



Chapter 120: Cells

Tereshan

I leave Claire on the sparring field, and I mind link Dane to join me when he can. I'm going to start with Tucker then move on to Roman. I'm still not sure what to do with Bryson.

Before I even get there, I can hear Roman yelling, banging on the cell bars.

"Is he like this every day?" I ask the warrior on duty.

"Every day, Alpha. Gives me a fucking headache."

"He's giving me one too and I haven't even been down here," I tell him drolly.

"What about Tucker? How has he been?" I ask.

"Quiet, mostly. He yells at Roman to stop





making so much noise periodically, but that's about it. Hasn't given us any trouble."

"Thanks."

"Do you need me to come down there with you?" he asks.

"No, but Beta Dane will be showing up at some point. Let him through."

"Yes, Alpha."

I head down the stairs. Since I can hear him, I know that Roman is to the right. I turn left, heading toward Tucker's cell. On the way, I pass Bryson. He's sitting on the cot in his cell, his head in his hands.

I stop and look at him. "What am I going to do with you, Bryson?" I ask softly.

"I don't know, Alpha. But if it makes you feel any better, being in here with him," he nods his head in the direction of where Roman is screaming and carrying on, "is like being in hell."





A hint of a smile ghosts my face before I pull it back. “Dammit, why’d you have to betray me?”

“I’m sorry, Alpha. I truly am. I believed her when she said we would finally be together as a real couple should.”

I nod. “I’m not here for you today. I still haven’t decided what to do with you.”

“I understand,” he says, and it makes it harder because I think he really does understand what he did, how much his mate truly lied to him and the terrible position he put me in.

I turn, heading to Tucker’s cell. As soon as he sees me, he’s on his feet.

“Alpha!”

“Tucker, you injured my mate.”

“Yes, Alpha. I didn’t know she was your mate, I thought she was merely an omega that was trying to escape.”

“Things have changed since you’ve been in





here, Tucker. The omegas are learning to spar. We're building a library so they and anyone else that wants, can learn to read. The abuse that has been allowed in this pack for so long is unacceptable. Anyone that is caught abusing another pack member, no matter their rank, will be banished or killed, depending on the severity of the crime."

I see the momentary flash in his eyes. I know how he feels about the omegas. I also know that he thinks that if I don't see it, I won't believe he did it. I remember that very well from sparring with him in the last timeline. He's a sneaky fucking bastard.

"There will be no second chances. There will be no option for the cells. You abuse any one of my omegas and the choices are death or banishment from the pack."

I watch as the reality of what I'm saying sinks into his thick skull.

"You have the choice to leave the pack now, if you don't think you can abide by those rules," I tell him.





"No, this is my pack. I'm staying."

"Okay. You should also know that Alpha Keegan is building some farming areas on our land and his omegas will be here as well. The same rules apply, Tucker."

He scoffs. "We're taking up farming, Alpha?"

"We're in an alliance with an Alpha who farms all the food for the packs, Tucker. Part of that alliance is to provide this pack with specialty items that other packs won't get."

"I bet Alpha Franco won't like that."

I reach through the cell bars, grabbing him by the front of his shirt and pulling him to me.

"What do you know about Alpha Franco?"

"What? Nothing! Nothing at all. I just...he owns the grocery stores. I know that."

"He'll no longer be receiving food from Alpha Keegan. So that 'farmer' you were just joking about, could quite possibly decimate Alpha Franco's pack. As I said, you're free to leave





this pack if you choose.”

I release him and stand back. “Are you working for Alpha Franco?” I ask, Magnor coming forward and pushing out his Alpha aura. “Tell me the truth!”

Tucker yips, his wolf lifting his neck, exposing his throat to Magnor. “No, no I don’t work for Alpha Franco.” He says hurriedly.

I hold him there another minute before I release him, Magnor pulling back.

“I suggest that it stays that way.” I say, pulling out the keys and opening the cell door.

“Go get washed up and then check in with Jesiah. He’s our new Gamma and is running the patrols.”

“Yes, Alpha.”

He passes Dane on his way to the stairwell.

“I won’t be sorry to leave your fucking loud ass,” he yells to Roman as he runs up the





stairs.

As I pass back by Bryson's cell, he calls out to me.

"Alpha, Jesiah took my position?"

I stop and look at him. "Yes."

He nods. "He's a good choice, a good warrior. He'll make a good Gamma."

"He already is," I say, continuing down the hallway to where I can hear Roman.

"It's about fucking time, Alpha. I can't believe you made me wait so long to talk this out. I mean, I know you've been angry with me before, but this..." he gestures around the cell.

"You're lucky I haven't killed you for betraying the pack, Roman." That brings his attention back to me.

"Your life is dependent of what you tell me and whether or not I believe you."

Dane hands me a chair that he pulled from





down the hall. I sit while Dane leans against the wall behind me.

"You raped Feena, multiple times." I state it as a fact. It's the easiest lie to catch him in.

"Rape is an ugly word, Alpha. She agreed to everything I asked."

Dane snarls behind me. I raise a hand and while I can still feel the anger rolling off of him, he quiets down.

"She agreed because you threatened to rape the other omegas if she didn't, right?"

He turns, running his fingers through his hair and begins pacing.

"They're omegas. It's what they are made for, Alpha. You should know, your mate is one," he says which sends me flying against the cell walls.

Dane rushes up behind me, holding me back.

"Don't speak of my mate again, or I will kill you."





He watches me closely until Dane pulls me back. I yank my shirt down, running my fingers through my hair before sitting back down.

“Fine, we won’t talk about the obvious. So, yeah, I didn’t think it would be a huge issue to sleep with the omegas. I don’t know why you made that a rule anyway. But you said they had to be agreeable. I found a way to make Feena agreeable. Technically, I didn’t break any of your rules Alpha.”

“Threats and coercion do not make a woman agreeable you piece of shit.” Dane says.

“What the fuck are you even doing in here, Dane?” Roman asks him.

“That’s Beta Dane to you, Roman,” I tell him, and watch in satisfaction as his eyes go wide.

“You gave him my position? Are you fucking kidding me?”

“Yeah, and you want to know what’s amazing? Shit’s actually getting done in the pack now.” I say.





“Un-fucking-believable.”

“So, how long have you been working with Franco against me?” I ask, switching topics and watching him closely. It’s quick, but I’m ready, and I see it, the flash of surprise before he wipes it away. Damn, he’s good. No wonder I never questioned him in the first timeline. I didn’t even know to look for a problem.

“What are you talking about? You’re my Alpha, you’ve always been my Alpha.”

“Why is he so desperate to get this pack?” I ask.

“How the fuck would I know?”

“Who’s the delivery guy that was asking about you?”

He shrugs. “Johnny? What about him? He delivers shit, we talk, so what.”

“He’s one of Eason’s men, right.”

There it is, that flash again, just as quickly as





it's there, it's gone.

"I never asked what pack he was from."

"Why does Franco want my pack?" I snarl, Magnor coming forward to push his aura over Roman. I watch as Roman and Tripp fight the Alpha command. Magnor pushes harder. Roman may have forgotten, but Magnor is the strongest Alpha wolf alive.

Finally, Tripp yips in pain and exposes his throat. "He needs money."

"What does that have to do with my pack?" I snarl.

"I don't know."

Magnor pushes forward again, snarling loudly.

"I don't know! He just said if I gave him information on your whereabouts that he would pay me for it."

I lean forward. "So, a man who needs money is going to pay you for information about me





and you didn't think that was odd? You betrayed me for money, is that what I'm understanding?"

When he doesn't answer, Magnor pushes all his strength forward. "IS IT?!"

"Yes! Yes, I betrayed you for money."





Chapter 121: Jessie

Claire

After I hung up with Zoey, I went to find Feena. She was in the kitchen with Jessie, teaching her how to make some dessert for lunch.

‘Zoey and Keegan are on their way here. Zoey recognized the name.’ I tell Feena in the mind link. If Zoey isn’t the daughter of Jessie’s Alpha, I don’t want to get her hopes up.

“What are we making here?” I ask, coming to look in the bowl.

“Jessie said her favorite cookie was chocolate peanut butter, so we’re making some to serve with lunch.” Feena says, just as Nita comes in, carrying food from the pantry.

