

# Albert



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The cave was quiet as a tomb. That silence, and the bars covering his exit like spiderwebs angered the boy to no end. He couldn't comprehend the reason for his punishment, for he was obviously innocent. All he could do was stroll up and down in the narrow cell that any medieval dungeon would come to envy. A bundle of straw for sleeping, a bucket to do the deeds, bars, and chains. The chains were laying on the floor in pieces, like petals after a typhoon had just passed. He was no mere mortal. Werewolf blood was running in his veins, with which he was born.

He just circled back and forth, almost as if to carve away the stone under his feet. The ferocious pumping of his blood did nothing to ease the process of calming down. His father was most likely aware that those bars wouldn't hold him. Then if he was to get out, even greater repercussions would await. Must keep cool, can't tear the bars apart.

But the anger just kept rising and he began to feel like steam would start coming out of his ears, like a boiling teapot. Step by step it got more and more difficult to keep his transformation in check. Yet another lesson his father yammers on about, and it only fuels his rage further, that he must learn to stay cool, to keep control of these impulses before he'd be allowed to leave home.



A real bear of a man stopped in front of the door. Wearing a biker jacket, jeans and boots, his face covered in what would be best described as unending hair. Huge beard, eyebrows so bushy you'd be forgiven for thinking he is less than sapient, long greasy hair flowing over his shoulders. One of the men under the boy's old man, mostly responsible for petty errands. It was an entertaining thought that even now he's shown up to take the boy somewhere.

-Albert – he called out to the boy, with a voice fitting his grizzly appearance – your old man will see you now.

-How nice of him.

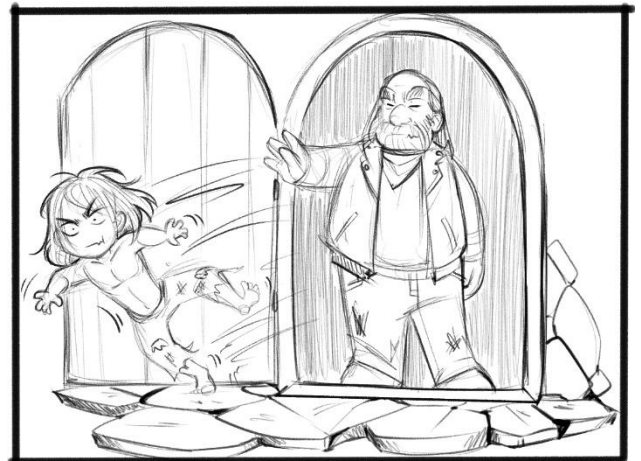
Regardless of his cheeky response, he followed after the giant like a well trained dog aware of the futility of any resistance he could muster. The corridors of the cave

were lit by evenly spaced lanterns hanging, covering everything in a fatigued yellow hue, giving Albert the illusion of being inside a beehive. They kept on winding deep within the mountain, occasionally broken up by doors leading into various chambers.

At long last, they arrived at the door they were headed to. It had no distinguishing features, neither did the room on the other side of it. Bear gently nudged the boy past the doorstep, which made him practically fly inside like a weaponized pillow. He scrambled onto his feet from the less than flattering position, swept his brown hair away from his emerald eyes and glanced up.

This room was equipped with the same things his cell was, with the only luxury being a desk. Behind it sat the big guy. Barely resembling his son. Long blond hair, azure-blue eyes, and features so sharp you'd think they carved it from rock. In his strict gaze, a hint of kindness was ever present, but the boy knew he can't let it mislead him. Their only similarity was their voices. The same deep tone shook their surroundings from within their throats.

-You do know why you are here, right?



Father stood up from behind the desk, focusing all his attention on his son. His stare throwing spears, swords, and any other piercing and slashing weapons you could think of as he stepped away from the piece of furniture, into arm's reach from the boy.

-Breaking curfew is probably on the list.

He needed every ounce of courage so he could stay himself, and not turn into a shaking little child. He was one inside, but didn't let it be known. He didn't fear him, it was respect. He respected all the lessons given by him, one of which was to accept the consequences of your actions and to always present yourself to others, not some facade. He knew it very well that he had to properly take responsibility for his actions.

Edgar wasn't deceived by the boys attempts. He saw everything right in his eyes. Read every thought from the minute movements of his muscles. And he wasn't the least bit angered by it. He felt immeasurable pride. But rules were in place for a reason, and they had to be enforced regardless of how similar he was in his younger days. His face almost softened up for a moment, almost.



-I hope you have no delusions of getting away with the court jester act like you do with your tutors.

-Oh Sire, where would I find the courage to do such a thing? I don't even have a cap.

The Lord of Wolves pondered over his son's remarks for a second, to give him the joy of some theatrical self-pity, but he decided to take a different route.

-For a cap befitting a fool, one must work hard and entertain. You, sadly, failed at doing either, having

inherited your humor from my mother-in-law in all likelihood. Besides, beyond escaping, losing your mind, butchering a farmer and his herd, totaling a dozen or so civilian vehicles, I'd like to ask you what additional enjoyment do you get from chewing on tires?

Albert sank his head down, looking at the muddy tip of his shoes. Indeed, going rabid wasn't part of the plan. It only included escaping, being cool for his mates, and getting back in. His failure in the matter embarrassed him greatly, and he was expecting a fittingly strict punishment in turn. During their little party, his older buddies, who are much more versed in controlling themselves, kept provoking the Prince, knowing full well his difficulties. And of course, he got played by, and proceeded to jump on them. The brawl was followed by transformation, followed by more brawling, where the overwhelming numerical disadvantage was threatening with a defeat. The thought of which was even more unbearable for him.

In his werewolf form, he easily overpowered multiple members of his kin, thanks to the purity of his blood. He could unleash powers that made him feel like even moving the world would be an easy task. But then and there, surrounded by four much more battle-hardened wolves, he was forced to do something he swore he wouldn't to escape defeat. However, oaths are sacred.

He dipped on all fours, and shook the whole valley with a roar that would make mothers reach for their children, while he grew two additional heads, and a few sizes. Standing in front of his opponents like the hell hound Cerberus guarding The Gates, he was ready to tear them into mincemeat. But they fled. Having seen the Royal Blood's most obvious manifestation, they ran like rats looking for holes to hide in. The real rampage only came afterwards. And the sheep herd, too.

-I take full responsibility for my foolishness, Father.

That's all he could come up with. Nothing more, nothing less.

-Albert – his father started with a dejected sigh – it’s not about weakness. You are much more noble and good hearted. I’m not expecting you to be perfect, you obviously couldn’t be. But keep in mind what you have to become.

-Understand already that I won’t be King! - the boy raised his voice, perhaps too much so – Just because I’m your son doesn’t give me any right to lead. I can’t even control myself, much less every wolf in the world. You old fleabags go and choose a fitting heir.

His father just wrinkled his forehead.

-The old fleabags have already chosen You. And you’ll never escape that. If you think you aren’t fitting, then become fitting. Study and better yourself. Become real ruler material. You’ll be spending the next two weeks training with the elites. The two weeks following that, you’ll read and learn everything Shakespeare ever wrote. You can commit your next misdemeanor once you’re done with those.

With all that, he let his son leave, and gazed on the pendant hanging in his neck. The sphere’s inside looked as if millions of stars were shining within it, then a sudden swirl, and it all turned into a picture of an Egyptian woman, tattoos on her face, and vampire fangs slipping through her thick lips.

