

Tereshan

Over the next several weeks, things get into a routine. While I still like being close to Claire and Feena, I'm not as wary as I was of Roman. Claire is keeping him busy, having him help Bryson with the new patrols that include Alpha Keegan's lands. He grumbled about it, but he did it.

It didn't take long for news of the alliance to spread and for Alpha Franco to express his displeasure at the alliance between Keegan and Claire. I was in the office when he called.

"Alpha Tereshan." Claire answered the phone. She looked at me. I know the look. It was hard to remember to say our fake names in the beginning, but it's getting harder to remember those aren't our real names. People call Claire's name so much that I turn now when someone calls out for me, without thinking about it. I've noticed that, unlike before, Claire no longer turns when her name is called.

"Hello Alpha Franco, what can I do for you?" She asks and I come to her desk. She pats her thigh for me to sit on. It's so similar to what I used to do to her that I don't question it too much. Especially when Magnor practically pushes me into her lap.

She puts the phone on speaker and puts a finger to her mouth telling me to be quiet.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing, Tereshan?" Alpha Franco's voice snarls through the line.

"I'm not sure I understand what you mean, Alpha. Can you be more specific?" Claire says and the taunt in her voice is loud and clear.

"You don't want me as your enemy, Tereshan." He snarls again.

"I'm still not sure what we're talking about here, Franco." She stresses his name, dropping the Alpha and her respectful tone just as he has.

"Your alliance with Alpha Keegan. How dare you?"

"How dare I enter an alliance with another pack that will help my pack? I don't know, Franco, it seems like good business sense to me." She tells him.

"He's not going to be able to provide me with the food I need if he's supporting your pack with his food source."

"Actually, my alliance with Alpha Keegan won't impact your food source. It will only divert my pack's purchasing from you to him. He will continue to provide you with food for your stores, and you won't

need as much now that my pack won't be buying from you."

"You cut me out, you fucking bastard."

"I made a decision that was in the best interest of MY pack, Alpha. You've made multiple attempts to undermine me and my pack. I know about Ivy, I know about Heath, and I'm sure there are others. So you can take your self-righteous attitude and shove it up your ass. This isn't about you losing money. This is about you losing the tenuous finger holds that you had on my pack. I won't allow you to hurt my pack and I certainly won't allow you to take it away from me." Claire snarls back at him.

I look at her while she's focused on the call. She's changed over the last few weeks. She's stronger, more confident. The changes in the pack have been significant. The omegas are much happier, and it shows in all aspects of the packhouse. The areas aren't just clean now, they are decorated with fresh flowers and small decorations. Food is presented in more artistic ways as the omegas begin to show their talents in ways they never did before.

I rejected her before because I thought she was weak. And, she was, in the physical sense. This body has taken a lot longer to get into shape than I thought it would. It's a testament to her inner strength that she's

continued to spar with Dane every morning, learning how to fight and keeping her Alpha's body strong and lean.

"You will regret this, Tereshan." He says.

"Come after me or my pack again, Franco and it's you who will regret their decision." She snarls before disconnecting the call.

"You know he'll come for you?" I say to her.

"Yeah, I know. I just hope I'm ready when he does." She says looking down at me. "We don't want a repeat of last time."

"No, we don't."

She taps my thigh, letting me know that I should get down, but I turn to her instead.

"You know, Dane is a great instructor, but he isn't going to teach you my fighting moves."

She looks at me. "What do you mean?"

"I have signature moves, let's call them, that I use in a fight."

"Isn't it a bad idea to use the same moves? Then people can counteract them."

"In theory, it's a bad idea. But, in that body, I'm the strongest Alpha out there. They'd have to be stronger than me to overpower me in my signature moves."

"Are you offering to teach me, Tereshan?" She asks me, obviously expecting me to say no.

"Yes, actually, I am. For a price."

I had painted the base boards for her and earned the money to give Vivienne a book on towel origami. She had thrown her arms around me and hugged me, crying, like I'd given her the best gift she'd ever received. Sadly, it probably was, and that's on me. I wasn't a good Alpha to my omegas.

So, I started looking around and seeing that there are others that I could help. Some don't know how to read at all and Claire has brought in tutors for them. It's a slow process, but they are working hard at it. I thought it would be nice to get them some fun books to read.

Then, there are the ones that want to learn to cook new things, but we have no cookbooks, no way for them to learn. I thought it would be nice to get some new cookbooks too. The entire pack would benefit from that.

"And what price is that, Tereshan? You know I can't switch us back. Even if I knew how, I wouldn't do it."

She says. We've had this conversation many times since the swap.

"No, not that. I want to buy more books for the omegas."

