all had one suitcase each, which I hoped was going to be enough, but Dernov reassured me that we could get clothes, toiletries, and even Cooper’s diapers if we needed them in the compound.

“Okay,” Aunt Eva announced as she wandered out of the kitchen. “The fridge and cupboards are stocked with food, so Beatrice and Mariam shouldn’t need to go to the store anytime soon.”

“Excellent,” I replied. “And I’m assuming everything else is ready for them?”



“I just have to leave fresh towels on their beds, then that’s me.” She smiled.

“It’ll be like a five-star hotel,” I chuckled.

“That was my hope, yes,” she replied.

A small selection of my betas were going to stay in Scotland, and Beatrice and Mariam chose to set up camp in this rental house. I wanted to leave fake clues wherever I could, so that included the rental houses and cars.

The majority of the cars had been returned, but we rented out nine new cars in order to take us to London. My name was no longer linked to the new cars, so I hoped it looked like I’d stayed in Edinburgh, especially as we still had the rental houses.

Lachlan and the Scottish ravens were going to stay here, as well as Nayeli, Dexter, and Curtis, but they were ready to jump into action and travel across the globe if I needed them. Ewan also promised me that his own flock would keep an eye on my betas, just to be on the safe side.

However, with forty betas, as well as the six hundred Dernov mentioned in Russia, I felt like I could afford for a few

of them to stay here to help confuse the shit out of anyone who targeted me.

Originally, Curtis' and Dexter's first mission was going to be to convince any secretly spying agents that I was headed for the airport. Dernov had slyly leaked information which made it seem as though I was going to fly somewhere, which we hoped the Asian agency would take note of and flood any and all airports in the UK.

But then Ewan stepped forward with a different plan.

It turned out that three of his agents had already volunteered to fly to various countries from the Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen airports. They all had remarkably similar builds and features to me from far away, but they would use some added adjustments to make it even more believable. They had passports and documents with my name on them, too, so we hoped to fool any lurking enemy agents who may be watching the airports.

Ewan had already been a huge help by organizing the passports and train tickets, but he went completely above and beyond by sending out his own agents, and it meant so much to me that he'd offered to do that without thinking twice about it.

That was all going to take place this evening as soon as we'd left for London, so I was eager to find out how it went.

As long as everything went according to plan, I hoped my pack and I could be in France or even Belgium before anyone realized the airport information was bogus.

*Incoming, Jesse, Austin's silent voice brought me away from our plans. I'm just pulling up outside with the new passports and tickets. I'll just post them through the door and drive away again.*

*Excellent, Austin, thank you, I replied as I caught on to the sound of a car engine outside the house. Did everything go okay with Ewan?*

*Yeah, perfect, he said. He has everything in here, and he wishes us all the best on our mission. He also told me to tell you that he'll call you in the morning, but you're just to give him a call before then if you need anything.*

The letterbox rattled against the front door as a large brown envelope was posted through it.

*Thanks, Austin, I said for both the information and the passports.*

*I have everyone else's passports with me, so I'll hand them out, and then we can come back later to discuss the final plans?* he suggested.

*Sounds good,* I replied. *I'll speak to you later. Oh, and remind everyone to buy their snacks now if they want anything for the journey. I'm sure Olive needs time to prepare for that sort of decision.*

*Already done it, Alpha,* Austin chuckled as he drove away. *According to Sage, Olive is still deciding whether to buy candy, cakes, or chips. So hopefully she's made up her mind before this evening.*

*I'll keep my fingers crossed,* I snickered.

My betas and I usually gathered as a team when we had to plan something, but that wasn't going to work when we were trying to draw attention away from the house. So instead, we were going to have a private conversation using our mental connection, and my pack was going to remain in the mile and a half radius in order to stay connected to each other.

“Ooh, are those our new passports?” Hailey gasped as I picked up the envelope from the floor.

“They certainly are.” I grinned, and then the two of us wandered into the living room where the others were waiting for us. “Are you ready to become a new person?”

“You know me, Alpha.” Hailey winked. “I just love changing my name.”

“That reminds me, why didn’t you just go with your actual name, Hailey?” Arielle asked. “No one knows Sarah Moore.”

“My database says Sarah Moore,” Hailey grumbled at the sound of her real name. “Hopefully no one can get to my files, but just in case they do, I wouldn’t want anything to link me to the database.”

“That makes sense.” Nikita nodded.

“I didn’t know Hailey wasn’t your real name.” Lian raised her eyebrows in fascination.

“Trust me, we were just as confused when we found out,” Blair chuckled.

“I’ll tell you everything later, but all you need to know right now is that Sarah was a sad, lonely little girl who was the black sheep in her family, and she’s gone now.” Hailey placed both hands on her hips. “It’s like those Taylor Swift lyrics.

Y'know, the old Hailey can't come to the phone right now.

Why? Oh, 'cause she's dead."

"Yeah, we love Hailey, not Sarah." Azalea grinned.

"I also understood that reference, because I know who Taylor Swift is!" Arielle cheered, which made us all laugh.

"Even I know who that is," Ivy said with a sigh as she curled up against the side of the couch. "And I only listen to white noise. However, I can't shake the suspicion that she has some devious, underlying plan to take over the world via romantic-minded and easily influenced young women... which I can't help but find intriguing and possibly even admirable in its long-game design."

"Huh." I nodded as I considered this. "That'd make a weird amount of sense, actually."

Caitlin smirked at this, but then she shrugged and moved on.

"I never understood the fascination for white noise before, but now I can't sleep without it," the werewolf replied. "It's really quite soothing. Like waves rolling across the shore before retreating again."

“I think it sounds like a murderous swarm of angry wasps seconds before they attack their victim,” Ivy replied. “It’s quite beautiful.”

“Is Ivy talking about killing someone again?” Benji chuckled as he joined us in the living room.

“Of course.” Ivy nodded.

“Meh.” Benji shrugged. “I suppose that shouldn’t surprise me. Now, are you going to hand out those passports, bro?”

“I’m just waiting for Aunt—”

“I’m here, I’m here!” Aunt Eva scurried into the room. “Sorry, I was putting the fresh towels on the girls’ beds. Please, go ahead.”

Inside the brown envelope were two smaller envelopes, one of which felt much thinner than the other. Thankfully, Ewan had scribbled a description on each envelope, so I instantly knew the thin one contained the train tickets and travel documents we all needed.

The second envelope held our new passports, and I felt the excitement in the room as I brought out the first passport.

“Holy shit, are we British citizens now?” Benji gasped as he read the words on the front.

“C’mon, Benji,” Azalea laughed. “Think about it. Ewan sorted this out for us, and he only has some sort of power when it comes to the British government...”

“I think it’s amazing Ewan was able to do all of this so quickly,” Lian said.

“Apparently it takes a minimum of two days to get an emergency passport, or something.” Nikita shrugged. “But with Ewan’s help, we were able to get them even quicker.”

“He’s a great friend to have.” I nodded as I looked inside the passport. “Opal Dwyer?”

“Oh, that’s me.” Arielle grinned.

“What a gorgeous name,” Aunt Eva said with a smile.

“Thank you.” Arielle blushed. “It’s my favorite girl’s name.”

“Lily-Rose Appleton?” I smirked.

“Hi, yes, that’s me.” Hailey raised one hand in the air. “My name is Lily-Rose, I love horse riding, flower arranging, and spending time in my French chateau.”



“Whereas I’m Aubrey Knight, because it was the first name I thought of,” Nikita snickered, then she motioned down at Cooper. “And my son, Maxwell.”

“They’re both beautiful names.” I smiled and brought out the next passport. “Jake Ellis?”

“Thank you.” Zac grinned.

“Isabelle Ellis?” I smirked.

“It’s actually Izzy,” Chloe sighed sarcastically, then she smiled.

Blair’s new name was Ruby Thomas, Caitlin was Eleanor Ellis, Lian was Su Bao, but her English name was Sally, and Aunt Eva decided to go with Mila White to keep our “characters” still related to each other.

“Oh, god,” I groaned as I saw Benji’s passport. “Hamish McAllistair?”

“Yeah.” He grinned. “It was either that, or Ben Dover. And I wanted to keep some of my Scottish blood in there.”

“You’re not even Scottish,” Blair mumbled.

“Not the point.” Benji shrugged.

“Well, you should have gone for Ben Dover,” Azalea chuckled. “Because I was going to go for Tahra Dactyl.”

“Like the dinosaur?” Zac laughed.

“Like the dinosaur.” Azalea grinned. “But I thought that might have been too peculiar, so I went for Tahra Gator. A fun mix between a dinosaur and an alligator.”

Azalea smiled up at me as she took the passport from my hand. “Thank you, Alpha.”

“Your welcome, Tahra.” I winked.

And that just left Ivy’s new name, which was probably the best one of the lot.

“Here you are, Thana.” I smiled.

“Thana?” Aunt Eva frowned.

“Thanatos is the Greek God of Death,” Ivy explained as she stroked one of her black braids. “So I shortened the name.”

“Of course, you named yourself after death,” Blair chuckled. “You’re fantastic, Ivy. Or... Thana.”

“I know.” Ivy nodded.

Once the passports had been handed out, and everyone introduced themselves with their new names, we spent the rest

of the day making sure we had everything we needed.

Caitlin triple-checked Zac's bag to make sure he'd packed everything, because apparently he once packed a singular pair of underwear for a week-long vacation. His excuse was that he had to make room for all his toys and books, so he didn't have space for his clothes.

Fortunately he was older and wiser this time, and Caitlin was pleased to see that her son had packed clothes, games, toys, and even some of his homeschooling work, too.

I had a couple of calls with Hazel and Ewan, mainly to wish us all luck on the journey. Ewan also wanted to check with me that the passports were okay, and I couldn't have praised them harder if I tried. It didn't even look like we were wearing wigs in the pictures.

Before I knew it, it was five o'clock, and my betas started to take their places outside for our quick meeting before we hit the road. We wanted to have left Edinburgh by seven, so we had enough time to go through any last-minute details.

My family and I were relaxing in the living room as normal, and I lounged back against the couch as I gave my betas a couple more minutes to arrive.

*Can you let me know once everyone has arrived?* I asked as I glanced at the time on my phone.

It was so strange having a meeting like this, but there wasn't much we could do.

*We're just waiting for Tiana and Scarlett,* Connor replied.

*Sorry, sorry, we're here!* Scarlett called out. *We had a phone emergency and couldn't find Tiana's charger. But we have it now!*

*Okay,* I laughed. *So we're all here now?*

*We're all here,* Austin confirmed.

*Alright.* I ran one hand down my face as I tried to make sense of what was about to happen. *So within the next two hours, I want us all to be on the road and out of Edinburgh. It'll take us eight hours to drive directly to London, and our Eurostar to France leaves at sixteen minutes past six. But we have to drop off our rental cars, get through the train station, and board the train before six o'clock.*

*What time does the rental place open?* Angelique asked. *Do we just drop off the keys, or...?*

*It opens at eight, Kiri replied. I called the car company in London and asked if we could drop the cars off as early as five. I had to pay a little bit extra, but there will be someone there to accept the cars and go over the paperwork when we arrive.*

*Amazing, thank you, Kiri. I smiled.*

Blair and Azalea nudged Benji with their elbows and winked at him, but he playfully pushed them away.

*You're welcome, Jesse, the werecoyote replied. Luckily for us, the car rental is part of St. Pancras Station, where we need to get the Eurostar, so we don't need to worry about getting from one place to another.*

*Even better. I smirked. So that means we have about eleven hours to get to the station. The roads should be quiet in the middle of the night, and if we need to stop, then we need to stop, but let's try and keep that to a minimum. We need to get onto the train as easily as possible, and even though we have our disguises and passports, that doesn't mean no one will recognize us, so let's give ourselves the best chance of getting out of here. Also, whenever you do leave a car, you must make sure your disguises are on and in place. I would just keep them on throughout the entire drive, but before we leave the cars,*

*let's remember to think about whether we've taken anosmiacs, and whether our disguises are in place.*

*Does everyone have enough anosmiacs? Aunt Eva asked. You should all have your own supply, but if you need a top up, just let me know.*

*I think we might need some, Eva, Daisy replied. Gemma, Angelique, and I have enough to last us a week, but I'd like for us to have enough in case anything happens.*

*Of course, Daisy, Aunt Eva said. I'll give you a bottle from our supply. Anyone else?*

Everyone else had enough anosmiacs, so we moved onto the next order of business.

*As soon as we get on the first train, things should be fairly streamlined from then on, I continued. Apart from one overnight stay, we'll be traveling from one place to another without much delay. It'll probably be a long journey, but let's keep ourselves to ourselves, we'll do whatever we can to blend in with the crowd, and before long we'll be in the compound. But for now let's make sure we have snacks for the journey, our devices are all charged... That sort of thing.*

*I've picked out my snacks, Alpha, Olive said happily. I couldn't decide what I wanted, but I went for Haribo, some chips, and some lollipops. Because, like, sometimes you can't beat a lollipop, y'know? They just hit differently.*

*I understand. I smiled.*

*Before we end this meeting, Jesse, have you spoken to Arthur? Kristina asked. Has he given you any tips or tricks?*

*I spoke to Arthur briefly, I replied. I went over our plans with him, and he agreed with everything we're doing. He was impressed that Ewan was able to get us the documents and tickets so quickly, and he wished us all a safe trip.*

*I miss him, Gemma laughed. I almost wish he was with us, because I can just imagine how he'd react to going into a Russian compound.*

*He'd have a lot to say about it, that's for sure, I snickered. Okay, does anyone have any questions before we leave?*

I waited for a moment, but everyone said they understood the plan, and there would be plenty of time to answer any queries once we were on the road.

As soon as the meeting ended, Nikita gave Cooper one last feeding, and everyone started to change into their disguises.

Azalea, Blair, and Arielle chose long blonde wigs which didn't suit their personalities in the slightest, but they looked natural, and Hailey had a long vibrant pink wig which Ivy braided to make it sit more naturally.

Ivy wore a short black wig which sat around her ears, and Caitlin and Lian chose brunette wigs which almost looked like it was their real hair.

And Nikita went for a silver-and-black wig which sat just above her shoulders. Apparently she'd always wanted to dye her hair silver, but she wasn't sure if it would suit her, so she took the opportunity to style the wig while she had the chance.

"It really suits you," I said as I wrapped my arms around my omega's waist and kissed the top of her wig-covered head. "You should think about dying it this color."

"Maybe." Nikita smiled. "But I have to admit, I'm very glad you didn't go for a wig like Benji. I think only he can pull that thing off."



It was harder for my betas to find wigs for men, but they came across a small selection. However, one of the wigs they found was a short, brown, curly-haired wig which looked like it was made out of plastic. The hairstyle suited Benji, but he had to wear a cap in order to hide how fake it was.

“You’re right,” I chuckled. “A beanie and fake glasses works for me.”

I looked different from the picture everyone saw on the news, and I hoped that was enough for now.

“They’re hot.” Nikita smirked and tapped the fake lenses. “They suit you.”

“Thank you.” I grinned, and then I leaned forward and placed a sweet kiss on her lips. “Is everything ready for Cooper?”

“As ready as it can be, I suppose,” she sighed and rested her head on my chest. “We have enough diapers and clothes to last him a couple of weeks, and we can get more when we’re out there if we need to. I think I’m just... I’m just scared. How is he going to react to all the traveling?”

“I think he’ll be okay.” I squeezed her tight. “I think it’ll be challenging, but he was fine on the plane over here, so

hopefully it'll be the same on the train, too.”

“The whole thing is daunting, though,” Nikita admitted. “Especially with Arielle and Blair being so pregnant, too.”

“I know,” I mumbled. “But we'll stick together, and we'll focus on getting to Russia. That's all we need to worry about first.”

“Okay...” Nikita sighed, but then she pulled back and pressed a kiss against my lips. “Shall we get ready to go?”

“Let's do it.” I nodded.

Laura and Aunt Eva decided to drive for the first couple of hours, and once we were confident there weren't any enemy agents spying on us outside, we packed the cars as quickly as we could.

Beatrice and Mariam arrived as the last suitcases were being loaded into the trunk, and Ewan sent me a text message to say his own agents had left for the airports, so everything had started to take place.

But then everything seemed to hit me as soon as I hugged Beatrice and Mariam goodbye and we drove away from the house.

There was no way of knowing what was going to happen between now and when we arrived in Russia. There was also no way of knowing what was going to happen while we were in Russia, either.

But I was confident that Dernov knew exactly what he was doing, and maybe it was stereotypical of me, but a compound in Russia sounded like one of the safest, most protected places we could be right now.

The first leg of the drive went smoothly, and everyone in the car with me either watched movies on their tablets, shared fun conversations, or fell asleep.

We stopped at a service station just north of Manchester because Zac needed to pee and Cooper's diaper needed to be changed. Connor and Austin offered to take Zac to the restrooms, and while they did that, Gemma and Kristina bought the drivers some coffees to keep them going.

We stopped again a few hours later to allow the drivers to switch out, but then it was straight on to London without any issues.

Fortunately, because it was so early, London felt practically deserted as we drove through it. The sun was still to rise, too, so I didn't get the bustling impression of the

country's capital city, but according to Blair and Nikita, it was a place we definitely had to visit once we were safe to show our faces again.

As soon as we arrived at St. Pancras station at four-forty-five in the morning, we emptied the trunks, threw away any trash, and then the drivers took the cars to the rental place.

From the outside, St. Pancras looked like a cathedral with old red bricks, arches, and spires. But on the inside, the station looked like a mall with glistening stone flooring and a curved glass roof.

But the interior of the ancient train station was the least of my worries.

Because driving through London might have been a breeze, but the same couldn't have been said for the amount of people we came across when we walked through the archway.

It was five o'clock in the morning, but the train station was packed with people.

And it seemed as though everyone was looking at me.



# Chapter 11

*Jesse, Arielle whimpered silently as we tried to work out where to go. Everyone's looking at us.*

I paid close attention to the information boards, but then I casually glanced around the ancient station to see if people actually were looking at us. It seemed as though most people were more concerned about finding the right platform and making their way toward their own train, but it certainly looked and felt as though all eyes were on us.

*We're okay, I told her reassuringly as I grabbed hold of her hand. Let's just focus on getting on the train instead of everyone else around us. We're also running on very little sleep, so that's going to make everything appear more daunting than it actually is.*

I was just as stressed and nervous as she was, but I tried my best not to let that show, and instead I focused on getting everyone to the right place on time. Fortunately, directions to the Eurostar were well signposted, and my family and I trundled our suitcases behind us as we began our walk through the station.

There was one tense moment when a guy automatically stopped walking in front of me, and I walked straight into his enormous suitcase before I could prepare myself.

“Oh, sorry, mate,” the guy said in a deep Cockney accent as he pulled his case toward him. “I was in a world of my own. I should come with a pair of eyes in the back of my ‘ead.”

“It’s okay.” I smiled and laughed.

The Londoner seemed to glance at me for a brief moment, but then he shook his head.

“It’s too damn early for this malarky,” he scoffed. “Anyway, have a good one.”

“You, too,” I replied, and then I looked over at my family before we continued walking.

I wasn’t sure if that guy knew who I was or not, and maybe the early hours of the morning caused his eyes to play tricks on him, but I was exceedingly pleased when we both parted ways.

However, that small encounter made me realize that if people knew I was from the States, then my accent could be a clue for them to hold onto. So even though I wasn’t the best at

putting on different accents, I made a note to adjust mine as best I could.

*Cars have been dealt with, Jesse, Kiri informed me silently. We're just making our way to the Eurostar now.*

*Thanks, Kiri, I said. We're almost at security now, and I can see Kristina, Connor, and their groups just ahead of us.*

*Right, we are Jesse, Connor spoke up. All you need for security is your passport and the tickets, then you walk through the scanners when you're told to do so.*

*It doesn't seem as intense as airport security, which is good, Kristina mumbled.*

*Let's hope that's the case, I replied.*

A long, wrap-around line separated us from security, and there must have been at least twenty or thirty people in front of us, but they all seemed to be far too interested in collecting together the appropriate paperwork and making their way through the line.

In fact, no one seemed to look in my direction, and I kept my head bowed as I absentmindedly glanced at my phone, just in case anyone turned around for whatever reason.



However, I still feared that I'd see my face and name plastered all over the station, like a wanted sign out for my arrest, or even my death. But luckily I never saw anything of the sort, so I was able to let out a short breath as we slowly made our way across the line.

Before I knew it, it was time for us to head through, and Caitlin wandered forward with Chloe and Zac.

“Final destination?” the male security guard asked with a straight face as he glanced down at their passports.

I sucked in a deep breath, and my stomach seemed to rise to my throat as we approached our first hurdle.

“Paris,” Caitlin lied with a brilliant smile.

Our tickets only said we were going to France, and then we had separate tickets for the rest of the journey, so the security guard had no reason to think otherwise.

The guard in the booth scanned the passports and the tickets, and then he placed them all in a neat pile as he handed them back to Caitlin.

“Are you going to Disneyland?” he asked.

“Yep!” Zac bounced around excitedly. “I can't wait to see all my favorite characters!”

It was another lie Zac had been told to tell, but given how excited he looked at just the thought of going to Disneyland, I made a promise to take them all to the most magical place on earth once we'd dealt with the rest of the world.

It was the very least I could do.

“Have fun, and have a safe trip,” the guard said. “One at a time, head through the scanners to your right, then follow the signs to the platform.”

“Thank you so much,” Caitlin replied as she ushered her children away.

“Next!” the guard shouted.

My stomach remained in my throat as I watched Benji, Arielle, Lian, Hailey, Ivy, Azalea, and Blair all step through individually. They all said Paris was their final destination, and the security guard barely looked at them as he handed back their passports.

Nikita and I were next to go, and I pushed Cooper's stroller through the barriers as Nikita handed over our documents.

“Final destination?” the guy sounded even more bored than he did five minutes ago.

“Paris.” I smiled as I changed my accent just slightly to add a bit more of an English twang to it.

“We’re taking Max to Disneyland.” Nikita smiled down at Cooper, and then glanced up at me. “We’re so excited, aren’t we, Mason?”

“We sure are.” I winked.

“A lot of people are going there today,” the guard said as he scanned our tickets. “I think the half term is coming up, so everyone’s leaving before the schools are out.”

I had a feeling a “half term” was a vacation, but I just nodded my head in agreement, even though I didn’t fully know what he was talking about.

But all in all, the guard seemed to be far too focused on his job to really look at me, apart from a quick glance between myself and my passport photo, and everything scanned through properly, so everything was going according to plan.

“The kid will need to leave the pushchair when you go through the scanners,” he explained as he handed us back our

passports and tickets. “But head off to your right, then make your way to the platform.”

“Thanks,” I replied. “C’mon, Aubrey.”

“Thank you!” Nikita called out, and then she skipped beside me as we wandered toward the assigned scanner.

*Okay, that was easier than I thought, Nikita mumbled privately as we joined another line. And he barely looked at you, Jesse, so I’d be very surprised if he thought we were up to something.*

*That’s the vibe I got, too. I nodded. And now we just have to get on the train and make our way to Russia.*

Going through the scanner and getting to the platform was the easiest part of the entire process, and I kept in constant contact with the rest of my betas to make sure they’d all made it in time, too, which they had.

The train had already arrived at the platform, but around us was a swarm of people walking around in all directions as they tried to locate their allocated coach. Some of my betas were in coaches three, four, and five, but Ewan had managed to get me and my family first-class seats in coach seven.

“Are we actually going under water?” Zac gasped as Caitlin located their seats.

“Of course, we’re going under water,” Chloe sighed. “How else do you think we get to France while on a train? Fly?”

“In fairness, there could be a bridge that crosses the water.” Laura shrugged as she gave her niece a smirk.

“But there are windows.” Zac tapped the glass beside him. “So do we get to see all the fish in the sea?”

“I don’t think that’s how it works, sweetheart,” Caitlin laughed. “We’ll be in a tunnel, so we’ll just see the tunnel.”

“Aah, man,” Zac mumbled.

I couldn’t help but laugh at Zac’s clear disappointment, but it was probably a question I would have asked if I was eleven years old.

“Hey, Mason,” Benji said from behind me, and it took a second for me to remember that was my chosen name.

“Hey.” I turned around in my seat and smiled at Benji and Hailey.

We had five rows of two seats and a group of four seats, so I automatically told Caitlin, Laura, and the kids to take the

group of four, and the rest of us could swap places throughout the journey if we needed to.

“Lily-Rose and I were wondering if you have the travel adapter in your bag?” Benji asked.

There were so many names I had to keep track of, but at least we didn’t have to use them for too long.

“I... think so.” I frowned, and then I located my bag and checked around the various pockets until I found the European plug adapter. “Here you go.”

“Thank you.” Hailey smiled.

“Are you comfortable?” I asked.

“Apart from being next to... Hamish, yes.” Hailey smirked as she nudged Benji with her elbow, and then she played with one of her pink braids.

“Hey, you love sitting next to me,” Benji gasped. “And any more of that nonsense and I won’t let you watch this movie with me.”

“I think traveling with you two is going to be like traveling with the kids,” Azalea snickered from behind Benji and Hailey. “But part of me thinks Jake and Izzy behave better than you do.”

As soon as Azalea said that, Zac groaned as Chloe did something to frustrate him. Caitlin then told Chloe off, but the teenager complained and said she hadn't done anything.

“Do you want to take back that statement?” I asked Azalea.

“Maybe...” my omega chuckled. “I'll see how the first hour goes, and then I'll give you my answer.”

“You can swap seats with me, if you want?” Hailey suggested sweetly.

“I think I'll pass,” Azalea laughed. “Plus, Sally and I were going to start watching a new TV show together.”

Lian peered in between the two seats and gave us a wave.

I had Nikita beside me with a sleeping Cooper in her arms, Blair and Ivy sat together in front of us, and then Arielle and Aunt Eva were at the front.

Everyone seemed to be perfectly comfortable, and I also started to feel comfortable as soon as the train slowly moved away from the platform.

It was only going to take about three hours to get to Paris, and then the real adventure began when we boarded the

next train, but for now we were comfortable.

Our tickets were checked about thirty minutes into the journey, and then a drink cart was trundled down the aisle followed swiftly by the complimentary food cart.

The menu was mainly written in French with English translations underneath, but each food option had a picture of the meal beside it.

I ordered a black coffee, and then I chose the selection of pastries and fruit for breakfast. The rest of my family seemed to go for roughly the same thing, apart from Arielle who ordered a peppermint tea, a soy yogurt, and a banana.

The majority of the journey went by smoothly, and whenever we spoke to each other we always made sure to use our new names.

I had a call from Ewan just to tell me that his agents had managed to get their flights without any issue, and he and Dernov were going to keep a close eye to make sure the agents in Scotland continued to follow the false leads. He also had no reason to believe any agents were in St. Pancras when we boarded the train, so we hoped we'd managed to leave the country completely undetected.



Once that call was out the way, and Cooper was settled, I managed to get some sleep, and I woke up with twenty minutes left to go.

It wasn't as easy to navigate around Gare Du Nord train station because none of the signposts we came across were written in English. So it was a damn good thing we had Lian with us, and that she was practically fluent in French.

“Um...” My omega peered up at the board.  
“International arrivals, departures... Okay, we want to go this way. I expect we'll need to scan our passports and tickets again, and then we'll have an hour before we have to board our train to Brussels.”

*Then once we're in Belgium, our third train takes us straight to Russia, right?* Blair asked silently, just in case anyone was listening.

*Yes.* I nodded. *There will be a layover in Germany, but we won't have to leave the train, so our next stop will be Russia.*

We would have had to find a hotel in Germany if Ewan hadn't spoken to the German ESD, who in turn discussed everything with the train line, and they were able to allow us to sleep on the train, which saved us so much time. My betas

were going to stay in a hotel because there wasn't enough space for everyone to sleep on the train, but they were slightly safer than I was to wander around.

Lian amazed me as she led us through the foreign station. We mainly followed the crowd, but when it came to scanning passports and tickets, Lian chose the correct lane and walked us down toward the officer who sat in a glass booth.

“Bonjour, monsieur,” Lian said politely.

“Bonjour.” He nodded.

The rest of the French was lost on me, but Lian spoke so eloquently and only hesitated a couple of times. My limited knowledge of the language allowed me to understand that Lian mentioned her family and friends a couple of times, but that was helped by the fact that she motioned toward us as she did so.

