



Chapter 0483

"Whatever we do, we are running out of time. There is only two weeks until their birthday." Mateo walks to me and wraps me in the biggest bear hug that almost crushes my rib cage, but I couldn't care less. It is one of the best feelings in the world.

"We will figure this out Shorty, just keep fighting, never stop fighting. I'm pretty sure it's the only way any of us are going to survive this."

We say our goodbyes and finish running our patrols. I try to check in with Osiston and Nickolas. I get no response, but I feel like they got the message and they just can't respond. It doesn't feel like they are blocking me, but who knows. I hate not knowing what is going on outside the pack. It's like we are on an island and completely cut off from the outside world. Which makes no sense since our warrior links should span across any distance. 1

I need to figure out how to contact Elena, there are a lot of unanswered magical questions I have and I can't just keep using magic blindly. I'm lucky that all the guys and I have gotten were unexpected tattoos out of this protection spell. I know magic can be volatile if used incorrectly and I am not a born caster, so there has to be some limit to what I can or should be doing. It feels like a disrespect to the craft to just go about willy nilly casting when I don't know the expected

outcomes. She has a phone, but rarely uses it...or checks text messages apparently.

There are just too many obstacles right now and it is so frustrating. Jena and I head over to the training grounds. I am starting to feel like this never ending cycle might break me. We are all just going through the motions. Even training has lost its appeal, when it used to be my outlet. Lil saunters up to us.

"So, did we gain a club member? Nevermind. She does not hide her elevator eyes. The way you two look, either we did or we have ten new prisoners to question after a massive fight." She laughs at her own joke. 1

"You're an idiot." Jena smiles. "And, yes, we got our latest club member. Now I need some sleep. Let me know if you come up with anything."

We both nod and watch her walk away, but I notice a little more pep in her step.

Delta Kayle walks to the front of the training before we start and holds his hands up getting everyone's attention. 1

"So you all know we are going to do a mock trial, something the Alpha thinks would be fun for everyone who is stuck here while we wait for word on the Rogue King..."

What does he mean 'wait for word?' And there isn't really anything fun about trials. This is not Delta Kyle talking. I'm so tired of listening to puppets. I take a deep breath and let

it out slowly, but apparently not very quietly, because he looks right at me and pins me with a stare. But, it's not an angry or aggressive stare. He knows why I'm huffing and he can't talk to me through the mindlink either. Man, I really want to punch that b*tch in the face. It's not enough she's hijacking the whole pack, she's gotta take every single person I care about away from me?

"Like the last two years you will run through a series of obstacles and challenges. Unlike the last two years, participation is mandatory by all pack warriors. Participants in the lowest ten percent at the end of each trial will be eliminated until there is one final winner. Our visiting Elite warriors will be setting your challenges, and I would like to remind you that many of them are warriors who placed in the top three percent of the last two trials held in this pack. They will not go easy on you..." He looks at me again, this time I know he's trying to tell me something.

I'm half tempted to make everyone take up sign language with all this can't mindlink crap.

"Lil, he's trying to tell me something. What do you think it is?"

"It's shady that it's mandatory, that's going to make patrols really light, which is not a good idea right now but it's an elimination process, so people could intentionally suck to just get out in the first round and call it a day. It'll only be the lowest ten percent though" 1

"The elimination process is going to make the whole thing

take days, and what does he mean 'we won't go easy on them?' We aren't going to intentionally hurt them either. We are all tired and overworked as it is."

"Maybe that's it. Someone wants our reinforcements down. Not just weak from exhaustion, weak from fighting each other too."

"What, like working with the Rogue King? Why would anyone do that?"

"We know two people who, it appears, would do anything to gain power. Why not sell out if the promise was a whole ass pack in return?"

"There won't be a pack left to control!"

"That's the brilliance of the plan, because Kaley and her dad believe the lie that the Rogue King will follow through. It's what I'd do, get some stupid schlep to do the hard, tiring part. Weaken the strongest warriors and then swoop in and collect the prize."

"I hate it when you make sense, and I agree with your crazy ass. This is bad. How do we fix it?"

"One problem at a time, Midge. Let's save these boys of yours first. The lives of your future Alphas are more important. We can talk with the team about the trials later."

I nod. Just another f*cking problem. I never thought of myself as a vindictive person, but I have found myself



fantasizing about different ways to draw out tortures for Kaley and her dad. Starting with a silver laced whip.

The atmosphere around the training grounds is a mixture of interested talk and downright pissed off. No one is excited for these trials at all like they were two years ago when I participated. But, I understand. No one wants to be forced into competition. We aren't gladiators here for the crown's amusement... Oh, Sh*t!... Yes we f*cking are. I smack myself in the forehead and tell Lil my revelation.

We need all of the warriors on high alert. We also have to plan this stupid thing in a way that doesn't seriously injure anyone, but also makes it look legit to whoever might be watching from the shadows.

We walk back to the house fast, grab everyone and head out back to the firepit. I think we have gotten a little bold talking outside, but with the barriers up around our perimeter I feel safe and frankly I am slowly leaning into the world of 'I don't give a sh*t.' I also know that almost everyone here is a warrior. This is like being back on the compound with Stella and Jack in the kitchens. We have only essential Omegas still here, and by 'essential' I mean Packhouse Omegas. Everyone else is safe and out of Kaley's reach. I figure in one way or another we all signed up for this bullsh*t.