She looks at me, frowning. "You want to buy books for the omegas in our pack?" She says slowly as if she's not sure she understood what I said.

"Yes. Actually, we should consider a library. There's that wasted space in the back of the packhouse. That room is never used. We could begin to collect books and then it would be a space where anyone could go to relax and read."

"Who are you and what have you done with Tereshan?" She says, looking at me.

I shrug. She's right, it's not how I used to act, but now I spend almost all day every day with these omegas. I realize how much they were lacking under my care.

"I've gotten to know them. I want to do better by our pack's omegas." I tell her.

"So, you'll teach me your signature moves and I'll pay you to what? Build a library?"

"Yes."

"Tereshan, I'll build the library. It's a great idea and a place where the omegas can go to get tutored that's out of the way."

"Okay, fine, then I'll use it to buy cookbooks for the kitchen staff. They want to learn to make different foods."

"They do?" She asks, surprised.

I smile. I've never known something about the omegas that she didn't know. "They do."

"And you want that to come from you?" She asks me.

"I need to make amends. I wasn't a good Alpha to them. They won't know why it's important to me, but I will and you will."

"Okay, Tereshan. When do you want to start training?"

"Let's do it at night when Roman goes to the brothel."

"Roman goes to a brothel?" She asks.

"Yeah, didn't you know? I'm surprised he hasn't asked you to go with him."

She shakes her head, looking thoughtful for a moment. "Who owns the brothel?"

"I don't know. I just went when I needed to release

some anger and I didn't want to take it out on the pack."

"You would go beat up those women?" She asks me horrified.

"I...." Now, knowing what it felt like to be mauled by Roman, I can't imagine there is any amount of money that would make those women want to be in that place.

"Why do women work in brothels?" I ask her instead.

"I don't know, but if I had to guess, I'd say it's because they don't have anywhere else to go."

It doesn't sit well with me. It's just one more thing that I did without really thinking about it, without realizing how my actions impacted others.

"So, what do you say, Alpha? You want to learn my signature moves?"

"Alright Tereshan. Meet me back here after dinner."

Claire

I begin training with Tereshan. At first, I thought he'd use it as a chance to make me feel insignificant or foolish, but instead, it feels like he really wants me to learn, to fight like he did when he was in this body.

He's pulled up a chair so he can match my height.

"Okay, so if I have you in a hold like this," he says, wrapping his arms around my neck in a choke hold, "how do you get out. Walk through the steps slowly."

Surprisingly, he's a great instructor. He's patient, taking time to ensure I know what to do and walking me through it as many times as needed. I follow the steps he's given me and pull his arms off my throat, pushing him aside which knocks him off the chair. He lands easily on his feet.

"Okay, now do it for real." He says, hopping back up on the chair.

I move in a faster rhythm, but still make sure to gently push him off the chair.

"You can't end gently, Claire. You have to thrust me away from you."

"Tereshan, if I do that, I'll hurt you. You aren't an opponent that is my height. I'm not throwing you to the ground, I'm throwing you off a chair. You're not an Alpha, you're an omega. I don't want to break your bones."

He huffs. "Fine. Maybe you can practice with Dane. But you need to complete the maneuver. You have to train your body and your mind so that when you're in battle, your body knows what to do even before your mind thinks it."

I grab a towel and wipe the sweat off my face and neck.

It's only been a few days and I already feel like I'm learning more fighting strategy. Tereshan is right. Dane knows how to train, he good at it, but Tereshan has actual fighting experience and, what he calls, his signature moves. I haven't tested them on Dane, but they seem effective.

Tereshan watches me a moment. "Can I ask you something?"

"Yes." I say, moving to the desk to look at what I have going tomorrow. Tereshan frequently asks me about why I've done this or that with the pack.

"What are you going to do with Ivy?" That gives me pause. Her 30 days are up tomorrow. Technically, I

should let her out and send her back to work, only she's an omega now. Feena and I have talked about it and Feena is concerned that she'll be nothing but a constant headache.

"That's a good question. Got any ideas?" I ask, not expecting any.

"You know if you leave her in the packhouse, she'll do something to undermine you."

I do. It's something that Feena and I have been talking about.

"Yes. I don't particularly want her in the offices or the bedrooms. There's no telling what she'll do. And if she really was working with Alpha Franco, I don't want her having access to any information that she could give to him."

"Can I make a suggestion?" He asks me.

I lean against the desk. "I'm all ears."

"Alpha Keegan is coming tomorrow to begin clearing the area to plant the flowers for the bee garden, right?"

"Bee garden. I like that. And yes, he is."

"Put her out there. Warn him, of course, about it, but

then she's working and well away from the packhouse."