“Passeports et billets, s'il vous plaît?” He held out his hand, to which Lian passed him the stack of documents he was after.

The man glanced down at our passports, then he took a long, hard look at each of us before he moved on to the next passport. I still had the same fear that I'd see my face

somewhere, or perhaps he'd recognize me as he looked at the documents for Mason White, but everything seemed to go smoothly.

Once the man had checked everything and scanned all of our tickets, he said something to Lian and motioned with his hands as he spoke.

“D'accord.” She nodded, which I knew meant “okay.”

Lian thanked the man, and then told us to follow.

“That was amazing,” Hailey gushed as we wandered past the booth.

“Thank you.” Lian smiled. “That was the first time I've ever spoken French to anyone other than my tutor, so I was quite nervous to begin with.”

“You certainly didn't show it,” I snorted. “I was so impressed.”

“Yeah, and me, too!” Benji shook his head in disbelief. “Can you teach me some French?”

“Sure.” Lian shrugged. “It's not like we don't have a lot of time on our hands right now.”

Lian used the directions the man gave her to take us toward the correct platform for the train to Brussels, and my

betas had just enough time to get some snacks and drinks from a store before the train arrived.

Just like with the Eurostar, my family and I had first-class tickets again, and I let out another sigh of relief as soon as the train doors closed and we started to move.

“Let’s make ourselves comfortable,” I said to my family. “We’re going to be on this train for a long time.”

“I already know what I’m going to do,” Nikita said as she curled herself up against the window. “No one wake me up unless Max needs to be fed.”

“Copy that.” I smirked.

Aunt Eva had Cooper cuddled up against her chest, and given that she couldn’t go an hour without holding her great-nephew, I knew she wasn’t going to let him go anytime soon.

Unlike the Eurostar, my family and I sat around tables instead of rows of two, and they all shared various tablets as they huddled together to watch TV shows and movies. Ivy had her sketchbook out in front of her, Chloe blared music through her headphones, and Benji and Zac battled each other on Benji’s Nintendo Switch.

Arielle tried to watch a movie with Hailey, but my omega's eyes started to close ten minutes into the journey, and soon it was just Hailey watching the movie by herself.

I wasn't sure what Azalea and Lian were watching, but I assumed it was the same show they started on the last train, and the two of them seemed to be completely hypnotized by whatever was on their tablet.

Blair also listened to music, and Caitlin relaxed back in her seat as she returned to her most recent book of choice.

I found myself simply watching my family, and their laughter and smiles made it seem like there was nothing going on in the world, and they were about to take part in a giant vacation, not a dangerous mission across the globe.

I checked in with my other betas on the train a few times, but they were all doing roughly what we were doing. I also reminded them to take their anosmiacs, but they'd already made sure to do just that.

We ordered drinks and snacks whenever the carts came around, and I tried to take my mind off the real issues going on in the world, or what was going to happen once we reached Russia. I even managed to watch a couple episodes of a TV show I'd downloaded without thoughts and questions spiraling

out of control, and for the first two hours I was able to relax for the first time in weeks.

“Word of warning,” Blair said as she returned to her seat. “Hold on tight when you go to the bathroom.”

“Thank you, because I was about to do that,” I chuckled.

The train wobbled back and forth as it hurtled across the tracks, and if I hadn’t held onto the tops of the seats, I probably would have fallen flat on my face, or toppled into the seat beside me.

But then the bathroom was even worse, and there was barely enough space for me to turn around in. I had to somehow hold my balance and then work out the strange contraption when it came to washing my hands. It felt like using the bathroom on a plane, except it was half the size and during turbulence.

But at least I managed to get back to my seat before I fell over or made a fool of myself, so it felt like I’d accomplished something.

Our constant traveling really started to take effect as we reached Brussels, but fortunately it was a much easier

transition from one train to the other.

It was six o'clock at night by the time our train left for Germany. We had been traveling for almost twenty-four hours, but we had only made it to Belgium which would have taken a few hours to get there by plane. But given the amount of agents Ewan's men spotted in airports, and Dernov's men had spotted around Edinburgh, going by train was definitely the safest option.

And at least it meant we didn't have to jump from a train, onto a ferry, and repeat that process a few times before we reached Russia.

I hadn't heard from either of them in a few hours, and no news was good news, so even though the traveling was hard, I knew we were safe, and currently no one had caught on to our secret mission.

Apart from feeling tired and restless, the one thing everyone complained about were the disguises. Zac didn't like how the wig felt on his head, Hailey's wig was itchy, and Blair just wanted to run her hands through her hair and massage her head. My beanie also felt very hot on my head, too, so I only imagined how the wigs must have felt.

Chloe and Zac were clearly done with traveling by the time we reached Germany. Caitlin even had to separate them because the two of them just kept arguing.

“Oh, my god,” Chloe huffed as she tucked her feet up onto the seat. “I’m so tempted to just jump off the train in Germany and head back to Scotland.”

“That’s too bad,” Caitlin mumbled. “You’re staying here, and that’s final.”

“But why can’t I go with the others?” The teenager threw her arms in the air. “They’re all getting to stay in a hotel, but we have to stay here!”

“Because last I checked, none of them were my children.” Caitlin gave Chloe a stern look. “You are staying where I can see you, and that’s the end of it. I will not allow my daughter to walk around a country she’s never been to before.”

“But they’ll all look after me!” Chloe groaned. “C’mon, Mom, this is so unfair!”

“Izzy,” I said sternly as I caught on to the stress that coated Caitlin’s face. “Your mom is in charge, whether you like that or not. If she says you’re staying here, then you’re



staying here. Now, please, don't argue with her on that one.

We're going through enough as it is."

"Technically you're in charge," she muttered under her breath.

"Fine." I smirked. "Then I'm telling you to stay here. There are no other options."

"I don't mind sleeping on the train." Zac smiled up at me like a little angel. "I actually think it's fun."

"You're only saying that because you want to be Je-Mason's favorite," Chloe grumbled.

"Or maybe he's genuinely excited about sleeping on the train?" Arielle shrugged. "I think of it like an adventure!"

"But it's going to be so boring!" Chloe groaned. "We'll just be sitting here sleeping."

"And what do you think they'll be doing in the hotel?" I laughed. "It's not like they'll be taking advantage of workout facilities or room service. They'll get to their rooms, sleep, wake up, and come back on the train again."

"It also means they'll get less sleep," Caitlin added. "At least we can stay where we are and sleep until we're ready to wake up. We won't have any alarms."

“Fine!” Chloe covered her face with her hands. “But this is the last time we’re traveling across the world by train.”

“You know I can’t promise that.” I smiled sadly. “But I’ll do everything I can to make sure our traveling is much easier next time.”

Once everyone had stepped off the train in Germany, the crew came around our first-class seats and began to turn them into beds. The tables were folded down and clicked into the walls, and then the seats were pulled out flat before sheets and blankets were added.

It might not be the most comfortable night’s sleep we’d ever had, but at least it lowered the risk of other people seeing us if we had to wander back through a train station and check into a hotel.

The train crew informed us in broken English that they would be on the train if we needed anything, and that they’d wake us up thirty minutes before passenger boarding in order to put the beds back.

I thanked them for all their work, and then they walked away and left us to it.

The train crew didn't know who I was, as far as I was aware. They just knew the German government asked for this favor, so I was clearly someone of importance.

It wasn't even that much of a favor, because the train was a sleeper train anyway, but there were only a few beds available, so most people were recommended to book a hotel instead.

Despite how the beds looked, I actually had a surprisingly comfortable night's sleep. Cooper woke up a couple of times, and Zac complained that he couldn't fall asleep, but everyone else seemed to sleep soundly.

Then, just as I was getting into a really good dream, it was time to wake up, and we organized our stuff and turned the beds back into seats again as the other passengers stepped back onto the train.

My betas silently informed me that everyone was on board, and their night in a local hostel was fine, but the mattresses could have been slightly firmer.

As soon as it reached seven-fifty-nine, the train doors closed, and then we were off. It was going to take us twenty-four hours to reach our final destination of Moscow, and then it was going to be a two-hour drive to reach the compound.

But we had already completed the first half of the journey, so I just hoped the next twenty-four hours went by as smoothly.

The train was going to take us through Poland, straight up and through Belarus, and then into Moscow, and because it was my first time in those countries, I was interested to see how the views changed through the windows, and the landscapes we'd look out on as we hurtled from place to place.

However, apart from the announcement that told us the next stop on the journey, I had no idea when we'd passed from one country into another. The rolling hills in Poland reminded me of the rolling hills in Scotland, and even though there was a more European feel to the cities, with tall, tan-colored buildings, and ancient, steeple-topped architecture, I often had no idea where we were.

But that didn't stop me from enjoying the adventure, and my family around me enjoyed themselves, too.

My omegas hopped from seat to seat, the kids caught up on their sleep, and we took walks around the coach to keep us moving. The food and drinks carts stopped by every hour to see if anyone needed any more refreshments, and we were given breakfast, lunch, and dinner as part of our first-class tickets.

There was a clear difference between traveling for three hours compared to twenty-four, and everything started to get very tedious as we crossed the borders into Russia, but at least we were almost there.

Our disguises and new passports had seemingly worked, and no one had acted overly suspicious around us, which I saw as a good sign.

However, my previous fears returned as soon as we arrived at Moscow Leningradsky Station.

The place looked like an enormous golden temple, but it was the security that freaked us out the most.

The men marched around the building with guns strapped to their thighs, or slung over their shoulders. Their straight backs and stern postures made it very clear they owned the place, and I knew they wouldn't take shit from anyone.

So I silently prayed they didn't know who I was, or that they were actually in on the plan with Dernov to get us here safely.

Because if that wasn't the case, and the men recognized me, shit would hit the fan.

And the security probably would be showing me exactly how impressive their guns were.



## Chapter 12

“Do not leave my side,” Caitlin whispered to her children as we made our way down the platform.

Fortunately, the kids were smart enough to know that now was not the time to misbehave, especially with the Russian security guards staring down at every person who passed them.

I tightened my grip on Cooper’s stroller as the ticket barriers came into view, and I just hoped I looked like every other passenger in the station. But I had a strong feeling those guards could smell bullshit from a mile away, and I hadn’t traveled all this way to find myself locked up in a Russian prison.

*Jesse, Azarov’s deep, Russian voice seeped into my thoughts. I will help you through barriers. Wait there.*

My betas decided to walk through the station in smaller groups so that they didn’t stand out if they all walked together, but the Russian wild cats decided to split up and join each smaller group to help with translations.



“Let’s stay here,” I said to my family as I motioned toward the wall to my left. “Azarov’s going to help us.”

A flurry of activity appeared beside us as alarm bells pierced through the air, men started shouting, and dogs started barking. My heart rate instantly increased, and the eyes of everyone around me widened.

I had no idea what was going on, but I automatically assumed it was something to do with me, and perhaps we’d made it all the way to Moscow just to get caught before we’d even made it through the barriers.

“Do not fear that.” Azarov patted the air calmly. “One man try to go through barrier, but ticket not work. He now... apologize, but men voices cause dog to bark. They not even shout. My language is, er... deeper. More loud than American.”

“Thank fuck for that,” I blew out a sigh of relief.

Azarov was certainly right about one thing. The Russian guards definitely sounded angry, like they were seconds away from taking out their guns and firing into the air. But that was just how their language sounded to me, and maybe these men weren’t angry in the slightest.

“So... we’re safe to go through?” Benji asked, and for once there was very little humor in his voice.

“Yes, we keep going.” Azarov nodded. “Man not in trouble, so no danger here.”

Once I knew everyone was okay after the little fright we’d received, Azarov waved us forward with his hand, and he directed us toward a barrier which allowed strollers and suitcases through it.

The wild cat spoke to the guard who manned the barrier. The guard nodded his head lightly, and then he glanced at us and told us something in Russian as he held up one finger.

“You have to go through one at a time,” Azarov translated. “Hand out passport, then go through.”

“Okay...” Benji mumbled as he decided to go first.

The guard took a long, hard look at the passport for Hamish McAllistair, then he glanced up at Benji with the same expression on his face.

Once the guard was happy, he scanned Benji’s ticket to allow the barrier to unlock, then Benji took back his documents as he walked straight through.

My throat felt thick with fear as I watched my family walk through the barrier. Cooper had to be removed from his stroller and carried through, and the guard thoroughly searched every inch of the stroller before he allowed Nikita to take it back.

Chloe played with her hands anxiously as she stood in front of the barrier, and I took a hold of Caitlin's hand to keep her as calm as possible.

Fortunately, the guard allowed Chloe to go through without any issues, but it wasn't as easy when it came time for Zac to go through.

"Can you come with me?" he asked his mother. "I'm scared."

"You don't need to be scared, sweetheart." Caitlin smiled, even though I could hear the pain in her voice. "Just stand there, let the man check your passport, and then you walk over to your sister, okay?"

The guard ordered something in Russian, and he motioned Zac over with his hand.

"You must stand here." Azarov crouched down to Zac's level. "This won't take long."

Zac looked everywhere apart from at the man in front of him, and his young face flushed with anxiety as the seconds ticked by. He looked so small compared to the enormous security guard, and it was horrible to see Zac looking so scared. It even looked like he was about to burst into tears, and I just knew Caitlin's heart was breaking.

Fortunately, before Zac completely lost his shit, the man scanned his ticket and allowed him through. The young boy practically sprinted toward Chloe, and she held her quivering brother in both arms as they waited for Caitlin and Laura to walk through.

I allowed everyone else to go before me, and my nerves seemed to calm down as the last of my omegas wandered through the barriers.

Azarov followed on behind them, and then it was my time.

The security guard looked down at the passport for Mason White, but then his dark eyes narrowed as he looked up at me. It could have just been how I interpreted the expression on his face, but the man looked conflicted, like he couldn't quite work out what to believe.

“You?” he asked as he prodded the passport with a fat finger.

“Yes, that’s me.” I nodded.

The guard frowned again, and he looked back and forth between me and the picture several times.

I tried not to let my true emotions show, and I hoped my emotionless face made the guard think that nothing was amiss. But deep down I knew exactly how Zac felt standing in this spot all alone.

I had a strong feeling the guard totally knew who I was, that I wasn’t Mason White, and maybe he knew everyone around me all had fake names, too. But if this guard worked with Dernov, or knew of Dernov, then perhaps I wasn’t in any sort of danger.

But it certainly didn’t feel that promising.

“You come there.” The man pointed to an empty space behind him. “Sit.”

“Me?” I asked.

“You,” he ordered, and then he continued to talk in Russian.

“He says you must sit against wall,” Azarov translated.  
“A man needs to come and talk to you, but sit there now.”

“Wh-What?” Hailey asked. “Why?”

“Because a man needs to talk to... Mason,” Azarov explained as best he could. “It won’t take long. He not in danger. Just stay there.”

It certainly felt like I was in danger.

It actually felt like I was about to get arrested, and I had to stand against the wall while the guards threw a set of cuffs around my wrists.

My omegas called out to me silently as I took my spot against the wall, and the other betas in the station asked if everything was okay, but I didn’t have much of an explanation to give them. I just said the same thing Azarov told us, and I hoped that was enough to keep my betas calm.

But there was part of me that was tempted to ask whether I could use my phone. I felt like I needed to call Dernov, explain everything to him, and perhaps he’d give me a proper answer.

Why had I been told to stand against a wall by myself?

Who was this man I had to talk to?

Why did it feel like I was about to be thrown into the back of a cop car and taken off to a Russian prison?

My family stood together, but they constantly looked over at me and gave me small smiles, but they all stayed where they were, even though they desperately wanted to come and join me.

The security guard allowed more passengers through the barrier, and not once did he look back at me. It was almost like he'd completely forgotten I was there, or maybe it was because I was out of his hands that he didn't bother to look over and check up on me.

I must have been standing there for fifteen minutes when a little boy and his mother walked through the barriers. The little boy was only about six years of age, and he held onto his mother's hand as he skipped through the daunting contraption.

But then the boy looked over at me, and he cocked his head to one side as a frown formed on his tiny, pale face.

After a second, the little boy threw an arm out in my direction, and he bounced around on the spot as he shouted something excitedly. He pulled at his mother's jacket and

repeated something over and over in Russian, but he never took his eyes off me.

A sickening sense of fear trickled through me, but I kept my face as straight as possible.

*The boy say he recognize you, Alpha, Azarov said silently. Say you are man from TV.*

*Fuck's sake, I groaned. What do I do?*

It didn't make any sense that a little boy recognized me in a Russian train station, but I'd traveled right across Europe without anyone even looking at me twice.

Was my luck seriously that bad that I got caught by a six-year-old just before I made it to safety?

*Don't do anything, Azarov informed me. Just stay where you are.*

Fortunately, the mother hushed her son's excitement before anyone really caught on to what was happening, and she gave me an apologetic smile as she wandered toward me.

"I'm sorry," she said with a soft, Russian accent. "My son is... happy. We know... about you."

I didn't say anything, but my frown told the woman how confused I was.



“Thank you,” she whispered. “For... everything you do. Thank you.”

Before I could say anything, the woman’s green eyes flashed purple for a brief second, and then they returned to the same vibrant green color they were before.

She was a shifter, and she clearly didn’t hate me.

She must have heard everything going on in the news, otherwise her son wouldn’t have been so excited to see me, but it didn’t seem as though she’d believed the lies the Chinese government made up.

The woman gave me one last smile, and then she took her son by the hand and walked him away. The little boy continued to skip happily, but he occasionally glanced over his shoulder and waved back at me.

I gave him a very slow, short wave in return, mainly because I had no idea what the fuck had just happened.

*Are we... going to talk about that?* Benji asked silently.

*Yeah, what the hell just happened?* Azalea asked.

*I’ll let you know once I’ve worked it out myself,* I snorted.

Before any of us could discuss the strange, sudden interaction, a man in a black suit and a thick gray jacket wandered over to us. He had a quick conversation in Russian to the security guard, and then he followed the guard's motion of his hand and walked over to me.

“Mason White?” the man asked in a deep voice, with an even deeper accent to accompany it.

“Yes.” I nodded.

“But that is not your real name, am I right?” He frowned, but there was the making of a smile on his thin lips.

The man stood at least a head taller than me, and he scratched the dark stubble on his jaw as he waited for an answer.

But what answer did I give him?

I had no idea who the guy was, so I didn't want to admit to my forgery in case it got me, and my entire family, into serious trouble.

“I'm sorry.” I shook my head lightly. “Who are you?”

“My name is Sedov Yakovich.” The man placed a large hand on his chest. “I work with Dernov Vladimirovich, and it is my duty to take care of you.”

That was slightly more comforting, but I wouldn't automatically take his word for gospel without talking to Dernov first. If Sedov knew who I was, and if he knew Dernov was the head of the Russian agency, then he could have easily put two and two together.

"Am I able to speak with Dernov first?" I asked.

"Of course." Sedov nodded his head once.

I took a few calming breaths as I located my phone and brought up Dernov's number. It took a couple of seconds for the Russian to answer, but as soon as he did, and as soon as I told him everything that happened in the station, Dernov was quick to reassure me.

"Sedov is my best agent," Dernov explained. "I trust him with my life, and trust him with yours, too. I'm sorry for not telling you sooner, Jesse, but I had issue with agents in Europe I had to sort out first."

"Is everything okay?" I asked.

"It is now, yes," he replied. "But don't worry, there is no word you have been to other countries. Asian agents think you fly somewhere from Scotland and try to find you, so you're safe for now."

I hadn't realized how much weight I had been carrying until Dernov told me that. My entire body seemed to slump as a freeing feeling ran from my head to my toes, and despite how long the journey was, it was totally worth it at that exact moment.

"Follow Sedov," Dernov continued. "He has cars waiting outside to take you all to compound. I head there now, and I meet you at compound. Okay?"

"That's excellent, Dernov, thank you." I smiled.

The smile stayed on my face as I ended the call and looked back up at Sedov.

"Dernov said you have cars outside?" I asked.

"Yes." The large man nodded. "Enough cars to fit all of you. Bulletproof and dark windows, so no one see in. Station has been checked also."

My eyes widened slightly at the idea of the cars being bulletproof, but then the expression softened as I realized Sedov said the station had been checked over, and hopefully that meant no undercover agents had decided to survey every mode of transport across the globe.

Once everyone was much more comfortable with Sedov's arrival, I informed my nearby betas about what was happening, and then we followed the enormous man out of the station.

The first thing I noticed were the layers upon layers of solid, packed snow on the ground, and the city of Moscow seemed to peek through the wintry scenery. A bitter wind blew against my face, and I instantly realized why every security guard inside the station had been wearing the same thick jackets and wool hats.

The internet wasn't lying when it described how cold Russia was in winter.

Fortunately, shifters didn't feel the cold as much as humans did, so we didn't have to wrap up like everyone else. But the same couldn't have been said for Chloe and Zac, so during my interesting conversations in the station, Caitlin had ordered her children to pull out their winter clothing.

"Come," Sedov ordered as he marched across the icy snow. "We all meet in car park."

The kids struggled with their suitcases in the snow, and the wheels of Cooper's stroller refused to turn, but with a little

help from my betas we made it around the side of the enormous station where the parking lot was situated.

I expected to come across several SUVs, or some sedans we'd all have to squeeze into. But it turned out that the language barrier must have caused an issue when it came to describing the vehicles.

Because the "cars" Sedov spoke about were actually trucks.

Military trucks.

"Holy shiiiiit!" Benji whispered excitedly. "This is so much better than a superyacht!"

There were seven trucks in total, and all of them were a mix of either beige or dark green. The monstrous wheels looked to be bigger than Zac, the majority of the trucks were covered in solid metal, and the only tinted windows Sedov told us about were the windows around the cabins of the trucks.

According to Sedov, twelve people could fit into each truck, so we were told to climb in and make ourselves comfortable.

"There isn't enough space for all of us in one truck," Aunt Eva said. "So Benji can stay with you, and I'll go into

another one.”

“Sure, no problem,” I replied.

Four steps at the back of the truck took us up into the cargo area, and Benji climbed in first in order to help Chloe, Zac, Arielle, and Blair up the steps.

“This is so cool!” Zac laughed, and the solid metal rattled as he jumped around. “I feel like a soldier going to war!”

“Let’s hope there isn’t a war before we’re ready for one,” I mumbled as I steadied Nikita on the stairs.

Caitlin climbed in after her, followed by Hailey, Azalea, Lian, and Ivy.

“This is much better,” my avian omega said as she chose a seat. “I can’t handle too many outsiders in one day.”

“I bet there are weapons in these trucks, too,” Benji cackled.

“There are.” Ivy nodded. “I can almost smell the bullets from here.”

Aunt Eva took Cooper from my arms as I climbed up the steps, and then she passed my son back to me as she headed off toward Austin’s truck.

*Is everyone okay?* I asked silently as I looked around the parking lot.

Apart from a few police cars, the trucks were the only vehicles in the area, so it wasn't a parking lot for passengers, which also made me more confident that no one had spotted us climbing into the outrageous trucks.

*We're all good, Alpha,* Kristina replied.

*Same here,* Austin added.

*The last of my group is just joining us now,* Connor said.

*Bala and Zimin are still to climb in, but then we're good to go, sir,* Carlo informed me.

*Excellent.* I nodded. *In that case, I'll see you all at the compound.*

As soon as I made myself comfortable in the truck, I was hit with the strong, musty scent of leather and oil. The chilling wind blew through the metal sidings, and the truck creaked and groaned as everyone moved around.

The truck came with six leather seats on each side which faced each other, and there was only just enough space in the middle for us to stretch our legs out without kicking the person opposite.



All of our luggage and Cooper's stroller had been stored in the top compartment of the truck, and Sedov and one other man sat in the cabin.

"We will drive for two hours." Sedov turned in his seat to face us. "It will be long drive, and bumpy roads, but try to be comfortable."

"Thanks, Sedov." I smiled.

I took my seat beside Ivy and opposite Hailey, and I held Cooper in his sling against my chest as the trucks roared to life and slowly began to drive out of the parking lot.

Cooper woke up to the sudden noise, and his crying told me he didn't like the roaring engine or the squeaky brakes, but I managed to hush him back to sleep without too much of an issue.

Like Sedov said, the journey was extremely bumpy and uncomfortable. It felt like we were flung around every time the wheels went over the smallest bump in the road, and we all had to hold on whenever the truck took a turn, but at least none of us had any issues with motion sickness.

I managed to check my phone a couple of times, and I had some messages from Hazel and Ewan asking how my

journey was going. I also had a message from Parker stating that he was still doing a fabulous job at keeping everyone on my side, and telling them all about shifters.

I dreaded to think what he was actually telling them.

Moscow was two hours ahead of the UK, but it was ten hours ahead of Oregon, and seven hours ahead of New York. So I replied to Hazel and Parker, even though I knew it was the middle of the night for them, but at least they'd know that everything was okay.

I told Ewan about my interaction in the station with the lady and her son, but that we were currently with Sedov in fucking military trucks on our way to the compound.

The entire adventure was mind-blowing, and I still couldn't wrap my head around everything that happened in the last two days, but at least the end of this crazy and terribly long journey was in sight.

Roughly two hours after the trucks left the station they came to one final halt, and Sedov jumped out of the cabin as the engine was switched off. I tried to peer through the front windows to see where we were, but all I saw was a vast, open plot of land that seemed to spread all the way over to the snow-capped mountains in the distance.

Dernov originally said there were high walls and watchtowers, so I couldn't imagine us staying in an underground bunker, but I had no idea what the compound was going to look like.

I just hoped it wasn't too unwelcoming or intimidating for the kids. This whole situation was already stressful enough.

All of a sudden, the back door to the left of me swung open, and the hinges shrieked in protest as Sedov locked both doors in place.

"We walk from here," he announced.

The rest of the trucks were parked in a straight line behind ours, and I just made out other agents walking around the sides of the trucks as they freed my betas in the back.

"Where are we?" Zac whispered.

"This is where you're going," Chloe teased her brother. "You're staying here, but we'll come and visit you."

"What?" Zac shrieked and turned to look at Caitlin.

"Am I staying here? I don't want to stay here."

"Chloe," my omega sighed at her daughter. "All I ask is for you to leave your brother alone for five minutes... Just five minutes."

“I think this is the compound, buddy,” I told Zac as I unbuckled my seatbelt. “And don’t listen to Chloe. We’ll all be staying together.”

“Yes, this is compound,” Sedov replied. “Come now, you all follow me.”

Nikita took Cooper from me as I jumped down from the truck, and then I assisted the others as they made the climb down.

“God,” Azalea sighed as she leaped down the steps without an issue. “My butt is so numb right now. I cannot wait to shift.”

“Your ass looks pretty good from here.” I smirked.

The leggings she wore were like a second skin, and they showed off every curve of my omega’s fantastic body.

“I know.” She winked. “But that doesn’t mean it isn’t numb.”

“Maybe a massage will help it,” Hailey giggled and rubbed her hands.

“Christ,” Benji groaned. “At least allow me into the compound before you jump on each other.”

“Why don’t you go and find Kiri?” Blair chuckled as she carefully stepped down. “I’m sure she could do something with her hands...”

“I hate all of you,” Benji called out. “C’mon, Ivy, you and I can explore this world together.”

“Me?” Ivy frowned. “Have you heard what I can do with my hands?”

“Okay, fuck, I don’t want to know.” Benji slapped his hands over his ears and whistled a tune as he walked away.

“Aah, now this is where I want to live.” Ivy glanced around the snowy landscape with the tiniest smile on her face.

But for Ivy, that tiny smile practically lit up her entire face.

“The middle of nowhere with no cell service or outsiders?” I smirked.

“Yes.” She nodded. “And plenty of places to bury bodies. And with the snow that’s covering the burial site, it’ll keep the bodies fresh, and decomposition shouldn’t set in as quickly as it usually does. It’s quite beautiful, if you think about it.”

“I love how weird you are,” Arielle giggled.

“Thank you.” Ivy nodded.

“I also love how weird you are,” Nikita added, and her eyes widened as she took in the view behind me. “But I also love the look of that!”

Everyone seemed to turn at the exact same time, and we let out a collective gasp as we took in our home for the next little while.

What we hadn't been able to see from the truck was the sandstone wall that seemed to be at least forty, maybe fifty feet in height, and the electric fences that ran around the walls like a barrier. I couldn't see where the walls ended, but that just made the compound larger, which was more than okay with me.

I spotted two watchtowers in the corners, so I assumed there were more on the other side of the compound, and multiple men marched between the fence and the walls with various guns strapped to their chests.

