

Prologue

The Wolf

A storm was brewing.

I could smell it in the air, taste it as I sat watching the gusts of wind rattling the leaves outside. Dark clouds built ominously over the sunset that flamed across the sky.

“Mr Faolan, sir?”

I tightened my hand around my tumbler of whiskey. “What, Neo?”

The gangly, pale young hacker edged into the sitting room that was resplendent with opulent velvet armchairs and ornate antique end tables. “Sorry, sir. I know you gave orders not to be interrupted but I thought you’d want to know...there’s been a breach on The Tavern.”

I put the drink down with a clink, turning slowly to face him. “A breach?”

He gulped. “Yes sir, just now. I got the alerts, and...”

He trailed off when I stood. I towered over him by a fair few inches, but at 6’4” that wasn’t uncommon. What was uncommon was the way he didn’t break eye contact when faced with the ice of my stare.

“There was a breach on The Tavern, the server that we hired you to secure?” I asked silkily.

His hands shook where he clutched a laptop to his chest, with good reason. I had a reputation among the Wolves so that even the most insignificant foot soldiers knew not to displease me.

“Show me,” I commanded.

Thunder rumbled as Neo put the laptop on the sideboard and pulled up the information, his movements jerky.

“I still don’t know how the hacker got in. I shut him down, but not before he copied over some data.” Neo turned the laptop to face me, his fingers trembling.

I scanned the information quickly. When I got a third of the way down, I froze. I slipped my hand into my left pants pocket, finding the pendant I kept there and winding its chain tightly in my fist.

The diamond bit into my palm as I met Neo’s almost-black eyes. “Is this everything?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Are you certain?”

He nodded, his prominent Adam’s apple bobbing nervously. “That’s all he got.”

“Has he contacted anyone?”

Neo swore softly. “I haven’t checked. Hang on.”

He grabbed the laptop, typing frantically. When he faced me again, his pale skin had taken on even more of a pallor.

“Trace him and whoever he has contacted,” I barked, pulling out my phone.

“Yo, Wolfie, what’s up?” Zel answered when he picked up my call.

“We have a problem,” I said. “Are you with MacTire?”

The enforcer hesitated. There was little I couldn’t handle as second-in-command, so if I was asking for the kingpin then he knew we were in some deep shit.

“Ja,” he replied. “Me, and Tate also.”

“I’ve got him,” Neo called out. “Morris Reese, owns Reese Security with his daughter Isabella. That’s who he’s talking to right now.”

“Has he contacted anyone else?” I asked him.

“What’s going on, Faolan?” Zel said.

“He texted a Brendan East,” Neo replied. “I’m pulling his details now.”

I’d long accepted that ice ran in my veins but rarely did I feel its bite. At that name, the cold pierced me. “Brendan East. Are you sure?”

Neo nodded. “He’s some rich dude; lives at a place called The Castle? Shit, wait...that Morris guy is driving there now! I’m tracking the GPS on his phone and he plugged the location in his map.”

I turned from him, speaking into the phone. “Zel, Neo is going to send you the details of a mark. Take Tate and any Wolves you need—whatever happens, do *not* let him get to The Castle, you hear me? Send another team after the girl. I need this locked down *right now*.”

“On it, Wolfie,” Zel said, already on the move. The only time he agreed easily with one of my instructions was when he could shoot someone. His twin Tate was no better.

“I’ll update MacTire once I’m done with Neo,” I told him, ending the call.

The pendant bit into my palm as I turned back to my hacker. “Jam Reese’s phone—his daughter’s too. This information goes no further than them, do you hear me?”

Neo nodded once and returned to his laptop.

I released the pendant into my pocket, reaching for the tumbler once more. The foreboding storm clouds gathered outside, occasionally fractured by a flash of lightning.

The back of my neck prickled and I glanced up to the window to find Neo watching me in its reflection, his face gaunt and white against the bruised clouds behind it.

“What, Neo?”

“Are they going to—are Zel and Tate going to *kill* them? This Morris Reese and his daughter?”

I tightened my grip on the glass before taking a measured sip. “That information can’t go further than them. You know that very well.”

He didn’t say anything but his expression said enough.

I gave him a cold smile that didn’t reach my eyes, and hadn’t for ten years. “You never know when your time is up, Neo. Best enjoy it while you can.”

Finally, he averted his gaze.

My jaw pulsed once and I downed the rest of my drink, slamming the tumbler down. Neo jumped.

“Wolves aren’t in the business of happily ever afters, Neo. Now get to work and shut Reese and his daughter down before any more damage is done.”