"That's a great idea, Tereshan." I look at him thoughtfully for a moment. "You know, when YOU'RE not trying to undermine me, we actually work well together."

"Don't get used to it. I'm trying to protect the pack, not rebuild our mate bond. For the pack, I'm happy to work together."

"Duly noted." I say, turning away.

"There's blueberry cobbler for dessert downstairs. I'm going to grab some before going to bed." He tells me.

My lip curls. "I can't stand the smell of blueberries." I tell him.

He stops on his way out of the office, turning to me. "Haven't I caught you stealing blueberries before?"

"A blueberry and yes you have. That was before."

"Before what?" He asks frowning.

I look at him again, debating on whether I should give him this bit of information about me. I'm still not sure that I trust him. He hasn't done anything specifically to undermine me recently, but that doesn't mean that he

won't try when an opportunity presents itself.

He tilts his head and somehow, even on my innocent face, I can see the arrogant question on his.

"It's what you smell like to me. Blueberries. I used to love them. It was worth every punishment I ever got to swipe one here and there. But then, after last year....well," I shrug. "The smell makes me nauseous now. All it does is remind me of pain and weakness."

The arrogance has dropped off his face, replaced by something that looks suspiciously close to regret.

He nods, turning to leave the office. "You smell like lemon verbena to me. I don't have the negative connotation with it that you have with blueberries, so I still love the scent and taste of sugared lemons."

He turns back to me again. "For the record, nothing I've ever tasted, tasted as good as you did that one time that I had you."

Before I can respond, he's out the door, closing it behind him.

The next morning, Roman follows me down to Ivy's cell. "What's the play, Alpha?" He asks me.

"I want to ask her again if she is working for Alpha Franco. I would think, after a month that she would

have given him up.”

He shrugs. “He’s probably all she’s got left. She doesn’t have a mate any longer and since he’s an Alpha, she’s probably hoping that he’ll take her as his Luna now.”

“We need to be careful with her. I don’t want her having access to anything about pack business and I don’t trust her to clean the bedrooms without causing some sort of problem.”

He snorts. “I can’t see Ivy cleaning a bedroom. She wouldn’t even know what to do.”

Neither would you, Roman.

When we get there, I can see that Ivy is looking ragged. “Your 30 days are up, Ivy.”

“Good, then let me the fuck out of here.” She snarls, but since she’s no longer a Gamma, the sound is more pitiful than intimidating. I hear Warrior Turner snort behind me.

“Last chance to ‘fess up, Ivy.” Roman tells her.

“Confess to what? Wanting to be a Luna. Fine. I confess. But I love Bryson. I just want to talk to him.”

“You are forbidden from entering the ranked members side of the house, Ivy. You will not approach Gamma

Bryson. You will not speak to him unless he approaches you." I tell her.

"You can't do that! He's my mate!" She screams.

"Was your mate. Now, you're an omega and he's unmated. Leave him be, Ivy." Roman says and I feel his aura pushing out. I need to learn how to do that on command.

"So, you're not going to try to redeem yourself and tell us what you were doing with Alpha Franco to undermine our pack?" I ask her.

"I didn't do anything."

"Except sleep with him. You did that plenty of times, didn't you?" Roman snorts.

"Can I please just get a shower?"

I look at Roman who shrugs. I unlock the doors and escort her up the stairs. She begins walking toward the stairwell for the ranked members rooms.

"Ivy, where are you going?" I ask her.

"To my room, to shower."

"Are you stupid, Ivy? Alpha just told you that you weren't to go on that side of the packhouse." Roman says.

"But my room is over there." She points in the general direction of her room with Bryson.

"No, your room USED to be over there. Now, you're in the omega's hallway." I say as Feena walks up.

"Come along, Ivy. I'll show you to your room." Feena says to her.

I watch as Ivy's chest heaves with anger and frustration. Then I catch the scent of salt and I know she's fighting tears. She grits her teeth, does her best to toss her oily, matted hair and walks past me following Feena.

I had given Feena the instructions on where she would be working, letting her know that she could start today after she showered and got some real food in her.

All day, I fretted about her getting into something, or causing problems. I checked in with Feena multiple times making sure someone had eyes on her.

I needn't have worried. The next day, she was gone. She snuck out of the pack overnight.

When I reach out through the pack link, I realized that she has disowned the pack. Ivy is now a rogue.

Tereshan

Magnor and I have been going out running with Damara and Claire several times a week. She doesn't always have time, but to her credit, she makes time for that. Often, she'll order dinner in her office for the two of us to eat after our training and afterward we'll go for a run with Damara.