“Holy shit,” I whispered.

Either we had arrived at the compound, or Dernov had set me up to fail and had actually led me to a prison.

But there was no way in hell any shifters were going to get near this place without being spotted and getting shot on sight.

I'd never felt safer.

"Come," Sedov brought me out of my thoughts.

"Dernov wait for you inside gates. Trucks cannot fit through gates, so we must walk."

A few men had already started to unload our luggage, and we were told they'd bring the suitcases inside once everything was organized.

"I can't believe we're going to stay here," Lian whispered as she clutched my spare hand, and we started to walk toward the gates.

"It's wonderful, isn't it?" I smiled. "And are you going to shift with the others?"

"I think I might," she replied. "It will be nice to run around."

"I cannot wait to see this." I grinned.

I was excited at just the idea of my weretiger omega running around with werewolves, werecats, and werecoyotes,

and with the avians flying overhead, so I couldn't wait to see Lian in action.

“Hey, Chloe.” I looked over my shoulder to locate the teenager. “Maybe you could shift with us...?”

“I wouldn't hold your breath, Jesse,” she snorted.

Chloe had only shifted once in her life, but I wanted her to gain the confidence to shift whenever she felt the urge to, as long as it was safe, of course. But I wasn't going to force her into anything, either.

“Oh, my god!” Benji suddenly shouted. “We don't have to hide anymore! We don't have to use our fake names, and we don't have to wear our disguises anymore!”

Everyone around me cheered as they ripped off their wigs and allowed their heads to breathe for the first time in a couple of days.

Their excitement didn't simmer down until we arrived in front of the chain-link gates. Rolls of barbed wire ran across the top, and an intimidating-looking man stood in front of the gates with some sort of machine gun in his hands. His graying mustache twitched, and a permanent frown covered his dark eyes.



He looked like every Soviet soldier I'd ever seen on the news, and I was exceedingly glad he was on our side.

The man was dressed in a gray winter jacket that stopped at his knees, and his glove-covered hands clenched around the gun as Sedov came to a halt in front of him.

Sedov gave him a few commands in Russian, and then the guard glanced across the long line of shifters before he opened the gates and allowed us to enter.

*Holy fuuuuuuck, Kristina called out silently. Did you see that guuuuun?*

*It would have been hard to miss it, Tiana laughed.*

*I need one of those in my life! Kristina chuckled. Jesse, hook me up with one of those!*

*I'll do my best, I replied with a smile.*

The first set of gates only allowed us past the electric fences, then just in case the opposition managed to get past that, there was a second, solid iron gate built into the wall of the compound.

The guard who manned the second gate looked just as intimidating as the first, and he had the same gun held against his chest, too. I also spotted a few men marching around the

top of the watchtowers, and I had a feeling they had the same machine guns as the others.

Sedov gave the second guard the same command, and then the man shouted something loudly before an electric buzzing noise was heard, and the iron gates slowly pulled open.

*Fuck. Me,* Benji whispered.

I almost couldn't believe what sat on the other side of the compound walls.

I'd imagined wooden huts, or military barracks lined with single beds and thin mattresses. I also imagined there to be a larger building at the back of the compound where small meetings would take place, and maybe another smaller building which held supplies and where we could receive first aid.

I certainly hadn't expected to see a fucking gated community hidden behind the sandstone walls of the compound.

It was like we'd stepped out of Russia and arrived back home in the States.

Everywhere I looked there were white-and-tan brick houses, front yards which were still covered in snow, and something that even looked like a damn roundabout in the distance.

The roads and pathways had been cleared of snow, and every house had a car in the drive. I couldn't see how long the compound went on for, but I imagined there were more houses at the back, and it wouldn't have surprised me if there was a fucking grocery store and coffee shop somewhere.

I spotted at least fifteen houses from where I stood, and that was only the beginning.

“Is this seriously where we're staying?” Aunt Eva sounded like she was about to cry. “Jesse, we've... We've never been so safe.”

My hometown of Monroe was heavily guarded with patrol groups, but even that didn't feel as safe as this. We could shift and run, or simply walk from house to house without the constant need to look over our shoulders.

“I'm no longer scared about going into labor,” Arielle giggled. “Because giving birth here is probably safer than at home.”

“I think you might be right,” I said before I placed a kiss on her forehead.

“Jesse!” a boisterous, Russian voice called out, and I turned around to see a tall, rotund man with thinning brown hair and a bushy beard.

He looked to be somewhere in his late thirties, and he wore the same gray jacket as everyone else, but this one had a red belt stretched around his gut. His black pants were tucked into a pair of shiny black boots which crunched through the snow as he walked through it.

I hadn't met that man before, but it didn't take a genius to work out who he was.

“Dernov?” I smiled.

“Aah, Jesse!” Dernov held out his arms, and his mustache lifted as he smiled. The chuckle he let out seemed to echo around the entire compound.

Dernov held out his hand for me to shake, and then he laughed again. I didn't catch on to what was so funny, but I just laughed anyway.

“Welcome, Jesse,” he said happily. “Welcome to compound.”

“I have to admit, Dernov, this certainly wasn’t what I expected when you told me about this place,” I snickered.

“This is incredible.”

“Really, truly incredible,” Arielle agreed.

“I put great money into compound,” Dernov explained.

“I wanted safe place, for shifter and humans, and like yourself, I am very rich man.”

“I can see that,” I chuckled. “Especially if you can afford this.”

Dernov laughed again, and he slapped my back with one hand.

The slap would have knocked me to the ground if I were human, but instead I just laughed at the sheer strength of the man beside me.

He must have been one of the strongest humans I’d ever come across.

“Come, Jesse and family!” he called out. “Let me give you tour of compound.”

“Can I see your selection of guns?” Kristina asked.

Dernov looked around to see where her voice came from, but then he gave my gun-obsessed werecat a smile.

“You can see guns.” He nodded. “And you can train with guns, too.”

My jaw dropped, and I just knew Kristina had the same reaction.

“Train with them?” I asked.

“Yeah!” Zac cheered.

“No,” Caitlin and I both said sternly at the same time.

“We have shooting range outside of compound,” Dernov explained. “After tour I take you, and I show you supply.”

“Do we get to practice on real targets?” Ivy asked with a smirk. “Hopefully live ones as they scream and run for their miserable lives, even though they know they won’t get away?”

“Oh, you are dark one,” Dernov chuckled.

“Dark, creepy, deeply unsettling.” Ivy shrugged. “Many descriptions describe me, and it’s all music to my ears.”

Dernov’s laugh seemed to get louder and louder, and it caused the rest of us to laugh, too.

“Okay, okay.” The Russian patted his large stomach.

“Come, come. There is much to see. And once again, welcome

to compound!”

Welcome to compound, indeed.

I had a feeling we were going to enjoy our stay.

I just hoped I didn't look back and regret that statement.





## Chapter 13

I took a couple of minutes to introduce Dernov to my family and the betas behind me. He already knew little bits of information about my pack from the conversations we'd shared, but it was the first time he'd heard everyone's names and species.

It was also nice for the wild cats to be reintroduced to the head of their original agency, and Dernov wrapped his arms around the wild cats as he thanked me for looking after them.

"Of course." I nodded. "I did what I hoped other people would have done if they were in my position."

"But you take wild cats under wing." Dernov tapped the top of my arm. "You care for them when they need it, and I will always be grateful for that."

"The same could be said for all of this." I motioned around the compound. "You invited us here where it's safe, and for the first time in days I don't have the fear that someone is taking pictures of my children, or slyly watching our house, and I'll be forever grateful for that, too."

Dernov chuckled again, and then he turned toward Zac and Chloe and patted their shoulders with his enormous hands.

“Jesse is good man,” he told them. “I hope you both know that.”

“He’s alright, I suppose.” Chloe shrugged with a smirk.

“Aah, we have joker!” Dernov laughed.

“I want to see your guns.” Zac looked up at Dernov with a hopeful look in his eyes.

“Zachary...” Caitlin pointed a finger at her son. “What have I told you?”

“That guns are dangerous...” he muttered.

“Young man.” Dernov crouched down and placed one hand on Zac’s shoulder. “Guns are not toys. Your mother is right, and for now you are young pup, and young pup should not play with dangerous weapons. But one day you will be big, strong shifter. Maybe alpha? But for now, while you still small, be young pup. Have fun. Shoot things later, okay?”

“I could be an alpha?” Zac gasped, and he looked like he’d just come across all of the presents underneath a Christmas tree. “I want to be an alpha like you, Jesse!”

“God help us if you become an alpha,” Chloe mumbled, but Zac ignored her.

“There’s every chance you could be carrying the alpha gene.” I nodded. “But there’s every chance you could be a beta, too. But when it comes to being an alpha, safety is everything, which is exactly why your mom and I don’t want you to play with guns just yet.”

“Okay...” Zac sighed. “I suppose I can wait until I become an alpha...”

“Excellent!” Dernov cheered. “Now, let’s start on tour. Where would you like to go first?”

“Uh...” There was so much to take in, and I imagined the tour was going to take the majority of the day. “How about we start with the houses first?”

“Good choice.” Dernov nodded. “We leave best ‘til last...”

It amazed me how different Dernov was in person compared to the mysterious Russian I’d imagined when I spoke to him on the phone. He actually reminded me of Ewan, and how both of them always looked on the bright side of life, but they knew when to be serious, too.

I probably could have told Dernov I'd had a cheese sandwich for lunch, and he'd still find it funny.

"There are twenty-five houses in compound," Dernov explained as he led us toward the first house. "Each one have four bedrooms, and cars outside filled with gas. Cars always stay at house, but you must fill out form if you drive out of compound."

"So you can keep a track of who borrowed the car, when they left, that sort of thing?" I asked.

"Er, yes." He nodded. "Safety is big thing in compound, as you can see, so we keep track of people."

"That makes a lot of sense," I replied.

Dernov went on to explain that the houses were well insulated during the winter, but cool and airy during the summer months. They came equipped with everything we'd need, as well as washing machines, dryers, internet access, and TVs in each bedroom.

I didn't want to know how much money Dernov had spent building this compound, but I knew it was an eye-watering amount, especially if there were roughly one hundred TVs and twenty-five cars in just the houses alone.

“Each house is same,” Dernov said as we walked up the cleared path. “And each house is unlocked right now, so betas can make themselves comfortable. Keys for house are on kitchen table, but compound so safe they don’t need to even lock door!”

My betas decided to take that opportunity to organize the suitcases and pick their chosen houses. Apart from Zhang and Han, who decided to stay around Lian after being apart from her on the train for so long.

“What sort of guests do you have here?” Azalea asked. “Is it other shifters like us who need a safe place to stay?”

“Yes, just like that,” the Russian replied. “I have shifters all over country who need help from other alphas. I let them stay here while we sort out issues with alpha, and then they leave when they can go home again. No one know of compound, and guests who stay here are told to keep secret. Which they do because of help I give them.”

That sounded like the perfect solution when it came to breaking up fights between rival shifters, and it showed how much the shifters meant to Dernov. However, I imagined there would be a high demand to stay in a place like this if everyone

knew about it, which was exactly why Dernov kept quiet about it.

“Do we really not have to lock the front doors?” Aunt Eva gasped. “That seems... risky.”

“Not in compound.” Dernov smirked. “My men are here to work, so houses are just for guests. Compound is most safe place, no one can enter unless allowed.”

“This still blows my mind,” Blair chuckled.

Even though Dernov said we didn't have to lock the doors, I knew we were all going to. Mainly out of habit, because it would have felt strange falling asleep with the front door unlocked. But also for precaution, because even though I trusted Dernov greatly, we were still wanted shifters in a foreign country.

He also told us that he had a team of cleaners who came into the compound once his “guests” had left, so everything was perfectly clean and restocked whenever the next group arrived.

Once that explanation was out of the way, Dernov kicked the snow off his boots, and then he wandered into the house and motioned for us to follow him.

Light oak wood flooring ran throughout the entirety of the house, and unless the upstairs was different, it looked as though the same cream-colored paint had been added to all the walls, too.

Even though the houses seemed to be a decent size from the outside, there was some sort of TARDIS effect, and they felt much bigger and more spacious inside. The front door opened onto an entryway with a set of stairs at the back, a small bathroom, and storage for jackets and shoes.

The kitchen on the right came with a table large enough to fit ten people, as well as white counters that wrapped around half of the room. There was even a fruit bowl in the center of the table which was filled with green apples and a bunch of bananas.

Then on the left of the hallway was the living room which also had a sliding door that took us out into the backyard. There was a red-and-white patterned rug in the center of the floor, and two brown couches with two matching armchairs sat neatly around the TV on the wall.

A large, wooden bookcase took up the space beside the rectangular window which overlooked the front yard, and even

though the vast majority of books on the shelves were in Russian, there were a couple of books in English, too.

I didn't recognize any of the books, and I probably wouldn't have the time to sit down and read one, but at least the option was there, and my pack could enjoy the books if they wanted to.

Once Dernov had explained everything, like how to use the dishwasher and washing machine, he led us upstairs and told us everything he could about the bedrooms. He even said there was a crib for Cooper somewhere in the compound, so he would get one of his men to find that for us.

The four bedrooms were practically identical, except one of them came with two single beds, two of them came with double beds, and one of them came with two double beds.

But apart from the beds, all of the rooms came with cream-colored walls, and two identical, mahogany chests of drawers underneath the TV that was attached to one wall. Royal-blue curtains lined every window, and the shared bathroom came with both a bath and a shower cubicle.

But my favorite part of the house, which was probably unintentional, was the view of the watchtowers I had from the master bedroom. I almost wanted to just sit and watch the



men, even though they stood around and didn't do much for half the time. They marched from one side of the tower to the other, stood in that spot for a couple of minutes, and then they marched back and swapped places.

It felt like I was in some sort of strange hybrid TV show which included *Prison Break*, *The Walking Dead*, and *Stranger Things*.

Except with more shifters, and much less walkers and demogorgons.

And last I checked, I also didn't have the blueprints of the compound tattooed across my chest and back.

Once Dernov had explained everything he could about the house, he took us back outside. A small flurry of snow had started to fall, and it seemed to cover everything in a silver-gray light.

"Is Cooper warm enough?" I asked Nikita as I placed my hand on our son's back.

"Yes, he's quite comfortable." She smiled. "I'm actually jealous they don't make slings like this for adults."

"Maybe that should be something we invent." I smirked.

Cooper was tucked into his sling, and his flushed cheek was pressed up against Nikita's chest. He had his hat on to keep him warm, as well as a blanket and Nikita's jacket, but my betas silently told me they'd look after him inside if it got too cold.

"Compound is like small town," Dernov chuckled as he walked us toward the roundabout. "Everything you need, including doctor, is right here."

"Do you have plans on expanding?" Aunt Eva asked. "Is the rest of this plot of land yours, too?"

"Yes, all mine." Dernov nodded. "I do what I want with land. Maybe make compound bigger, or maybe add more security."

"Does it need more security?" I scoffed. "It seems pretty damn safe to me."

Dernov let out a cry of laughter as he slapped my back.

"You sound like my wife," he chuckled. "My wife, she tell me to not spend all our money at once. She tell me not to fix what does not need to be fixed, and enjoy compound as is right now. But I want school in compound, proper hospital in compound!"

“But maybe you should listen to your wife,” Caitlin laughed. “We tend to make a lot of sense...”

“You sure do.” I winked.

“Why would you want a school?” Hailey asked. “I mean, how long do the guests usually stay for?”

“They stay for as long as they need to.” Dernov shrugged. “And I want kids to get education. I have kids, too, and maybe we move here one day.”

I didn’t know anything about Dernov’s personal life, but it was nice to know that he had a wife and kids at home.

“Do you live far away from the compound?” Lian asked as we made our way past more identical-looking houses.

“About one hour from here,” Dernov replied. “Agency headquarters are in middle of Moscow, and it take about forty-five minutes to drive there from home.”

“Is that the only headquarters in the whole of Russia?” I asked. “Or do you have other units spread around?”

“We have other buildings, yes,” he explained. “There is other headquarters on east side of Russia, because country is so big, but I am head of both. Moscow is just main headquarters, like New York.”

“I understand.” I nodded. “It’s the same in the States, too.”

As soon as we reached the snow-covered roundabout, Dernov explained that if we went left we’d come across the rest of the houses, but if we went right we’d come across the doctor’s clinic as well as the small store.

“You can get most things in store,” Dernov explained as he took us in that direction. “Food, drinks, cleaning products. But if you need clothes you must leave compound. But there is enough supplies to last you one month. So if you stay in compound for longer, I can get someone to get more supplies.”

“That’s very kind of you, thank you.” I smiled. “I hope we won’t have to stay for an entire month, but it’s good to know that we have everything organized.”

“You can never be too sure, Jesse,” the large Russian replied. “Always best to be safe.”

“Truer words have never been spoken,” Aunt Eva said.

A small bell chimed as Dernov walked into the store. It was about the size of an average convenience store, and there were two aisles on one side, two on the other, and a walkway ran from the front door all the way down to the counter where

a lady with long brown hair smiled at us. Dernov and the lady had a small conversation in Russian, and she just continued to smile as she nodded her head.

“Unlike normal store, you do not pay for items here,” Dernov explained. “For guests, this is free. Just take items to counter so we keep note of purchase.”

His generosity constantly overwhelmed me.

“Do you really not ask for anything in return?” I shook my head in disbelief. “You don’t want your guests to pay to stay here?”

“Why pay?” he asked. “I have a lot of money. I also care for shifters, and I just want to make sure they’re safe. Would you charge others to stay?”

Owning a compound wasn’t something I’d ever considered, so I hadn’t even thought about charging people like it was an Airbnb, it just amazed me that Dernov gave those shifters so much safety without thinking twice about it. But as soon as I thought about it, I saw no reason to charge anyone.

“If this was my compound, and shifters really needed my help, then I wouldn’t want them to fork out hundreds, or

maybe even thousands of dollars,” I replied. “I have more money than I could ever dream of, and other shifters aren’t that lucky, so I don’t think it’s right to make them pay me.”

“Exactly.” Dernov smiled.

We spent a few minutes wandering around the store, and even though all the items were in Russian, it was fairly easy to work out what everything was.

The store had everything from loaves of bread, milk, and meats, to frozen products, cleaning supplies, and alcohol.

A lot of alcohol.

The houses were already stocked with food, so the store was just to top up supplies, but Benji, Hailey, and Blair couldn’t leave without getting some candy, which caused Zac and Chloe to want candy, too.

“Ask Dernov first,” Caitlin said as her children held up mysterious bars of chocolate. “If he’s okay with you having them, then you can have them.”

The bars had a picture of a baby wearing a headscarf on the front, which was quite creepy when I first saw it. The bars came in various flavors, but the kids went for the plain milk chocolate bars.

We hoped it was milk chocolate, anyway.

“Enjoy the chocolate!” Dernov chuckled. “We have lot of chocolate in compound. Alenka is very iconic chocolate here in Russia.”

“Thank you.” Chloe smiled.

“Yes, thank you,” Zac added.

“I have to admit, the wrapper is... interesting,” Benji chuckled.

“The blue-eyed girl is very famous,” Dernov explained. “Everyone know the blue-eyed baby.”

Despite the peculiar packaging, the chocolate was very good. It was slightly more bitter than the milk chocolate we were used to, but it wasn't too overpowering, and it had a very sweet aftertaste.

After we'd left the store, Dernov took us back toward the roundabout, and then we took the road to the right which was apparently the direction the meeting house was in. Both sides of the road were covered in tall, thin tree trunks, so I could only imagine how thick and full of life the trees looked in spring and summer.

“This building is where big meetings take place,” Dernov explained as he pointed toward a long, tan building in the distance. “Tomorrow morning we will meet here to have discussion, Jesse. We will decide what to do with Asian agency.”

“Okay,” I replied with a short nod. “I’m interested to see what we’re going to do.”

“So am I,” he laughed.

Two guards in gray jackets stood on either side of the main door of the building, and Dernov said two more guards stood at the back of the building, too. Even though Dernov had repeated how safe the compound was, he also said that the information stored within that building was very dangerous in the wrong hands, so he needed added security for that one building alone.

Apart from the men outside the meeting house, and the guards we’d seen outside of the compound, I hadn’t spotted anyone wandering around within the four walls. But I assumed there was no reason for that with the addition of the watchtowers.

The last stop on our tour took us behind the meeting house where we came across an identical armed gate to the



one at the front of the compound. We were told that those gates weren't used as often, but they were just as guarded as the others, and it was the only gates that took us to the shooting range.

“I trust you, Jesse, and I know you will be safe.”

Dernov placed one hand on the iron gates. “However, I ask you to tell me if you want to use shooting range.”

“Oh, of course.” I nodded. “I don't think we'll need to use it for practice anyway, but I'll be sure to tell you beforehand if that changes.”

“And I know the children are not allowed to use guns, but my guards will not let children through without me,” he added. “Even if you are there, they will not let children through unless I tell them. I want to make sure guests are safe, and the weapons we have in here are too dangerous.”

I really appreciated that rule, and the smile on Caitlin's face told me that she was just as grateful.

“Thank you, Dernov,” I told him. “But don't worry, no matter how desperate Zac is to go through there, I know that Caitlin wouldn't let him. And I wouldn't, either.”

“You've got that right,” Caitlin snickered.

“Aww, man,” Zac grumbled.

“What other weapons do you have back there?” Ivy asked. “Spears? Knives? Bombs?”

“Everything.” Dernov’s eyes glistened with excitement.

“I bet you’re just missing a big red button to press,” Benji chuckled.

“There might be button...” Dernov smirked, but then he laughed. “There isn’t button, but maybe compound needs one.”

“I wonder how your wife would feel if you spent your money on that,” I chuckled.

“I will live in compound, because my wife will take the home,” Dernov chuckled. “Now, shall I show you weapons?”

“Sure.” I grinned.

Nikita stayed inside the compound with Cooper and the kids, but they were still busy eating their chocolate bars anyway, so they were quite happy to sit back.

The guards beside the gates allowed us through, and Dernov led us past the electric fencing as he pointed out how deserted the area was. We had already seen how deserted it

was when we left the trucks, but there was nothing to see from the back of the compound, either.

Apart from a few trees and a stone building in the distance, there were no other signs of life, and the blanket of snow didn't stop until it reached the mountains, which looked to be at least seven miles away, maybe even further than that.

The stone building was roughly the same size as two of the houses put together, and it had more barbed wire secured around the roof. Two armed guards stood on either side of an iron door, and even though it didn't look like much from far away, I knew that was where all the weapons were kept.

The building came without any windows, and I only saw the one door, so I imagined Dernov only needed the two guards to man it.

The guards bowed their heads and stepped to the side as Dernov approached, and then he typed a memorized code into an electronic keypad before the door buzzed open.

Automatic lights switched on as we entered the darkened room, and they turned on in stages until they reached the far end of the building.

“Hoooooly shit,” Benji whispered.

The right side of the building was lined with secure cages and bulletproof glass, and within those cages were guns of all shapes, sizes, and power, rows upon rows of ammunition, and a variety of weapons which included spears, swords, and even grenades kept in a separate container.

The second half of the building was separated with more bulletproof glass, and three booths had been built opposite the long strip of cement where three targets had been set up at the very end. The booths came with hearing protection and safety goggles, and the entire shooting range looked to be as safe as it could be.

“I’ve never been happier,” Ivy sighed blissfully. “And I’ve played with a countless number of corpses in my life.”

“This is...” Azalea was lost for words. “Fucking hell, Dernov.”

“We have outdoor range, too,” Dernov explained. “We use that for more powerful guns, and we never use grenades. Not even in practice.”

“I’m very glad to hear that,” Aunt Eva snickered.

“I can now see why the kids aren’t allowed out of the compound,” Caitlin sighed. “Zac would have a field day in

here.”

“Just in case kids manage to reach building, only one person has keys.” Dernov shoved his hand in his pocket and brought out a small keychain. “The keys only open cages to weapons. Nothing can break through the iron or glass, so only I have access to weapons.”

“I think we need something like this at home, Jesse,” Benji said with a small grin. “Can you imagine Kristina running a place like this?”

“I can, and now I’m thinking about how quickly we can get this sorted,” I laughed.

“A company made shooting range for me,” Dernov explained. “They have business in America, too, so they can do same for you, if you want.”

“I think I definitely want that,” I laughed.

Aunt Eva added that she’d only allow us to have a shooting range if we took all precautions, and just as long as we were incredibly safe. But even though Benji and I agreed, we also couldn’t help but laugh.

We all knew Aunt Eva would be in the shooting range as much as Kristina was because we couldn’t keep her away

from weapons.

We left the building shortly after that, and Dernov led us back into the compound where we met back up with Nikita and the children.

None of us could stop going on about how incredible the shooting range was, and Nikita was just as keen on having our own built in Monroe at some point.

I thanked Dernov for his marvelous tour as we headed back to the house, and after he patted me on the back once more, he announced that he had some work to do, but that my pack and I were now free to shift and stretch our legs and wings if we wanted to.

He also added that the avians were free to fly over the walls, but they just had to be careful. They didn't have the same security outside the compound, so as long as they knew that, then they were free to do whatever they wanted, within reason.

My pack cheered as they heard the good news, and within seconds I had werewolves, werecats, wild cats, werecoyotes, and avians running and flying around me.

“Are you coming to join us, Li-Li?” Zhang asked as he removed his hoodie.

“Maybe soon,” Lian giggled. “But you both have fun.”

“Oh, we will!” Han clapped his hands together as the two of them ran off toward one of the houses.

Seconds after that, two enormous weretigers emerged from the side of the house, and it was nice to finally face weretigers while knowing they weren’t about to maul me to ribbons.

Because they were honestly majestic as fuck.

I was able to easily tell the two tigers apart because of Han’s missing ear, but I wasn’t sure if I had appreciated just how enormous they were when we went up against them.

They were at least three times the size of a regular Siberian tiger, their curved ears twitched, their striped tails whipped through the air, and their large, pointed teeth curled over their bottom lips. Their lethal paws had enough strength to knock me out with a single hit, and I quickly recalled just how sharp their claws were.

Zhang and Han played with each other for a second, but then Han chuffed before he took off running toward the rest of

my betas, and Zhang was quick to follow on behind him.

“I’m definitely joining this,” Benji said as he kicked off his shoes and completely ignored the snow on the ground.

“Anyone else?”

“Yeah, come on!” Azalea chuckled, and Ivy quickly joined in on the excitement.

There seemed to be nothing better than watching my pack leap, sprint, and fly around the compound. They were so carefree, they didn’t have to look over their shoulders, and they could finally be themselves. They didn’t even have to worry about people walking across a natural trail and spotting them.

They were free for potentially the first time in their lives, and there was no greater feeling.

Once Benji, Azalea, and Ivy had removed their clothes, they all crouched down to their knees as they allowed themselves to shift. A thick layer of gray fur replaced Benji’s skin, and his nose, mouth, and chin elongated to become a snout filled with powerfully sharp teeth.

My omegas’ arms turned into wings, and their bodies shrunk down in size until they shifted into a bald eagle and a



raven. Their mouths and chins became solid, curved beaks, and as soon as the transformation was complete, Azalea and Ivy fluttered their wings and took off into the sky.

*Hey, Caitlin,* Benji said silently as he shook out his wolf body. *Would you be okay if I gave Zac a ride?*

Caitlin thought for a moment, but then her lips curled up in a smile.

*Go on then,* she replied. *Just as long as you're both safe.*

*Yesss!* Benji cheered. *I've always wanted to do this, and now's the time!*

Benji lowered his large body in front of Zac, and it almost looked like a dog had fallen asleep at the boy's feet.

Zac glanced down at Benji with a look of fear and amusement on his face, and then he held out a small hand as he stroked Benji's gray fur.

It was the first time Zac had properly been around shifters in their animal forms, so I just knew how intimidating it must have been for him.

"Zac," Caitlin caught his attention. "Benji's asking if you'd like to go for a ride with him?"

“Really?” His face exploded into excitement. “Yes, yes, can I?”

“Go ahead.” She smiled.

Hailey and Caitlin assisted Zac when he climbed on Benji’s back, and they told him to hold onto his fur as tight as he could.

“Oh, and dig your heels into his side,” Hailey added. “That’ll help you hold your balance, but tell Benji if you feel like you’re going to fall off.”

“Okay...” Zac said shakily.

The young boy shrieked as Benji carefully stood up from the ground, and then he took a few steps to allow Zac to get used to the movement.

