

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Chapter 16-20

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

The moment Raif caught Echo and began mating her, I knew where in trouble. That same light, the same warm give the same rapturous explosion of pleasure bladed through our bolt like it had when I had mated with Kennedy

After that, there was no controlling Raif He lost all restraint, griling engrossed in the excitement of the hunt and bliss of the mating. Echo had finally collapsed back at the overhang, before I could get Raif under control again.

Dammit, Raif

Quirin. 1.

I know he didn't mean to lose control anymore than I did, and yet, neither of us has any restraint when it comes to feeling the utter joy that being inside our mate brings us.

We watch as Echo shifts back to her human form. I take control of Raif's wolf body and walk over, sniffing her. I growl as I smell blood.

"This is why I said no more mating. Now that you and Echo have completed your bond, there is no reason to mate until we know we can control ourselves," I tell

him.

I know he doesn't like what I'm saying, but he doesn't like smelling the blood on Kennedy and Echo either, especially knowing that it was caused by us.

I pull the shift and collect our clothes, getting Kennedy dressed and pulling on my shorts before lifting her and carrying her back to the packhouse.

When I step out of the forest line, the pack members who are congregated outside stop to look at me.

"Alpha, is everything okay?" Kier asks, jogging up. He stops when he smells the blood on Kennedy.

"She's fine. Tired after Echo and Raif ran all evening."

"Right," he says, dragging out the word and giving me a look before stepping out of my way. The rest of the pack stares as I

them. When I get to the back of the packhouse I turn to the pack members who are silently watching me.

"You all must have heard Raif and Echo running through the pack lands. We're newly mated, our wolves completed their bond. She's not dead so you can stop staring at me as if I murdered your Luna," I growl, making all of them jump.

I spin on my heel and stride inside. The pack members in here quickly skirting out of my way.

'Over react much?' Raif asks.

'We made her bleed. Again. It's no wonder they think we killed her.'

When I get her back to our room, I carefully strip her down and start a bath. She's dirty and I want to wash off the blood before I put her to bed. I strip off my shorts once the water is warm and carefully sit in the tub with her in my lap. I get the soap and begin bathing her.

I've struggled so much with control, that I haven't taken the time to look over my mate's body. She's lean, as all wolves are, especially Alpha wolves who run a lot, but she's not as muscular as most warriors are. I rather like that her body is softer than others I've seen or been with. Her body fits mine perfectly, softening my hard, rough edges.

Are we all talking about yen plead buty Railsde

Trould be snarky with my well, bun what's the print? He knows as well as know myself

Two wind Beef Wellington, Itaif says I think sheet dinner tosight, how I never thought I'd like a slab of beef surrounded by puff pastry, but dam. It was good. I'd so been comprised when Kennerty feat me the bite of foor! It felt intimate in a way Tin untary detomed to forling. No one has ever fed ne before

Bever Our rough edges are too sharp for her softness. I don't think she ever be able to soften those hand lines. She'd only hurt berwolf i she tried. I tell him honestly.

Raif begins purring as he looks down at our mate. "Echo gave me a good run

You were running all out in the beginning, weren't you?' I ask him.

Yes, our little mate is fast,' he says proudly

But you're faster, I say.

I'm not sure I am faster. I just think I have more stamina than she does,' he says, and I realize he's right. If he were faster, he'd have at least caught up to her before she'd run full out for an hour. Of course, after he plowed into her like a fucking jackhammer when he caught her the first time, she'd been running injured. She'd gotten slower each time he caught her, allowing him to catch her more quickly until she'd finally collapsed, exhausted.

I'm frustrated all over again at my lack of restraint. I'm not the kind of man or Alpha who loses control. I always keep a tight rein on my emotions, but with Kennedy I don't seem to have any at all.

I get her out of the bath and dry her off before putting one of my shirts over her head and laying her in bed. I'd prefer to leave her naked but since I obviously have no self-control when it comes to my mate, I'd rather no risk temptation.

When I have her snuggled in bed, I go clean up the bathroom, quickly taking my own shower before crawling into bed and wrapping myself around my mate. I may not be willing to have sex with her, but I'm not willing to sleep without her. Last night when I'd finally fallen asleep, it had been the best sleep I ever remembering having in my life. And tonight is no different.

In the morning, I wake up without an alarm as I always do. I look at the clock and see that it's my usual 4:45am wake up. Just in time to get dressed and head down to warrior training.

"Wake up, Little Pup. Time for training," I say to her, kissing the side of her head and leaping out of bed to get dressed and brush my teeth.

"What?" she murmurs, rubbing her eyes and looking around as if confused about how she got here.