Magnor loves his time with his mate. He can never get enough of her. I have to admit, I don't know what she would have been like as an omega, but Damara fits into Magnor's skin and body easily, commanding others with her presence.

'She would have been an incredible mate, an incredible Luna if you hadn't been so arrogant.' Magnor says. He still hasn't forgiven me for rejecting her. Over time, I can see that he was right. My mate isn't as weak as I thought she was. And most of her weakness was caused directly by me.

In contrast, Magnor has only gotten stronger since Claire's initial rejection. Every time we spend time with her, he's a bit stronger. Now that we're eating and training, I've been able to put some weight on Claire's body. She's getting some muscle tone too and all of that is making Magnor stronger as well.

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We meet Claire out in the forest. She's already shifted and Magnor immediately pushes forward, moving to his mate and running his hands over the fur on her face, then rubbing his body down her side, just like he would if he were in wolf form.

"Hello, Magnor." Damara's voice comes flitting into our mind as she turns her head to watch him.

"Hello, my love." Magnor says out loud to her.

She licks his face, causing Magnor to laugh, which comes out in a giggle. A cute giggle. I remember that sound. That sweet sound that she would make when Magnor was running with her through the forest. I frown, I don't

remember that sound ever coming from her any other time.

"Why would it? You did nothing to make our mate happy. Her only happiness was when she was with me." Magnor snaps at me.

"Magnor, I want you to try to shift again today." Damara says, interrupting his scathing remarks to me. She's been pushing this more often. She wants to see him shift.

I can feel his resistance. Every time he can't shift, he feels like he's failed her.

"Try. For me." She says gently, as if she can feel his resistance as well.

He sighs and I know he'll try. He wants to run as much as she wants him to. But more than that, he wants to make her proud of him.

"Come on, buddy. We can do this." I encourage him. I really have been doing what I can to make him stronger. I want to know that the damage that I did to Claire's body isn't permanent, that she could shift if ever our

places switch back. I can at least give her that, give her and Damara that.

He strips and gets on all fours. I pull back, letting him take over, silently encouraging him. I feel Damara come up beside us, rubbing her body against his, encouraging him in her way.

And then I feel it, a single snap of bone as his body starts shifting. It's agonizing and we've only just about caught our breath as the second bone snaps, then another and another.

I don't know how long it takes for Magnor to shift, it feels like hours as every bone individually breaks and re-shifts in his body.

Damara never leaves our side, purring and encouraging Magnor as he pants and whimpers through the change. When it's done, we lay there, exhausted and unable to move.

"You did so well!" Damara says, nuzzling Magnor.

"You're so beautiful. I forgot how beautiful you

are." I hear Claire's voice, the awe and sadness clear.

'Magnor, can you move? I want to see Damara's form.'

'I need another minute. I'm not sure I've ever felt anything that painful before.'

'Yeah, that was way worse than our first shift and that's supposed to be the worst of it. Do you think it was because of the rejection that it hurt so badly?'

'That and just her general lack of nutrition and exercise over the years, most likely.'

"You know, Claire," I say while we wait for Magnor to collect himself, "it might be a good idea to try to get all the omegas to shift. We're all getting stronger, and it would help them and their wolves if they were able to shift. But I would suggest that you go with them, help them as their Alpha."

"I'll talk to Dane. Maybe we can start with someone like Feena."

"Maybe not Feena." I say, thinking about her abuse from Roman.

"Why? She's a strong woman."

"She is, but she went through a lot based on what you told me. Her body may need more time to get strong." I say.

I hear both Damara and Claire snort at that. "You still haven't realized how incredible she is, have you?" Claire says.

Whatever my retort was going to be, dies as Magnor begins to struggle to his feet. Damara is instantly there, giving him something to lean on as he gets to his feet. When he does, he shakes out his fur and looks around.

'Why is everything so big?' He asks.

Damara chuffs out loud. 'It's not big, Magnor, you're just smaller. My wolf form isn't nearly as big as yours.' She says and I can see that she's right. Even just looking at Magnor's form, Damara's wolf only comes to his shoulder.

'Do you think you can walk?' She asks Magnor.

'Yes.' He says confidently, although I can tell he's not at all confident that he is strong enough to walk. However, once he begins taking the steps, I can feel his excitement.

He begins moving faster and before I know it, he's jogging at a decent pace. He can't do much more than that, this body is still too weak for heavy running, but he lifts his head to the sky and howls his happiness at being back in his wolf form.

We get to the lake on our pack lands and I'm thankful that the moon is out tonight. Magnor walks to the water's edge, and I get my first look at Damara's form. I suck in air. She's breathtaking.