“Aaaah!” Zac laughed. “This is so cool!”

His laughter increased as Benji picked up his pace, and it wasn’t long before he was trotting across the road, around in circles, and then back to the house again.

“Oh, my goood!” Zac chuckled as Benji picked up his pace even more. “This is amaaaziing!”

Caitlin freaked out at first, but her fear soon simmered as she realized that her son was safe.

“Do you want to have a go, Chloe?” I smiled.

“Oh... I dunno,” she mumbled. “I think I’ll just let Zac have fun for now.”

“You might change your mind later,” Hailey giggled.

Everyone was in such high spirits, and if we weren’t exhausted from all the traveling, we probably would have spent the rest of the night sprinting and flying around in our animal forms.

But it felt like no time passed before the sun started to set, and soon it was time to make ourselves comfortable in our assigned homes.

There was always tomorrow, though, and I knew my betas would be running around outside before the crack of dawn.

My plan for the night had been to settle down, have some dinner, and then go to bed in order to catch up on my lost sleep.

However, I quickly realized that wasn’t the plan when Caitlin announced that Laura was going to look after the kids for the night.

Aunt Eva was on babysitting duty.

And Benji and Kiri were going for a run around the compound.

I had eight stunning omegas waiting for me upstairs and a house to ourselves.

Yeah, I wasn't going to sleep anytime soon.



## Chapter 14

The grin on my face seemed to light up the entire room, and that was all because of the eight omegas I came across as I entered the master bedroom. I just thought they all wanted to take showers and settle down for the night, but my omegas didn't work like that.

They were always up to something.

The two double beds had been pushed together so we didn't have to sleep separately, and my stunning women were cuddled up together against the metal headboards.

“This is being added to my core memories,” I said as I closed the distance between us.

Nikita and Azalea were still wrapped in their towels after taking a shower, Lian had changed back into her jeans and hoodie from earlier, but Arielle, Blair, Hailey, Ivy, and Caitlin had changed into their silky pajama shorts and tops, which didn't leave much to the imagination.

“We knew we had to take advantage of the alone time as soon as Eva mentioned babysitting Cooper,” Nikita replied,

and she curled a strand of her caramel-colored hair behind her ear.

“Then all I had to do was get Laura to look after the kids.” Caitlin smirked. “They didn’t even question me on it.”

I wasn’t sure if there had ever been a time where my omegas and I had a house to ourselves. Aunt Eva or Benji were always around for safety and security, but the compound was so guarded that my women and I could almost act like a normal couple for once.

If it was normal to have nine girlfriends, eight of which could shift into wild animals, of course.

But now that we had this opportunity, I made sure to take full advantage of it.

“So.” I smirked as I glanced across the stunning lineup of women. “Who wants to go first?”

“We may have already thought about that,” Blair replied while she traced her cleavage with one hand.

“And...?” I led.

Everyone seemed to glance over at Lian, and my anxious weretiger nibbled on her bottom lip like she had to find the courage to say what was on her mind.

“It took a long time to get here, Alpha,” Lian started as her confidence started to build. “And we were on the train for so long. So we thought it was only right for you to have a hot shower. Perhaps you should loosen up your muscles, especially if it’s going to be another long night for you...”

“We all had showers before you came in,” Arielle said. “And we have to admit, the water pressure is fantastic.”

I instantly caught on to their plan, and all I could do was smile.

“You’re right.” I nodded. “I think that’s the perfect idea.”

“Good.” Lian smirked.

“And you’ll all wait here?” I asked.

“We’ll wait here.” She nodded her head once.

“Okay,” I said as I kicked off my shoes and unbuckled my jeans. “I’ll... see you all soon, then.”

The bedroom didn’t come with an ensuite, they all shared the one main bathroom. But given that we had the house to ourselves, I didn’t have to worry about anyone interrupting our wicked plans.



My omegas' giggles echoed around the house as I wandered into the bathroom, and the noise was silenced slightly as I closed the door and turned the shower on.

Given Lian's cultural differences, I had a strong feeling she was going to join me in the shower. To her, sex was a private thing between two people, and that view didn't change even when she lived in a pack with multiple omegas. I was the only person who was allowed to see her naked body, and she made sure to wear clothing that covered everything apart from her hands, feet, and head.

There was a chance her views could change over time, but for now my omegas were more than happy to accommodate her differing needs.

However, as I rinsed the shampoo from my hair and washed my body, I started to question whether that had been their plan all along. Lian still hadn't walked into the room, and I wondered whether I should extend my shower just in case Lian was trying to find the confidence to walk in.

Fifteen minutes after I entered the shower, I turned off the water and stepped out. I knew they were up to something, so I decided just to go about my evening routine, and I'd try to patiently wait to see what happened.

Then, just as I was drying my body, the bathroom door slowly swung open, and I caught Lian's reflection in the mirror in front of me.

"I hope I'm not interrupting anything, Alpha..." Lian smiled, and then she stepped further into the room and closed the door behind her.

"No, not at all," I replied casually. "Did you want to take a shower after me?"

"I've already had one," she said coyly, then she stepped over to me and placed her delicate hand against my solid abs. "But there is something I'd like to do, and I was wondering if you could help me with it?"

"Oh?" My eyebrows lifted. "And what's that?"

Lian leaned up on her tiptoes and brushed her lips against my ear.

"I've always wondered what it's like to..." she whispered. "To have sex on a counter."

My eyes instantly focused on the counter in front of me, and images of Lian pressed up against the mirror while I clutched the counter for balance played throughout my mind.

“Remove those clothes,” I growled as I placed a nipping kiss against her lips. “Now.”

My cock hardened against the soft towel around my waist as Lian pulled off her hoodie and t-shirt in one swift motion. Her jeans were then pushed down her legs, and she stood in front of me in nothing but her red lace bra and matching thong. Her breasts swelled over the thin covering, and my mouth began to salivate at the sight of her.

She was delectable.

And she was all mine.

“If I remove my clothes, then I think it’s only fair if you do the same...” Lian toyed with my towel with a shy look in her chocolate-brown eyes.

“As soon as you remove that, you’ll know exactly what you’re in for.” I smirked. “And given how I feel right now, you’ll quickly know what it’s like to be fucked on a counter.”

I just wanted to grab her and pin her against the wall, and her orange-floral scent that filled the bathroom only made me harder and more desperate.

“I don’t mind...” Lian blushed, and then she pulled at the knot of the towel before the whole thing fell to the floor.

The weretiger let out a light gasp as she caught sight of my aching cock, and she licked her lips like she was suddenly starving, and desperate for what I had to offer.

A light growl formed in the back of my throat, and before Lian could look away from my dick, I had her in my arms. She locked her ankles against my back, and I slammed my lips against hers as I walked us both toward the sink.

Her toned body felt like velvet beneath my hands, and I touched every inch of her that I could reach as our tongues tangled together.

Lian seemed to have a thing with suckling and nibbling on my lips, which I didn't complain about, and there was nothing hotter than when her teeth dragged across my lips.

"You're incredible," I whispered as I unclasped her bra with one hand.

"I could say the same about you, Alpha," she replied.

Hearing that name fall from her mouth caused a feral monster to appear, and I instantly began to rock against her covered entrance as we continued with our heated kiss.

"Jesse," Lian whispered as I trailed my lips across her cheek and suckled on her ear. "Please, Jesse."

“Please what?” I smirked.

“I need... I want, I...” she gave up trying to talk.

“Are you wet for me?” I asked, even though I already knew the answer given how damp her thong was. “Are you desperate to feel me?”

“So... So wet,” she whimpered. “I need you, Alpha. I...”

Lian continued to whimper, but that turned into a squeak of excitement as I lifted her ass off the counter and pulled her thong down her legs until I threw it somewhere behind me.

My weretiger automatically parted her legs without me even having to say anything, and I nestled myself against her as I gave her one more kiss.

A quick tug of my cock was all it needed for a drop of precum to settle on the head, and I wiped it away with the tab of my thumb as I eyed up Lian’s delicious pink folds.

I didn’t even need to ask if Lian was ready, I knew my answer just by looking at the expression in her eyes.

So with that, I parted her entrance with my mushroom head, and I stalled for a second before I slammed forward and

filled her in one go.

“Ohoo!” she cried as her eyes winced shut. “Jesse!”

“Shiiiiit,” I hissed in delight, and that feeling grew even stronger as her tight walls began to stretch and mold around me.

“Oh, my...” Lian panted. “Alpha!”

The two of us stayed still for a second, but once I knew Lian was comfortable, I slowly brought myself back, and then I pushed forward again softly.

Our bodies jerked against the counter, and her back was pressed up against the foggy mirror. The condensation dribbled down the glass in small streaks, but all I thought about was the outline of Lian’s body that would be left behind at the end.

After a couple of minutes, I increased the speed and pressure again, and Lian went from holding onto my shoulders, to holding onto the counter, and then back to my shoulders again as I plowed into her.

“You’re mine,” I growled as I slammed into her over and over. “Mine.”

I tried to hold back from cursing around her, but that didn't mean I couldn't allow the primal side of me free.

"I'm yours," she panted. "I'll only ever be yours."

And it wasn't just the mating mark on her collarbone that proved that.

Lian's body was only for me to see, and only I had the privilege of taking in the sight of her curves, her perfect ass, and her magnificent muscles.

I fucking loved ballet dancers.

Lian's blunt nails clawed at my shoulder blades as her ankles pressed against my ass, and there was nothing better than the sound of her sweet moans whispering into my ear.

Several minutes went by where I worked her body into a frenzy, and my omega came twice in that time. It felt like her muscles tensed up but also relaxed at the same time, and I simply held her between myself and the steamed-up mirror as she rode the waves of her orgasm.

The glass which held our toothbrushes wobbled against the ceramic sink, and at one point I was scared the mirror was going to fall off its hooks and shatter on the floor. But those

fears didn't last for too long, especially with the stunning woman wrapped around me.

And as my cock began to swell to announce the start of the knotting process, the mirror and the glass were the last things on my mind. Beads of sweat formed across my body as my cock stretched her walls and pressed against her womb, and our breathless pants mixed within the heat of the bathroom.

“Jesse,” she pleaded. “I... Oh, Alpha!”

Our bodies became connected in the most primal way, and I pumped into her a couple more times as the knotting process solidified our bond. My lips left a trail of heated kisses across her cheek, her neck, and then they came to settle on the crescent moon mating mark on her collarbone.

“Ahaaaa,” I groaned as a sharp tingle shot down my spine.

“Fill me, Jesse,” she ordered. “Give me everything. Give me your child.”

Lian's body jolted against mine as my balls tightened, and just as she reached her third orgasm, I let out a shuddered



breath, and streams of thick, warm cum expelled from my cock.

“Yesssss,” I hissed as stars danced across my vision.

I thought my body was going to combust from the sudden change in pressure as I filled my omega with every last drop, and her juices dribbled down my shaft as her jaw dropped open to let out a silent scream.

Lian rested her tired head against my shoulder, and had it not been for the counter she was sitting on, we probably would have collapsed to the floor.

“That keeps getting better and better,” she whispered as she lazily stroked my damp hair with one hand.

“You’ve got that right,” I snickered. “God, you’re incredible.”

Lian laughed nervously into the crook of my neck, but I had already noticed a major difference in her confidence in the few days since she’d joined my pack. She was no longer as anxious as she was on the first day, and I couldn’t wait to see her true colors within the next week or so.

We remained joined together for an additional ten minutes as the knotting slowly dissolved between us, and then

Lian jumped down from the counter after she gave me one last kiss. She mentioned something along the lines of finding something to distract her while I spent quality time with the others, and that was when a question popped up in my mind.

It didn't feel right that Lian didn't join us, and I hated the idea of her finding something to do while I fucked the others.

"I know you want moments like this to stay between us, which is absolutely fine by me," I said as I collected Lian's abandoned clothes off the floor. "But what are your views toward watching other people?"

"Oh." Lian frowned. "I hadn't... That's never crossed my mind before. I suppose I've had no reason to question it until now."

"Would you be willing to sit and watch me... pleasure the others?" I asked.

Lian thought for a second, and she pulled her pants up her toned legs as she focused on her answer.

"The fact I didn't instantly brush off the idea makes me think it would be okay," she said after a moment of silence. "I think... I think I might like it. I also know that I am yours, but

you aren't only mine. So the idea of watching the others... pleasure you... might be quite fun."

"I think it would be very fun." I smirked. "But if you find it to be too difficult to watch, or whatever it might be, then you don't have to stay in the room. I wouldn't hold that against you."

"Thank you, Jesse." Lian smiled. "I think I'd like to see how I get on."

"I think I'd like that, too." I smirked.

That was another sign that Lian was opening up to us, because a few days ago she was nervous about watching the others climb into our bed without any clothes on, and that was just to go to sleep.

But now she was willing to sit and watch me fuck my other omegas, and she'd no doubt witness them pleasuring themselves and each other, too, and I couldn't imagine anything better.

Of course, Lian was slightly nervous, and she gave my hand a squeeze as I walked her back to the master bedroom, but her grip softened slightly as we entered the room, and she gave me a sweet, reassuring smile.

“How did you find the shower, Alpha?” Azalea asked with a smirk.

“It definitely loosened up my muscles,” I snickered. “And then I received five-star service at the end, too.”

“You’ll have to give the compound a high rating,” Hailey giggled. “Highly recommend, and would come again.”

“The last part’s right,” Nikita snickered. “I definitely think Jesse’s planning on cumming again...”

“And me,” Ivy mumbled. “I’m so wet right now, and all I want to do is ride you into next week, Alpha.”

“Oh,” Lian sucked back a laugh.

“Are you going to join us?” Ivy ran the tip of her tongue across her lips.

“I’ll be in the room, yes,” Lian replied. “I’ll... sit back and observe.”

“Then make yourself comfortable,” Blair ran her hands through her black hair. “And we’ll be sure to do the exact same thing.”

An armchair was positioned across from the bed, which was the perfect place for Lian to sit, and it was almost like the chair had been put in place for that exact reason.

I drank in my omegas' unique scents as my eyes roamed over their sheer beauty, and my heart began to pound at just the thought of becoming lost inside their bodies.

But who to pick first was always a difficult decision to make.

Arielle was on the left side of the bed, Ivy was on the right, and the others were cuddled up in the middle. So instead of making them fight over who went first, I decided to make things easier by going in order.

They were all going to get their fill of me regardless.

“Arielle.” I smirked as her reddish-brown eyes widened with excitement. “You’re wearing far too many clothes.”

“Would you prefer for me to wear nothing at all?” she asked innocently.

I didn't even have to respond, I simply started to countdown from five to one, and that told Arielle everything she needed to know.

My omega giggled as she slipped her pajamas off as quickly as she could, and she threw them to the floor just as I reached the end of my countdown. Arielle's tan skin glowed in the dim light of the room, and her hand edged closer and

closer toward her bare pussy as her bottom lip became caught between her teeth.

She was fucking delectable.

They all were.

“Blair and Hailey,” I said as I swallowed back my desire for a second. “While you wait for me to reach you, I want you to work together. Make each other cum with your fingers, your tongues, I don’t care.”

“Of course, Alpha.” Blair smirked.

“Anything to please you, Jesse,” Hailey replied.

I didn’t need to tell my omegas twice, and Hailey practically launched herself onto Blair as the werewolf omega let out an excited squeal.

“Nikita and Caitlin, and Ivy and Azalea, it’ll be the same for you,” I ordered. “While I make Arielle forget her own name, you’re going to do the same to each other.”

Before Azalea could even respond, Ivy threw herself across the bed and practically tackled the avian with her hands and lips.

“Oof,” Azalea chuckled, but then she quickly became lost in the avian who caged her in her arms.

It was quite amusing to watch, especially given that Ivy was much smaller than Azalea, but my little raven knew exactly how to dominate someone.

Nikita and Caitlin took things slower, and my werecat omega helped Caitlin out of her pajamas as her hands began to roam lower and lower until they sat in between Caitlin's legs.

"Oooh, Nikita!" the werefox cried.

I could have watched them all day, and part of me was tempted to make Arielle watch the others while I teased the shit out of her body, and maybe that was something I'd experience at some point.

But I was as hard as a fucking rock, and needed nothing more than to watch my werecoyote ride my cock until we were nothing but a mess of limbs.

"Lie back," I said softly.

My wandering hands sent a wave of goosebumps across the surface of her skin, and the faintest prickle of hairs rose from Arielle's thighs as I pulled them apart.

"Jesse," she panted.

"Yes?" I smirked as I dropped to my knees and took in the marvelous view in front of me.

Her opening glistened with her wetness, and Arielle balled her hands into fists like she had to stop herself from reaching down and putting her fingers to good use.

“Please make me cum, Alpha,” she begged. “I... God, I can’t hold back.”

“My pleasure.” I grinned, and then I used the backs of my hands to part her legs slightly more as I settled myself in between them.

Beside us, my other six omegas were all pleasuring each other in different ways. Ivy was just about grinding herself against Azalea. Her hands were lost in the bald eagle’s red hair, and their lips were locked in a heated kiss.

Nikita was like me, and her face was lost in between Caitlin’s legs, while Caitlin massaged her breasts and gently rocked herself against Nikita.

Blair and Hailey were also curled up in each other’s arms, and they both used their fingers to tease each other.

I parted her pussy lips with two fingers before I slipped my tongue inside and took in the welcoming taste that swarmed in my mouth. Arielle lifted her hips slightly to give



me a better angle to work with, and the deeper I went, the more Arielle practically forced herself off the bed.

“Yesssss!” she cried as she arched her back. “Jesseeee!”

Arielle locked her ankles against my back and pressed her thighs against my head as she caged me in with her legs. I increased the speed of my tongue, used two fingers to rub against her clit, and she continued to call out my name as she was brought closer and closer to her orgasm.

As Arielle allowed her orgasm to break free, she scratched and pulled at her hair and let out a scream so loud it wouldn't have surprised me if everyone in the compound heard her.

Her body trembled and vibrated against mine. Her juices gushed free, and I lapped up the majority of it before it dribbled onto the bed.

I briefly wondered what Lian was thinking as she witnessed all of this take place. So I took a quick glance behind me, and all I saw was Lian looking at everyone on the bed with a mix of emotions on her face. She looked intrigued but also shocked and slightly embarrassed at the same time.

But she hadn't left the room, so I took that as a good sign.

"Jesse," Arielle said, which brought my attention back to the bed.

Arielle had one hand placed across her forehead, the other was on her chest, and her pregnant stomach bobbed as she caught her breath.

"Was that what you were after?" I asked.

"Y-Yes..." She nodded. "But... I'm not done yet."

"Good, because neither am I." I smirked.

Arielle let out a little laugh, and then she carefully moved herself off the bed and motioned toward the spot she just vacated.

"Lie down, please," she said.

I was barely on the bed before Arielle attacked, and she forced me onto my back as she climbed back onto the bed. Her hands danced across my chest and down my stomach, and she looked me straight in the eye as she pulled herself onto her knees.

Arielle wasn't usually the dominant one, she much preferred to be told what to do. But that didn't mean she didn't

like taking control, and there was something so fucking hot about watching her take the lead.

Especially when she straddled my thighs and rocked her dripping entrance against my rigid cock.

“Fuuuuck,” I choked as the sight of her caused every other thought and feeling to wash away.

Her hand felt so small as it wrapped around my length, and she blindly guided me toward her pussy as she clutched onto my hand for balance. Then, once Arielle was ready, she dropped down steadily but surely, and I felt her tunnel stretch around me as she dropped herself down onto my lap.

“Holy shiiit,” I groaned as the two of us stilled for a second.

“Mhmmm.” Arielle dropped her head back, and she rocked her hips against me as we began to move in sync with each other.

What started off as slow and steady, quickly became rushed and needy, and our pace picked up as every second went by. Her warm tunnel begged to be filled, and I pounded my cock as far in as her body would allow me as she cried out my name over and over.

But just for fun, we changed it up every so often.

We fucked slow and deep for a few minutes, but then we increased the pace until the sound of our sweat-slicked skin slapping together echoed around the bedroom. And that, mixed with the variety of sounds my omegas made, was like a match made in heaven.

Neither of us said a word as the knotting process connected us together, probably because we were already struggling to breathe.

Streams of cum shot from my cock, and they poured straight in her womb as more and more shots fired out. Arielle crumpled and spasmed as she coated me in her juices, and some trickled down my pulsing thighs as she whined toward the ceiling.

If we thought we were breathless before, then nothing had prepared us for how we felt at the end. Even with the snow outside, the heat in the room was almost overpowering, and the bedsheets stuck to me like a second skin.

But when I had one omega on my cock and the others spread out around me, the heat and the stickiness was nothing to complain about.

Arielle and I held each other for a couple of minutes after the knotting had dissolved, but then I took one look at my other omegas and that was all it took to make me work my way across the room.

I fucked and teased each one in order from left to right, and their uniqueness came out every time I had them pinned beneath me.

Some of them liked to be in control, whereas some of them liked me to order them around. Hailey begged for me to make her cum, and give her a child, whereas Ivy practically climbed me like a tree and created moves and positions I didn't even know were possible until tonight.

Caitlin, Blair, and Nikita just wanted me to take them, they didn't mind how I did it, and Azalea, like Ivy, also liked to take full control of my body as she climbed on top. Her pierced nipples glistened in the overhead lighting, and I couldn't take my eyes off her toned arms, legs, and her incredible abs as she dominated the fuck out of me.

We must have been in that room for at least three hours, maybe even closer to four, but all I thought about was my omegas, and I quickly lost count how many times they coated my cock in their juices during that time.

“I’m going to make a suggestion,” Nikita broke the silence with a loud yawn. “I think we should all go to bed now.”

“As hard as it is to tear ourselves away from Jesse, I completely agree,” Hailey replied.

We were all absolutely spent after two days of traveling followed by a few hours of fucking, and we all collapsed onto the beds in a postcoital bliss. Lian cuddled up beside me in her long-sleeved, silky purple pajamas and matching pants, but the others barely covered their naked bodies with the bed sheets.

“How was it watching us?” I smirked as I placed a sweet kiss against my weretiger’s lips.

“It was... hotter than I thought it would be,” she giggled into her hand. “I always thought sex between two partners should be a private thing, and it still very much is, don’t get me wrong. But I... enjoyed the view more than I thought I would.”

“Good,” Azalea chuckled. “Because we can’t keep our hands off Jesse.”

“Or each other,” Arielle giggled.

“Amen to that!” Hailey gave Arielle a high five.

“Especially when I can still feel him inside me,” Ivy hummed in pleasure. “Stretching every inch of my body, filling me with his seed... I’m only just getting my sight back.”

“Once again, amen to that,” Hailey giggled.

“Oh.” A fiery blush coated Lian’s cheeks.

“Don’t worry, you’ll get used to this,” Caitlin replied. “And even if you’d prefer to keep these moments between yourself and Jesse, that’s totally okay with us.”

“Yeah, we understand,” Blair added.

“As much as we’d love for you to join us, we also won’t make you do anything you don’t want to do,” Nikita agreed.

“Thank you,” Lian mumbled quietly. “I appreciate that.”

“You’re one of us now, Lian!” Hailey reached over me and stroked the weretiger’s cheek. “And we love you just the way you are.”

My omegas started up another conversation after that, and it was something to do with the chocolate bar the kids tried earlier, but I barely heard their response before sleep took over me.

My dreams that night consisted of running around the compound, exploring the shooting range some more, and taking in the wonders of the vast countryside. I wasn't sure if it was because we were now safe within the walls of the compound, or maybe my brain no longer wanted to play cruel tricks on me, but for the first time in a while I didn't have any nightmares or unpleasant dreams.

I woke up a couple of times, mainly because I was used to waking up for Cooper and because I was in a different bed, but I was able to quickly get back to sleep again, and I didn't wake up again until my alarm went off at eight-thirty.

My omegas were still fast asleep, so I left them in bed as I crossed the hallway and entered the bathroom. Benji's loud, throaty snores vibrated through the walls of his own bedroom, but we had an hour before we had to meet Dernov in the meeting house, so I didn't see any reason to wake him up yet, either.

I took a quick shower, tied a towel around my waist, and then I brushed my teeth before I headed back to the bedroom.

"This is a nice way to wake up," Nikita laughed as she caught sight of me.



Her excitement caused the others to wake up, and it wasn't long before I had eight omegas staring and drooling at my half-nakedness.

“If only there was time for us all to join you.” Blair winked.

“Next time.” I smirked.

I felt eight pairs of eyes on me as I dropped the towel and changed into the first outfit I found in my suitcase. None of them said a word until I used the towel to hand-dry my hair, and that was when Nikita mentioned she had to go and free Aunt Eva from her babysitting duties.

Nikita was always the last omega to wake up, and the hardest one to get out of bed in the mornings. But those habits had long since faded ever since Cooper was born. Nikita didn't even miss the long sleeps too much because she loved our son more, but I wondered whether those feelings were going to return once Cooper was older.

Nikita gave me a quick kiss as she ran out the door and left for Aunt Eva's house, and then I left my omegas to relax while I focused on making sure Benji was awake.

At twenty past nine, Benji and I said goodbye to the omegas as we headed for the meeting house, and we collected Kristina, Connor, Austin, Han, and Zhang on the way.

“What sort of information do you think we’re going to hear today?” Connor asked.

“I hope it has something to do with guns.” Kristina smirked.

“When it comes to the Asian agency, there are always guns involved,” Han replied with a slight sigh. “And that’s not always a good thing.”

“So is this meeting actually going to be about how we’re going to take down the agency?” Connor asked. “Or the Chinese branch, at least.”

“That’s the hope.” I nodded. “But we’ll just have to see what Dernov thinks we should do.”

As we arrived outside the meeting house, the two guards nodded their heads and stepped to the side to let us through.

I knew everything was going to change as soon as we discussed a plan.

And the reality of everything seemed to hit me as soon as we walked into the building.



## Chapter 15

We were instantly met with a maze of corridors, and I wasn't sure whether we had to go left, right, or straight ahead.

The yellow-painted walls were covered in a variety of pictures, which included a bird's-eye view of the compound, the surrounding hills, and some men and women I'd never seen before.

Although the entryway didn't hold much in terms of items, there was definitely a sense of power in the meeting house, partly because of the guards who stood outside.

"Do you know where to go?" Benji whispered, but his voice carried around the echoey building.

"Nope," I replied. "Um..."

I glanced around the entryway like a clue was going to form out of thin air, but the only signs I saw were in Russian, so I was almost tempted to call Azarov into the building to be my translator.

But before I could get a silent message out to my wild cats, the heavy oak door to my right swung open, and Dernov filled the doorway with his large frame.

“Jesse!” He swung his arms out in a greeting as he chuckled happily to himself. “Welcome to meeting house!”

“Thank you.” I smiled.

I took the time to properly introduce Dernov to Kristina, Austin, Connor, Zhang, and Han, and he greeted everyone, including Benji and I, with big hugs and slaps on the back.

*I'm getting the impression he's always this happy...*

Kristina said silently.

*I think you might be right,* I laughed.

“Come this way, come this way,” Dernov said as he ushered us toward the room he just vacated.

Our sneakers squeaked against the tiled flooring as we followed behind Dernov, but this was quickly swapped out for a dark blue carpet as we entered the room. Pristine white walls practically glistened in the morning sun, and an enormous, rectangular table was placed in the center of the room with roughly fifteen chairs around it.

A projector had been installed in the ceiling above the table, and in front of one of the chairs was an open laptop with a variety of wires plugged into it.

“Please, all take seat.” Dernov motioned toward the chairs. “Also, I have breakfast coming. Are you hungry?”

“Starving,” Benji chuckled as he took the seat beside me.

“Good!” Dernov clapped his hands together. “And while we eat, we discuss plan to take down Chinese branch.”

“No beating around the bush, then,” Austin scoffed. “We’re really doing this so quickly?”

“Of course.” Dernov frowned. “The longer we wait, the more power Chinese branch will gain. We must do something now.”

“You’re right.” I nodded. “We don’t want to give the Asian agency more time to add bullshit lies to their list, which is probably what they will do if we give them that advantage.”

“We need to clear Jesse’s name, and I’m not hanging around.” Kristina crossed her arms over her chest and leaned back in her chair. “So what’s the plan, Dernov?”