“What’s all this? Looks like we’re having a cookout?” I say, looking at the food items, ground beef, hamburger buns, and chicken.





Feena smiles and blushes. "Dane asked me what my favorite dinner is. I told him I used to love having cookouts in my pack when I was a child. We've never done that in this pack, so he asked Alpha if we could purchase a few grills. They are scheduled to arrive today, so we thought it would be nice to have a cookout and let the pack sit outside to eat tonight."

"I love that idea! Not only is it something new and fun, but it's a great way to bring the pack together."

"I thought so, too," Feena says, adding more flour to the cookie batter as Jessie mixes it together.

"Does anyone know how to grill in this pack?" I ask, thinking there is no way that Tereshan does.

"Dane said he does," Feena says.

"I do too, Luna," Nita says. "And I cook a mean pork butt and ribs. We'll have to plan a barbeque soon."





"Now my mouth is watering, and I just ate breakfast," I tell them.

'Luna, Alpha Keegan and Luna Zoey just arrived at the border,' one of the patrols informs me in the mind link.

'Thank you. Let them through,' I tell him.

"I'll be right back," I say, looking at Feena.

She nods and continues to give Jessie instructions on making the cookies.

I go outside to wait for Keegan and Zoey to arrive. It's only a couple of minutes before I see their car coming down the road. When they pull up, I walk out to meet them, hugging Zoey and noticing immediately that she smells like Keegan.

I stand back, looking at her questioningly. She smiles, pulling her shirt away from her neck and showing me her new mate mark.

"Congratulations!" I say, hugging her again.

"Thank you," she says, pulling back and





looking at Keegan lovingly as he comes around the car. He kisses the side of her head tenderly before looking at me.

“I figured I’d take this opportunity to speak to Tereshan. I’ll need to make some arrangements to be away while Zoey is in heat.”

“Of course, Alpha. He’s down in the cells talking to Roman at the moment, but I’ll let him know that you’re here.”

Zoey takes my hands. “Before we go inside, you said Jessie was in the brothel, but I never saw her there. I would have recognized her.”

“She only got there about a week ago, right about the time you and Amelia escaped. I guess she’s been living on her own for a long time. She stumbled across Alpha Eason’s pack lands, and he put her there.”

“But she’s just a child,” she says.

“Fourteen is what Feena said.”

“It sounds like her. I would want to bring her





to our pack if it's her. I spoke to Keegan about it on the way here. She would be more comfortable with me as her Luna and Amelia as her Beta female since she knows us."

"If she's agreeable, so am I, but I'll warn you, Feena said she had nightmares all night and is terrified."

"That doesn't surprise me, that place is awful."

We turn and walk inside. I lead them into the kitchen. Jessie is carefully putting cookie dough on a cookie sheet as Feena talks her through what to do.

"Jessie." Zoey says softly.

Jessie's head snaps up and the spoon in her hand clatters to the ground. "Alpha Zoey?"

Zoey steps around me, opening her arms. Jessie's races into them and begins to sob hysterically.

"I thought you were dead, I thought everyone was dead," she says over and over before





beginning to hyperventilate.

“What’s going on?” Tereshan asks quietly, coming up behind me.

“Jessie is part of the same pack that Zoey and Amelia were from. They are part of Jessie's previous Alpha family.”

I step forward, putting my hand on Zoey’s back. “Let’s find a more private place to talk, shall we?” I say.

Zoey nods and begins to guide Jessie as I lead them to Tereshan’s office.

“Is there somewhere you and I can speak privately while they get settled, Tereshan?” I hear Keegan ask.

‘Do you need me?’ Tereshan asks in the mind link.

‘For now, I’m good. It will probably be easier if you aren’t in the room while we talk.’

‘I’ll use Dane’s office. Call me if you need anything.’





When we get to the office, Zoey sits Jessie on the couch beside her. I grab some tissues and sit across from them. Zoey listens as Jessie tells her everything that happened. While the story is similar to the one she told me, Zoey knows the people involved in the battle and in Jessie's escape. She asks her specific questions about what she saw and where she ran.

"They killed my parents," she says tearfully.

"I know, sweet girl. I'm not sure how you survived on your own, but you're very strong." Zoey brushes the hair out of Jessie's face.

"Do you know, I'm a Luna now?" she asks Jessie.

"You are? When? How?"

"Alpha Tereshan and Luna Claire helped me too. Me and Amelia."

"Alpha Amelia is alive too?" Jessie asks, excited.





"She is and she is mated to the Beta in our pack. I am mated to the Alpha, Alpha Keegan. He came in with me, but you may not have seen him. He's very kind, a good man. We want you to come live with us."

Jessie's smile fades. "He won't want me. Not if he knows what happened to me. No pack will want me."

Zoey takes Jessie's face in her hands.

"Sweetheart, Amelia and I were in the brothel before you were. My mate knows that, and he wanted me anyway. The same is true of Amelia's mate. They are cutting ties with the man who put us there. I understand it was Alpha Eason that put you there?" she asks the last part.

"Yes, he said it would be fun. It wasn't."

"No, it wasn't. But neither of those men will hurt you again. Alpha Keegan has cut ties with both of them. Keegan is a farmer. We have lots of land, with plants growing all the time. There's plenty to do and you can work outside or inside. Usually, the omegas want a mix of both, so they switch off on days some





outside some inside.”

“Really? That sounds great!”

“So, would you like to come live with us? To become part of our pack?”

She looks at me before looking back at Zoey.

“Yes, yes thank you,” she says, throwing herself into Zoey’s arms again.



Chapter 122: Preparations

Tereshan

I watch as Claire takes Zoey and Jessie into my office before turning and leading Keegan into Dane's. Instead of sitting behind the desk like I would have in the past, I sit in a chair beside him.

"I'm guessing we're here to talk about your mate smelling like you now?" I smile, watching him as we sit. I'm jealous, I know it. Claire is ready and so am I, but with everything happening, we need to be prepared. I can't just give in to my desire to mark and mate her.

"Yes. I know the timing isn't great. It just sort of happened." He says sheepishly.

"I understand that. I've almost marked Claire several times."

"So, she has agreed too?"





I smile, thinking of her statement this morning. “Yeah, she’s ready. But my Beta and my Gamma both found their mates and now you have marked yours. We can’t all go out for our mates’ heat at the same time, especially after last night.”

“Tell me about that, what happened?”

I tell him about the information we gained about Franco being in debt, but no one knows why. Then I tell him how we got the girls out of the brothel and the fight before I left.

“Yeah, he’ll be coming for you. The debt part is interesting. They didn’t hear anything at all?”

“Equipment, is what they said, like bulldozers. Does that mean anything at all to you?”

“Bulldozers, back hoes, dump trucks, those types of things are used for levelling land or digging holes. I haven’t heard that he’s into any type of land development. That might explain his debt, if he was buying up land and building it, but I’d think we’d have heard





about that.”

“I have some feelers out for the brothel, I’ll have my guy dig a bit deeper and see if he can find out if Franco is buying up land. I’m guessing that if he’s leveraged the brothel to the maximum, then his grocery stores are probably the same, which would also explain why he was so angry about me pulling out. He’s going to feel any loss of business if he’s that in debt.”

“Before we get to the brothel, I wanted to let you now, we didn’t find anything in your soil. My guys will be here today to start digging up the land. If they find anything, I’ve told them to call me, but otherwise, it’s just rich in minerals, which is good for farming.”

“And whatever you found may have nothing to do with this, but that’s not how Claire took it and her instincts are almost always right. So, let me know if you find anything.”

“Will do, now back to the brothel. What are your plans for the girls?”





I lean forward, scrubbing my face. "I need to find packs for them. I can absorb a lot of them, but it will take a toll on my resources here. I don't have enough housing for all of them unless I double everyone up."

"I can take some of them. I'll ask the other Alphas, the ones that don't condone visiting the brothels, at least. The ones that frequent that establishment may not be a good place for these girls. Too many memories."

"I agree, and it would be too easy for them to get put back into a position where they were being mistreated."

"Any idea how many women we're talking about?" he asks me.

"If I had to guess, I'd say roughly 50, but I also would have said there were no children there, so who knows."

"I can't believe I never realized what a disgusting piece of shit that guy is," he says, growling.

I smile at him.