Her coloring is gorgeous, her fur the same strawberry blond as Claire's hair, her eyes a darker green than Claire's.

'You're so beautiful.' I say, not realizing I said it through the mind link.

'Thank you.' Damara says, and the same sadness is in her voice.

Magnor turns, rubbing his face against hers.

'I'm okay. It's just been a very long time since I've seen my wolf form.'

Magnor licks her face, grooming her now that he can. We lay beside the lake until Damara finally says we have to return.

'It's late. We need to get back. You, in particular, have to be up early.' Claire says.

We walk back to the edge of the forest where we left our clothes.

'Ready buddy?'

Magnor takes a deep breath, reaching up once more to lick Damara's face before I begin to pull on my human form. It doesn't take as long to shift back, but it's still very painful.

When the shift is complete, I lie on the ground panting.

I feel Claire grab my clothes, putting them over my body before lifting me up in her arms.

"Wow, I don't weigh anything to you, do I?" She says quietly as she carries me into the packhouse. The lights are dim as everyone has gone to bed for the night. Everyone except Feena.

She comes rushing out in a bathrobe, her hair in curlers. "Alpha, what happened?"

I lift my head looking at her. "I shifted."

Feena's hand flies to her mouth and tears well in her eyes. She looks up at Claire.

"You're next, Feena."

Claire

I met with Feena and Dane and discussed the omegas shifting to their wolves. We had come up with a plan on how to determine who would be eligible to participate in the shift.

Feena was first. Dane helped me and we were able to get her to shift. She struggled as much as Tereshan had in my body, so I know it will be difficult for all of them. Tereshan and Feena were the strongest of the group of omegas, at least mentally.

I had a meeting with the omegas, Feena and Dane, letting them know that I wanted to try to help them shift, but not until they and their wolves thought they were ready. We set up a schedule for the omegas to sign up if they wanted to try to shift and then Feena, Dane and I meet to discuss if they are strong enough or if we'd like to work more on the strength and diet before we try.

Vivienne and Jacoby had both signed up and were approved. I was surprised when Tereshan asked to join in Vivienne's shift. But she wanted him, or rather me there, so I allowed it. I had Feena there as well to help.

Both of them took hours to shift, but in the end, either Tereshan or Feena had taken them for their first walk around the pack lands in their wolf form. It is becoming a goal for all of the omegas to be able to shift. And once they have shifted with me, they are eligible to begin shifting on their own. Feena decided on a buddy system, to make sure that no one had any problems, and no one was alone in the pack lands, just in case something happened.

The atmosphere in the pack has changed considerably. During breakfast, there is laughter and I watch as some of the warriors have started to eat with the omegas. The segregation in our pack is going away. Sometimes, I even see the warriors helping the omegas learn to read, whether here at mealtimes or in the library that we've started to put together.

Feena thought that was a great idea and put Tereshan in charge of it. He loves being able to make the pack better and being a part of something good, something positive for the pack.

After he cleans my office in the morning, he spends the afternoons helping to clean and set up the space for the library. It's interesting to watch him. I'm not sure he realizes that he's changing, changing for the better in my opinion.

I usually go to see how he's doing and how the library is coming along before I grab him for dinner and our evening training. I've settled into a routine. It's busy, it's chaotic, but it's good.

Another new change that surprised me were the mates that the omegas found from Alpha Keegan's pack. When he sent his people over to set up the fields for the berries and the bee garden, as Tereshan calls it, several omegas from his pack met their mates in mine. What was most exciting for me was that in each

case, the omegas argued over which pack to live in. My pack is no longer the place that is hated by omegas. Now, it is becoming the place where omegas want to stay, want to have their families.

Those thoughts carry me to the library to check on Tereshan's work. I walk in, noting the changes from yesterday. I smile, seeing him on his hands and knees, his upper body tucked into some bookcase as he cleans.

"That's a ripe ass, right there." Roman says, coming to stand beside me. I'm guessing he mistook my smile for the lascivious one he has on his face. Whereas mine was more appreciating that Tereshan is finally learning the value of manual labor.

"What's up, Roman?" I ask and I see Tereshan quickly pull himself out of the bookcase turning to look at us. I nod my head at him, letting him know I'm here to get him for dinner and he should finish up.

Roman turns to me. "I know you're not going

to the brothel any longer, although I still don't understand why, since it doesn't seem like you aren't getting fucked by anyone in the pack either." He stops as if I'm going to discuss my sex life, or lack thereof, with him.

I gesture for him to continue. He shrugs. "Just thought you might want to know, a certain ex-Gamma is now working there." He says, looking smug.

"Ivy is working at a brothel?" I ask, incredulous.