“Oh, you are eager one,” the Russian laughed, and then he unbuttoned his suit jacket and hooked it over the back of his chair. “Well, I—”

All of a sudden, the door to the room swung open, and a lady in a gray dress wheeled a gold trolley into the room. Various China plates clattered against the gold steel, and one of the wheels squeaked like it needed to be oiled.

“Aah, breakfast!” Dernov cheered, and then he said something in Russian to the lady, all with a smile on his face.

The lady replied with her own smile, and then she continued to empty the trolley. There were five plates covered in silver cloches, two steel coffee pots, and eight white cups with matching saucers.

“You’ve delivered us a feast,” I laughed at the sheer amount of food.

I didn’t even know what was under the cloches, but I couldn’t imagine it was a small, light breakfast.

“I want you to try traditional Russian breakfast,” Dernov explained. “The kitchen make my favorites, but also foods you must try.”

Dernov lifted the first dome to reveal a pile of something that looked like pancakes, but they didn’t look as smooth as the pancakes we had at home. The food had been



topped with maple syrup, blueberries, and a strawberry preserve on the side.

“This is syrniki,” Dernov explained. “It is cheese pancakes, but only made from the best farmer’s cheese.”

“Cheese pancakes?” Connor raised his eyebrows. “I’ve never heard of that before.”

“It’s very delicious.” Dernov gave the plate a chef’s kiss. “Very sweet, too.”

Next was a pile of donut holes, or “ponchiki” as Dernov called them. They were traditional donut holes dusted with powdered sugar and cinnamon, and apparently they were known to be a sweet dessert or a breakfast item.

We also had Russian black bread to try, which was essentially just rye bread. It was accompanied by some slices of white cheese, but apparently the bread went very well with a bowl of stew, too.

“You all must try sharlotka.” Dernov pointed to the plate closest to Zhang. “It is apple cake, made fresh this morning. Truly delicious.”

The final plate held something called vatrushka, which were apparently cheese-filled pasties. The chef had used

tvorog, which was a soft cheese, and Dernov said food items like that were good for eating on the go with a cup of a coffee.

Which then brought us to the coffee jugs.

One was filled with steaming, black coffee that caused my mouth to water at just the scent of it. But the other was filled with a traditional Russian tea, which was particularly popular on colder days. The tea had been infused with citrus, cloves, and cinnamon, and the varying scents wafted from the pot as Dernov poured some into a cup.

“Please, enjoy your breakfasts.” The Russian motioned to the table. “Then we start.”

“Thank you.” I smiled. “This is very kind of you.”

“Only the best for The Alpha.” Dernov slapped my back as he laughed.

I tried the cheese pancakes first, and although they looked heavy and stodgy on the plate, the pancakes melted in my mouth, and the maple syrup and fruit preserve matched the slight taste of cheese really well.

The donut holes and apple cake were also delicious, but Austin said they were too sweet for him in the morning, which

I understood. They were definitely sweet, but a sip of the Russian tea helped to smooth out the sickly feeling.

I wasn't even a big tea drinker, but I made a mental note to tell Arthur Mordaine all about it, because he didn't go a day without drinking copious amounts of tea.

The black bread was slightly dry, but the smooth, mature white cheese worked well with it, and it acted as the perfect accompaniment.

The last thing I tried was the cheese pastry, which was nice, but slightly too overpowering for me. It was like a mix of both sweet and savory, and perhaps it was just too much cheese for one meal.

However, Benji, Han, Connor, and Zhang all thought the pastries were delicious, and they all made sure to take one more before the plate was empty.

“Okay,” Dernov said as he popped a blueberry into his mouth. “Shall we discuss plan?”

“Sure.” I nodded. “But before we get started on the finer details, I just need to know whether it's actually safe for me to leave the compound. I'd already planned for my omegas to stay here, but do I need to stay here, too?”

“I think there are both pros and cons to that question,” Kristina replied. “Sure, it’s probably safer for you to stay within the compound, but you need to get the message across to the rest of the world that you’re not some cold-blooded killer on the run, and how are you going to do that while you’re hiding within these walls?”

“She’s got a point.” Connor nodded.

“There’s also the question of who goes if Jesse doesn’t,” Benji said as he took a slurp of his Russian tea.

“We’ll be more than up for the challenge.” Han nodded his head in Zhang’s direction.

“Which is why we’re here in the first place,” Zhang added.

“Yes, but if I’m trying to hide, then I don’t think it’s a good idea to have my own betas turn up,” I replied.

“I thought that, too.” Dernov took another blueberry from his plate and threw it in his mouth. “I questioned it all. But I think it’s best if you are there, Jesse. It will help people see truth, that Chinese branch was lying about you and all your kind.”

“You’re right,” I agreed. “It’ll also help other shifters see who I am, and what I live for. The Asian agency painted shifters as monsters, and because of them, the entire world now knows the truth, so we’re having to seek shelter because of their colossal fuck-up. As The Alpha, this is exactly the sort of shit I’m supposed to help protect us all from.”

“If I wasn’t part of this pack, and I believed that you were a monster, Jesse, knowing that you’d put an end to the people villainizing us would help me change my mind,” Austin said. “You handled the group who exposed us, and you did that for our safety, not just yours.”

“But what about the humans?” Connor asked. “How do we tackle their speculations?”

“They’ll have to wait for now.” I shrugged. “The Chinese branch and the shifters are our top priorities at this moment. It won’t look great to the humans, but it needs to be done.”

“That sounds like an agreement,” Benji said confidently. “So we’ll discuss how we’re actually going to do this, and then decide on who will go with us?”

“Yeah, I think so.” I turned to look at Dernov. “What do you have in mind?”

Dernov let out a deep sigh and scratched the thinning hair on his head. Then he picked up a white remote control beside him and pressed a button which brought down the projector screen.

“I will not lie, Jesse, this is going to be hard,” he scoffed and rubbed a spot in the middle of his forehead. “I have done a lot of research, and I have worked hard to get information. But I think I know what needs to be done.”

The betas around me were silent as the screen rolled down into place. Dernov typed something on his laptop, and then there was a small beep as the projector was turned on.

“This is, um... map,” he said as a reflection of the laptop screen appeared through the projector. “What is... What is word for this? Blueprints?”

“A blueprint?” My eyebrows almost reached my hairline. “Like an intricate layout and design of a building?”

“Yes.” Dernov nodded. “A blueprint. The main Asian Shifter Agency headquarters in Beijing, China, and this is blueprint of building.”

“Holy shit,” Benji whispered.

“Oh, fuck,” Kristina snorted.

I didn't say a word, despite how much my stomach churned. We wouldn't have needed the blueprints unless Dernov wanted us to enter the building, or maybe just mess with it.

He wasn't kidding when he said the operation was going to be difficult.

The feeling in my gut increased as Dernov clicked on an opened tab on his laptop, and pages upon pages of blueprints appeared on the white wall in front of us.

There were six pages in total, and each page was marked with a number which I assumed corresponded to each floor of the building. But I almost couldn't dissect what was in front of me, and all of the white lines, markings, and words all seemed to blend into one giant mess of scribbles upon a sheet of blue paper.

"How did you get these?" I asked as I blinked and looked away from the overwhelming screen.

"I have friend." Dernov smirked. "These are blueprints for electricity and gas, which all headquarters have in building. So I ask friend to find me files, which he send over to me in secret."

“It’s always good to have friends like that,” I chuckled.

“Indeed, it is.” He nodded. “But now we have blueprint, we know how to enter headquarters...”

“That’s what I was afraid of,” Benji mumbled.

“Glad I’m not the only one who thought that,” Connor snickered.

“If you look here.” Dernov reached into his pocket and brought out a laser pen, then he drew across a line at the bottom of the first page with the red light. “This is main front wall of headquarters.”

“Okay...” I said.

“It is heavily guarded, like compound,” the Russian continued. “If you turn up here, Jesse, you will be... Well, maybe arrested on sight. Maybe... more.”

I swallowed loudly.

The betas around me all had the same look of concern and confusion on their faces.

“So we have to find a way for Jesse to get in there undetected?” Kristina’s green eyes widened, and she ran both hands through her black hair. “Because this sounds like the true definition of Murphy’s Law.”



“Then we’ll have to make sure nothing goes wrong,” I sighed.

“But how are we supposed to do that?” Benji asked.  
“Because our disguises worked to get here, but I’m not sure they’ll be up to scratch to get into the damn headquarters.”

“This sounds like breaking out of Alcatraz,” Austin mumbled. “Or maybe breaking into it, in this case.”

“Aah, but I have plan...” Dernov’s face split into a smirk as I turned to look at him. “It will still be dangerous, of course, but it might work. And it all involves my connection to the agency.”

“Alright...” I replied.

“What if I say you arrive here in Russia,” Dernov explained. “Maybe say your plan was to take down Russian headquarters, but we caught you in Moscow as you arrive on train. I will be doing my job by taking you to Beijing, especially if they are wanting to capture you.”

I instantly caught on to his plan.

“They still think you’re allied to them.” I nodded. “So they might not think anything of it.”

“Yes.” Dernov smiled. “If guards expect me to bring you, they will allow me and you to go through, and then we’ll be in headquarters.”

“And once we’re past the guards, all hell will break loose?” I assumed.

“We kill everyone in sight,” the Russian chuckled. “It will be war, Jesse. And after what they did to my shifters and to you, we deserve a war.”

“Fuck, yeah, we do.” Benji punched his hand into his fist.

“The Head of Agency will probably get taken to safe place,” Dernov pointed the laser back at the projector screen and scrolled down until he reached the fifth page. “I think this is where he will be.”

“You think?” I asked. “But you don’t know for certain?”

“Well, this is his office.” Dernov drew around a large square on the left of the blueprints. “It is most secure place in whole building. Heavily guarded, but automatic locks and bulletproof glass, too. Once we get into headquarters, it’ll be your job to get to the Head, Jesse. Only guards’ keycards and fingerprints allow access to office, but take out the guards,

take the keycards and place hands on scanner, and then... You have entry.”

“What if we cut off the power?” Connor asked. “Would that disable the locks?”

“No, not really,” Dernov replied. “All headquarters have backup. If electricity is shut off, they still have security.”

“That sounds about right, to be honest.” I nodded. “So how do I reach this office?”

“Use the stairs.” Dernov returned to the first page of the blueprints and drew a route with his laser. “The stairs are on your right when you enter the building. There are elevators, too, but it is safer to use stairs. Guards might use elevators for speed, but also if power is shut off, then elevators will stop running. Follow stairs until fifth floor, then follow this route.”

Dernov was quiet for a second as he showed us the route up the stairwell until he landed on the fifth page again.

“Head left down this corridor, then through these doors,” he continued. “Turn right after those doors, and then you’ll see sign for Head’s office. These corridors will be covered in guards, and Head will have more guards in office with him, I assume, so you’ll need to be careful.”

“What’s the Head’s name?” Austin asked. “I don’t think I know it.”

“Lu Lim.” Dernov rolled his eyes. “He is werecat alpha, a lynx. He is not smart when it come to decisions, and he is biggest motherfucker.”

“I don’t doubt that for a second,” I snickered. “But first I need to make sure I can get to him.”

“I’ll go with you, bro,” Benji said. “We can double-team these fuckers.”

“But that brings me to next issue,” Dernov sighed. “Lu Lim has panic button in office. I have one, also. If he press that button, agents from all over area will flood the headquarters. So as soon as hell break loose, like you say, you must get to Head as quickly as you can, Jesse. You will have a lot of men behind you.”

I was almost glad I didn’t have too many of those cheese pastries, because my stomach started to churn at the thought of what we had to face.

Not once did Dernov make it seem like it was going to be an easy mission, and I knew from the start how challenging

it was going to be. But that didn't make the pill easier to swallow.

“Then I'll make sure I have my strongest, toughest betas around me,” I said with determination. “My omegas will stay here, but I'll use everyone I can get my hands on. Some of us will shift and break through the headquarters that way, and others will stay in their human forms and shoot every guard they come across.”

“I'm all for doing that.” Kristina raised her hand in the air and smiled. “Dernov, will we be able to use your fantastic selection of weapons?”

“Of course, but maybe not the grenade,” he chuckled. “You can use guns, or melee weapons like swords, spears, throwing knives... if this is more to your liking. Many fun option for you. You will have fun.”

“Fantastic.” Kristina smirked.

“There will also be more weapons to pick up along the way, I imagine,” I replied. “Then if we feel like more people need to shift, either into their human or animal forms, then that's something we can play by ear on the day.”

“I’m happy to use a sword, or a spear, for that matter,” Zhang said. “I grew up learning kung fu, so although I don’t know how to fire a gun, I know how to use a melee weapon.”

“Oh, my god, I need to see this,” Benji gasped. “Then you need to teach me.”

“You’re on my team then, Zhang,” Kristina replied.

“What about you, Han?” I asked.

“I’ll shift, if that’s okay?” he replied. “I’ve fired a gun twice, and the sound of it practically removed the last of my hearing for a while afterward, which makes me even more vulnerable during a fight. So I think it’s safer if I go for my strongest version.”

“Of course, whatever’s easiest for you.” I nodded.

“Also, the idea of a weretiger fighting among us.” Connor grinned. “I cannot wait for that.”

“My guards will also go with you,” Dernov said confidently. “They will add numbers to your pack.”

“Thank you, I really appreciate that.” I smiled. “Because from the sound of things, we’re going to need all the people we can get.”

“But how are we all going to get there?” Austin asked.  
“Beijing isn’t close by, but we’re all going to have to sneak into the headquarters with you.”

“Surely if Dernov has ‘arrested’ me, then it only makes sense for my pack to be taken, too, right?” I asked. “We could all travel together.”

“We could, yes.” Dernov nodded. “I could say I arrest all of you for conspiring against Russian government. All must suffer for such a crime. So, we all turn up together, get past the guards, and then start the attack.”

“And will we all fly together?” I asked.

“Yes, we all fly.” Dernov smiled, but then that turned into a smirk. “Like you, I am very rich man, and I have nice plane for us. We travel in style, but then we pretend you are criminal when we arrive in Beijing.”

“I’ll never say no to a private plane,” Benji laughed.  
“Even if we are pretending to be criminals.”

“And when will this take place?” Austin asked. “How long do we have to prepare for this?”

I turned to look at Dernov. “When do you think?”

“I want this over quickly, so I would say leave tomorrow.” Dernov shrugged. “It take seven hours to fly to Beijing from Moscow, so we already look at long time before we get there.”

I leaned back in my chair as I thought for a second.

It was very short notice, but given everything the Asian agency had done to me, I needed to break through and demolish them as quickly as I could. I had so much to lose, and adding time to that was only going to make things worse.

I wanted my family to be able to go outside without the fear that some enemy agent was going to attack them, and I wanted my children to be able to run around and play in the backyard without worrying their faces would end up all over the internet.

The hope was that all of that would be closer to possible as soon as we took down the Chinese branch, which made me even more tempted to jump on the plane as soon as I could.

However, there was something I needed to be certain of before we went anywhere.

I trusted Dernov, and I was so thankful that he'd given us this opportunity to stay in the compound where it was safe.



But I needed to be absolutely certain that we weren't going to get to China and find out it was all a setup.

“Leaving tomorrow works for me...” I nodded my head slowly. “But I need to know one thing.”

“Of course,” the Russian replied.

“What assurance do I have that this isn't some setup?” I asked. “I need to be sure that you aren't going to take me to China and serve me directly to the government, and that you haven't painted it to make it look like I'm in charge.”

“You've got a point,” Connor mumbled.

“Jesse,” Dernov said with a serious tone. “Because of agency, I lose shifters. Alphas, omegas, they all killed because of China's plans. You need revenge, but I need it, too.”

“Also another good point,” Connor added.

“And to assure you that this isn't some plan, I have something for you...” Dernov rummaged around his pockets until he found his phone. “Two seconds.”

No one said a word as Dernov held his phone against his ear. I heard the loud dial tone, and then a guy answered the call and said something in Russian. Dernov replied, and

whatever he said made it sound like he'd asked a question, but then he nodded his head and ended the call.

“Okay, you come with me.” He smirked. “I have gift for you.”

“A gift?” I frowned.

“Isn't the compound enough?” Benji laughed as we stood up from the table.

“This is bigger than compound,” Dernov replied.

“Come. The gift is outside waiting for you.”

*What the hell?* Kristina asked silently, to which I just shrugged.

I had no idea what was going on, but we followed Dernov out of the meeting house and down the snow-covered pathway until we reached the gates at the back of the building which led to the shooting range.

Was Dernov going to offer me a gun?

“My phone call was to make sure the gift had arrived,” he said as the solid gates unlocked with a loud buzz.

“Okay...” I frowned.

But Dernov didn't have the time to reply, because as soon as the gates were pulled open and we stepped toward the electric fence, I spotted the sheer number of people who stood on the other side.

The amount of people seemed to go on and on, and I couldn't even see where the crowd ended from here.

"What the fuck?" I asked. "Who are these guys?"

"This is your gift, Jesse!" Dernov chuckled, and then a quick flick of his hand told the guards to open the second set of gates. "You won't need to worry about numbers anymore."

I still had no idea what was going on, but then one man stepped forward. His entire body was covered in winter jackets, pants, and a furry hat, but he had a young face, so I assumed he was roughly seventeen or eighteen.

"Jesse Rafe," he coughed into his fist to clear his throat. "Because of Shen Shui, we have been left alpha-less. We're completely alone, and we need someone to help guide us."

"Oh, shit," Benji whispered.

"I..." I was lost for words.

Dernov had planned all of this for me, so any seed of doubt that something was awry quickly vanished.

“We come to you as five hundred and eighty-three betas and beta captains who are looking for a new leader,” the young man continued. “We are those displaced by the actions of the weretiger you destroyed. With the help of Dernov Vladimirovich and his men, we wish to help you take down the Asian agency. We know the world is changing, and we wish to serve The Alpha, who we know will give us a better life. Who will lead us to glory and honor as shifters.”

I had no idea what to say, and I hoped the smile on my face told the shifters that I accepted their offer to join my pack.

However, that smile turned into one of shock as the guy dropped down to one knee.

And then five hundred and eighty-two other betas dropped to the snow at exactly the same time.

Together they mumbled their pledge and submitted themselves to me at that exact moment.



## Chapter 16

I felt my omegas' eyes on me as I folded some spare clothes into my bag. I had to leave for the airport in an hour, and I knew they all felt the same way.

They wanted me to go to China because we had to get the bullshit under control, but they were also terrified that something was going to go wrong, and for that reason they would have preferred for me to stay within the safe walls of the compound.

“Are you sure you have everything you need, Jesse?” Caitlin asked. “Do you need more anosmiacs? Do you even need to take any in the first place?”

“What about your toothbrush?” Arielle queried. “Have you packed that?”

“And your toothpaste and hairbrush,” Hailey pointed out.

“And don't forget your guns, swords, spears...” Ivy's eyes grew wide at the thought of weapons. “Make sure to describe everything to me when you get home. I want to know

the details about the blood spatter, how the men fell, their final words... It could give me inspiration for my next painting..."

"I think Jesse has everything," Nikita laughed, but it held very little humor.

"I do." I smiled. "Benji, on the other hand, might need to be reminded about his toothbrush, maybe even a spare pair of boxers, too."

"Come on, Jesse," Blair laughed. "We all know Benji wears the same pair of boxers longer than he probably should."

"Oh, that reminds me!" Lian gasped as she ran from the room, and we all watched the closing door with the same confusion written across our faces.

Before we could question Lian's sudden race from the room, she returned again with our laundry basket in her hands.

"I had an idea," she said as she tore through the basket and threw dirty laundry onto the floor without a care in the world.

"Is it how to annoy Aunt Eva in ten seconds?" Azalea chuckled.

"No," Lian giggled. "I thought— Aha!"

The weretiger straightened up and handed me the t-shirt and boxers I'd worn a couple of days ago.

“You've been on the run, yes?” she asked rhetorically. “Jumping from train to train, or maybe using different modes of transportation. Do you really think you'd have access to decent showers, or would you have to deal with a sink and a small trickle of water to wash yourself with?”

“I still don't understand where this is going...” Arielle frowned.

“I do.” I smiled at Lian's brilliant idea. “Are you suggesting that I wear this when I get to the headquarters? Make it look like I've been struggling for a few days?”

“Yes.” She grinned. “Because whether you're The Alpha or not, you're still going to get stinky and dirty if you haven't washed for a few days. And the headquarters might suspect something if you arrive in handcuffs, recently caught in Moscow, but your hair is clean and your clothes are freshly laundered.”

“Holy shit.” Blair blinked. “You're a goddamn genius.”

“Oh, thank you.” Lian blushed as she tucked some black-and-purple hair behind her ear. “I just thought it made



sense.”

“It makes total sense,” I replied. “I hadn’t actually given much thought to how I should look when I turn up at the gates.”

“In that case, maybe we don’t need to remind Benji about packing clean clothes,” Nikita laughed.

“Why are you talking about me and my clothes?” Benji asked as he walked into the room.

He held the strap of his backpack over his shoulder, and the front of his hoodie was covered in crumbs from the Russian cheese-filled pastry he’d had for breakfast. He brushed them off with one hand, and Blair gave me a look which said, “I told you so.”

“Lian was saying that you should look and... smell like you’ve been on the run,” Hailey explained. “So you should wear clothes that should probably be in the laundry basket.”

“Oh, yeah, that’s a cool idea.” Benji nodded. “Luckily for me, I literally shoved all of my clothes into my suitcase before we left Edinburgh, so they’re all creased, and some of them don’t smell great, either.”

“Then you’re already sorted,” Arielle giggled.

“I should probably pass on the message to Zhang, though.” Lian shook her head and rolled her eyes playfully. “Knowing him, he’ll probably want to impress the guards, especially as it’s our home country. So he’ll pick his smartest outfit to wear. Which would not be the case if he was unexpectedly caught and arrested.”

“If you inform Zhang and Han, I’ll tell the others,” Benji suggested. “Olive is probably trying to pick her prettiest dress right now, so that would make her decision easier, too.”

“Can she fight in a dress?” Hailey asked.

“There’s a lot you can do in a dress.” Ivy held up the skirt of her black lace, bridal-inspired dress. “It also makes it easier to run, jump, and wrap yourself around someone when you don’t have anything constricting your legs.”

“That’s true.” The werewolf nodded.

“However, Olive is one of the betas who’d planned to shift once we’re through the gates,” I added. “So she probably shouldn’t wear her favorite dress anyway, not unless she wants to say goodbye to it.”

“What about the six hundred new betas?” Caitlin asked.

“What are you doing with them?”

I still couldn't believe what happened yesterday when all five hundred and eighty-three new betas and beta captains kneeled in front of me and submitted themselves to become members of my pack. The image of them kneeling down at the same time still ran through my mind, and no one fully believed what had happened until I'd explained it to them a couple of times.

I'd now lost count of how many betas and beta captains I had spread out across the world, but it was easily in the thousands, maybe even close to three thousand in total.

And if everything kept going in the same direction, that number was only going to increase.

"They've already started their journey to China," I explained as I threw my last few items into my bag. "They can wander around undetected because we're the only ones who know they're now part of our pack. So the plan is for them to stay near the headquarters, but they're not to make a scene. Then as soon as we storm through the gates, the betas will come out of their hiding places and storm behind us."

"It's going to be so fucking cool." Benji punched the air. "Guns firing, shifters running through the corridors. Avians flying, wild cats mauling guards into pieces... Ahaa!"

“Alright, don’t rub in the fact that we can’t go,” Azalea snickered. “I know it’s safer here, but... c’mon, Benji.”

“Sorry.” My half-brother dropped his head like a child in trouble.

My omegas were going to stay in the compound with the children where it was safer, and Aunt Eva had kindly offered to stay with them because she wanted at least one family member to stay back. But because of the hundreds of new betas who turned up yesterday, I could afford to allow a few more betas to stay behind with the omegas, just to be on the safe side.

Laura, Daisy, Sage, Angelique, Zimin, Dudin, and Soba were going to stay behind, but that meant I still had over six hundred betas behind me in China.

“Okay,” I sighed as I checked the time on my phone. “We need to meet Dernov in fifteen minutes. Benji, do you definitely have everything you need?”

“Let’s see...” Benji listed everyone on his fingers. “Phone, wallet, phone charger, clothes, snacks for the plane, Nintendo Switch...”

“Deodorant?” Hailey asked.

“Toothbrush?” Arielle suggested.

“Kiri?” Azalea smirked.

Benji glanced over at the omegas with an unimpressed look on his face, but then he frowned before he ran from the room.

“What did you forget?” I laughed.

“My toothbrush!” he called out.

I also sent out a silent message to the others to make sure they all had their passports, which everyone did apart from Olive, and then I slung my bag onto my back.

My omegas all linked hands as we walked downstairs to where Aunt Eva was waiting for us with the children. Cooper was surprisingly awake and alert, and it broke my heart to look into his sweet blue eyes.

“You’re looking at me like you know I’m going somewhere,” I mumbled as I held my son in my arms.

He seemed to look directly into my eyes for a second, but then the ceiling caught his attention.

“Be a good boy while we’re away,” I told him as I placed a kiss on his forehead.

“Yeah, don’t miss your Uncle Benji too much,” my half-brother laughed.

I held Cooper for a couple more minutes, and I spent the entire time staring deeply into his eyes. But then I passed him over to Benji so that I could say goodbye to Chloe and Zac.

“Be good for your mom and Aunt Laura, okay?” I whispered to them, even though everyone else in the room could hear me. “I already know you’re on your best behavior for Aunt Eva.”

“Yeah, because she’s scary,” Zac laughed.

“You’re not wrong,” Eva said with a playful, pointed look.

“Be safe, Jesse,” Zac said as his laughter faded.

“I will be, buddy.” I held the boy in my arms, and then I glanced over at his sister who tried to not let her emotions show. “Look after each other while we’re away.”

“I will,” Chloe mumbled, but then her tough facade broke, and she wrapped her arms around me. “How long will you be?”

“It’s hard to say.” I shrugged. “Hopefully only a few days, but I’ll make sure someone keeps you all up to date.”

“Okay...” she sighed.

“Come here, sweethearts,” Caitlin said from behind me.

The kids gave me one last hug before they went to join their mother, and she instantly wrapped her arms around them.

“We’ll see Jesse, Benji, and the others soon when they get back,” Caitlin said confidently.

“Yeah, it won’t be that long,” Blair did her best to convince them.

“But I was thinking we should go to the store and get more of that chocolate...” Azalea gasped.

“Aw, man, you guys get chocolate?” Benji grumbled sarcastically. “That’s not fair...”

“You decided to go to China.” Zac smirked. “If you didn’t go, you’d be able to have chocolate, too.”

“Can you save me some?” Benji asked.

“Nope!” the young boy sang. “Snooze you lose!”

Azalea’s distraction managed to cheer the kids up, and at least they were with their mom, so it wasn’t as difficult for them. But they still understood how dangerous the mission to

China was, and they were smart enough to know the risks involved.

But because the kids were distracted, I used that time to give my omegas hugs and kisses, and I reminded all of them just how much I loved them. I told Blair and Arielle not to go into labor before I got home, which I hoped was an easy promise to keep, and then I held Cooper once more as we walked outside to meet Dernov.

“Are you ready, Jesse and Benji?” the large Russian asked.

Dernov was dressed in his gray jacket again, and a small, leather duffle bag sat in the snow beside his feet.

“Ready as we’ll ever be,” I said honestly.

“Good, good.” Dernov nodded. “I have car waiting outside compound to take us to plane. Come, we must go now.”

I gave my family one last round of hugs and kisses, and no matter how hard she tried to sniff them away, Aunt Eva couldn’t hide the tears in her eyes.

“I swear to god, Jesse.” She cupped my face with both hands. “If anything happens to either of you and I’m not



there...”

“We’ll be fine.” I gave her the strongest smile I could muster. “This is no different than the other fights we’ve taken part in.”

“It’s completely different, you know that,” she huffed. “But just... Just be safe, and don’t go anywhere without Benji beside you. Benji, it’s the same with you.”

“It’s cool, Aunt Eva.” Benji grinned. “Jesse and I are, like, tag team champions. We’ve got this shit.”

Aunt Eva tried to keep her cool, and she played along with Benji’s jokey comments, but she wiped away more tears as she pulled us in for more hugs.

“They’ll be safe with us, Eva,” Kristina called out from behind us.

“No one messes with The Alpha and gets away with it,” Connor added.

“I’m as quiet and deadly as a ninja!” Olive whooped. “I’ll beat their asses until they beg me to stop! Hahaaa! Not today, Asia!”

