

## Chapter 181: Hope

Tereshan

Weston invited Keegan and I to his ranked member ceremony. Because Claire is getting farther along in her pregnancy and our son is large, I didn't want to take her, but she insisted.

Keegan actually presided over the ceremony while Claire and I acted as witnesses. Zoey is too close to her delivery date, and she stayed home.

The packhouse and the pack lands look considerably different than when I had last seen them. The packhouse looks bright and airy, the pack lands have been cleaned up and the fencing all taken down. It still has a long way to go, but Weston and Vivienne are doing a really good job here.

At dinner, Vivienne and Claire chatted about everything that Vivienne has been doing all week. I'm not surprised, Vivienne always had a good heart, but the pack has already fallen in love with their Luna. You can see it in every interaction they have with her. Just like with Claire, the pack is drawn to her, not only needing her love and support, but also her acceptance, and she generously gives herself to every one of her pack members.

The same is true of Weston. He carries himself like an Alpha, but he makes time to speak to all of his pack members. The pack is needy, desperately wanting his attention, guidance and acceptance. They have been without true leadership for far too long and a pack doesn't work well under those conditions. Weston remained patient, kind and caring when

speaking to all of his pack members. I noticed that Holden and even Jacoby are in similar situations where the pack is constantly seeking their support.

Jacoby found his mate. She was in this pack. It's made me think once again about all the changes and differences that are occurring in this timeline. So many people have found their mates, found the love that I have with Claire. None of that would have been possible if not for Magnor and Damara making the choices that they made, the choice to be with their mate.

A week after Weston's ranked member ceremony, Weston, Keegan, Eric and I meet in my pack to go over the contract for the new arrangements of land, food and work. We had talked about it a bit last week, but it was a celebration and that pack seriously needed something to celebrate.

Today, we are sitting around the table in my office. Eric has brought all of the paperwork that we need to finalize the contract, and we look over the land, deciding the best way to divide it up.

"If we split the distance between our packs, Tereshan, you could take the northeast portion including the hut and mining machines, I could take the northwest portion including the mountains, and then Keegan, your lands could extend straight north," Weston says as we look over the map of the landscape.

"I took time to walk the land a bit over the past week. This area is good for farming, and it would be easy for me to extend the farms that I already have to the new border in these areas," Keegan says, showing us the area he is talking about on the map.

"You could take some of this extra land to set up a place to continue doing the phytomining. That way it's not too close to your packhouse and away from where you process the food. We could set up a roadway or even use one of the tunnels to get the harvested plants to you," I tell him.

"And that reminds me, we need to talk about your phytomining before I leave."

Weston raises an eyebrow. "Good news for Alpha Tereshan, I hope."

"Very good news," he says, smiling at me before we turn back to the map.

"We'll need to be careful at first. I like that two of Keegan's borders will be protected by ours," I say, "but Roman and Eason don't know about this change in borders yet."

"I can send the changes to them and every other pack," Eric says.

"So, you found Roman?" Keegan asks.

"Yes, he's in Eason's pack, like we suspected. Technically, my spies haven't seen him, but they've seen Ivy," I say.

"With them, it's better to be safe. I'm thankful to have at least part of my lands bordering those of my allies. I think my pack is the most at risk of being attacked," Weston says."

"I'm not so sure about that, but we're all at risk. The three of us have a lot that Eason and Roman will want to get their hands on. I suggest that we continue to run the central border, making sure no one slips past our new border patrols while they get used to the new area and new scents in the

area. We also need to make sure that our packs meet and know each other. Also, based on the times when I've done that with Keegan, you can expect that some of the pack members will find their mates, so anticipate some pack shuffling as well," I say.

"Yes, we saw that already with Jacoby," Weston says smiling. "That was a really good thing. The pack needed something more than me and Holden telling them that things would be better. They saw it as a sign that their new Gamma was mated to one of our pack members. Which also reminds me, I could use some help building mating houses. We have the supplies. Vivienne insisted on using the money that we found in the mating house to purchase what we needed. She said it was a sign that it was meant to be. However, I could use some hands to help build the homes around our pack," Weston says.

"We've got people, and when you're ready, I've got work. Keegan has the alluvial mining system set up and now, with the extension of our borders, we can expand that, which will give me even more opportunity to hire people."

"I'm ready. The people I have who can build are not the same as those that would do well mining. Maybe we should have an alliance gathering, or something similar. We could set it up at the point where our three packs join and let our pack members all meet each other. If they are going to be patrolling near each other and working together it would be a good chance to have nearly everyone meet," Weston says.

"And a good opportunity to have them meet their mates early on so we can adjust," I say, just as Keegan's phone rings.

"Alpha Keegan," he answers.

A moment later he's shooting to his feet.

"I'm on my way," he says, racing for the door.

"What is it? Are you under attack?" I ask him.

He turns to me. "Zoey's in labor!"

"Keegan!" I say, seeing the terror in his eyes.

"I have to go," he says.

"I'm coming with you. You need to stay calm. Zoey isn't your first mate. She is strong, she and your daughter will be fine," I tell him, looking over my shoulder at Weston and Eric.

"We'll see ourselves out," Eric says.

"Let me know when we can celebrate your daughter's birth," Weston says as we race out of the packhouse.

I send Claire a mind link, letting her know that Zoey is in labor.

"I'll get Jesiah to bring me. You go with Keegan," she says.

Keegan leaps off the back porch, shifting and racing toward his pack lands. Magnor shifts, following closely behind him.

We follow Dainen, Keegan's wolf, to the pack hospital.

"Where's my mate?" I hear Zoey snarling as we race inside.

Keegan shifts quickly, running to where he heard Zoey.

"I'm here, love. I'm here," he says as he rushes into her room.

Someone gives me a pair of shorts to put on and I sit, waiting until Claire and Jesiah arrive. She brought me some clothes,

so I change then we sit. I pull Claire into my lap, stroking her growing stomach.

"We need to get you in to see the doctor too," I tell her. My son is getting so large that I can almost tell which part of his body I'm rubbing when I stroke her stomach.

Finally, hours later, Keegan comes out of the room, a smile on his face and happy tears streaking down his cheeks.

"Everyone, meet my daughter, Asha."