"What?" he asks, half smiling, half grumpy.

"I like this side of you. I've never seen it before. Being mated brings out the Alpha in you."

"She's everything, and I won't take that for granted this time. And you may as well know, I intend to get her pregnant, so I'll be even more protective of her. I'm an older man, I'd like to retire before I die. My mate is young. I want to spend some good years with her once our pups are grown."

"You're talking like you're 50 years old. You can't be more than 35. You're not that old."

"Thirty-four, and still 15 years older than my mate. And by the time our pups are grown, and I must tell you, I plan to have as many as my pretty little mate will give me, I'll be pushing 60, so yeah, I want to start now."

"I don't plan to start having pups with Claire until this year is over. I don't want to leave our child parentless. I don't want to risk losing my child in a war either." I tell him.





He leans forward, his eyes intent on mine. "Know this, if you and Claire do have a pup, and something happens to both of you, Zoey and I will raise the child as our own. If you get her pregnant, and you die, I will look after both of them."

It's so much more than I could have or would have ever asked for. I'm overwhelmed. I stand yanking the man to his feet and giving him a huge bear hug.

I feel his body jerk at first, then he chuckles as he pats my back. "Of course, I expect the same of you if something were to happen to me."

I stand back, looking at this man, this incredible Alpha. I can't believe I ever thought he was weak.

"I will protect them and keep them safe. But nothing is going to happen to you. Franco and Eason have to get through me and my pack before they can get to you."

"Good, now that that's settled, I'm guessing my mate is planning to bring Jessie home





with us, since she's from her pack originally. You don't have any issues with that, do you?"

"None," I say, walking out of the office and seeing our mates and Jessie walking out of mine.

"Everything good?" I ask as Keegan moves to pull his mate to him. Goddess I can't wait until I can mate with Claire.

"Jessie is going home with Zoey and Keegan." Claire says/

"Good, it'll be nice to have another young one in our pack. Helps to keep me feeling young!" Keegan says smiling at her. I can see it's exactly what she needed to hear.

Claire comes and leans against me, and I wrap my arm around her.

"Can I say goodbye to Feena first?" Jessie asks.

"Of course, and you're welcome to come visit any time. We share a border, so you can come across and visit us safely that way."





Claire says.

We follow her as she runs into the kitchen to hug Feena.

Feena hands her a bag. "Here are some cookies. You can't leave without taking some with you. It was your idea after all."

After they say their goodbyes, we walk them out and I pull Keegan aside.

"Let me know where you and Zoey will be. I'll make sure our patrols give the place a wide berth, but I also want to make sure that no one can attack you while you're there."

"I appreciate that. I'll be by tomorrow. We can walk the grounds together, and I'll show you where it is. It is actually closer to our shared border."

"Well, that makes it easier to guard," I tell him. "I have one there too, it's where I'm planning to take Claire when the time comes. Will your Beta be taking over while you're out?"





“He will, I’ll bring him with me tomorrow to show him your lands and introduce you to him.”

Claire comes to stand beside me, and I wrap my arm around her again as we wave goodbye.

When they're gone, she looks up at me with so much love in her eyes.

I turn, wrapping both my arms around her.

“What’s that look?” I ask her, wishing I could feel her emotions.

“We’re doing so many good things together.”

“We have many more good things still left to do.” I say, leaning down to steal a kiss.

When we pull back she licks her lips. “Do you know, I think I’ll ask Feena to make a blueberry cobbler. I’m definitely craving my favorite flavor.”

I take her mouth in a passionate kiss that leaves of both breathless.





Chapter 123: Ticklish

Claire

I'm lost in Tereshan's taste, his scent, my need for him growing stronger by the day. When he pulls away from the kiss, I'm panting.

"When are we meeting with Dane and Jesiah?" I ask, feeling dizzy.

"Now sounds good to me," he says, rubbing his face against mine.

That makes me giggle. This big powerful man wants me as much as I want him.

When I open my eyes, I see that his are on me.

"I love that sound. I'd never heard it until recently and I hope that I hear it for the rest of my life."

He rubs his face down my neck, tickling me and making me squeal and giggle some more.





He nips at my neck, making me squirm as his face hair tickles me. He lifts me up, holding me to him as he continues his attack on my neck, growling low and only adding to the ticklish sensation.

When he finally releases me, I'm breathless from laughing and squealing. He leans in and gently kisses my neck that I know is red from his beard. When he looks up at me, his eyes are filled with love. Love for me.

I caress his face before leaning down to kiss him. He lets me lead, and I tentatively lick his lips asking for entrance that he immediately gives me. Then, I'm drowning in his blueberry taste all over again.

When he finally pulls away, my arms are wrapped tightly around him, holding him as close to me as he is holding me to him.

His eyes never leave mine. "Yes, Dane?"

My head whips to the left and sure enough, Dane is standing there, looking down at his feet, but he has a big, dopey smile on his face.





“Sorry to interrupt...”

“Are you, because you cleared your throat several times trying to get my attention,” Tereshan says.

My eyes go wide, and I look at Tereshan. I can feel heat flooding my cheeks. I was so caught up in the kiss that I didn't even hear Dane trying to get our attention. I can tell by Tereshan's smug look that he's proud that I was so consumed by him that I didn't hear anything else around us.

“Well, yes, you were obviously very busy, but I wanted to talk with you about Tucker and you had asked to speak with me and Jesiah.”

“You and Jesiah first.” He says, still not taking his eyes off me.

A slow smile spreads across my face. I can feel the love he has for me flowing through him. There is need and desire, yes, but there is also pride, commitment, and happiness.

I stroke his face as he continues to hold me





against him.

“We’ll meet you inside in a minute, Dane. I haven’t finished kissing my mate yet.” I say, and I watch the biggest smile I’ve ever seen spread across Tereshan’s face.

“Yes, Luna,” I hear Dane say, and I swear there’s a snicker in there, but I don’t care. I lean down and this time, I don’t hesitate. I take Tereshan’s mouth in the same possessive way he takes mine. I draw him in, deepening the kiss when I hear his possessive growl, feel the pleasure flowing through him at my initiation of our kiss, at my willingness to outwardly show everyone that I am claiming him as my mate.

When I pull back, I look at him.

“Mine.” I say softly.

“Yes, I am. And you are mine,” he says. “So, let’s go figure out when we can safely make it official. The sooner the better.”

I’m giggling again as he sets me on my feet and takes my hand to walk inside.





"Finally, I thought I was going to miss lunch," Dane says, leaning against the kitchen doorway.

"Oh please, I know very well you were taking advantage of this time to kiss Feena," making Dane jerk in surprise and Feena blush.

"I am the future Luna of this pack. What kind of Luna would I be if I hadn't caught you two kissing in the kitchen?"

"I...what...?" Feena says, stumbling over her words.

"Yeah, so, you might as well join us for this next conversation, Feena." I say, and now it's Tereshan's turn to snicker at Dane.

As we walk through the dining room, I watch as the omegas all call out to Tereshan, wanting his attention, his approval. I turn, guiding him through the throng of people that are eating lunch, giving him a chance to speak to them briefly as we make our way to his office.

I can feel pride swelling in him as his pack





members seek his acknowledgement and praise. When I feel the sliver of shame go through him, the memory of who he used to be, I take his hand, hoping to remind him that it's not who he is any longer.

"Alpha, Luna, I've finished cleaning your room already, is there anything else I can do for you?" Vivienne asks.

"In about 20 minutes, could you bring some of those delicious smelling cookies to my office?" Tereshan asks.

Vivienne's smile is huge. "Sure thing, Alpha."

"Oh and, your Luna has requested some blueberry cobbler. Can you make that happen?"

Vivienne looks at me and then back at Tereshan. "Blueberries are her favorite," she says in a stage whisper to Tereshan.

"That's what I've heard. If you have any other ideas, let me know."

Vivienne nods and bounces off.





Jacoby is next. "Alpha, when you get a chance, can you come see the library. It looks great. Lucy has been a big help."

"I'll come by today. I can't wait to see it."

And it continues as we walk through the dining room with omegas and some warriors wanting Tereshan's attention or to speak with him later.

When we step into the hallway to his office, the atmosphere in the dining room has changed. It's subtle, but everyone is happier, knowing that their Alpha accepts them and is proud of them.