“Let’s hope she sleeps on the plane,” Benji chuckled.

“Oh, my god, I actually, like, don’t need sleep,” Olive replied. “I’ve found out that I can, like, totally stay awake for longer than most people, even when I’ve had no sleep! And I don’t drink coffee, either, I’m just born this way! It’s crazy! Anyway, there was something I needed to do before we left...”

“Have you been to the bathroom?” Sage smirked. “That tends to be the number one thing on your list.”

“Oh, that’s it!” Olive laughed as she turned and ran toward her house. “Don’t leave without me! I just need to pee!”

“Let’s definitely leave without her,” Benji chuckled, to which I slapped him in the stomach. “Ow, dude! I was totally kidding.”

“Come on, let’s get this out of the way before I change my mind,” I mumbled.

“I will meet you at gates, Jesse,” Dernov informed me.

I nodded my head at the Russian, and then I took a couple minutes to say my goodbyes. All of my omegas, apart from Ivy, began to cry as Benji and I wandered toward the gates. However, Ivy did say that for once she didn’t like the

sickening feeling in her stomach, but usually that sensation soothed her.

Like before, when we arrived in Moscow, Dernov had the military trucks ready, and everyone climbed on board the musty, rickety vehicles before they took us toward the airport.

“Okay, Jesse,” Dernov said from the front passenger seat. “I have informed Chinese branch that I have you. They are... very eager to get you to headquarters as quickly as they can.”

“Okay...” I frowned. “Eager in a good way, or...?”

“Well, at first they say they come to Russia to get you,” he sighed. “But I, uh... I... persuade them to allow me to take you to headquarters. I say we already at airport, so it make more senses to take you to Beijing.”

“That could have been a close call,” I replied.

“Yes, very close,” he agreed. “But they know we arrive in Beijing at midnight, so I also hope that means headquarters is quieter during the night.”

Beijing was five hours ahead of Moscow, so even though we were going to be tired, there wasn't anything we could do about the time difference.

“Is that possible?” I asked as I threw my hand up against the roof as the truck drove over a pothole. “Or will there be just as many guards on duty?”

“Just as many, yes,” Dernov replied. “But other guards will be sleeping, so when alarm goes off it will take longer for them to arrive. Not too much longer, but it might give you a head start.”

Given how challenging the fight was going to be, an additional few seconds could make a world of difference.

“What about the weapons, Dernov?” Benji asked. “Is everything organized?”

“Yes, we have all organized,” the Russian replied. “The compartments above are filled with our weapons, and more has been loaded onto plane, too.”

“I also heard the betas took some with them earlier when they left, right?” I clarified.

“Yes, they have, also.” Dernov nodded. “Plus I have agents in China already. They have guns on them at all times, so we take from them when we arrive.”

“Can we get across the border with the guns and melee weapons?” Benji frowned. “Especially such a large amount

like that?”

“Normally no, it is almost impossible,” Dernov chuckled. “But we have friendship with Chinese branch. Or... so they think. Lu Lim just tell border control what is going on, and we need weapon for security with you, so they will let us through.”

“I suppose it all depends on who you know,” I said with a light smirk.

“Now, I must say our acting will start when we get to airport,” Dernov explained. “There could be Chinese agents waiting in airport, so we cannot walk onto plane laughing. I will put cuffs on your wrists, and make it look like struggle, okay? Once we on plane, we can take cuffs off again.”

“Sure.” I nodded. “That makes sense to me.”

All of a sudden, our conversation was interrupted when my home phone began to vibrate in my pocket.

At first I imagined it was one of my omegas, and maybe I'd left something important behind. But I was pleasantly surprised but also shocked to see Arthur Mordaine's name on screen.

“Arthur?” I frowned.

“Jesse, my boy, can you hear me?” he practically shouted down the phone.

“I can hear you loud and clear, Arthur,” I chuckled. “But are you okay? Why are you calling me so late?”

It was one o’clock in the morning back home in Oregon, and my avian lawyer was usually in bed by eight o’clock.

“I wanted to catch you before you stepped onto the plane,” he explained. “I may no longer be a fledgling, but there’s still life in this old bird! I can survive missing out on a small amount of sleep.”

I wanted to ask if he was sure about that, because no one complained about sleep more than Arthur, but it was so nice to hear his voice that I took everything he said with a pinch of salt.

“That’s very kind of you to miss out on some sleep.” I smiled. “We’re actually just in the truck now.”

“A truck?” the man gasped. “My, oh my, you’re traveling in style! And how is Russia, Jesse? Is it bitterly cold?”

“It’s pretty cold, yeah,” I snorted. “I’m sure it would be much worse if we were human.”

“Tell him about the tea,” Benji whispered.

“Oh, yes,” I said. “We had Russian tea yesterday, and I thought of you as soon as it appeared in front of me.”

“Russian tea...” Arthur mumbled in thought. “Now... No, I don’t think I’ve tried that before.”

“It was pretty good.” I shrugged. “It was fruity, but it had a hint of cinnamon, too.”

“Oh, that sounds delicious!” Arthur cried. “Do you know, I had a cup of elderflower and prosecco tea before bed, and although it is alcohol free, I thought I could taste some of the prosecco! My mother, God rest her soul, only ever believed in a small glass of sherry before bed, before alcohol became the devil’s drink, of course. But I pushed the boat out this evening, Jesse. Maybe that’s why I’m not struggling to stay awake!”

“I missed you, Mordaine,” I chuckled.

“Life is so boring when you’re not around, dude,” Benji laughed.

“I would hardly call your lives boring!” Arthur scoffed. “You’re about to take on the Asian agency! However, that is exactly why I called, so we should stop talking about tea

before I get far too distracted. Oh, I'm practically giddy, and that's not good when we need to discuss business!"

The next fifteen minutes were then spent discussing everything that was involved. I told Arthur about how we were getting to Beijing, what was going to happen once we were there, as well as the betas with me.

"Five hundred and eighty-three new betas..." my lawyer gasped. "Goodness me, Jesse! That's a lot of paperwork for me to fill out."

"We certainly need to have a meeting when we return," I scoffed. "But I can only imagine how much my net worth has increased since we last looked through my file."

"I'm thinking you'll be nearing the billions, my boy..." Arthur chuckled. "Oh, how exciting! I now wish my tea had actual prosecco in it!"

My net worth was at seven hundred million the last time we went over everything, so nearing a billion was daunting, exciting, but also very possible.

"We'll have to think of a way to celebrate when we reach that milestone." I smiled.



“I’ve heard superyachts are quite popular...” Benji smirked.

“Let’s not get ahead of ourselves,” I chuckled.

Arthur then went on to say that he’ll be waiting by the phone in case I need him for anything later on. I wasn’t to worry about the time, and it didn’t matter if I woke him up, either.

He also added that if the Head of Agency wished to talk to me and have a meeting, then I was to plead the Fifth until Arthur turned up. I wasn’t sure if he was aware that I was there to kill, not sit down and discuss business affairs. We’d also be in Beijing, which took about a day and a half to reach from Oregon, but I didn’t want to burst his lawyer bubble.

The call came to an end when Dernov announced that the airport was only fifteen minutes away, so Arthur wished us both luck and said goodbye.

I spent the last few minutes of the drive messaging Hazel and Ewan. Even though they were both well aware of the plan, I still made sure to tell them where we were, what time the plane was due to take off, that sort of thing.

Hazel had been an anxious mess ever since I told her of the plan to fly to Beijing. She knew something like this had to be done, but she didn't like the idea of being so far away from me. So it wasn't a surprise when she replied to my message, and she admitted that she probably wasn't going to get much sleep tonight.

The trucks were pulled over just before we reached the airport, and Dernov climbed into the back of the truck with the handcuffs in a black bag.

"This might be uncomfortable, but it is all for appearance," he said. "Just remember it will not be for long."

"It's fine, Dernov." I smiled. "We have to do whatever we have to do to make this easier."

Before Dernov cuffed my hands together, I messed up my hair with my fingers and rolled up my sleeves to make it seem like I'd been on a long journey. Then I placed both arms behind my back as the cuffs were locked into place. The same thing happened with Benji and the rest of my betas, and the guards Dernov brought with us to help fight were going to escort all us onto the plane.

It seemed like the perfect plan, and I just had to make sure we didn't live to regret our choices to leave the

compound.

As soon as the trucks pulled up alongside the private plane, Dernov returned to the back of the truck.

“Try to fight us,” he whispered. “Make it look like struggle.”

“Acting is my middle name.” Benji smirked.

Dernov held my cuffs in one hand and my bag in the other, and then he steered me out of the truck.

“Get your fucking hands off me!” I growled as I twisted around to make it seem like I was trying to break free. “Do you even know who I am?”

Dernov replied in Russian, but his tone sounded lethal and sharp.

He was a damn good actor.

“You’re going to live to regret this!” Benji shouted behind me. “If you hurt one hair on The Alpha’s head, I’ll—”

“Quiet!” the guard ordered. “Your threats do not work here, dog.”

“I’ll show you a fucking dog...” Benji snarled.

The rest of my betas struggled and shouted their abuse at the guards, and even Olive had lost her sweet-natured tone. She threatened her guard and said she'd chop him up into a million pieces, then she'd scatter the body parts throughout the globe so no one will ever locate his full body.

It sounded like something Ivy dreamed of doing, so I wondered whether she'd learned from the best.

But if there were agents watching, then we looked like violent, murderous shifters, just like the Chinese branch said, which was the exact effect we were going for.

My wild cats also shouted in Russian, and Azarov silently informed me that he'd insulted the guard's mother.

I had to hide my laughter by snarling.

The "struggle" continued as we boarded the plane, and we were practically pushed into our seats with the cuffs still attached to our wrists.

*Oh, my god, I hated being so rude to that nice guard, Olive said quietly as we tried to make ourselves comfortable. Do you think I should apologize? Because I don't want him to think I was actually threatening to chop his body up into little pieces, y'know? I save that for the real threat...*

*Don't worry, Olive, I think you're okay,* I laughed.

*But damn, Olive, where did that threat come from?*

Scarlett asked. *That was incredible!*

*I heard it on a TV show once,* Olive giggled.

*I loved every second of it,* Kristina chuckled.

Fortunately for my wrists, it didn't take long to load the plane, and we all let out a sigh of relief as the plane took off and the cuffs were removed.

"We will put these back on when we land in Beijing," Dernov explained. "But you have seven hours to relax for now."

"What about when we get to the headquarters?" I asked. "Will we be able to take them off easily?"

"Yes, because these are not real cuffs," Dernov's chuckle filled the entire plane. "Place base of thumb against button here, and they will click open."

Dernov showed us what to do, and then he placed them around my wrists again so that I could find the button he spoke of. The cuffs instantly swung open and fell into my lap, so I estimated that I had no more than a few seconds in order to

shift as soon as my wrists were freed in order for the fight to take place.

Once the cuffs had been sorted, everyone relaxed back in their seats, and I tried to fall asleep so that I had maximum energy for the fight. Benji played on his Switch, and some of my betas laughed and joked with each other, but I did my best to shut off the noises around me.

I woke up three hours later to find that Benji had also fallen asleep. The clouds outside were thick with snow, and I found myself watching the clouds drift by as we flew toward our destination.

“Jesse,” Dernov said from the seat opposite mine. “I receive message from my agents in China. The betas have found safe place near headquarters, and they know to move toward headquarters when we arrive.”

“That’s excellent,” I replied. “It sounds like everything is falling into place.”

“It is.” He smirked. “Because I also get message from Head of Agency, too. He had agents in airport who saw us load onto plane. He fully believe you are bad man, and he believe I still work for him.”

“Even better,” I chuckled. “And what did you say to me earlier, when you took me toward the plane? It sounded... terrifying.”

“I apologize, Jesse, but I bad-mouth you,” he laughed. “I say you are weak alpha, that you are... desperate to take over world, so I say I end you.”

“As long as you don’t really mean that, then I can forgive you.” I smiled.

“No!” He held his large hands up in defense. “I do not mean single word I said!”

“I know, it was all just for show, and it worked,” I replied. “So if they believed the stunt at the airport, then hopefully they’ll believe it when we arrive at the headquarters.”

“I think they will.” He nodded.

My agitation started to grow as we neared Beijing, and Dernov explained the plan one more time, just so everyone knew what was going to happen.

He told my betas to shift, or fire their weapons as soon as I shifted, and he told me that he’ll walk me through the gates and into the main lobby of the headquarters, then he’ll

tap my arm three times which will be the silent signal for me to shift.

“Walk into the lobby and tap three times...” I mumbled to myself as I solidified the plan in my head.

After that, Dernov handed everyone a pair of foam ear plugs, which would work as well as any more bulky ear protection against the impending volley of gunfire in enclosed spaces. The guards in the headquarters wouldn't be able to notice them, either, and we were confident they'd stay in place even after we shifted.

This meant that Han's hearing was going to be pretty much shut off completely, because he didn't have heightened hearing like we did, but Zhang was going to mentally communicate with him until they were mentally connected to me and my pack.

An hour before the plane was due to land, I went into the small bathroom and changed into the clothes Lian picked out for me earlier. I desperately wanted to spray some deodorant to mask the scent of the unwashed clothes, but that would have defeated the purpose, so I just had to deal with it.

The rest of my betas also changed into their old clothes, too, but they made sure the new outfits somewhat matched the



clothes they initially wore into the plane, just in case the agents noticed smaller details like that.

Our cuffs were then brought out again, and we performed our Oscar-worthy performances as the plane landed and we were dragged toward the cars that awaited us.

I threw a few insults at the guards, and they responded with their own sharp words in Russian. Our bags, which now held a few smaller weapons, were added to the cars with us, and then we took off.

Fortunately Lu Lim had informed border control about our arrival, so the men didn't even blink at any weapons they came across, and they allowed us to leave without any issues.

It took roughly fifteen minutes to drive to the Headquarters, and I barely looked out the window once as the excitement and anticipation flowed through me. I noticed a few high-rise buildings which illuminated the night sky with blinding lights, but I knew I'd have to wait until we left Beijing before I took in the beauty of the city.

Once I'd taken in the beauty of ending the Asian agency.

And as the glass building came into view, I knew it wasn't going to be long before I claimed back the power the Chinese government had taken from me.

They'd fucked with The Alpha, and now they were going to pay.



## Chapter 17

The Asian headquarters looked more like a factory than anything else, and a few lights inside shone through the enormous glass panels that made up the outside walls.

Like with the compound, an iron fence surrounded the headquarters. Men marched back and forth with large guns in their hands, and there were a couple of towers equipped with more armed men and floodlights.

I planned out every possible move as we neared our destination.

*Shooters, aim for the men in the towers first, I ordered silently. The other betas know to charge as soon as the first shot is fired, so let's make their entrance as safe as possible for them.*

*You've got it, Jesse, Kristina replied.*

*Dernov will lead me into the main lobby, I continued. As soon as I shift, the rest of you will shift, too. Then once the coast is clear, Benji and I are going to aim for the Head's office on the fifth floor, and I want Kristina and Han to come with us. Maybe more if needed, but let's go with that for now.*

I wanted a weretiger by my side when I took on the Head.

*I've passed on your message to Han, Connor said. I've also whispered the plans to the guards we're with, we have our guns on hand, but we can use theirs if we need to.*

*Excellent, thank you, Connor, I sighed. I also plan on using The Howl to give us a head start once we're all connected. Take down every man that falls to the ground, and Benji, Kristina, Han, and I will run for the stairs.*

*Copy that, Austin said. We've got this, Jesse. We'll have this agency in our hands in no time.*

*That's the plan. I nodded.*

My heart began to beat wildly out of control as the cars slowly pulled up outside the headquarters. Several guards turned their attention toward us, and they all aimed their guns in the direction of the cars as one guy walked toward us.

I slammed my back against the seat and twisted myself from side to side as I pretended that I'd really been arrested.

In actual fact, I had my thumb against the button on the handcuffs, and I was just waiting for the right time to press it.

“You’re going to pay for this!” I cried as Dernov pulled me from the car. “How dare you put your hands on me!”

“I wipe my hands of filth,” Dernov spat. “China can deal with you now.”

The other betas behind me put on the same show, and some of my shooters refused to move from the cars so they had access to their weapons.

“We’ll take him from here,” an Asian man said as he looked me up and down with a sickened scowl on his face. “I will take him where he needs to be.”

“No,” Dernov said forcefully. “I told Lu Lim I take Alpha to him. This is my job.”

Even if the Chinese man ordered Dernov to hand me over, the fight was still going to take place as normal. However, after a brief moment of thought, the man scoffed and nodded toward the gates.

“Take him in there.” He rolled his dark eyes. “Leave the others out here for now. My men will pat them down, then we will treat them like the dogs they are.”

“Motherfucker!” I yelled.

But at least I could let out my frustration, because that wasn't part of the plan.

*Wait for my countdown, then aim for every fucker you see, I ordered. I'll take on the men inside the lobby, but I'll need your help pretty damn quickly.*

*We'll do what we can, Jesse, Benji replied. Always got your back, bro.*

“Just let me go already!” I pulled down hard on the cuffs, but Dernov kept a strong hold on me.

I let out a few more creative words as Dernov led me through the gates, and I made a mental reminder to shift as soon as he tapped my arm three times. I planned on giving my betas the countdown as soon as Dernov tapped my arm, and I just hoped they had enough time to reach the lobby before I was outnumbered.

However, what I hadn't expected was for the lobby to be filled with guards at this hour, half of them armed with guns. I quickly spotted the sign for the stairs, but that was beyond a wall of scanners, which were manned with more possibly armed men.

The men were trained to shoot to kill, and as soon as they knew something was up, they'd have their bullets straight through my chest before I could even get the cuffs off.

I frantically thought of a plan while I struggled against Dernov's strong hold, but all of the options were risky, and I couldn't think of any potentially safe ideas.

But there was one that might work.

*Change of plans, I said silently as one of the men patted me down. It would be impossible for me to fight off all these men without them killing me and Dernov. So instead I need a diversion. Shooters, one of you needs to aim for the men in the towers. Do it swiftly, but create a distraction, and the rest of you need to be on high alert. All hell will break loose as soon as that gun is fired.*

The man patted down my pockets, but I knew he wasn't going to find anything. My phones and other personal items were in my bag, but Dernov made it seem like it had been confiscated already.

*As soon as this fucker stops checking my pockets, I'm going to shift, I continued. Everyone who decided to shift must do that exactly as I do. This will only work if we work as a team, and we have eyes in the backs of our heads.*



*I have a good shot of the men on the towers,* Kristina replied. *I'll also be able to take the gun from the guard beside me as soon as my hands are free. Just give me the signal, Jesse.*

“You’re not going to find anything,” I snarled as the man patted my ankles.

“Anything we do find will be given back to you when you leave,” the guy said with a dark laugh.

He probably thought I was never getting out of that building alive, but the joke was on him.

He was going to be the first one I slaughtered.

I had my thumb against the button on the cuffs, and all I needed to do was apply a small amount of pressure.

*Kristina, now,* I ordered.

As soon as I heard raised voices from outside I knew someone had noticed Kristina had slipped from her cuffs, so I imagined I had a couple of seconds before my highly trained shooter took out the first man.

But I didn’t need any longer than that.

As soon her gun was fired, the majority of the men around me began to charge outside, but they’d left the real

issue inside.

Seconds after they disappeared through the doors, I freed myself from my cuffs and forced myself to shift.

My clothes were torn from my body as my muscles doubled in size and power. Layers of thick brown-black fur spread across my skin, and a devilish growl vibrated against the back of my throat as my hands and feet became powerful, padded paws, and my face stretched out to form a muzzle.

It took no longer than a second for the transformation to take place, but in that time Dernov had brought out his own gun, and he quickly fired off two rounds and took out two of the six remaining men.

The man who still had one hand in my shredded pants pockets stared up at me in fear as he scrambled across the floor, and his left hand was dangerously close to an impressive rifle.

But I was closer.

As I let out a grating growl, I launched myself into the air and landed firmly on the fear-stricken man. His eyes bulged as he tried to reach his gun, but I slammed my paw against his arm before he could reach it.

His bones were crushed under my weight, but before the man could let out a scream, I slashed his throat with my claws. A river of blood poured against the collar of his white shirt, and even more blood bubbled into his mouth and soaked through his teeth.

Echoed cries, growls, and gunfire raged outside, but it was no different inside, either.

Dernov was an excellent shot, and he'd managed to take down three more men, but more guards seemed to arrive instantly to replace the ones we'd killed.

A flashing red light suddenly appeared in the corner of my eye, and a high-pitched, wailing siren began to blare around the lobby. I imagined it was the same around the rest of the building, too.

All of a sudden, Dernov spat something in Russian which I assumed was a curse word. At first I thought he'd been shot, but then he glanced outside before looking back at me.

“Building might go into lockdown,” he shouted as he shot a man straight between the eyes. “Jesse, watch my back. I must stop doors from closing.”

There was a snowball's chance in hell I'd survive this war if my betas couldn't even enter the damn building.

I wanted to ask how many issues we were going to face before I managed to reach the Head's office. But instead I nodded my furry head, and I focused all of my attention on the men in front of me as Dernov darted toward the doors.

There were five men in total. Three of them had guns, but even though the others were seemingly unarmed, they could have had weapons hidden somewhere.

Before I went for the most obvious kill, I watched the men closely. The three armed men had their guns aimed toward me, but none of them took a shot, and they all mumbled something in Mandarin as they glanced between myself and Dernov.

*They're wondering whether to kill you or Dernov first,*  
Han's silent voice suddenly appeared in my mind.

It usually took longer for my pack to become mentally connected to me, but I saved that question for later as my mighty weretiger stalked into the building.

I assumed that was what happened when someone allowed five hundred and eighty-three new betas into their

pack.

A smirk curled across my wolfy lips as Han shook out his striped body and gave me a quick nod of his head.

*Do you fancy a challenge?* I asked. *Let's destroy all five of them before Dernov's finished with the doors.*

*Let the best man win,* he chuffed.

And then we pounced.

Han let out a yowl as we aimed for our chosen targets, and his yellowed teeth glistened under the flashing red light as he landed his enormous paws against a man's chest.

The guy let off a few rounds of his gun as he was forced backward, but Han and I dodged the bullets as we sliced and raked our claws through the men underneath us.

My first target was killed within seconds, since all it took was for me to smash through his chest cavity, which slashed through his heart. My second target stalked up behind me with his gun raised, but he must have been a fucking idiot if he thought I hadn't heard him approaching.

Before the man could fire, I swung myself around, while still standing on my first target, and I smashed his gun

out of his hands with one paw and raked my claws through his face with the other.

The man let out a scream as his gun fell to the floor, and he held a shaky hand over his blinded eye as he held out the other hand in defense.

I already knew he was stupid, but the fact he thought I was going to cease attacking because he held up a hand.

I almost laughed.

Fucking idiot.

Instead of backing down, I forced the man onto his back, and then I slashed my paws across the rest of his face and chest. His screams became thick with bubbling blood, but that noise slowly simmered down as the man took his final breath.

More shots were fired outside, the siren continued to scream around us, but as I turned back around to see who else I needed to kill, I noticed how the mess of sounds had affected Han's limited hearing.

He was in the process of tearing chunks out of the man beneath him, and his white chin was covered in blood. But like me, he also had a man approaching with a gun in his hands.

And Han couldn't hear him with the ear plugs in.

*Han, behind you!* I cried as I tried to race across the lobby.

But then, just as Han spun his head around, a pulsing shot was fired.

The armed man jerked as a trail of blood poured down the side of his face, and then he fell to the floor in a crumpled heap.

“Doors are safe,” Dernov said as he pocketed his gun into his holster. “They will not close, but men will be coming, Jesse. You need to get to Head quickly.”

All I could do was nod my head in thanks, when in reality I wanted to mention how he'd managed to shoot a guy straight through the temple from so far away.

His shooting range clearly came in handy.

*Benji, Kristina, how are you doing out there?* I asked as I ran for the doors.

A panel on the wall had been forced open, and frayed wires fell from the hidden compartment in all directions. Dernov must have sliced through the wires to stop them from closing, and it was yet another thing I had to thank him for.

*We're almost done, bro! Benji shouted. The men in the towers are dead, and we're just finishing off the guards out here. But the betas are on their way, so we'll have backup in, like, thirty seconds!*

*Let me just kill this last guy... Kristina paused. Okay, cool. Bullet between his eyes. I'm good to go when you are, Benji.*

*I just need to... Benji huffed. Fuck, this man is strong! Let me... I just... Almost there...*

I glanced across the parking lot and at the war that took place. Werecoats, werecoyotes, werewolves, and avians charged across the asphalt. A pile of Asian guards had been left beside the cars, and my shooters used every barricade possible to keep themselves safe.

It was a beautiful sight, especially when I witnessed Zhang slice his melee weapon through the chest of one man, then he spun elegantly on his feet and decapitated a second man in less than a second.

As the two bodies fell, Olive raced toward them, grabbed one man's hand in her teeth, and then dragged the corpse toward a growing pile.



*Don't forget the head, Olive,* Zhang chuckled as he used his hoodie to clean his weapon.

*Oooh, it's like a soccer ball!* she laughed and dribbled the head between her paws. Then she kicked it perfectly into the pile. *Goooooal!*

It was nice to see her make light of the situation, but I had to remind her that the war wasn't over yet.

The sirens were blaring, Lu Lim had probably hit his panic button to send more men toward the headquarters, and I didn't even know how many men were still inside the building.

My betas had killed off an impressive amount of men in less than fifteen minutes, but there was still a long way to go, and we'd have time to celebrate later.

*Okay, Jesse, let's go!* Benji bounded toward me. *That dude's still breathing, but the fact I ripped off his limbs, and he's essentially just a torso, I imagine he'll be dead before we reach the stairs.*

*Hey, Olive, clean up on aisle four,* I said.

*Yeah, and take a mop and bucket,* Benji snickered.

*Damn, that guy's a bleeder.*

*Oooh, limbs!* Olive giggled.

She'd clearly spent a lot of time around Ivy, but I saw no reason to complain about that.

“Okay, Jesse, go to stairs.” Dernov ushered us into the blood-soaked lobby. “I keep guard down here, then send more betas upstairs when they arrive.”

I gave the large Russian another nod of my head, and I silently told Kristina to wish Dernov luck for me. I needed him to know that I wished him safety, and the small smile he gave me told me how much he appreciated it.

“Okay, let's go!” Kristina cried as she barged through the doors to the stairwell.

And we instantly halted as we saw the ten men racing down the stairs.

“Motherfucker,” Kristina sighed.

*This won't take long,* Benji snickered.

Kristina fired at every man she saw, and Han, Benji, and I launched up the stairs as we killed the men Kristina couldn't reach. Han's growl vibrated through my body as he drove his teeth straight into someone's arm, and Benji and I worked as the perfect tag team.

I smashed someone against the brick walls which knocked them unconscious within seconds, and that gave Benji the chance to finish him off as I focused on someone else.

The stairs were nothing but a river of blood within seconds.

It seemed as though more men appeared every time we cleared one flight of stairs.

“Will this never end?” Kristina groaned as she reloaded her gun.

*Do you have enough ammunition?* I asked as I raked my claws through a man’s chest and sliced through the sling of his gun in the process. *Because if you don’t, there’s now a gun at my feet.*

“Oh, fuck, it’s some kind of military-style bullpup rifle!” Kristina shoved her handgun into her holster, picked up the fallen weapon, and instantly pulled the magazine to check the ammunition inside. “And it’s fully loaded, too!”

*This stairwell is clear, Jesse,* Benji called down from the stairs above. *Two done, three to go!*

But as soon as Benji said that, the door above us opened with such force that it smashed against the wall.

A group of men screamed something in Mandarin as they clambered down the stairs.

*Kill them*, Han translated.

*I plan to*, I growled.

“Everyone stand back,” Kristina ordered. “Let’s see what this baby can do.”

Kristina crouched down on the ground and pressed the buttstock of the rifle against her shoulder pocket. She curled her fingers around the handguard, peered through the optic mount, and began to fire as soon as the men came into view.

Six rapid shots echoed through the stairwell. Five men instantly fell to the ground, but the sixth man let out a scream as he grasped onto his bloody arm.

“Scream all you want, motherfucker,” Kristina growled as she fired off one last shot which hit the man square in the chest.

He was dead before his knees even buckled.

*Holy shit*, Benji laughed as we ran up the stairs.

