

Tereshan

I hate feeling small and weak. I hate it. I hate that my Beta did this to me. I know he doesn't realize it's me, but he knew he was going against my wishes, and he went after what he thought was my mate.

I never truly realized the impact that I had as an Alpha over the omegas in my pack. I've seen it with Claire, how they adore her, practically falling over themselves to make her happy. It's something they never did before. With me, they were always scurrying out of my way, trying to get lost in the background and stay unnoticed. With her, all they want is to be seen, noticed, appreciated. And she makes sure that she does.

Now, as I lay curled in her arms, Damara purring at me, helping to calm me, I understand it better than I ever have before. As an Alpha, my strength, my protection means everything to the pack that depends on me to take care of them, to protect them. And that is most important to the omegas, the weakest members of the pack. But it's more than a show of strength, more than being a fighter. It's about being the strong arms that encircle them letting them know that they are safe, that you won't let anyone hurt them.

Claire understood this much better than I ever did, but I understand it now.

She strokes my hair, soothing and calming me until there is a knock at the door.

I flinch, not knowing who is here.

"It's just Dane and Feena. I've asked Feena to stay with you. Dane has brought two guards to stand outside your door. I need to go deal with Roman." Claire says.

"What are you going to do?" I ask her.

She looks at me. "What do you think I should do?" She asks me.

I want him dead, dead for what he did to me, dead for disobeying me, dead for raping the person he thought was my mate. But I also know that Claire isn't a fighter or a killer. It will hurt her to kill him. I know her now, understand her. She may be used to violence, but she doesn't condone it.

"You'll have to use your Alpha command to get him to confess. He won't otherwise. Then, demote him and banish him. Make sure you demote him first. He needs to lose his Beta status."

She tilts her head, stroking my hair. "I'm surprised you don't want me to kill him."

"Honestly, I do. I want him dead, but by my hands, not yours. I'm not strong enough in this body to kill him. And I don't want you to have to live with that."

Her eyes narrow on mine. "You're not at all the person I thought you were, do you know that?"

I laugh mirthlessly. "I'm not the person I used to be."

"You're stronger than you know, Tereshan. You will get

through this. Damara and I will be here for you every step of the way."

I nod as she gets off the bed. "I'm going to let Feena in and then I'm going to deal with Roman."

"Thank you, for believing me." I tell her, remembering Roman's words and knowing that if things had been different, I probably would have believed him over Claire.

"There was never a question in my mind, Tereshan."

She opens the door and Feena rushes in. I can see the tear stains in her cheeks, but to her credit, she refuses to cry in front of me. She forces a smile on her face.

"I brought you some food. Your favorite, lemon tarts." She says, setting them down beside me.

"Thanks, Feena."

I'm picking at the food, Feena is rubbing my back, not sure what to do for me when Claire opens the mind link to me.

"Beta Roman, you have been accused of raping the omega Claire." I hear her say.

"That's a lie. Where is the bitch! I would never go against you, Alpha, you know that." He says. And I know I would have believed him. When it came to a fight, he was always there for me, always had my back, but when it came to taking over this pack, all he did was help me destroy it.

Damara push forward in Claire's mind, and I feel a flicker in mine. Maybe Claire is right. Maybe she and

Damara can help Magnor find his way back. A large part of my fear is that I'm more alone than I've been since Magnor came to me when I was 10. Without him in my head, everything feels empty. I've been taking him for granted.

"Tell the truth, Beta. Did you rape the omega Claire?"
Damara's aura is really impressive. I can feel it, even through the mind link.

I hear Roman growl. He's fighting the command.

"Answer me!" Claire barks.

"Yes. Yes I slept with her, but she wanted it." He says, and I feel nausea roll through my gut. I would have believed that too. Will Claire?

"Really? She asked for you to force yourself into her body and tear her so badly that she needed stitches, Roman? Is that what she asked for?" Claire snarls.

I hear a gasp, Bryson maybe?

"I...I..."

I feel Damara's aura push out, stronger than I've ever felt before. I hear Roman yelp in pain.

"Yes, yes, I did it." He says hurriedly.

There's a beat of silence. I assume Claire, Dane and Bryson are looking at each other.

"I, Alpha Tereshan Colton, strip you Roman Dowry of your title as Beta and I banish you from this pack forever."

"NO! NO! You can't do that!" I hear Roman screaming, but even through the mind link, I can tell that his voice isn't as strong as it used to be.

"Get him off our pack lands, Dane."

"With pleasure, Alpha."

I hear Roman screaming and thrashing around and then more warriors come to help Dane pull him out of what I would guess is Claire's office.

"Did you hear all of that, Tereshan?" She asks me.

"Yes, thank you."

"It's done. He'll never hurt you again."

Two days later, I left the hospital.