"That was a good idea. I need to do that more often," he says as we join the others.

"It's not hard to make them happy. They just need a little encouragement and to know that their Alpha appreciates them."

When we walk in, Tereshan goes to sit behind his desk, pulling me into his lap and wrapping his arms around me.





"There's a lot for us to talk about, but the most important thing, at least in my mind, is getting on the same page about our mates. Jesiah, I know things with you and Lucy are new, and that's a good thing, and as much as I don't want to scheduling mating time, we need to be cognizant that all of us want to mark our mates which will put them into heat."

Feena looks down, having turned the color of a cooked lobster. Dane wraps his arm around her shoulders, pulling her to him and kissing the side of her head.

"Feena hasn't agreed to accept me as her mate yet," he says.

"When she does, I'm afraid it can't be spontaneous." I say, watching Feena. "Just like me and Tereshan, we will need to plan it out."

"Exactly," Tereshan says. "If you didn't see Keegan and Zoey earlier, she is now marked, meaning that she'll be going into heat in the next week. I'll be meeting his Beta tomorrow





and seeing where they'll be staying. We'll work our patrols around them."

"Well, Lucy and I are nowhere near that point, so I'm not sure I need to be a part of this conversation," Jesiah says.

"You know, if you truly are serious about taking her as a mate, you should consider having her mark you. It seems to have worked for Zoey and it's worked for me. From my perspective, I have none of the risk and all of the benefit."

"Not all of it," Tereshan interrupts me. "She doesn't second guess how I feel, what the intentions are behind my words." He strokes his hands up and down my arms as he talks.

"When trust is the issue, letting her mark you could make all the difference in the world. But you have to remember that you carry the burden and the risk. If she marks you and then rejects you, it will devastate you. Think about it. But, if and when the time comes to mark her, we need to make sure that it's safe. Safe for the two of you and safe for the





pack.”

Tereshan sits back, pulling me against his chest. “Claire has agreed to let me mark her. I want to do that as soon as possible, but I also can’t be out of commission at the same time as Keegan or either of you. Franco and Eason will be planning an attack, and we need to be ready.

Dane looks at Jesiah and back at Tereshan. “Then we’d better start increasing omega training. Because if all three of us have to go out, it’s highly likely that we’ll be attacked when one of us is out of commission.”





Chapter 124: Weapons Training

Tereshan

After our discussion about the mate bonds and making a tentative plan for me to mark Claire after Zoey finishes her heat, Claire and Feena head out.

I walk Claire to the door, kissing her, more deeply than I normally would, but I want to keep this feeling between us going.

"I'll see you at weapons training."

"I'll be the little one that looks lost," she says, making me smile.

"You'll be great..." I hear Feena say as I close the door.

I return to my desk. "Okay, what's this about Tucker. Tell me he hasn't caused problems already."

"No, but I don't trust him," Jesiah says immediately.





I look at him. "If you did, I'd be concerned about you being my Gamma. I don't trust him either, that's why I sent him to you to get his assignments. Put him where we can keep eyes on him." I say.

"So you don't believe that issue with Claire was an accident either?" Dane asks.

"No, I think we all know that Tucker is a problem. I'm just not sure if he's a problem because he's an asshole or if he's a problem because he's working for Franco," I tell him.

"I have him running patrols right now. Currently, I've put him on the east side. If he is a mole, I don't want him learning how our patrols run around Keegan's pack," Jesiah says.

"Good idea. And Keegan's people are over there planting the flowers for the bee pollination now, right?" I ask.

"Yes, they started yesterday," Dane confirms.

"Good. Keep an eye on him. I gave him the option to leave, and I also told him that





aggression toward any member of this pack would not be tolerated. I'll be keeping an eye on him during warrior training."

"You think he'll hurt one of the omegas?"

"If given the chance, I know he will," I say.

"Alright, we'll keep an eye on him. We'll see you at weapons training," Dane says.

"How's that going, overall?" I ask.

"The omegas LOVE it!" Dane says, Jesiah nodding his head in agreement.

"Honestly, I love it too. It's fun and for them, it's manageable, easy."

"It's almost like, even though their bodies weren't meant to be warriors, that doesn't mean they weren't made to fight. Jacoby especially has really taken to it," Dane says.

Yeah, I remember him and that hammer.

"Hammer?"





"How'd you know?"

"Good guess," I say smiling.

I spend the next few hours getting paperwork done looking over my financials and wondering again how Franco has maxed his finances. He has money coming in from multiple sources.

I grab my computer and look up land development in my area. Nothing unusual pops up. Then I look up uses for a bulldozer. It's basically what Keegan said, they are used to move large amounts of dirt and earth. Along those same lines, I find excavators, graders and back hoes.

I sit back and think. Why would he need this equipment unless he's doing something on his pack lands. Even then, it should be costing him this much money. I pull up the list of pack lands. The actual borders as we know them aren't exactly the same as what is identified in land surveys. It depends on how much of the land is livable.

When I get frustrated, I call Eric again.





"Hey Alpha, I don't have anything for you yet," he answers.

"That's okay, I wanted to add another item to your list."

I hear paper shuffling. "What's that?"

"I want to know what Alpha Franco is doing with large equipment, things like bulldozers."

"Okay, I'll add it, but while I've got you on the phone, you should know that something shady is happening with that brothel."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, it should have been easy for me to get the information on what is owed on that property, but it's buried. Deep. I'm still digging and I'm like a wolf with a bone, so I'll find it, but I thought you should know."

"Would it help you to know that I've heard Franco has leveraged that brothel to the maximum and it isn't paying the bills?"

"Interesting." He's quiet a moment. "Do you





think he'd have gone to the human banks to get a loan? It's unusual for the wolves to mix with the humans, but if he were trying to keep this a secret, he may have gone that route."

"At this point, I wouldn't put anything past him," I say.

"I'll check it out. Anything else?"

"Not yet. I'll let you know if that changes."

"Talk soon."

I hang up and stand, still thinking about the possibility of Franco going to a human bank. The only reason to go to a human bank is if he's hiding something. Since I know he is, it would make sense. But having a human bank involved will get messy and make it hard for me to buy it out from him unless he defaults on the loan.

I walk to my room, changing for weapons training. 'Claire, where are you?'

'On the field with everyone else. You're late.'





I look at the clock. 'I'm on my way.'

When I get there, I see Feena working with a group of omegas and warriors showing them proper form and how to aim at the targets that are set up in front of them. As I watch, they all release their arrows. Some fall straight to the ground, some land part way to the target, some actually hit the target but not the center and one just gets tangled up in the bow and the person's fingers.

Instead of heading toward Claire, I turn to go watch Feena.

"Alpha, did you want to try?" she asks as I walk up.

I look around, finding the spare bows and arrows. "Sure," I say.

"Here Alpha, you can use my target. I'm not very good," Justin, the one who got tangled up says to me.

"You're fine, Justin, you just need to stop being afraid of getting smacked with the bow. If you followed my instructions, it won't hit





you like it did yesterday.”

I look at him. “You got hit by your own bow?”

“Yeah, it hurt,” he says, kicking the dirt.

“Why don’t you try with me, then. Show me the proper form that you’ve learned from Feena,” I say, coming to stand behind him.

I chose the largest bow and arrow left on the ground. It still feels too small for me, but it will do.

I stand behind Justin. “Okay, show me what to do,” I tell him.

His eyes are wide, but he gets into position and begins walking me through it. Feena guides him and therefore me to the proper posture, shoulders back, elbow up, breathe, before Justin says, “Now you release the arrow.”

“Show me.” I say and watch as he presses his lips together, a look of determination on his face. He doesn’t want to disappoint me.





He gets back into proper posture and this time, the arrow flies to the target, hitting the very edge.

"I did it!" He shouts, looking shocked. "I really did it!"

"Nice job, now let me see if I can do it."

"It's so easy Alpha, I know you can do it," he says still dancing around excitedly. I see Feena roll her eyes before I aim at the target and release. My arrow slams halfway through the target, eliciting a lot of ohhhs from my pack members. It wasn't dead center, but I hit it.

"Nice job, everyone, keep up the good work," I say, putting the bow and arrow back and smiling at the group as they chatter excitedly, ready to try again.