"Echo passed out at the overhang," I say, grabbing my shoes and sitting on the edge of the bed to put them on. "I brought you back and bathed you before putting you to bed. You missed sparring yesterday, but you can't miss every day. I've got to go. I'll see you down there."

"Quirin....." she begins. I lean down and kiss her before she can argue.

"No arguments. I have to go. Don't fall back to sleep. Training begins in fifteen minutes," I say, then head out.

I jog down the stairs and head out back seeing most of my warriors already here and starting to warm up.

At five, I start the warmup. She arrives late, staying in the back but at least she's here. It will be good for the pack to see her strength and that she's not dead. Raif rolls his eyes at that snarky thought.

Since I'm not sure how sore she might be, I decide to put her up against one of my warriors rather than Kier. Kier's an excellent fighter and he has a lot of restraint, but I want to wait and see just how good Kennedy is before I put him up against her.

All of my warriors have real-life fighting experience, unlike Kennedy, so I choose one of my younger warriors with less fighting experience to partner with her when

I divide everyone to groups.

"Kier, can you monitor the warriors. I've never seen

Kesar. I want to get an idea of how much training she's had."

"She's the daughter of an Alpha. Do you think that's a fair

ring for Cameron? He's not from a ranked family."

"He's had real fighting experience. She hasn't. If she's better than he is, I'll switch them out," I tell him.

"Kennedy," I call out to her and wave her over. "Kennedy, this is Cameron. Cameron, if you haven't met your Luna, this is Luna Kennedy," I say, introducing them.

"Hello," Kennedy says, and Cameron nods. I can tell he's nervous about sparring with her. What surprises me is that I can feel Kennedy's nervousness too. "Let's start slow. Kennedy you take defense, Cameron, offense. Ready? Go."

As soon as I call it, Cameron aggressively goes after Kennedy. She lightly blocks him and then falls backward, Cameron raises an arm to land a hit but I grab his arm, keeping him from touching Kennedy.

"Kennedy, Cameron's a good fighter. You don't need to worry about hurting him," I say, holding out my hand and helping her up. "I'll make sure he doesn't get too injured. Just focus on the fight," I tell her.

"Ready?" I say, waiting until Kennedy to get back in her defensive stance. "Go."

Once again, Cameron comes at her hard. This time she ducks away from his punch, but rather than getting a hit on him where he's wide open, she spins away. I start to get a bad feeling as I watch her and when Cameron goes at her hard again, nearly punching her in the gut, I grab his arm again, staring at Kennedy.

"Please tell me that your father, the Alpha of his pack, trained his daughter how to fight," I growl, my voice low. I'm working really hard to maintain control of my anger. How the fuck does an Alpha who grew up in a time of war not train his pups to fight?

"I hate fighting. I always have. After pup training, he let me spend my mornings in the pack hospital with my mother," she says defensively. I can't tell if she's defending her father or pleading with me to understand why she can't fight.

I close my eyes, working hard to get my anger under control. When I open my eyes, I see her watching me.

"That's it for today, Little Pup. Go back inside," I say, my barely controlled anger making my words harsh.

I'm not sure if it's my tone, or if she can feel my anger, but she looks like I slapped her. If I wasn't so angry, I'd try to talk to her about it. But instead, I watch her press her lips together tightly and turn, walking away.

"Find a new partner," I growl at Cameron. I stand there, watching where Kennedy went back into the packhouse.

"She doesn't know how to fight?" Kier asks quietly, coming to stand beside me.

"Apparently not."

"Shit, Alpha."

Yeah, this is definitely a pile of steaming hot shit. In a pack full fighters, I have an Alpha mate who doesn't even know how to defend herself.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Kennedy

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I've never been so embarrassed in my life. I cannot believe that Quirin called me a pup in front of his warriors. It was all I could do to not start crying right there in front of everyone. So instead, I did what he said. I turned around and walked back inside.

I had intended to go to our bedroom and let the tears come, knowing I have some time before he will be done with training, but as I walk in, Susie waves me over. "Luna. Luna, are you okay?" she asks.

I force my tears back. "Yes, thank you. What can I do for you?"

"Well, Alpha said we should come to you when we need to order food," she says.

"Of course. Why don't you show me where you keep your food and how you're managing the ordering system now."

We spend the next couple of hours going over everything. The system they're using is okay, but I prefer mine and after talking it over with them, they like my process as well. I also make sure that I tell every one of them something that I liked about their part of dinner last night.

"Alpha Quirin said that he loved your beef wellington, Susie," I say.

"He's never tried it before. I make it because it's my mate's favorite."

"Kelvin, right?" I ask.

"Yes, that's him."

We've just about finished up when I hear the warriors start coming in from training.