"When I asked her what she was doing there, she said Alpha Franco told her if she ever needed to leave our pack that he had a place for her. She assumed he meant as a ranked member, maybe even a Luna. Apparently, he meant at a place at a whore house."

He's been watching Tereshan during our discussion but now he turns back to me. "I guess that bee garden you're setting up with Keegan looks a whole lot better to her now, eh?"

I would assume so. I turn, watching as Tereshan finishes putting away the supplies and cleaning items he was using today. He comes over, watching Roman warily.

"Hey Claire, looking good. I've been watching you at warrior training. You're getting stronger. Keep up the good work." Roman says to him.

I see Tereshan flinch at the mention of Roman watching him. I wonder if he's irritated at his Beta taunting him. After having been on the other side of Roman's fake good behavior, it would be irritating to have to take his constant ridicule.

"Beta." Tereshan says, inclining his head in the briefest possible nod to show his respect.

"Keep up the good work." Roman says, smacking Tereshan's ass before turning and heading out. "See you later, Alpha." He says, waving his hand in the air as he goes.

"Ready?" I say, looking down at Tereshan who

is rubbing his backside.

"He's such an asshole." He says to me.

"He always was." I say as we walk to the kitchens to get our food.

Tereshan is quiet until we get closer to my office. "What did he want? Roman?" He asks, looking at me.

"He wanted to tell me that Ivy is now working at the brothel." I say, opening the door to the office.

Tereshan stops and looks at me. "You're joking!"

"Nope, he couldn't wait to tell me. Apparently, she ran to Franco, and he set her up there."

We move into the office and sit down to eat. He looks up at me. "You know what this means?"

"Yeah, we really need to know who owns that brothel."

He nods. "And I'm guessing it's Franco."

Tereshan

A couple of days later, Feena asks me to take a breakfast tray up to Claire's office. I think of it as her office now, it's where she spends most of her time anyway. She's a hard worker and the changes she's making are having a significant impact very quickly.

I knock before walking in, balancing the tray on my arm. I've gotten good at it. Feena gave me specific instructions when Claire and I first swapped places because I was dropping everything all the time. Now, it's become second nature.

"Hey, Claire." She says to me, coming to grab the tray from me.

"Thank you."

As I walk in, I see Alpha Keegan is here again. He and Claire meet frequently to discuss the status of the gardens, food, new ideas that

Keegan has. I think this alliance has given him the freedom to be even more creative and our pack is reaping the benefits of his food production.

“Ah, Claire, how are you this morning?” He asks. Alpha Keegan has always been nice to me and all of the omegas. I remember that even before the swap he was kind to Claire, but now, I see it in all of his interactions with our pack members as well as the ones that come here from his pack.

“Good morning, Alpha Keegan. What brings you here today?” I ask him.

“Well, your Alpha keeps stealing my omegas.” He says cheerfully.

Claire snorts, pouring coffee for him. I take the pot of coffee from her and finish making it. She nods her thanks before turning back to Keegan.

“It’s not my fault they prefer to live here, Keegan. I told you that Dane is willing to give

time to your pack to teach your omegas how to protect themselves. Or you could send them here and they could train with my omegas." She says, sitting down.

I hand a cup of coffee to her first, then hand Keegan's to him. He sighs as he sips. I can't help but smile.

"We all know you have a weakness for that Madagascar sugar you sell, Alpha." I tease him.

"I do at that, young lady." He says to me. I know Feena would have made sure that's the sugar we were using. It's the good stuff, but she always makes sure we have it for when Alpha Keegan is here.

"Let me ask you something, young lady." He says, leaning forward. In Claire's tiny body, I'm not much taller than he is while he's sitting.

"Would you like to come live in my pack?" He asks me. I frown, looking from Claire back to him.

"Why would I do that?" I ask him. This is my

pack, why would I leave it?

He sits back, laughing, as if I've just confirmed something for him. "As I expected. You can convince my omegas to come here, but I can't convince yours to do the same." He says.

"No offense, Alpha, but you didn't really offer me anything except a change of scenery." I say to him.

He looks at me thoughtfully for a moment, before smiling sadly. "Sometimes, that's all it takes, Claire. Sometimes omegas would give anything to get away from their environment, even risk going to a place where they know nothing about the pack or the Alpha."

I look up at Claire. I know that's how it was in my pack before she took over. All the omegas have said so. They hated it here and now, they don't want to leave.

"Well, we have it pretty good here, Alpha. I wouldn't want to leave." I tell him.

I begin cleaning while they go over the crops,

the progress of our gardens here and the next shipments for food.

After Claire walks him out, she comes in and looks at me.

"What?" I ask her.