I turn to head over to meet up with Claire and my eyes connect with her grey-green ones. The proud smile on her face makes my heart feel light.

I walk to her, the rest of the world falling





away. I love when she looks at me like this, like she's proud of me, of the man I am, of the Alpha I've become. Her acceptance has become everything to me.

I step up to her, covering her hand as she reaches up to stroke my face.

"Well done, Alpha."





Chapter 125: Option

Feena

Alpha Tereshan coming over to encourage the group I'm working with today made all the difference in the world. Once he left, everyone tried harder, listened to my instructions and by then of training two of them had hit a bullseye.

I watch as they rush over to tell our Alpha and Luna what they did. The change in Alpha Tereshan and this pack is tremendous in a very short amount of time.

I watch a moment as Tereshan smiles and congratulates his omegas, telling them of others that did well during training and acknowledging their accomplishments. I see Claire tell the ones that are disappointed in themselves that she too needs more practice.

I smile, turning to collect up the bows and arrows to put them away. Now that the spare room is turning into a library, I'll have to ask





if we can make a weapons room or build a better storage area for them. The one we have is basically a moldy room on the side of the packhouse.

“Here, I’ll take those,” Dane says, coming over to assist me. He has a bag over his shoulder filled with knives, hatchets, and hammers.

I hand him the bows and arrows and grab a bag that we use to hold them, helping him slide them inside. He hooks that bag over his shoulder, taking my hand as we begin to walk to the makeshift storage room.

“So, I was thinking about what Alpha said earlier today,” Dane says as we head to the side of the packhouse.

“Which part?” I ask.

He stops, turning me to face him. “The part about you marking me until you’re ready to let me mark you.”

I’m shaking my head before he finishes.
“Dane...”





We've argued about this several times already. He deserves someone who can be a true mate to him. I don't know if I can ever be that for him.

"Listen to me," he says, cupping my face, "the only reason I accepted your rejection is because you begged me to. But I never wanted to reject you. I've only ever wanted you, Feena. You are my mate, regardless of the rejection."

"You know why I did that, Dane. There was no reason for both of us to suffer with Roman's abuse," I say.

It's true. I knew Dane was my mate. We'd both known since I turned 18. Maybe if I hadn't waited the first time to mark him, things would have been different. Or maybe not. Roman really didn't care who he hurt as long as he got what he wanted. According to Claire, he slept with Ivy knowing that Bryson could feel it in one of their previous lives, so why would he care if he raped me knowing my mate could feel it?

As soon as I had made the deal with Roman, I





had rejected Dane. It had taken him several days of feeling the pain of the abuse of the mate bond before he had finally agreed to accept my rejection. I had cried, begging him until he did. I didn't want him to feel that pain, not when it was a choice I made to protect the omegas.

What surprised me the most was that he never left my side, he never took another mate. He accepted my rejection, but he still cared for me as best he could.

Now, he wants me to be his mate, to accept him, to mark him.

We drop the weapons off into the storage room and he pulls me farther from the packhouse.

"Feena, there will never be anyone for me, but you. I stood by, helpless because there was nothing I could do while that monster took advantage of you. That killed me. But now, I'm a Beta, I can make a difference. You are the acting Beta female. Let's make it official. The pack is already changing so much under this new leadership. We have a





chance to make a better life together, to make a difference in this pack."

"Dane..."

"I know you're not ready to let me mark you. I know you're not anywhere near being ready for the intimacy that it will bring, but we can take our time, we can move slowly. I want to know, I need to know, that you want me as much as I want you. Luna said it helped her to feel Alpha's emotions. You would feel mine, you will know what I'm thinking and feeling, all the time."

"Dane, what if I can never..."

"Listen to me. You took the brunt of the pain before. You rejected me to protect me, basically forced me to reject you, to protect me. Now, I will take all the risk. If you never let me mark you, so be it. There will never, ever be anyone for me but you, Feena. You are the love of my life. You are all that I want, and if this is the only way that I can have you, then I'll take what I can get."

How did I ever deserve this man? This





amazing, incredible man.

"Okay," I sigh. "Okay, I'll mark you. We'll figure out a time..."

"Now! Right now," he says, taking my hand and pulling me into the forest.

"Dane, you can't be serious."

"Feena, I have no intention of giving you time to talk yourself out of this. I want your mark on me, and I want it now. You said yes, so unless you've already changed your mind, I want to do this now," he says, pulling me into the shadows of the forest, and pulling his shirt over his head before leaning against a tree.

I watch him as he lifts his neck, exposing his throat to me. Tears burn and threaten to fall as he watches me, begging me with his eyes to mark him, to give him what he's asking for.

This time, it's him begging me.

I step forward, running my hands over his chest, watching as his muscles quiver under





my touch. His hands come to rest gently on my hips, but otherwise, he holds perfectly still, waiting for me.

I run my nose over his collarbone, to the small dent in his neck before moving to his marking spot. My wolf is prowling in my head, anxious and ready to finally mark her mate. It's the most energy she's had since Roman began assaulting me daily.

Even after the rejection, Dane's scent of freshly baked banana bread didn't go away. It was fainter, more easily ignored, but it's still the scent that I adore. I lick his skin, tasting him, softening the skin where I will sink my canines.

"Feena..." my name is a wish, a prayer on his lips.

How can I not give this man the only thing he asks of me, the one thing that I can give him.

My mouth begins to water, and my canines extend, my wolf pushing me to mark him, make him ours. It isn't hard to fight her, to hold her back in her weakened state, but I let





her forward as I slowly, gently slide my canines into his skin. His blood enters my mouth and instantly the bond snaps into place, his love flowing into me.

Dane's hand comes to the back of head, holding me as I push my body against him, milking my venom into his neck, flooding his system with my scent, marking him as mine forever.

I hear his growl of pleasure, but I also smell the salt of tears. When I finally pull away, I lick the wound, healing it before looking up at him.

I wipe his eyes and kiss him softly.

"Thank you," he whispers, putting his forehead against mine.

"Thank you for making me yours."





Chapter 126: Too Big

Claire

Weapons training is a whole other level of training. I hadn't participated in the last timeline, relying on Tereshan's strength, so this time, I realize that there actually is some skill involved.

The hammer and the axe are too scary for me. If I had to, I could learn, but once Tereshan came over and begins teaching me how to throw knives, whether it was because this body had some memory of that, because Tereshan's a good teacher or just because I felt more comfortable with a weapon that was light enough that I could easily handle it, that ended up being the one I stayed with.

Tereshan had told me to keep working with the knives. He wants me to become lethal with them. If I didn't know what was coming, I would probably fight him a bit. But I do, and I know that this time, I have no intention of dying or letting my mate die. So, I'll





become a lethal killing machine.

'You'll have me too this time, Claire. I know I wasn't a help to you in the first timeline, but I will be this time. I'm getting stronger every day and I'll be ready to shift again tomorrow.'

'I'm not blaming you, Damara. You've been wonderful and I'm thankful that you are able to shift and are getting stronger, but if something happens and you can't fight or there are too many, or I need to protect Magnor, or any number of possibilities, I just want to be more than capable of defending us and our pack. Plus, it helped for the omegas to see that I'm not that skilled either. It encouraged them to keep trying.'

'Our mate was really good with them, wasn't he?'

'He was. Goddess, Damara, I had no idea that being mated to an Alpha could be this fantastic.'

'I did. Magnor was always fantastic.'

She begins purring loudly enough that





Tereshan's head whips up and he looks at me. We're currently in our bedroom getting ready for bed. His head tilts to the side as he walks to me.

"What's on your mind, Damara?"

I let her forward. We didn't have time for her to try and shift again today, and she didn't fuss about it, so I know she wasn't feeling up to it anyway, but now she's ready to spend time with her mate.

"My mate," she says, stroking our hands down his body.

I watch as Tereshan's eyes darken and Magnor pushes forward.

"You're always on my mind, mate," he says, stroking his face against ours.

He pulls back, looking at her. "Did you want to try and shift? If you think you can, we can shift and sleep in these bodies beside each other tonight."

'Claire?' she asks me.





'I would never keep you from Magnor. If you think you can, I'm okay with it,' I tell her.

"Yes, I'd like to try it. I want to sleep beside my mate."

"I would love that. Is Tereshan okay with us sleeping together?" Damara asks.

