

Chapter 23 - Denying the Alpha

FAITH'S point of view

"Wait," a loud, rough voice asks from just beyond the cave. My heart stills. I try to swallow that hard lump feeling in my throat. Don't panic, I warn myself. They don't know you here, and if you're quiet, they won't, I try to reason. But my pep talk does nothing in the way of calming my nerves. "Do you smell that?" the same voice questions aloud. I can hear his deep breaths as he tries to sniff me out. The fact that he's addressing someone is worrying. Add in the fact I had no way of knowing how many someone and it was terrifying. I couldn't take on anyone, let alone more than that.

Sapphire? What do we do now? I beg, she has to help me. I hope she can hear me. I hope she's saved enough energy to shift. Because I just may need her. I don't know what I'll do without her otherwise.

Just lay still. You have your scent covered. All we can do now is wait it out or hope Uncle Amelio shows up. She whispers back. I don't know why she's the one whispering; they can't hear her.

Well, duh, I snap back. I didn't plan on charging them or anything stupid. That would be suicide, and I haven't endured all that I have to just hand myself over to a bunch of dirty rogues.

I can scent at least three of them. All rogues. Her voice was confident.

Well, that's just great.

"Smells old", comments a harsh female voice.

"Should we check it out." a younger male voice asks.

Because of their voices, I am able to peg that there are two men and one woman. Sapphire is confident that they are rogues, and judging by the rancid meaty smell, I would say she is right on the money, so they probably are not the strongest fighters, even still, in my current condition, their chances were better than mine.

What do we do? I ask again. The panic was setting in now. I hated feeling so vulnerable. I need to be able to do something. Maybe I could outrun them.

Sssshhhh. Don't you dare!!! Just stay put, okay. Don't you dare move! She orders me firmly.

I can hear heavy footsteps approach the entrance of the cave and then stop. I hold my breath and fasten my eyes shut as tight as I can get them. Everything in me is screaming for me to run. It was hard because sapphire was right. We had no choice. We just had to wait. After what feels like a lifetime, the sound slowly moves away.

"I don't see anything. Let's go," the gruff voice orders them.

I don't dare make a sound. I strain my ears, and finally, I hear three sets of footsteps thud heavily across the earth. Judging by fading noises, they were moving away and fast. Once I was sure they could no longer hear me, I let out a shuddering breath as tears threatened to overwhelm me. That was far too close. Thank goddess, I was already in those damned leaves.

You are alright. You are alright. You're alright. I chanted to myself like a mantra. Only I don't know yet if I could believe it.

I hope that Amelio is alright. He's strong and capable, but still, there is only one of him and three of them.

"FAITH, FAITH" I hear his panicked cries for me as he rushes the cave. "Oh, goddess Amy will kill me." He mutters.

Answer him! Sapphire snaps at me. I can tell she is worried more than anything. I didn't mean to make him worry. I was just still a little shocked, is all.

"Amelio", I cried out in sheer relief as I sprung out from my leaf pile. He jumped a little in surprise but recovered quickly.

"I am so sorry, Faith. Are you alright?" He scoops me up into a cuddle. Finally, I feel safe. I sob a little into his chest, the shock and fear catching up with me. However, I don't allow myself to indulge in a breakdown. After all, nothing happened, and for that, I was fortunate.

"Here." He hands me a large dead rabbit

"Sorry, I could only get you the one, but you should eat quickly. We need to get on the move. We don't want to be out here after dark."

I didn't want to be out here now. How much further is waning crescent?" I asked. It has been years since I last visited and we had gone by car then.

He makes a quick sucking sound with his lips like he has to think about it. Who knows, maybe he did “Just under three hours if we push ourselves.” He nods.

“I can do that”, not that I had a choice.

“Alright, well, let’s quit wasting time, eat quickly, soon as you’re done, we leave.”

There was no way I was eating raw rabbit. I could stomach a lot of things but not that, so I let sapphire eat it. It wasn’t enough, but it would do.

We have rested, we have drunk as much water as our stomach could hold, and now that we have finally eaten, we are ready to run. I want to wash off a little in the river. The dirt I had covered myself in was incredibly itchy, and I was becoming aggressively uncomfortable. Still, I had already wasted enough time making Amelio stop to eat, so I sucked it up. Amy was probably getting worried because we were taking so long. Besides, if Amelio wasn’t going to complain, then neither was I. I could be as strong as any man.

I still wasn’t used to running in my wolf form. The attention to detail amazed me every time. How could she the splinters in the bark at this speed? I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to wrap my mind around it. I followed Amelio obediently as we zipped through the trees. For a short while, we had to run closer than I would have liked to the boundary of Riverstone. I prayed the entire time that we didn’t come across any of their pack members on patrol. Moon goddess must have been on our side because we passed without incident.

Do you think dads okay? I have been trying not to think about it since we left, but I couldn’t any longer. I needed to know if he was alive. I should have said something to Amelio. As soon we are at Waning, I’ll beg their alpha to send men for my family. I don’t care.

I don’t know. She whimpered sadly. She loved my dad as much as I did.

What about mom? Mom hadn’t appeared injured, but who knows how they are being treated. Luna Cassidy has been my mother’s closest friend since before I was born. Surely, she wouldn’t allow anything to happen to her because of me, would she? I mean, my mother was innocent, so she couldn’t legally do anything, could she.

I don’t know. Sapphire repeats herself.

I don’t want to feel anymore. Sapphires in charge right now, and I couldn’t communicate with Amelio or his wolf at all. I settle into the back of sapphires mind, and I sleep. It’s the only thing I can do right now anyway.