She moves to sit behind her desk. "You surprised me, that's all."

"Because I said we have it good here? We do. I'd be a fool not to recognize that you've made some real positive changes in my pack, Claire."

"My pack." She says.

"Our pack." I say and I realize as I say it, I really like the way that sounds.

I look at her, ready to say more, but I see her eyes have gone unfocused. For someone that didn't have a strong wolf a few months ago, she's taken to mind linking very quickly. She really is a natural.

'She was supposed to be our mate for a reason,

dumbass.' Magnor says. He doesn't yell at me as much these days. It's almost as if being in Claire's body has helped us to reconnect after last year. It's been good to have him back on my side again.

'I'll always be on your side, as long as Claire and Damara are on your other side. It was only because of how you treated our mate that we were at odds.'

'Well, as much as I hate being an omega, it has been an eye-opening experience for me, that's for sure.' I tell him.

'Good.' He says. I'm about to ask what he means when Claire refocuses on me.

"Who's Francine?" She asks me and I stiffen.

"Alpha Franco's daughter, why?"

"She's here. She wants to see me."

I snort. "You mean she wants to fuck you, don't you?"

I watch as Claire's lip curls in disgust and I have to smile. But then my smile drops. Francine won't care about that. I know her, she'll do everything possible to get Claire, or rather me, into bed.

Real fear goes through me. I've just gotten Magnor strong enough to start shifting again. "Claire..."

She looks at me, frowning. "What? I'm not going to sleep with her, Tereshan."

I know my heart rate skips up. I only felt the pain of a cheating mate bond for a one night, but it was enough. Enough for me to know that I don't want to have to feel Francine kissing and touching Claire.

"She won't care. She won't even care that I'm here. She'll leap into your arms and kiss you. I...." I stop, looking down. "I know I have no right to ask you not to, but..."

In an instant, she's crossed the room and picked me up. I yip, surprised at the sudden

move.

“What are you doing?” I ask her.

“She can’t exactly jump into my lap and kiss me if you’re there, can she?” She says and goes to sit behind her desk, putting me in her lap.

“Try to look like you’re busy.”

I snort. “I know how to organize my desk, Claire.”

“Beg to differ, since I’ve cleaned it up twice now.” She says, just as there is a knock at the door. Before Claire can answer, Francine breezes into the room, tears streaming down her face.

However, the moment she sees me in Claire’s lap, she stops. Interestingly, so do the tears.

“Alpha Tereshan.”

“Hello, Francine. Have a seat. Did you want something to eat? Something to drink?”

She shakes her head no. "Thank you Feena, that will be all." Claire says, looking past Francine to where Feena is standing by the door.

Feena's eyes are on me in Claire's lap, a worried frown on her face.

'He's using me as a prop to keep Francine from leaping on him.' I tell her. 'He's not doing anything to me.'

She nods and steps back closing the door. Claire glances at me, knowing something just transpired between me and Feena before turning back to Francine.

"How can I help you, Francine." Francine's eyes are laser focused on me.

"Who is she?" She asks, pointing at me.

"One of my pack mates. Is that what you came here to discuss?"

"What? No." She says, looking back at Claire.

She stands and begins pacing, she shakes her hands at her sides and the tears start again.

"It's my father. I hate him."

"I can understand that, I'm not very fond of your father either." Claire says.

"I know and that's why I'm here." She says, leaning over the desk and then looking at me again. "Can we have some privacy?"

"Claire is helping me with paperwork today. I'm sure whatever you have to say can be said in front of her."

I see the snarl cross her face, so quickly as to almost be unnoticeable before the tears are back. "I just...I just need to do something, something to get back at him."

"Back at him for what?" Claire asks.

"What?" Francine turns, startled by the question.

"What did he do that you want to get back at

him?" Claire says more slowly, as if Francine is slow.

"Oh, he ummmmm....he won't let me live my life! I mean, I'm 18 now. I want to show him that I'm not a little girl anymore."

"And you thought that coming to see me would show him that you're all grown up now?" Claire asks, still in that slow way. Francine hasn't caught on yet, but I have.

She played me. This was all an act. I didn't care at the time because I wanted nothing more than to get back at Franco for shutting off my food supply. But now, watching from this perspective, it's so obvious.

Franco used his own daughter to set me up and give him an excuse to attack my pack, an excuse that no other pack leader would ever question.

Claire

Seriously, how dumb does this girl think I am?

'It worked on our mate.' Damara says.

'That's not saying much. Although I hope he's getting smarter now that he's an omega.' I tell her.

'It's good to have hope.' She says sarcastically.