He smiles. "He says as long as he gets to sleep with his mate, he doesn't care what form she's in."

She strokes his face. "I never loved you before, Tereshan. Not in either of the other timelines, but I love you now. I love you as my mate and as my Alpha."

I watch Tereshan push forward. "I was never worthy of your love before, not like Magnor was. I'm working every day to be worthy of you and Claire."

"We see the changes in you, and we love you for them. Thank you for becoming the man you were meant to be."

He reaches down, kissing her and stroking





her hair. "You're going to try to shift?"

She nods.

"Do you feel strong enough to try it?"

"I want to try." She says.

He steps back, watching as we strip off our clothes.

"I see that look in your eye, Tereshan,"
Damara teases.

"My mate is the most beautiful woman I've ever laid eyes on, it's not my fault my body responds to her." He says.

She shakes her head and crouches down. The shift still takes longer than it should, but somewhere in the middle of it, we feel Magnor brushing against us, lending us his strength. It's the incentive she needs to push through the pain and when the shift is finally complete, she recover faster than she did the last time.

'That's good, my love. You did better this





time. It will only get easier.'

The two of them lay down together, piling on top of each other until they are comfortable before Damara falls into a deep sleep.

'Claire?' I hear Tereshan in my head.

'Yes?'

'Are you okay in there? Damara was exhausted.'

'I am too. After another long day, the shift was hard, but, while it hurt, it wasn't as painful as the last one.'

'Sleep, my love. We'll watch over you.'

'We need to make a plan to get the omegas shifting,' I say sleepily. 'They were so happy to have their wolves back in the last timeline.'

'We'll start with Feena, like you did. When she's ready, we'll know the others are ready.'

Magnor begins purring and I quickly follow Damara into sleep.





When I wake, I realize that at some point in the night, we shifted back and now I'm laying naked on Tereshan. I'm not sure that his hard body is any more comfortable than the tile floor, except it's warm and smells deliciously like blueberries.

I sit up, straddling him, realizing that he is hard underneath me. I look down and a cold sliver of fear runs through me. I remember the pain of how it felt having him push inside me last time.

"It will be different this time, I promise," he says, his hands sliding up to my hips.

My eyes flash to his. "It's too big, Tereshan, it won't fit." Even I can hear my heart thundering in my chest.

He sits up, looking me in the eyes.

"Hey, relax. Breathe, Claire. You were made for me, and I was made for you. I didn't handle it well our first time, I wasn't careful with you. It will be different this time, it already is. I've had my fingers inside you more than once, stretching you out. I won't





say it won't hurt. I understand that it always does the first time, but I'll do everything I can to make it as good for you as I can."

"It doesn't even fit in my hand, Tereshan. My hands are so much smaller than yours are."

"Baby, your entire body is small compared to mine. But the Moon Goddess didn't give us three chances to make this right for me not to fit. You were made for me. And this is why I want time before you go into heat to make sure your body is ready for me. Once you're in heat, you won't care if you tear.

Eventually, your scent will be so strong, that I won't care either. So, I need you to really understand what I'm saying and decide when you're ready."

"Could....could we try to make it fit before you mark me?"

"Little mate, I would if I thought I would be able to control myself or Magnor. But I will want you desperately. Even in the first timeline my canines came out and I wanted to mark you and I didn't know you then like I





know you now. I wouldn't want to risk it."

I look down at the head of the massive penis that is still so large it's terrifying.

"How about this, at the risk of sounding like I just want you to get me off, rather than stroking me from behind me where you can't see me, stand in front of me. Get used to my size so it's not so startling in your smaller body. You can touch me or not, whatever you're comfortable with. We have some time. I don't want you to fear me, any part of me."

I nod.

"Good. Okay sexy little mate let's get dressed for warrior training. Magnor said Damara is getting stronger, which means I can push you harder."

Wow, does he push me. Today, he begins striking out at me for real. He gave me warning, but he's really fast. To his credit, he has enough control that when he actually makes contact with me, it's gentle enough that he doesn't leave a mark. I'm not sure how he has that much control, I never did, but I





guess that's why he's an Alpha. He was meant to be in charge.

'We were too, as his Luna. He's just had years to learn where we've only had a year. We'll get better,' Damara says to me.

After the first hour, Tereshan calls a halt to our sparring and calls Lucy and Jesiah over. "Practice what you've learned and teach Lucy. Jesiah, you're with me."

Lucy and I begin sparring. I'm not as good as Tereshan, but Lucy isn't as good at sparring as I am, so it's a good combination for us. I realize that Tereshan did this on purpose. He's strengthening both of us, me and Lucy, by giving us an opportunity to spar together and as I watch, I realize he's making Jesiah stronger too, giving him pointers and working him much harder than he worked me.

When Dane calls an end to training, Tereshan comes over and kisses me. "You did well. Get some breakfast. I need my own training, so I'm going to stay and spar with Dane. I'll see you shortly."





“Okay,” I say and reach up on my tiptoes to kiss him before walking with Lucy to the packhouse. Jesiah apparently decided to stay and watch their sparring as well.

It’s late morning when I hear Tereshan in our mind link.

‘Claire, where are you?’

‘I’m in the library putting books away, why?’

‘Francine is at the borders. I need you to join me.’





Chapter 127: Francine. Again.

Tereshan

I need to make sure that I get my own sparring in. So, I told Dane to stay at the end of training. He's the strongest member of the pack now besides me and I need a challenge. I love sparring with Claire, but that's to make her stronger, and she's getting there, but I need to hone my skills and keep them sharp too.

I had worked with Jesiah, but I can tell that he's still growing from the warrior to the Gamma status in strength and speed.

Dane, however, is a smart fighter. He trained Claire in the last timeline and made her stronger. I taught her how to fight like an Alpha, he taught her how to fight and win. They are similar strategies, but Alphas are stronger, we can do more, push harder. Unless you're an Alpha, you wouldn't know that.





I bounce on my feet and give Dane the 'come on' gesture. "Let's see what you've got big guy."

I'm doing what Dane calls showboating, but for me, it's my energy level. I bounce because I have so much pent-up energy. Dane, on the other hand, is stoic, until he lashes out at you. And that's his strength, you never see it coming from him. He can go from zero to deadly in the blink of an eye.

We've been sparring for a while and Dane is holding his own. He gets hits in, and I've been getting mine in. Unlike when I'm with Claire, I don't hold back with Dane. I need him to move faster, if he's fighting an Alpha, so I fight him full on. I finally take him down, pinning him to the ground.

"Nice, good job, next time...." I stop mid-sentence, sniffing the air. I release him my hold, but my eyes don't leave his.

"Something you want to share, Beta?"

The bastard has the audacity to get a self-satisfied grin on his face before he pulls his





shirt aside to show us his new mate mark.

"What? When?" Jesiah asks.

"Last night. I thought about what you said yesterday, Alpha and I talked to Feena last night. When she said yes, I didn't give her a chance to change her mind."

"Congrats, man. Truly. But just remember, Claire and I are marking and mating first. Then you two can duke it out over who goes next," I tell him.

Jesiah looks thoughtful. "You just asked her, and she said yes?"

"Oh hell no. I groveled, argued her points until there was nothing left for her to argue and then when she finally gave in, I had her mark me right then."

"If you really want her, keep chipping away at her. Keep telling her you want her, you don't care about the risk to yourself, you just want her. Do the romantic thing, buy her flowers, hell, go find some of the quartz that I found and have a jewelry set made for her."





“What quartz?” Dane asks.

“Didn’t I tell you?”

“No,” they both say.

I tell them about it and how I have necklace and earrings being made for Claire.

“Actually, that reminds me, I want to take her back out to get another piece soon. Keegan’s scientist, or whatever he is, said there are all different colors of quartz. I want to have one made in every color we can find.”

“What color did you find?” Jesiah asks.

“Clear, white, something like that, I think. It’s hard to tell when it’s in its rock formation. Anyway, I dropped it off a couple of days ago to have it made. I’m hoping to hear from him in a few more days.”

“Where did you find it?” Dane asks.