“And look, they left two more bullpups behind.”

Kristina grinned as she looped the slings over her shoulders.

*How are we doing outside, Austin?* I asked as I leaped over the corpses.

*I mean, it's not a walk in the park,* he replied. *But these new betas are fucking fantastic. We've completely outnumbered the opposition.*

*That's what I like to hear,* I said. *And how is Dernov doing inside?*

*Oh, the lobby is filled with people, to the point where they've had to head into another part of the building,* Austin scoffed. *But Dernov has about twenty betas and guards with him, so they're well covered. Some of the betas are also going to head to the fifth floor to guard you, if you need it.*

*Excellent, thank you,* I sighed in relief. *Keep me updated.*

*Will do, boss,* he said confidently.

Benji, Han, Kristina, and I were faced with at least fifteen more men before we even reached the fourth floor, and for a second it felt like they just kept on coming. The siren was still blaring, and I knew without a doubt that it was the

toughest fight I had ever taken part in. It felt like the men came out of the fucking walls.

But it only made me stronger in the end, so I wasn't one to complain.

However, I briefly reconsidered that comment when a man appeared over the handrail above us and opened fire.

*Watch out!* I cried as we flew to the sides to take cover.

*I think I can get him...* Kristina creeped back down the stairs and angled her rifle over the handrail in order to get a better shot.

Both Kristina and the man fired at the same time, but only Kristina was victorious.

*Aaaah!* Han screamed suddenly as he crouched to the ground and pawed his remaining ear.

*Han, are you okay?* I asked as I sat beside him. *Benji, Kristina, watch our backs for a second.*

*You got it, bro.* Benji nodded.

*Han, what's wrong?* I asked again. *Were you hit?*

*The... The gunfire!* Han's jaw stretched out in pain. *I can't... Ah, the ringing! I can't... I can't hear anything, but I*

*can feel that pain! The ear plug worked slightly, but now it's too much.*

Even I found it difficult at times, so I understood why it was such a challenge for Han.

*How long will this last?* I asked just as Kristina fired off a few more rounds. *Are you okay to continue?*

*Y-Yeah.* He nodded. *But you might need to be my ears until the fight's over. It won't clear up until the gunfire stops.*

*Don't worry, we've got this.* I gave him a wolfy smile. *We'll keep you updated, but just follow me. If we stop running, you stop running. Okay?*

Han nodded his head slowly as he stood back up again, and then we continued to climb the stairs as a group.

Fortunately, the last few stairs were empty as we reached the fifth floor.

But that was only because of the wall of werecats we came across as we left the stairwell.

There must have been at least thirty of them, and there were only four of us.

But that explained why we'd only encountered armed men on the stairs.

*We need shooters and shifters on the fifth floor immediately,* I cried out.

*The betas are on their way, sir,* Carlo informed me. *Shooters are behind them, so they won't be long.*

“Until then...” Kristina grumbled, and then she fired off several rapid shots as she aimed for the werecats in front of us.

As soon as the first werecat fell, the rest of them pounced.

Han roared as he put his discomfort behind him and focused on the main issue. Benji and I worked as a team once again, and I distracted one werecat while he killed them, and then vice versa.

My teeth sunk into the neck of a werecat, and my mouth filled with his rotten blood as I tore away at his body with my claws.

*Han, behind you!* Kristina said.

The weretiger turned just in time to dodge a werecat's paws, and then he launched himself into the air before he showed the werecat who was in charge around here.

*Kristina!* Scarlett suddenly called out. *Shoot at the windows to your left. Tiana and I are here to help.*



*I... the shooter mumbled.*

Kristina had three werecats headed toward her, so she didn't have the chance to look away for a second.

*I've got this, Kristina, Benji bounded toward her. You help the others.*

*Okay, stay back!* Kristina ordered, and then she aimed her rifle at the glass panels.

I threw a werecat onto its back as the windows were shot out. Fragments of glass littered the ground, and there was something oddly pleasing about the sound of shattering glass.

Scarlett and Tiana flew through the new openings, and my bald eagles let out a call as they swooped toward the werecats.

Then the door behind me flew open, and I turned around just long enough to see twelve werewolves and seven armed shooters.

*You need help, Alpha?* One of my newest betas asked me with an excited gleam in his orange eyes. *I am Runov, your new beta captain.*

*Welcome, Runov,* I replied as I tore through the chest of the werecat beneath me. *Show me what you can do.*

Runov and the other eleven werewolves launched themselves through the corridor as we took out more and more shifters one by one. Gunfire crackled through the air, and I made sure to give Han instructions whenever he needed them.

I received updates from the rest of the betas spread around the building, and despite the panic button and the blaring siren, it seemed as though my pack was going to be victorious.

I just had to find the Head.

As more and more shifters fell to the floor, I made my way through the corridors as I roughly remembered the directions Dernov told me yesterday.

However, as soon as I reached the last corridor, I came across another roadblock.

An additional ten werecats, as well as ten armed men had positioned themselves outside the Head's office.

They weren't going to let me pass, but I was tired of their shit.

*Shooters, I said as I eyed up the barricade. I'm going to use The Howl. As soon as the werecats drop, kill off the men behind them. Then turn your attention to the werecats.*

*Use the what?* a female beta asked with a delicate Russian accent.

*Just watch,* Benji chuckled. *I love Deafening Cry.*

I usually had to think of something that angered me in order for The Howl to have a full effect, but I hadn't felt anger like this in a long time. It had been bubbling at the surface for days ever since the Chinese government released their statement to the news, and it wasn't going to simmer down until I had the Head's head in my hands.

I sucked in a breath, threw my head back, and allowed a melodic howl to ripple through the air. The vibrations pulsed in my throat, and the werecats yowled in pain as they were forced to their knees by the ear-splitting noise.

*Uh, Jesse...* Tiana said quietly. *You might want to see this...*

I lowered my head as the howl sang through the air, only to see an unusual sight.

Not only had the werecats fallen to their knees, but the humans had, too.

That had never happened before.

Even shifters in their human forms weren't affected by The Howl.

Until today.

But I didn't have too much time to think that over before my shooters started to fire, and the werecats and humans were killed almost instantly.

All I had to do was get to the Head's office.

Dernov had already warned me that only fingerprints and certain keys would open the door, which wasn't an issue at first.

But then I noticed how far away the bodies were in comparison to the office.

A wicked plan formed in my mind as I caught sight of a floppy, pale hand.

Then I realized that I didn't have to take the entire body over to the office.

I just needed the fingerprints.

*Does anyone have a knife on them?* I smirked. *Actually, nevermind. I'll just use my teeth.*



## Chapter 18

Before I killed Lu Lim I needed answers, and there was no way in hell I was going to walk into that office in my human form. I needed to be the toughest version of myself, but also have the ability to talk, too.

I let out a steady breath, and then I allowed my body to stretch as I shifted into my hybrid form.

My muscles became firmer and larger, my muzzle shrunk back into my face again, and arms and legs stretched out as I stood at an impressive yet intimidating height.

There were several bodies littered across the floor, but only some of the men had keycards attached to their chest pockets, so I knew who I had to focus on.

I silently ordered my betas to keep a close eye on the office door, then I plunged my teeth into the man's skin.

My teeth ripped through his skin like butter, and I ignored the taste of his rancid blood as I crunched down on the bones and tore through the tough sinew.

Once the hand dropped to the floor with a squelchy thud, I turned to his right hand and did the same thing.

*Dude, did you really just...* Benji scratched his ear with his back paw.

*I had to get his fingerprints somehow.* I shrugged as I stood back up again.

*That's disgusting,* he cackled. *And I love it!*

*Benji,* I said as I held the floppy hands in my own. *I want you, Kristina, Han, and one more beta in the office with me. The rest of you will guard this door and corridor with your lives. No one, and I mean no one, is allowed anywhere near this door.*

*You know we will,* Jesse, Scarlett replied. *Let's end this night once and for all.*

*I'll help you, Alpha,* a soft, female voice appeared in my mind.

The silent thoughts belonged to a young girl who barely looked a day over sixteen. Her white-blonde hair, which was now stained with blood, had been tied up in messy pigtails, and she literally skipped toward me with a wicked look in her eyes, and then she licked her lips at the sight of the corpses.

She also had a holster strapped over her shoulders. One side held a black handgun, but the other side held two small

machetes secured inside purple sheaths.

*My name is Etush, but my friends call me Ettie.* She grinned.

I instantly knew she was perfect for the job.

I gave a white keycard to Kristina, and then I silently told her to swipe the card across the lock as soon as I placed the severed hand against the scanner.

*You'll all run in first.* I ordered. *Kristina and Ettie, shoot anyone who even dares to come near you. But leave Lu Lim for me. They know exactly what's going on, so be prepared to defend yourselves as soon as we enter.*

The green outline on the scanner showed that I only needed the right hand, so I threw the left hand over my shoulder without a care in the world.

The betas around me nodded, but then a plan came to mind.

*Also, if anyone has a phone on them, try and record my conversation with Lu Lim,* I added. *I want it as evidence.*

One of the new Russian shooters had his phone on him, so he promised to stand at the door and record the entire process.



I lined the fingers up against the green outline of a hand, and then I pressed into the cold, fleshy back of the hand as a green light automatically scanned the palm.

Then the door clicked open without a hitch.

We were instantly welcomed with a hailstorm of bullets.

Fortunately, the office door worked as a barrier, but we still narrowly missed being hit a couple of times.

Then as soon as Kristina and Ettie had a window of opportunity, they angled their guns around the door and fired off several shots.

Ettie aimed for the men on the right, and her small handgun shattered the air as she used three bullets to take out three men. Kristina's bullpup only added to the wincing, pulsing noise in the room, but her chosen men were killed off just as quickly as Ettie's.

The opponents fired off their own rounds, but given that six or seven men had already fallen, it was clear who the strongest shifters in the room were.

“Okay!” a loud, demanding voice called out with a Chinese accent. “If my men drop their weapons, you drop yours. Then we'll talk.”

I had a feeling it was Lu Lim, and even though I couldn't see it, he was probably limited to the men he had left, so he had to keep them alive for as long as he could.

The gunfire ended instantly on Lu Lim's side, so Kristina and Ettie reluctantly removed their fingers from the triggers, too.

"What makes you think I want to talk?" I asked from behind the safety of the door.

"Men like you always do," Lu Lim replied.

He wasn't wrong, but I had to make sure he was telling the truth.

"My betas will lower their weapons," I said with a warning tone. "But Kristina will put a bullet straight through your skull if you even think about crossing us."

I was met with nothing but silence, so with my betas protecting me from all sides, we walked further into the room.

One man sat behind a grand, glass-topped desk, and he had six remaining men on either side of him with rifles slung around their torsos. The scent of musk and mildew mixed with the scent of blood in the air, and I wasn't sure what was more

disgusting— the scent, or the sight of seven men lying in pools of their own blood.

Regardless, I was certainly able to pick up on the scent of fear that mingled with this man's rotten, musk and mildew stench.

“So,” I sighed and placed my hands on my hips. “Why don't you tell me why all of this started in the first place? Because you clearly hate me for some reason, but had we just talked like fucking adults, none of this would have happened, and you wouldn't be minutes away from your own death. If you refuse to answer, or try and cross us, my betas will show you exactly why you shouldn't have fucked with me in the first place.”

One of the armed men growled, but Kristina lined her rifle up until it was level with his head.

“You know why, Jesse Rafe.” Lu Lim's lips curled again. “I can't allow you to take over the world.”

“And you're certain that's my plan?” my snicker sounded like a growl in my hybrid form. “Again, you could have talked to me in person and realized the mistake you made from the start. But we can't change the past...”

“The only way of stopping you from taking over the world was to show the world who you really are,” Lu Lim spat in anger. “And this evening’s events prove how right I was.”

“No, it proves you’re a fucking idiot,” I snorted. “And that I’m already stronger than you’ll ever be. Especially since you won’t live to see another sunrise.”

The Head of Agency tried to contain his anger, but the expression was written all across his round face.

“And what of you? Will you go home to your family?” he asked with an evil smile on his lips. “How are your children doing, Jesse? I hope they’re safe.”

It took every ounce of strength I had not to launch myself across the room and slam his sweaty face against the desk.

A growl vibrated in Benji’s throat, too, so he must have stopped himself from doing the same thing.

*Kristina, kill one of the men,* I ordered.

A single shot ran out, and one of the armed men fell face-first onto the corpse in front of him.

The men around him aimed their guns, but Lu Lim held up a hand to halt them from doing anything.

“That was for even thinking about my children,” I growled. “I would strongly suggest you choose your words more wisely.”

“It was just a question.” Lu Lim shrugged casually. “Cooper’s your youngest, right? And then there’s Chloe and Zac? Aah, but they’re not actually yours, are they? Myles Beck was their father, the previous Head of Agency for the SDD, who you slaughtered and then took the place of. Which proves my point that you wish to take control of much more than you let on...”

*Ettie, do your thing.* I curled back my lips to reveal my lethal teeth.

The blonde-haired girl pulled the trigger.

They didn’t even have the chance to react.

Her chosen target jolted back as Ettie shot him straight in the nose. The men around him flinched as blood splattered against their cheeks. But they never lost their focus as the dead man fell to the ground.

“I told you not to speak about my children,” I muttered. “So if you want to have any of these assholes left to protect

you, I highly suggest shutting your fucking mouth where my children are involved.”

“Whatever you say, ‘Alpha,’” he scoffed.

“Now tell me,” I sighed as I tried to get the conversation back on track. “I heard you wanted shifters to be the superior species, am I right?”

“They already are.” Lu Lim shrugged. “Shifters are ten times stronger than humans will ever be. My own shifters are, anyway. I’m not sure if I can say the same about yours.”

*Do you want me to prove him wrong?* Kristina asked silently.

*Not yet, I replied. Save your bullets for later.*

“Shifters are stronger than humans, yes, I agree.” I nodded. “But if you want them to reign as the superior species, then why did you order Shen Shui to aim for alphas and omegas?”

“Why not?” The man shrugged.

Talking to this guy was like pulling fucking teeth, but I had to get some answers.

“Because you set yourself up to fail,” I told him. “If the alphas and omegas were alive, their children could have

become some of the strongest shifters out there. They'd also increase the shifter population, which, as I'm sure you know, is needed for a species to be superior. But instead you decided to kill the most important members of any pack and strike fear into shifters' hearts, instead of allowing them to build numbers and power. None of that makes sense, which makes me think you had alternative plans."

"It's simple," Lu Lim sighed. "All I require is that you fail. How can shifters as a species become superior if you're watching from the sidelines? It's your 'mission' to gain as many omegas as possible, or whatever hideous endeavor you're set on, so... by eliminating the alphas and the omegas, you can't target either of them. You won't be able to increase your pack or your territory if there aren't any alphas to kill off, dear 'Alpha.' And without even more omegas for you to gain and have children with. I have only begun doing what is right for the future of the shifter population."

"None of that makes any sense." I rolled my eyes. "But Dernov implied that you weren't the smartest alpha in the world, so at least I can see he was right."

"Dernov?" The werecat alpha frowned.

“Oh, did you not catch on to that yet” I smirked. “Yeah, we planned this attack together. He actually helped me leave Scotland undetected, along with my pack, and we’ve been in Russia for a few days planning this attack. See, the trouble with sending assassins to kill off innocent alphas and omegas for your own agenda is that you tend to piss off those who are in charge of those shifters. Human or not, people in power, like Dernov, demand respect and trust for their loyalty. Needless to say, you lost his loyalty the moment you sent Shen to slaughter his shifters. But he was more than willing to teach me how to gain access to this office, so I have a lot to thank him for.”

Lu Lim glanced at the men around him with a frown on his face.

“Are you really confused that this is where we’ve ended up?” I scoffed. “You and I could have worked together to look after the shifter population and grow in power at the same time. But instead you decided to risk the lives of every shifter in the world by exposing our secret.”

“You needed to be stopped,” Lu Lim growled. “The only way to stop you from taking over the world was to turn the world against you.”



A deep growl reverberated through my chest as I narrowed my eyes on the slimy shifter ahead of me.

“There are millions, maybe even billions of humans out there who now see us as enemies,” I snarled. “Were-hunters were already an issue before, but now you’ve ensured that even more were-hunters will gang together to end us. All because you wanted shifters to reign as the superior species.”

“You have to take risks to get what you want.” He shrugged, like he didn’t have a care in the world. “That was just one of the risks I had to take. And it has been worth it. Regardless of whether I live through this night, I have already won. When you were still learning to put one paw in front of the other as a shifter, I had already built an empire, Jesse Rafe. My agents have been located around the world since the agency was formed, and we have been prepared to ensure the rise of shifters from the very beginning. And now that the humans of this world will be in turmoil, living in fear, and aiming every bullet at your head, we have done just that. What better environment to sow the seeds of disorder? What better way to ensure the downfall of such weak, pathetic creatures as humans?”

I’d heard enough.

*On the count of three, aim for the men,* I ordered silently. *I'll aim for the Head.*

I sighed and glanced around the room to make it look like nothing was going on, but silently I was counting to three, and then my betas leaped into action.

It was four against four, and I stood back in delight as I watched the armed men suddenly refocus as my betas aimed for them. Three of the men dropped their weapons almost instantly and shifted into large lynxes, whereas the final guard stepped back and readied his rifle.

Benji and Han were the first to their targeted lynxes, and there seemed to be a flash of fur before paws swiped through the air, roars, growls, and yowls echoed around the office, and the lynxes were forced onto their backs as Benji and Han gained power.

Kristina and the lone armed guard stared down at each other with their guns raised, and Ettie had the final lynx all to herself.

She remained in her human form, but she pocketed her gun and brought out her shiny machetes instead.

Bookcases were knocked to the floor, a leather armchair was upturned, and the backing was ripped to shreds, and Benji came very close to throwing his lynx through the glass desk.

Yet while all of that was going on, Lu Lim stayed where he was, and he leaned back in his chair and folded his arms across his chest. It wouldn't have surprised me if he smirked, because he looked that confident that he'd win.

But our massacre in the headquarters was proof enough that my betas knew exactly what they were doing, and it wasn't going to be long before the five remaining men joined their dead buddies on the floor.

All of a sudden, a shot ran out beside me, and Kristina cursed under her breath as her bullet grazed the armed man's shoulder.

The guy winced and shouted in pain, but then he aimed his gun and let out a shot of his own. If Kristina and I hadn't been paying attention, the bullet might have hit one of us, but fortunately I had grabbed Kristina by the arm and dragged her down to the ground with me just before the bullet flew over our heads.

It connected with the wall behind us, and concrete fragments rained down around us, but at least it wasn't brain

matter.

The armed guard used the fallen bookcase and armchair as a barricade, and he dropped down before Kristina and I stood up again.

“I’ll get you soon, motherfucker,” she grumbled.

Han had his lynx locked under his paws, and he roared down upon the fallen lynx as his angled, black claws came exceedingly close to the werecat’s throat.

To the right of me, Ettie had crouched down to the ground, and she held both machetes in one hand as she held out the other. She pursed her lips together, and then she made a noise which sounded like she was trying to lure a domestic cat over with a treat.

The lynx’s lips curled back to reveal his dangerous teeth, and he watched the girl for a second with narrowed, beady eyes before he started to stalk toward her.

But before Ettie found herself in the lynx’s path, the girl crossed her arms over her chest, picked up a bit of momentum, and then performed a cartwheel without her hands even touching the floor.

She rolled out of the way just as the lynx pounded his paws against her original spot, but my potentially wicked beta had the upper hand, and she had just enough time to reveal one of her machetes and slice across the lynx's stomach before the guy even knew what was happening.

His pained yowl almost shattered the windows, and he fell to his sliced stomach as Ettie stood up again.

*Not gonna lie, I'm impressed, Ettie,* I said.

*Thank you!* She skipped toward the lynx. *I was in a traveling circus until five months ago.*

The lynx had lost a lot of blood, but he still had the energy to roll onto his back and away from my skipping beta. But Ettie kept up with him, and she sang a song in Russian which sounded a lot like Ring Around the Rosie, which was a fucking twisted nursery rhyme.

So it matched the vibe perfectly.

Ettie continued to skip around the lynx in a circle, and as soon as she reached "we all fall down," the girl sliced the tips of her machetes into the lynx's chest.

His yowl filled the room, his blood coated the wall beside him, and the lynx was dead before Ettie pulled her

knives free.

But she carved a giant 'E' into the lynx's back, almost like she was leaving her signature.

But then a second yowl caught my attention, and I glanced over just in time to see Benji snap his jaw around his lynx's throat. His paw raked every part of the werecat he could reach, and a river of blood fell to the wooded flooring as Benji tore the tendon free from the lynx's throat.

It was two against two, but Han still had the upper hand, and it looked like his lynx wasn't going to last much longer given the amount of blood that coated his speckled fur.

Kristina's target still hid behind his barricade like a coward, but she had her rifle trained on him, so one pull of the trigger would end him instantly.

However, throughout the solid minute it took to kill the first three men, Lu Lim remained at his desk, and I almost wondered if he was even going to do anything. But the anger written across his face deepened as every second went by, so I knew he was going to reach boiling point very quickly.

Benji and Ettie returned to me once they'd finished with their targets, and a fresh cut across Benji's right shoulder

instantly caught my attention.

*Are you okay?* I asked as I pointed toward the cut.

*Oh, yeah.* He shrugged. *It stings like a bitch, but it'll heal over before the Head is dead.*

Thirty seconds later, Han landed the final blow and killed his lynx, and then he joined Benji and Ettie in protecting Kristina as she stalked toward the barricade.

She'd waited long enough for that man to show himself, and we all just wanted it over with.

As my betas approached the barricade, the man angled his gun over the top of the bookcase.

But Kristina pulled the trigger before the man could do anything, and he slumped to the floor with a loud thud.

*Straight between the eyes,* Benji chuckled darkly. *That's what I like to see.*

“Very good, Jesse.” Lu Lim clapped his hands sarcastically as he stood up from his desk. “You’ve proven to me that your betas can kill my men.”

“We can do a lot more than that, trust me.” I smirked.

Lu Lim was lost in thought for a second, but then he shrugged one shoulder and walked over the bloody corpses as he rounded his desk.

In the blink of an eye, the alpha shifted, and he appeared in front of me in his hybrid lynx form.

Gray speckled fur and pointed ears surrounded his face, and he had several raised scars on his chest from years of fighting.

The man wasn't old in the slightest, I imagined he was about ten years older than me, but that meant he was just as strong and agile as anyone else. And years of fighting and training had brought him to where he was today.

But at least it was going to be the last day he was ever going to see.

Then, as he let out one more yowl, the alpha charged toward me.

But he and I were both on the same page.

Our paws clashed together as we both attempted to gain a sense of dominance, and as he dug his claws into my arms, I hooked my own under his collarbones, and I attempted to lock my ankle behind his in order to get him to the floor.



Lu Lim snarled and smashed his jaws together as a hungry, evil look appeared in his cyan eyes, and his tongue curled between his teeth like he was desperate to taste my blood.

Two could play that game.

My thumbs pierced through the veins and arteries that ran underneath the clavicle, and a fountain of blood shot out from all sides as the Head arched back in pain.

Just the blood loss alone would have killed him slowly but surely.

But where was the fun in that?

The sudden loss of blood distracted Lu Lim long enough for me to hook my ankle around his, and then I pulled my leg back as fast as I could while I pushed the motherfucker onto his back.

I created a cage around him with my limbs, and I placed the tab of my thumbs against his eyes with the plan of disorientating him as much as I could.

I must have underestimated the power of the werecat, because before I could land any killing blows, Lu Lim placed

his feet against my stomach and kicked me off him as fast and as hard as he could.

My betas growled as I slammed into the blood-soaked floor, but at least I had them watching me.

Lu Lim had no one.

Kristina also knew to shoot to distract, not kill, if she thought I needed a helping hand, but it was going to take more than landing on my back to wave my white flag in surrender.

Before I could jump up, the Head forced himself onto me, just like what I'd done to him, and he sliced at my exposed chest. His claws felt like blades cutting through my chest, but I forced back my growls with clenched teeth.

As soon as I found the right opportunity, I kicked Lu Lim off me, and for the next couple of minutes the two of us seemed to repeat that process over and over.

Every time I had him in my hands, I added more cuts, bruises, and I broke several of his ribs. I even raked my claws right through his chest which I knew was going to take much longer than normal to heal.

The Head did the exact same thing. He pressed down on my throat, dug his feet into my shins to hold me still, and

grabbed a hold of my hair and tried to slam my head into my wooden flooring.

As he let go of my head, his claws left stinging cuts across my cheek, and blood trickled into my mouth as rage flowed through me.

It was time to end the fucker.

A sudden blow to the stomach caused Lu Lim to stumble backward, and I took that moment to jump to my feet.

My betas silently cheered me on from the sidelines and it was like the added boost of energy I needed as I shook out my tight, sore muscles.

I wiped the blood away from my cheek with the back of my hand, and I thought of the many different ways to kill the Asian Head of Agency.

I could have been creative like Ettie, or ruthless like Benji, Han, and Kristina.

The perfect idea came to mind as soon as I had Lu Lim back between my paws.

His face was a bloody, bruised mess, and I'd left an impressive claw mark from his left shoulder down to his right hip. Due to the loss of blood and the blow to the stomach, Lu

Lim had to focus a bit more on what he was doing, which gave me the advantage I needed.

I stared at him for a couple more seconds in order to get my angle right, and then I slammed my shoulder into his beaten chest as hard as I could manage.

The werecat let out a cry as he was forced backward, and before he could stop himself, he fell onto the glass desk. The speed combined with his weight caused the entire thing to shatter, and the werecat fell to the floor as he landed on a bed of glass.

The alpha cried out and winced in pain, and I wasn't sure if that was because of the glass or a combination of all of his injuries, but either way, I didn't give him the time to recover.

A wicked smirk curled across my lips as I launched myself onto the alpha, and I pressed down against his throat with one hand as I found the largest shard of glass I could reach.

“Never again will you weaponize shifters,” I roared as I held the glass up high in the air.

The sharp edges sliced against my palm, but I was far too angry to give a shit.

“Because of your idiotic, psychotic plan, I have one hell of a mess to clean up,” I said as I pressed down harder on his windpipe.

His cyan eyes bulged, and he let out a croak as his cheeks flushed a dangerous shade of purple.

“You tried to turn the world against me, but you failed,” I added. “You failed at multiple things, but at least now I can make the shifter population see who you really were, and that you lied your way to the top for so many years. And unfortunately for them, you’ll be long gone before they even hear the audio my beta recorded. Because I just know they’d wish to be the ones who ended your life.”

I made sure Lu Lim spotted the smirk on my lips, and then my eyes flashed with anger as I stabbed the motherfucker straight through the heart with the shard of glass.

An agitated roar filled the room as I pulled the glass out and stabbed him again, and again, and again.

Lu Lim’s eyes grew weak and heavy as he lost the ability to scream or react, so I decided to get in just one final

swipe to kill the asshole.

I went for his bruised, mangled throat.

The glass sliced through his skin like butter, and at first the blood bubbled at the opening, but then it began to cascade onto the floor like Niagara Falls.

I hadn't even noticed until that point that the siren had stopped blaring, the red light had stopped flashing, and the entire building had been covered in a sheet of silence.

The war was over, I had won, and Lu Lim wasn't going to hurt anyone ever again.

There was also the slight technicality that I'd just killed the Head of the Asian Agency, which meant the entire agency was mine now. Not to mention, the territory Lu Lim owned was mine as well, and any remaining pride members of his automatically became members of my own pack.

But there was time to sort all of that out later.

Because I was standing in a river of blood, surrounded by broken glass and severely mutilated bodies, and there was more blood on the walls than actual paint.

And even though I'd taken down Lu Lim during one of the toughest fights we'd encountered so far.

I still had to face the rest of the world.

And clean up the mess the Chinese government had left  
for me.

End of Book 14



## Cast of Characters

**Aaron Hart:** *Human* FBI Agent. Short brown hair. Stubble. Broad build.

**Abigail:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Ginger hair. Tan fur.

**Adam:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Aiden's beta. Brown hair. Brown eyes. Muscular build. Tan and yellow fur. Short temper. Deceased.

**Aiden Jansen:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Blair's previous alpha. Tall. Blond hair in a man bun. Deceased.