"I was thinking." Francine says as she walks around the desk, looking at Tereshan a moment before reaching out and stroking a finger down the v-neck of the button-down shirt I have on.

Damara snorts in my head. 'I doubt she has a brain to think with.'

"Why don't you and I go to your room and I can show you just how grown up I am." She says.

I feel Tereshan tense up on my lap. I know what it feels like to be on the receiving end of a cheating mate bond. Even if I had any interest in being with this girl, which I don't, I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

"I'm busy, Francine. I'm an Alpha with a pack to run. I don't have time to try to make your father jealous because you're angry with him." I say.

"But it would be fun." She says pouting and biting her lower lip. Is that supposed to be sexy?

I frown, looking at Tereshan. He's frowning too. Good, maybe he's not thinking it's sexy, either.

On instinct, I take her hand and thrust it between my thighs. "Does it feel like I'm interested to you, Francine? Because I'm not."

I feel Tereshan flinch, but Francine's eyes go wide, and she snatches her hand back as if I burned her.

"You don't have to be an asshole about it." She says, tossing her hair.

I stand, lifting Tereshan off my lap and setting him down beside me before turning on her. I lean over her, letting Damara pour her Alpha aura all over her.

She yips, lifting her neck in submission to me.

"Why don't you run back to daddy and tell him that using his daughter to try and manipulate me is lower than I thought even he would stoop." I watch as her eyes widen.

"Tell him if he wants to whore out his daughter, he should use his whorehouse." I say, wondering if I'm right that he owns the place.

I see the anger flash in her eyes before her lip starts to tremble.

"Get off my pack lands and if you ever try to manipulate me again, you and your father will pay the consequence."

I stand up straight, watching her as she collects herself.

"Leave. NOW!" I bark and watch as she races out of my office.

'Dane, make sure Alpha Franco's daughter leaves our pack lands without doing anything to undermine the pack.' I mind link him.

'On it, Alpha.'

I turn and look at Tereshan. "Are you okay? I'm sorry about that, but I knew it would only be a momentary pain."

He nods. "How did you know?"

"That she was trying to manipulate me?"

He nods again.

"No offense, Tereshan, but it was obvious. Those were the worst fake tears I've ever seen."

"So, you were right. She was using me, giving

Franco an excuse to attack the pack.”

I think back to the seven omegas that we lost that day, their torn and shredded bodies, Vivienne’s included.

“Yeah.” I say sadly.

Tereshan frowns. “Who was in the safe room? Who was killed? I know them all now. They’re my friends, or as close to friends as I have.”

I give him the names, leaving Vivienne until the end.

“Vivienne.” He says sadly.

“Yeah.”

He sighs, turning back to the office. “I’ll get back to work.”

He’s taken two steps when he turns back to me.

“You should call Franco’s Beta.”

I frown. “Why?”

"He's in love with Francine. When I was fighting Franco the first time, his Beta attacked me, then shifted and told me to stay away from her. It was more than a normal Beta would do. Why would he care that I fucked his Alpha's daughter if he didn't have feelings for her!" He tells me.

I look at the phone then back at Tereshan. "What would I even say to him?"

"Tell him you wanted to give him the head's up. Tell him that she was here, and you sent her packing. It will also ensure that Franco can't attack for no reason."

"What's the Beta's name?" I ask, moving to the phone.

Tereshan thinks for a minute. "Holden. Beta Holden."

I find the number for Franco's pack and dial the main number, hoping Franco doesn't answer.

When someone does answer, I ask for Holden.

"Beta Holden." He says when he gets on the line.

"Beta, this is Alpha Tereshan."

He growls low.

"Why the fuck are you calling me?" He snarls.

I look up at Tereshan who gives me an encouraging nod.

"I wanted to give you a head's up, Beta. I thought you'd want to know."

"What's that?" He asks, sarcastically.

"Alpha Franco's daughter, Francine was here earlier today. She wanted me to have sex with her so she could piss off her father. I declined and sent her home."

There's a beat of silence. "Why do you think I'd care?" He asks. He's not snarling now. Tereshan was right.

"Just a hunch, Beta. I've given you the

information. It's up to you what you do with it."

Silence again before I hear him sigh. "Where is she now?"

I mind link Dane to see if she's off our lands.

'She just left out of the front gates.' He tells me. 'Good call to make sure she left. She was kicking and screaming the entire way. Now she's cursing out the gate guards.'

"She's at the front entrance of my pack lands, cursing out my guards." I tell Holden.

"I'll send someone to get her." He says and he sounds exhausted, like looking after Francine is taking everything out of him. It probably is.

"Thank you." I say, about to hang up.

"No Alpha, thank you." He says before the line goes dead.

That was unexpected.