“Claire and I followed the lake to one of its riverbeds, looking for reasons why Franco wants our pack. At the end of the riverbed, the water had some rust deposits and some





quartz. I'm still not sure if the rust is something in the water or something else. Claire was concerned about it, so I need to dig into that a bit deeper, to make sure that Franco isn't dumping anything into our water source. Although the lake is clear, so I don't think so. Maybe someone just dumped something near the end of the riverbed."

"I'll take Feena and check it out. I'd like to get a piece of quartz myself, if that's okay Alpha," Dane asks.

"Of course. You too, Jesiah. Feel free to go get a piece. There were quite a few of them and I know we have other riverbeds that I want to check out too."

"Why don't we do that then?" Dane asks.

"Kill two birds with one stone. Jesiah and I can take our mates to check out the different riverbeds that branch off the lake and we can search for quartz for our mates while we're there."

Jesiah agrees.

"Perfect. It's better to have more eyes anyway





and maybe you or your mates will have an idea on the rust, if you even find any," I say.

We've just turned to head inside when I get the mind link from the patrol. "Alpha Tereshan, Alpha Franco's daughter is at our borders, should I let her through?"

"No, I'll be there shortly. Keep her there," I say, immediately contacting Claire.

Franco's daughter shouldn't be here yet. It never happened this early on in the timeline, but her appearance always initiated the first battle.

I go to the library and collect Claire.

"It's too early for her to be here," she says, echoing my earlier concerns.

"I know. This means we have to delay our marking. I can't risk the pack, they aren't strong enough yet to fight and win without the two of us with them."

I stop, pulling her to look at me. "Listen to me, if this battle is going to happen soon,





you're not strong enough yet in this body to fight. We know in every timeline that Franco's men have broken into the same safe room. If this battle comes early, you are in the safe room. We need to make sure that particular safe room is stocked with weapons, and I need you to start training longer with the knives."

Thankfully, Claire doesn't argue with me. Instead, she smiles when I blow out a breath of relief at her compliance.

"I don't want our pack members to die either, Tereshan. And let's be honest, they survived in the last timeline because you were there. You aren't pulling me out of the fight, you're putting me in a different battle knowing I will make sure we win. I appreciate your confidence in me, and I won't let you or our pack down," she says.

"My sweet mate, you never have," she says.

When we get to the border, I can hear Francine ranting about now being allowed access to my pack lands.





I take Claire's hand as we walk up.

"Alpha Tereshan," she says and I watch her make note of me holding Claire's hand, "these goons wouldn't let me pass. I need to speak with you. It's urgent," Francine says.

This time, I do recognize the alligator tears for what they are, fake, manipulative drama.

"I'm afraid your father and I are not on good terms at the moment, so I asked my men to hold you here," I tell her.

"But that's why I'm here." She takes a step toward me, looking like she plans to reach out and touch me, but before I can say anything, Damara's growl rings out loud and clear.

"I suggest you keep your hands to yourself, Francine. If there's something you need to discuss, feel free to discuss it in front of my mate," I tell her.

Her teeth clamp together and just like Claire said last time, the tears dry up as quickly as they started.





"I was hoping to speak to you in private, Alpha.

"That's not going to happen, Francine. So, if that's all..." I turn, intending to leave.

"Please, Alpha, my father's a monster. He wants to put me in the brothel," she cries.

That's new. Of course, so is Claire and I going to the brothel. However, I can't look past the possibility that Franco is so maxed out financially that he's willing to sell his daughter. I mean, she's here and she fucked me like a champ in the first timeline to get intel from me. So, why wouldn't he?

"What did he say?" Claire asks her.

"What?" Francine frowns, looking at Claire.

"Your father. You said he wants to put you in the brothel. What did he say?"

"He said....he said it was time to earn my keep," she says. It's the words that he's used with all of the girls. I'm on the verge of letting her in, when Claire squeezes my hand,





stopping me.

Claire smiles at her.

“‘Earn your keep’. That’s an interesting term. What do you think he meant?” Claire asks. I have no idea where she’s going with this, but I know one thing. My mate knew Francine was lying from the very beginning. If she thinks Francine is lying now, I’m not going to interrupt.

“He meant I had to get on my back and spread my legs you moron, what do you think it means,” Francine snaps. Her disrespect has Magnor coming forward.

“Watch your tone with my Luna,” he snarls, pushing his aura out, easily making her submit. Geez, is she even an Alpha female? Magnor had a harder time getting Roman to submit.

“So, you’re telling me that you’re not here to try and find Ivy’s missing money? The money that she stole from Tereshan and was planning to use once she became Franco’s Luna?” Claire asks.





Son of a fucking bitch! That's why Dane had such a hard time getting her off the pack lands in the last timeline.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Francine says and even I can tell she's lying now.

"Well, you can tell your father that we've found the money and it's back where it belongs, in our pockets."

"You fucking bitch!" Francine screams before flying at Claire, her claws extended.





Chapter 128: Them or Us

Tereshan

The moment Francine leaped at Claire, I grabbed her by the throat, holding her in the air. She begins slashing at my arms and kicking at me, still trying to get to my mate.

Magnor's roar of fury is deafening. Instantly, my patrols drop to their knees, their throats exposed. Francine goes still in my hand and Magnor pulls her face within an inch of mine.

"Give me one reason why I don't kill you for going after my mate," he snarls in her face.

She whimpers but doesn't answer.

"What about Holden?" Claire asks and I see Francine's eyes go wide.

"He's your mate, right? And yet, he suffers with your infidelity. Tell me, did you ever bother to reject him, or do you just prefer to lead him along, tormenting him? Or maybe





he falls for the big, fake tears you drop at a moment's notice." Claire asks.

So, Franco's Beta wasn't just in love with Francine, he was her mate. No wonder he dropped everything to come get her in the last timeline. It's disturbing, because it's so much like what Bryson did with Ivy. He was willing to give up everything for a mate that didn't love him, and now it seems that Holden did too.

'So, Roman killed Holden, Francine's mate, then took Francine as his mate in the last timeline, but really, he wanted Ivy. Francine just ensured that no one questioned his validity as Alpha, since she was Franco's daughter. Is that what you're thinking?' I ask Claire through the mind link.

'Yes. This whole thing is so convoluted. What do we do here? Holden won't know that Francine attacked me, but if we let her go, there is a possibility that she'll fight against us. She did in the last timeline,' Claire says.

'I'm guessing Roman ordered her to, as her





Alpha. She's no fighter.'

'No, she isn't. She's a sneaky manipulator, a spy.'

"The battle coming, no matter what we do. So, the question is, do we care if Francine dies?" I ask Claire out loud.

Claire looks at me and I see the Alpha that she was for a year pushing forward. The Alpha that had to make hard decisions and the Alpha who wanted to do everything right but in the end, it still didn't save us.

"If it's a choice between her or us, I choose us," she says, knowing that she's sentencing Francine to death.

Francine begins thrashing in my hand again.

"So be it," I say, extending my claws and ripping her throat out.

She drops to the ground, dead. I look at my patrols.

"Put her body as far down the road from our





pack lands as is safe, then get back here. War is coming and it's coming soon. I'll let Dane know that we'll be tripling our patrols."

I shake my hand, trying to get Francine's blood off of me. The wounds she inflicted already healing.

I look over at Claire. I can smell her tears. I take her chin in my clean hand and tilt her head to mine.

"There was no other way."

"I know. I know you're right. I just hate it."

"Believe it or not, I don't like it either, but it's like you said. If the choice is them or us, we're surviving."

"Alpha, do you want us to let Beta Dane know?"

"No, I'll tell him," I say, taking Claire's hand and beginning to walk back to the packhouse.

"I think I'll call Holden anyway. He was an honorable Beta, or at least, I think he was. He





should know that I killed her for threatening you. He probably doesn't even know that she's here."

When we get back, I call Dane into my office and tell him about what happened as I wash my hands. I tell him to triple the patrols here and at Keegan's. "We need to get those spotters up at Keegan's and we should consider it here as well."

"Yes, Alpha."

"Do we have any woodworkers in our pack that you know of?"

"We have a few. I'll get them to start making those ASAP."

"Order the wood, I don't want to put pack members at risk by sending them off the pack lands at the moment."

When I come out, Claire is waiting for me. I sit in my chair, pulling her into my lap. I dial Franco's main pack number and an unknown voice answers.





"I need to speak to Beta Holden."