**Alex:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra.

**Alfie:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon Flock. Messy black hair.

**Allison Barnes:** *Werecat (mountain lion)* Nikita's younger sister. Long brown hair. Azure eyes.

**Amber Jansen:** *Werecat omega (mountain lion)* Married to Jonathan Jansen, mother to Aiden and Max Jansen. Dark



brown hair. Dull green eyes. Deceased.

**Amy:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Brown hair. Blue eyes. Biggest Disney fan.

**Anastasia:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Long blonde hair. Brown eyes. Great singer.

**Angela:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Auburn hair. Light-brown eyes. Organized.

**Angelique:** *Werewolf beta* San Bernardino pack. Dark brown hair with blonde roots.

**Annika Roswell:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Petite. Strawberry-blonde hair. Enormous dark green eyes.

**Archie Best:** *Avian beta (hummingbird)* Shaggy brown hair. Brown eyes. Orange feathers. Red chest. Brown head. Previously known as Matthew Moss. Worked as a spy for Myles Beck. Deceased.

**Arielle:** *Werecoyote omega* Jesse's half-Filipina omega. Warm brown hair. Reddish-brown eyes. Russet brown fur, bottle brush tail. Chocolate-cinnamon scent. Rescued from Gray Mackenzie.

**Arthur Mordaine:** *Avian* Jesse's shifter lawyer. Tall and rail-thin. Curved nose. Gold, circular glasses. Short brown hair. Black feathers.

**Ashton:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon Flock. Black hair. Brown eyes. Tanned skin.

**Austin Hayes:** *Werewolf beta captain* San Bernardino pack. Long blond hair. Blue eyes. Thick, wiry beard. Broad build. Always wears a plaid shirt and cowboy boots.

**Autumn:** *Werewolf beta* San Bernardino pack. Golden hair.

**Azalea:** *Avian omega (bald eagle)* Jesse's omega. Blood-red hair. Blue-gray eyes. Coffee and caramel scent. Rescued from Reuben Dillard.

**Azarov Petrovich:** *Russian wild cat beta captain* Pale skin. Long black hair. Brown eyes. Gray-speckled fur. From the

Kamchatka Peninsula. Does most of the talking for the wild cats.

**Balabanov “Bala”:** *Russian wild cat beta* Blond hair. Blue eyes.

**Beatrice:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Curly blonde hair. Sky-blue eyes. Nickname is Bee.

**Benji Shaw:** *Werewolf beta captain* Jesse’s half-brother and best friend. Dark blond hair. Hazel eyes. Gray fur. Viola student at Everleigh University.

**Blair Avalon:** *Werecat omega (lynx)* Jesse’s omega. Dyed black hair. Honey-colored eyes. Vanilla and honey scent. Sister of Gemma Avalon. Rescued from Aiden Jansen.

**Bodhi:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Short black hair. Brown eyes. Tattoo of cat paw on right calf.

**Bok:** *Russia wild cat beta* Brown hair. Smallest member of the group.

**Brady:** *Human* SDD Intelligence Agent. Currently stationed in Canada.

**Brenden:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Mainland. Jet-black fur. Rangy build.

**Brody Miller:** *Avian infant (golden eagle)* Red hair. Ewan Miller’s son.

**Bryce Lane:** *Human* FBI Agent. Short blond hair. Chubby face. Broad build.

**Caitlin Barrera:** *Werewolf omega* Jesse’s omega. Light blonde hair. Blue-green eyes. Square rimmed glasses. Rose and lemon scent. Rescued from Myles Beck.

**Caleb Moreno:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Copper-colored skin. Black curly hair. Reddish-brown eyes. Bronze-colored fur. Smoky markings on paw and snout.

**Calvin Till:** *Human* CSIS agent. Brown hair. Green eyes.

**Cameron:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Tan and white fur. Youngest pack member. Best friends with Finn.

**Carlo Abella:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Previous alpha to Pennsylvania pack. Dark hair. Green eyes. Tanned skin. Heavy stubble and mustache. Speckled fur. White paws. Italian born. Submitted himself to Jesse. Used to work alongside Myles Beck.

**Caroline:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Straight blonde-brown hair. Gray eyes.

**Cassie:** *Human* Blonde hair. Gray eyes. Small and mouse-like. Delicate features. Wife of Kyle.

**Cayden:** *Werecoyote beta* Californian pack. Blondish-brown hair. Mechanic.

**Charlie:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Curly blond hair. Blue eyes. Tan fur with a black mark under his chin.

**Charlie Jansen:** *Werecat infant* Islander. Dirty blond hair. Green eyes. Son of Aiden Jansen and Sarah. Five years old.

**Chelsea:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Bright blonde hair. Brown eyes. Sean's younger sister by two years.

**Chloe Barrera:** *Werewolf child* New York. Child of Caitlin Barrera and Myles Beck. Sister of Zac Barrera. 13 years old. Blonde hair with pink, blue, and purple ends. Blue-green eyes. Wears glasses. Slightly distant with new people.

**Christopher:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Long dark hair. Blue eyes. Campus security.

**Clarice Osborn:** *Werewolf omega* Theo Finch's omega. Blonde hair. Blue eyes. Previous alpha was Gabriel. Wanted shifter. Deceased.

**Clay:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. 17 years old. Youngest member of Jesse's pack. Very energetic.

**Colt Lewis:** *Werecat alpha (Lynx)* Canada. Curly blond hair. Blue eyes. Bulky build. Gray-speckled fur. Previous head of the Canadian Shifter Agency. Deceased.

**Connor Mackenzie:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Previous alpha to Californian pack. Submitted himself to Jesse. Black hair. Brown eyes. Gray Mackenzie's second cousin.

**Cooper Ivan Rafe:** *Infant* First-born child of Jesse and Nikita. Brown hair. Button nose. Shifter species unknown.

**Coral:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Blonde hair. Blue eyes. Quiet but fierce. Sweet, angelic smile.

**Corey Ryan:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Previous alpha to Modoc County pride. Tanned fur. White paws. Black tips on his ears. Scars on his face. Deceased.

**Curtis:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Ginger hair. Freckles on the bridge of his nose.

**Daisy Cairns:** *Avian beta (raven)* Yukon flock. Ginger hair. Light-brown eyes. Freckles on cheeks. Very anxious. Twin sister of Ivy Cairns.

**Dallas:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Curly brown hair. Gray eyes. Calm and chill personality.

**Damien:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Long brown hair with blond highlights.

**Daniel:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Lives with East Oregon flock. African-American. Very strong. Wanted to be in the military.

**Darcy:** *Avian beta captain (raven)* Burntisland, Scotland.

**Darla:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Strawberry-blond hair. Green-blue eyes. Quite small. Always hangs around with Lucie.

**Darryl:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Buzzed brown hair.

**David Atkins:** *Werecoyote alpha* Previous alpha to Lincoln County, Nevada pack. Gray-and-black fur. Red eyes. Deceased.

**Dernov Vladimirovich:** *Human* Head of Agency for Russia. Based in Moscow. Large and rotund. Thinning brown hair and bushy beard. Laughs at the smallest of things.

**Dexter:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Messy black hair. Bright blue eyes. Tan and blond fur. One black ear. Childish attitude. One of the youngest members of the pack. Nickname is Dex.

**Donald Robertson:** *Avian alpha (raven)* Never seen in person. Burntisland raven alpha. Killed by Shen Shui.

**Dr. Chase:** *Human* Jesse's professor at Everleigh University. Crow-like woman. Wrinkly face.

**Dr. Stenton:** *Werecoyote* Monroe town doctor. Black hair.

**Dudin:** *Russian wild cat beta* Curly brown hair. Green eyes. Tan skin.

**Duncan:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Ginger hair. Green eyes. Freckles across his nose.

**Dylan York:** *Avian alpha (raven)* Previous alpha to East Oregon flock. Never saw him in human form. Deceased.

**Eden:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Black-brown hair. Brown eyes. Birthmark on left side of neck. Twin sister of Ellis.

**Eleanor "Ellie" Miller:** *Avian omega (golden eagle)* Ewan Miller's wife/omega. Brown hair. Green eyes. Mother of Brody and Norah Miller.

**Eli Chambers:** *Human* CSIS agent. Brown eyes. Quite small and lanky.

**Eliza:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Sleek black hair. Pale eyes. Zane's twin sister.

**Elliot:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Curly blond hair. Greenish-brown eyes.

**Ellis:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Black-brown hair. Gray-brown eyes. Loves skateboarding. Twin brother of Eden.

**Eloise:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Reddish-blond hair in ringlets. Green eyes.

**Elsie:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Toffee-colored hair. Blue eyes.

**Elton Nilsson:** *Species unknown* Head of Agency for Sweden. Not seen in person.

**Ethan:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Black-brown hair.

**Etush “Ettie”:** *Russian werewolf beta.* White-blond hair. Sparkling blue eyes. Used to be part of a traveling circus. Sixteen years old.

**Eva Rafe:** *Werewolf beta captain* Jesse’s aunt on his father’s side. Dark brown hair. Icy-blue eyes. Silvery coat that’s sleek and full.

**Ewan Miller:** *Avian alpha (golden eagle)* Head of UK European Shifter Department. Ginger hair. Green eyes. Freckles. Based in Scotland.

**Ezra:** *Human* SDD Intelligence Agent. Stationed in Canada.

**Faith:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Copper-colored hair. Very sweet and quiet.

**Farrah:** *Werewolf beta captain* British Columbia. Burgundy hair. Pierced nose and eyebrow.

**Felix Elliott:** *Species unknown* Head of Agency for Western Australia. Not seen in person.

**Finn:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Messy blond hair. Green eyes. Best friends with Cameron.

**Florence:** *Human* Waitress at Alice’s Restaurant. Bright ginger hair. Forest green eyes. Assisted Jesse with information on the were-hunters.

**Foster:** *Werewolf beta captain* Idaho pack. Black hair. Brown eyes. Tanned skin. Gray fur. Doesn’t talk much.

**Franco:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Brown hair. Orange-brown eyes.

**Frederick:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Curly brown hair. Very quiet. Boyfriend of Lily.

**Galdina:** *Russian wild cat beta captain* Long blonde hair.

**Gavyn:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Buzzed black hair. Green eyes. Broad build. Loves playing football. Bit of a jock.

**Gemma Avalon:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Brown hair. Hazel eyes. Sister of Blair Avalon. Campus security.

**George:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Ginger hair. Green eyes.

**Gia:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Californian pack. Short red hair. Italian heritage. Wanted to be a chef.

**Grace:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Short brown hair. Green-brown eyes.

**Gray Mackenzie:** *Werecoyote alpha* Arielle's previous alpha. Long, highlighted, curly hair. Blue eyes. Orange-brown fur with black-tipped hairs. Deceased.

**Gregory:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Buzzed brown hair. Gray eyes.

**Guillaume Baudet:** *Werewolf alpha* Head of Agency for the European Shifter Department. From France. Not seen in person.

**Gus Dunn:** *Werewolf beta captain* Short blond hair. One green eye, one brown eye. Rotund figure. Red fur. Deceased.

**Hailey Moore:** *Werewolf omega* Jesse's omega. Brown-and-blond streaked hair, often dyes some strands in different colors. Green eyes. Light-gray fur, white speckled chin and stomach. Ears are a darker shade of gray. Honeysuckle and lavender scent. Deceased brother was a were-hunter.

**Han Ming:** *Weretiger beta* Black hair. Brown eyes. Missing half of his left ear. From China. Previous member of Shen Shui's pride.

**Hannah Pierce:** *Human* Jesse's class partner at Everleigh University. Blonde hair. Dark brown eyes. Former cheerleader.

**Harlow:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Mahogany hair. Crystal blue eyes.

**Harrison:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Eugene, Oregon pride. Curly brown hair.

**Harry:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Short brown hair. Blue eyes. Muscular build. Dark gray fur. Like a big brother to Hailey.

**Hazel Wise:** *Human* Co-head of the Shifter Detection Department, alongside Jesse. Long mahogany hair. Almond-colored eyes. Heart-shaped face.

**Hendrix:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Curly blond hair. Very chill and relaxed.

**Henry:** *Werewolf beta captain* Idaho pack. Curly blond hair.

**Henry Ray:** *Werecat* Shifter doctor on Vancouver Island. Short, fluffy brown hair.

**Holly:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Ginger hair. Green eyes. Orange-brown fur.

**Hope:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Short golden hair. Brown eyes. Very shy.

**Hudson Helman:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Head of Agency for the Australian Shifter Agency. Based in Sydney, New South Wales. Not seen in person.

**Hydra:** *Selkie beta (orca)* Long black hair. Soft gray eyes. Scar on left cheek. Black smudge on eyespot.

**Ivy Cairns:** *Avian omega (raven)* Jesse's omega. Long black hair. Light-brown eyes. Cinnamon and pine scent. Can make her own weapons. Twin sister of Daisy Cairns. Rescued from Zander Nevin.

**Jack Nolan:** *Human* Neat brown hair. Grayish-green eyes. Dark stubble. Previous student at Everleigh University. Musician who offered Jesse a part in his orchestra.

**Jackson:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Short dark hair. Cyan eyes. Blond and tan fur.



**Jake Woodruff:** *Human* Jesse's friend. Member of DnD group. Film Major at Everleigh University.

**Jayden Carver:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha to San Bernardino pack. Looked to be in his late-twenties. Only saw him in hybrid form. Deceased.

**Jesse Rafe:** *Werewolf alpha*. Tan skin. Dark brown hair. Blue eyes. Black fur. Violin student at Everleigh University. Parents were Ivan and Miranda Rafe.

**Joel:** *Werecoat beta captain (bobcat)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Blond hair. Blue eyes. Big fan of superheroes.

**Jonah:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Bleached blond hair. Brown eyes.

**Jonathan Jansen:** *Werecoat alpha (mountain lion)* Gray-blond hair. Blue eyes. Married to Amber Jansen, father of Max and Aiden Jansen. Deceased.

**Jude:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Neat and tidy. Good friends with Kora.

**Julia:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra.

**Julien:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Dark blond hair. Green eyes.

**Kahn:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Black hair with silver strands.

**Karina Barnes:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Mother of Nikita and Allison. Widow of Anthony Barnes. Brown hair. Teal eyes.

**Kasia:** *Werecoat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Red hair. Green eyes. Motherly. Girlfriend of Spencer.

**Kassidy:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Curly black hair. Brown and gray fur.

**Kiara:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Californian pack. Mahogany hair.

**Kinley Price:** *Human* Manhattan. Shifter Detection Department agent. Blonde hair. Dark blue eyes. Brown glasses. Assisted Hazel Wise and Rachel MacMillan getting information on Myles Beck.

**Kiri Everard:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Platinum-blond hair. Reddish-brown eyes. Ash-colored fur. Map enthusiast.

**Kora:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Blonde hair with silver highlights. Gray eyes. Neat. Good friends with Jude.

**Kristina:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Black hair. Pale green eyes. Campus security.

**Kyle:** *Human* Pianist in Jack Nolan's orchestra. Curly brown hair. Clothes are normally creased. Husband of Cassie.

**Kyson:** *Werewolf beta* British Columbia. Long black hair. Tanned skin. Tribal tattoos. Brown-and-white fur. Didn't appreciate Jesse's arrival.

**Lachlan Grant:** *Avian beta captain (raven)* Long brown hair. Blue eyes. Fire tattoo on shoulder and neck. Stretched ear lobes. Burntisland, Scotland.

**Laura Barrera:** *Werewolf beta* New York. Brown-black hair. Blue eyes. Younger sister of Caitlin Barrera. Wanted to be a paramedic.

**Laza:** *Russian wild cat alpha.* Previous alpha to the Kamchatka wild cat pride. Never seen in person. Killed by Shen Shui.

**Leo Williams:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Hawk-like nose. Sand-colored hair. Hazel eyes.

**Leona:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Ash-colored hair.

**Levi:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Black hair. Prankster.

**Lian Qing:** *Weretiger omega* Jesse's omega. Long, black-and-purple hair. Brown eyes. Orange and peony scent. Trained to be a ballet dancer. Fluent in multiple languages. Born and raised in China. Rescued from Shen Shui.

**Lily:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Blonde hair. Bright green eyes. Girlfriend of Frederick. Worst vegetarian ever.

**Lorelei:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Black-spotted fur. Very determined. Nickname is Lori.

**Louise Newman:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Blonde hair. Brown eyes. Gray speckled fur. Slight Southern accent.

**Lu Lim:** *Werecat alpha (lynx)* Head of Agency for the Asian Shifter Agency. Based in Beijing, China. Brown hair. Brown Eyes. Round face. Gray speckled fur. Exposed Jesse and shifters to the world. Deceased.

**Luca Soldado:** *Species unknown* Head of Agency for Spain. Not seen in person.

**Luca:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Dark buzzed hair. Thick black eyebrows. Broad build.

**Lucie:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Dyed black hair. Light-blue eyes. Always hangs around with Darla.

**Lukasz Bakula:** *Species unknown* Head of Agency for Poland. Not seen in person.

**Luke:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Blond hair. Blue-gray eyes.

**Lyla Jansen:** *Werecat infant* Islander. White-blonde hair. Brown eyes. Daughter of Aiden Jansen and Olivia. Three years old.

**Maffeo Lo Rivera:** *Species unknown* Head of Agency for Italy. Not seen in person.

**Maisy:** *Avian beta (raven)* Burntisland, Scotland.

**Manina:** *Russian wild cat beta* Curly black hair. Bites her nails when she's nervous.

**Marco:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Flaxen-haired. Stocky build.

**Maria:** *Werewolf omega* Washington. Theo Finch's previous omega. Older than Aunt Eva. Five teenage kids. Jesse gave the

option to leave the pack if she wanted to.

**Mariam Porter:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Long, curly blonde hair. Sky blue eyes. Loves to read. Bit of a girly-girl.

**Markov:** *Russian wild cat beta captain* Short brown hair. Brown eyes. Hooked scar on chin. Doctor of the wild cat pride.

**Markus:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Black hair in dreadlocks. Brown eyes. Tan skin. Tall with very broad shoulders. Wanted to be a football player.

**Marley:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Turquoise eyes. White tufts of fur on ears.

**Maryin:** *Russian wild cat beta* White-blond hair. Blue eyes. Very quiet. Only knows a small amount of English.

**Masen:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Black-and-gray hair. Dark eyes.

**Max Jansen:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Golden hair. Emerald eyes. Broad build. Lived off parents' wealth. Deceased.

**Maxwell Byrne:** *Human* Caught avians shifting on camera in Teslin, Yukon.

**Molly:** *Werewolf beta* San Bernardino pack. Dirty-blonde hair in ringlets. 19 years old.

**Myles Beck:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha of New York skulk. Dark blond hair. Blue eyes. Round face. Orange fur. Yellow-gold eye. White chin, and black-tipped ears. Head of the SDD. Territory spanned over all of New York and New Jersey. Deceased.

**Nayeli:** *Werecoyote beta* Californian pack. Long black hair. Tanned skin. Native American. Yurok Tribe.

**Newt:** *Werecat beta (cougar)* Max's beta. Bald head. Scar on neck. Broken front tooth. Deceased.

**Nikita Barnes:** *Werecat omega (mountain lion)* Jesse's omega. Light tan. Caramel-brown hair. Teal eyes. Golden fur. Citrus-sweet scent. Creative writing major at Everleigh University.

**Nina:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Black hair. Forest green eyes. Square-shaped glasses.

**Noah:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Brown hair. Yellow-brown eyes.

**Norah Miller:** *Avian infant (golden eagle)* Brown hair. Ewan Miller's daughter.

**Olive:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Wildly curly brown hair. Brown-and-gray fur. Very hyper and forgetful. 19 years old, but looks 15.

**Oliver:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Short brown hair. Blue eyes.

**Olivia:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Curly, light-red hair. Brown eyes. Mother of Lyla Jansen.

**Oscar:** *Werecoyote beta captain* Californian pack. Blond hair.

**Parker Little:** *Human* Jesse's friend. Red hair. Freckles. Wire-framed glasses. Member of the DnD group.

**Paul:** *Werewolf beta* British Columbia. Brown hair. Brown Eyes. Gray fur. Didn't appreciate Jesse's arrival.

**Paige:** *Werewolf beta* British Columbia. Short silver hair shaved at one side with blue stars. Ashy blonde fur. Very small. Goth. Didn't appreciate Jesse's arrival.

**Paxton:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Ashy hair with a fringe. Hazel eyes. Gets worried quite easily.

**Peter Daughtry:** *Werecoyote* Mainland. Gray hair. Blue eyes. Retired park ranger.

**Phoebe:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Silver hair. Yellowish-brown eyes. Bit of a nerd.

**Poppy Jansen:** *Werecat infant* Islander. Black hair. Blue eyes. Always wears hair bows. Daughter of Aiden Jansen and Sophie. Four years old.

**Professor Collins:** *Human* Jesse's music professor at Everleigh University. Short brown hair.

**Quinn:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Short brown hair. Sea-blue eyes. Mother of Rebecca Jansen.

**Rachel MacMillan:** *Human* Connecticut. Shifter Detection Department agent. Dark blonde hair. Green eyes. Hazel Wise's mentor.

**Raina:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Long, curly red hair. Her brother was her previous alpha.

**Ramiro:** *Werewolf beta captain* Washington. Previous beta captain for Theo Finch.

**Randell Snyder:** *Werewolf alpha* Shoulder-length, greasy brown hair. Scar from right eye to cheek. Red fur. Deceased.

**Rayko Pohl:** *Species unknown* Head of Agency for Germany. Not seen in person.

**Rebecca Jansen:** *Werecat infant* Islander. Blonde hair. Blue eyes. Speaks with a lisp. Daughter of Aiden Jansen and Quinn. Four years old.

**Reese:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Auburn hair. Brown eyes. Likes fishing.

**Reuben Dillard:** *Avian alpha (bald eagle)* Azalea's previous alpha. Patch of feathers missing on his stomach. Violet eyes. Deceased.

**Rhett:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Curly black hair. Blue eyes. Gray fur.

**Rhys:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Ginger hair. Blue eyes. Pale skin.

**Riya:** *Werecoyote beta* Californian pack. Long black hair. Tanned skin. Indian heritage. Loves to experiment with spices.

**Robin:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Long auburn-and-blonde hair. Gray eyes. Pretty nerdy.

**Roman:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Sky-blue eyes. Short black hair. Neatfreak.

**Romeo Bell:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha of Maine pack. Short brown hair. Gray eyes. Dark gray fur. Scar beneath his left eye. Worked alongside Myles Beck. Territory spanned over all of Maine and Vermont. Deceased.

**Runov:** *Werewolf beta captain* Gray fur. Orange eyes. Russian shifter. Previous alpha killed by Shen Shui.

**Russell Banks:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Canada. Bald head. Brown beard. Beer belly. Colt Lewis' assistant. Deceased.

**Ryland:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. White-blond hair.

**Sabine:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Max's beta. Blonde pixie cut. Petite build. Deceased.

**Sage:** *Werewolf beta captain* Idaho pack. Blonde hair.

**Samantha:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra. Blonde hair.

**Samuel Norris:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Modoc County pride. Never saw him in his human form. ID was found in a car. Deceased.

**Sarah:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Dark blonde hair. Green eyes. Mother of Charlie Jansen.

**Scarlett:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Strawberry-blond hair. Crystal-blue eyes. Small and petite.

**Scott Williamson:** *Werecat alpha (lynx)* Previous alpha of Eugene, Oregon pride. Gray speckled fur. One eye scarred shut. Black-tipped ears. Deceased.

**Sean:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Dirty-blond hair. Older brother of Chelsea by two years.

**Sebastian Rush:** *Werecat alpha (mountain lion)* Previous alpha of Connecticut pride. Blond hair. Blue eyes. Tattoo of a lion on right hand. Tip of one ear missing. Worked alongside Myles Beck. Territory spanned over all of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Deceased.

**Serena:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Golden hair. Beauty mark on right cheek. Campus security.

**Seth:** *Werewolf beta* Mainland. Buzzed blond hair. Brown and gray fur.

**Shalyapina “Shal”:** *Russian wild cat beta* Brown hair. Birthmark on her neck.

**Shen Shui:** *Weretiger alpha* Siberian tiger from China. Never seen in human form. Jade-colored eyes surrounded by scars. Worked as a puppet for the Asian agency. Deceased.

**Shi Mu:** *Weretiger beta* ESD agent. Brown hair. Brown eyes. Dresses in smart suits. From China but lives in Madrid. Lives alone, and isn't part of a pride.

**Sidney May:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Modoc County pride. Cropped brown hair. Dusty-gray eyes. Bit of a tomboy. Severe nut allergy.

**Simon:** *Avian beta (raven)* Burntisland, Scotland.

**Siyanko:** *Russian wild cat* Brown-blond hair. Tall and slim. Fastest wild cat in the group.

**Skye:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Atlin, British Columbia pride. Brown hair. Allergic to everything.

**Sloan:** *Werewolf beta* Idaho pack. Long ginger hair. Green eyes.

**Sobakova “Soba”:** *Russian wild cat beta* Short blonde hair.

**Sophie:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Black hair. Brown eyes. Mother of Poppy Jansen.

**Spencer:** *Werecat beta captain (mountain lion)* Islander. Ginger hair. Wanted to be a football player. Boyfriend of Kasia.



**Steph:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Islander. Long blonde hair. Organized and playful.

**Steven:** *Human* Violinist in Jack Nolan's orchestra.

**Sven:** *Werewolf beta captain* New York skulk. Brown-black hair. Broad shoulders.

**Tegan:** *Werecat beta (bobcat)* Modoc County pride. Red-brown hair. Gray-blue eyes. Very petite.

**Tess:** *Werewolf beta*. Idaho pack.

**Thalia:** *Werecoyote beta* Mainland. Tawny hair. Blue, doll-like eyes. Tawny fur with a fluffy tail.

**Theo Finch:** *Werewolf alpha* Black fur with patches missing and covered in scars. White triangle on chin. Murdered Jesse's parents. Deceased.

**Thomas:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Mainland. Sandy hair. Blocky glasses. Wants to be an engineer.

**Tiana:** *Avian beta (bald eagle)* Mainland. Curly black hair. Brown eyes. Diagnosed with OCD.

**Tilly:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Red hair with pink highlights. Silver eyes. Zodiac signs tattooed on her knuckles.

**Todd:** *Werecoyote beta* Monroe resident. Gray hair. Rotund build. Normally seen sitting in the diner.

**Tom:** *Werewolf beta captain* New York skulk. Dark blond hair. Broad shoulders.

**Travis Kelly:** *Human* Jesse's friend. Member of DnD group. Mexican-Irish nationality.

**Troy Watson:** *Werewolf alpha* Previous alpha of Idaho pack. Black fur. White paws. Deceased.

**Valya:** *Russian wild cat omega* Laza's omega. Never seen in person. Killed by Shen Shui.

**Vinko Leskovar:** *Werecat alpha* Head of Agency for Croatia. Not seen in person.

**Wesley:** *Werewolf beta captain* Mainland. Brown hair.

**Willow:** *Werewolf beta captain* Alberta. Brown hair. Previous beta captain for Theo Finch.

**Wren:** *Werecat beta (mountain lion)* Islander. Always wears sunglasses.

**Wyatt Arbour:** *Werecoyote alpha* Head of the Canadian Shifter Agency. Curly brown hair. Gray eyes. Stubble. Owns nearly all of Alberta.

**Yasmin:** *Human* Manhattan. Administrative assistant for Jesse and Hazel Wise. Black hair. Brown eyes. Tanned skin. Very small. Very excitable.

**Zac Barrera:** *Werefox child* New York. Child of Caitlin Barrera and Myles Beck. Younger brother of Chloe Barrera. 11 years old. Blond hair. Blue-green eyes. Loves video games.

**Zane:** *Werecat beta (lynx)* Mainland. Black hair. Pale eyes. Eliza's twin brother. Campus security.

**Zander Nevin:** *Avian alpha (raven)* Ivy's previous alpha. Blond hair. Muscular. Missing several feathers. Deceased.

**Zara:** *Avian beta (raven)* East Oregon flock. Sandy-brown hair. Brown eyes. Square-shaped face.

**Zhang Li:** *Weretiger beta* Black hair. Tall and muscular. Very protective over Lian Qing. From China. Previous beta of Shen Shui.

**Zimin:** *Russian wild cat beta* Black hair. Heavy stubble.



## End Notes

Thank you for reading The Alpha 14! I'll start working on the next book as soon as this one hits 100 reviews, [so please leave a review right here. Thank you!](#)

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