"I'm sorry, our Beta is unavailable at the moment. Can I take a message?"

"Tell him Alpha Tereshan is on the phone and I know what happened to his mate."

I hear a gasp and then the phone being set down. It's quiet for a long time and then I hear a snarl before the phone is picked up.

"What did you do?" he snarls into the phone.

"I protected my mate. The same thing you would have done if my mate had attacked yours. I don't know how you've tolerated her infidelity for so long, but I've instructed my pack members to leave her body outside my pack lands. I wanted to let you know, in case you wanted to come pick it up."

"Is this a trick? You kill my mate and then lure me to your pack lands to kill me too?"

"She came to me, she wanted a private audience with me, even after seeing me with my mate. My mate confronted her about her





reasons for being here and she attacked her. I didn't start this Beta Holden, but I did end it. At least her part of it. You are welcome to come get her body, or it will be left for the scavengers. That is your choice."

"I'll be there in an hour."

"I'll have my patrols keep an eye on her body to make sure no animals get to her before you get here."

I hang up and run my fingers through my hair, gripping on to it.

My mate's sweet hands come to my face.

"Hey, you did the right thing. And we learned something very important."

"Oh yeah," I say, pulling her against me, wrapping my arms around her and burying my face in her neck, breathing in her sweet lemon scent.

"What's that?" I ask, my voice muffled against her skin.

"Now we know that the money Ivy stole is





still here on our pack lands. We just have to find it.”





Chapter 129: Battle

Claire

I have a hard time sleeping over the next few days. I feel like I'm waiting for the battle to begin. We get the wood that Dane ordered, and they begin to build the lookouts. This gives the omegas in our pack and in Keegan's pack the ability to be up in the trees and watch over the pack lands, letting them be a part of protecting the pack.

I train hard to get better at throwing knives. Whether it's my determination or if I have a predilection for knife throwing, I become adept at throwing them very quickly. Beside me in weapons training, Jacoby becomes proficient in not only throwing hammers but also hatchets. He's dead on, over and over.

Vivienne and Elise are like me, they prefer the knives, since they are smaller and easier to handle. Both of them are getting better, but they aren't as proficient as I am.





Zoey goes into heat several days after Tereshan killed Francine. She and Keegan move to the house set aside for that purpose. It makes me want to be marked by Tereshan even more, but he and I agreed that we need to wait until the first attack happens. Everything is happening much too quickly in this timeline.

Keegan's pack members plant our flowers so the bees can make the honey that we want specifically for our pack. He also plants the berry plants that we will need for our triple berry jam.

Now, I feel like we're just waiting to be attacked. At night, Tereshan tries to take my mind off of the upcoming battle. He has found all sorts of ways to relieve my stress, exploring my body to his heart's content, making sure he knows exactly where and how I like to be touched. He's very attentive and takes his time, trying different ways of touching me to see which ones are the most effective. Honestly, they all feel fantastic.

I have been working to overcome my fear of his size as well. I started like he suggested,





by standing in front of him. It was different stroking him in this position because I only knew one way from when I was in his body. But after seeing how much time he took with me, learning how to stroke my body in every way I liked, I was determined to do the same for him.

He has been very patient with me, although he says I'm a fucking master at edging. When I finally asked him what he meant, I felt bad, but only for a moment. When I tuned in to his emotions, I realized that while he may not like the unintentional teasing, the orgasms he gets when he finally does come are really good.

Then, of course, there was the day that I decided to try something new. I remembered in the first timeline the woman who was in his bedroom, going down on him while I was setting up dinner. He had been moaning loudly and seemed to really enjoy it. So, one night, while I was stroking him, I had leaned down and taken him in my mouth.

His body had jerked, and he had grabbed the back of my head by the hair pulling me off of





him as he came all over his stomach.

“Fuck Claire!”

“I...I’m sorry.”

He held onto my hair, his eyes closed, his body still jerking, while his dick spit the thick, white liquid all over his stomach.

“Baby, you can’t do that without telling me first. Fuck, I just blew my load so hard I would have choked you.”

He pulls me up to him, tucking me against his side. “Don’t ever apologize for putting your mouth on me, I just wasn’t prepared. When you’ve got me that riled up, it doesn’t take much to push me over the edge. And fuck if your mouth doesn’t feel better than anything I’ve ever felt, other than the one and only time I’ve been inside you. But other than that, nothing has ever felt that fucking good.”

I had enjoyed his reaction so much, that I had started to try taking him in my mouth more often. He is so big that, at first, I couldn’t do it long before my jaw started to ache. But





over time, and with his guidance, I found ways to continue to bring him pleasure without making my mouth hurt. And the first time he came in my mouth, I thought I would never get enough of his blueberry taste. He has told me many times that I taste delicious, and he can't get enough. After that first time, I felt the same way.

Now, he calls me his greedy little mate because I suck on him until I get what I want, that delicious blueberry taste, shooting all over my tongue. Because he wants to taste me, he has introduced me to what he calls the 69 position. I lay on top of him with my legs straddling his face. He gets his lemony flavor and I get my blueberry delight all at the same time. Being the competitive Alpha that he is, Tereshan tries to make me come before I make him come. Sometimes it works, but not always. I'm a competitive woman too, and this is a fun game.

It's nearly three weeks before the battle finally comes to us. As before, it's in the morning, right after breakfast. The howls of alarm go up and Tereshan grabs me.





“Get to the safe room. You know which one. Make sure Jacoby is there with you. Go, and take care of my mate,” he says slamming his mouth on mine before ripping himself away from me.

I turn, looking around me.

“Feena! Get to the safe room, take Vivienne and the rest of the kitchen omegas with you.”

I turn looking around. “Jacoby, you’re with me, we need to open the safe room here!”

I begin guiding everyone to a safe room, making sure that they are getting inside. We can hear the fighting outside. I can feel Tereshan’s anger and ferocity as he tears through the intruders.

Once I see that everyone is safely in a room, the doors closed and locked, I begin moving toward the safe room that was attacked in both of the last two timelines. Just as I reach the door, the windows in the back of the packhouse shatter and seven werewolves push their way inside.





I race into the safe room, Jacoby holding it open for me. As soon as I'm inside, he slams the door shut and we hear the wolves slamming their bodies against the door, trying to break it open.

I turn, seeing Elise and several others in the room, their eyes wide with fear.

"Get your weapons. Get ready. They will break the door, but we will fight. We will make our Alpha proud of us! This is what we have trained for!"

"Yes, Luna." They say and I see that Jacoby has a belt with multiple weapons attached to it.

"Nice! Where did you get that?" I ask as I carefully put knives into the waistband of my pants.

"Alpha had it made for me. He said he knew I'd be a great warrior."

"Well, Alpha Tereshan was right and now is your chance to prove it," I say as the door begins to give.





I look at the group. I can see the fear in their eyes, smell it in the room, but I know that we can win. I just need to be the leader that gives them the strength and courage to do it.

“No one dies today, do you hear me?”

There’s a lot of mumbled, ‘yes Luna’.

“I said, NO ONE DIES TODAY!” I shout as the door gives and one of Franco’s warriors pushes his way into the opening.

I don’t hesitate. I throw my knife and it hits him dead in the eye. I turn quickly to look at the group.

“No one!”

“YES LUNA!” they say and as the next head pokes through, a hammer goes whizzing past me, slamming into the head of the man who was trying to push through.

The door comes blasting off his hinges, slamming against the side wall and two wolves come rushing in. I throw another knife as two more fly at the wolves, finding





their mark. One goes down, but the other stays on his feet. An axe comes spinning by my head, finding its mark with a sickening thunk and the fourth wolf goes down.

Two of the last three men shift and race into the small space to attack us, but they are the ones that are in the crowded spot, struggling to get to us. We have space, and freedom to move and so our weapons fly taking all of them out.

When the last of them falls to the ground, I check them to ensure that they are dead before poking my head out of the safe room. When I see it's clear, I turn back.

"Are you okay to stay here? I don't know if any more will come, but if so, you have your weapons. You fight."

"Luna, where are you going?" Jacoby asks me.

"I'm going to find Tereshan," I say, leaping over the dead bodies and grabbing my knives.

In the last timeline, I only survived because





Tereshan came to help me. Now, I need to make sure that my mate doesn't need my help.