"I should let you get set up for breakfast. I'll check in with you later."

"Thanks, Luna," Susie and several other omegas say to me.

"Oh, Luna. I made you a breakfast sandwich. I wasn't sure if you were going to pack hospital again today," Christy says.

"I'm on my way over there right now," I say. I'm not ready to face the pack or Quirin at the moment. The hospital is where I feel comfortable, so that's where I'm going to go. I know I'll have to face them eventually, but I need to get past my hurt feelings first.

I take the sandwich, thanking Christy for making it. As I'm walking out, I hear some of the warriors talking quietly.

"She really doesn't know how to fight?" one warrior asks, and my heart drop into my stomach.

"A fucking Alpha who doesn't know how to fight. And we're supposed to accept her as our Luna?" a second warrior says.

"Do you think he knew before he accepted her?" a third warrior says.

"I doubt it. Why would he want the liability of a pup who can't fight," the first one says and they all snicker.

There's an angry growl. "Knock it off, all of you. Alpha has been very clear. You will accept his mate as your Luna, or you'll find

somewhere else to live." I recognize Beta Kier's angry voice.

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I duck out of the packhouse before I hear any more. As I walk to the pack hospital, the tears sting my eyes. I find a place off the road and duck out of sight, letting my tears fall. I've only been here a day and a half, and the warriors already have no respect for me. I understand that respect has to be earned, but now, they'll be forced to accept me, even if they don't respect me, or they'll lose their home.

Echo whines in my head. It's as important for her that the pack respects us as it is for me.

I can feel Quirin pushing against our mind link, probably wanting to know where I am. I keep it closed. I've had enough vulnerability for one day.

I dry my tears and head to the pack hospital. I decide to make a list of everything that we would need to bring this hospital back into the current day and age. We may not be able to afford all of the new machines that we have in my parents' pack, but we can at least get some things that would be important, such as an ultrasound machine and baby heart monitor. There's no reason these women should be losing their pups, at least not in the numbers that Deborah said they

were.

Since we don't have a computer system over here and I'm unwilling to go to the packhouse to see if there's one that I can use, I use my phone to look up the cost of what each item would be.

"Kennedy," Quirin's voice is soft, but it still startles me. I was so deep in my thoughts and making my list that I didn't even hear him coming up behind me.

"Hi, Quirin. What's up," I say, keeping things casual. I can already feel my throat tightening.

"The omegas said you didn't come back for lunch, and if I'm not mistaken, your breakfast is sitting on that shelf, uneaten," he says, looking past me.

I turn and see it sitting there. I'd forgotten all about it. I wouldn't have been able to swallow it down this morning anyway.

"Don't tell Christy. I don't want to hurt her feelings."

"You should come get something to eat," he says.

"I'm not hungry," I say. He opens his mouth to say something else and I shove my list into his hands.

"What's this?"

"It's a list of everything that I think we need for the hospital. It's a lot, so I've put asterisks by the items I think are most important."

He frowns, glancing at the list before handing it back to me. "I told you, just order what you need."

He barely even looked at it. All the work I put into this doesn't even matter to him. How can I order anything if I don't know what the pack can afford?

I take it and turn away from him, feeling the tears burning in my eyes again.

"Kennedy..." he pauses but I don't turn around.

"I'm sorry for speaking so harshly to you this morning. I was taken off guard. I was expecting you to be a strong fighter, not untrained."

"Well, now you know."

"You should have told me," he says.

"I tried to before you left this morning, but you said you had to go. I tried to mention it when we first arrived, but you started talking to your gate guard," I tell him.

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I feel his hands on my shoulders and the heat of his body seeping into my back. I can smell sweat on him and I wonder what he's been doing today.

"Will you come have dinner with me?" he asks.

"What time is it?"

"It's after six o'clock. When I finished afternoon warrior training and realized that you weren't back, I came looking for you."

I close my eyes and pull from years of watching my parents handle something difficult. The very last thing I want to do is walk into that dining hall with all those warriors and their judgmental looks.

"Of course," I say. Echo gives me her strength, knowing that this will be hard for me. But I'm their Luna and I'm an Alpha female. I'm not going to hide just because they have an issue with me. I'm not going anywhere. They're going to have to adjust just as much as I am.

I put the list of items on a shelf and throw the uneaten breakfast sandwich away. Then I walk back to the packhouse with Quirin. The volume of the warriors' voices lowers significantly as we walk in. I ignore that, looking over the food and asking one of the serving omegas what we're having and who made what. Once again, I take a little bit of everything and when I look and see an empty table, I'm ready to go sit there but Quirin nods in the direction of Beta Kier.

"I told Kier we'd sit with him tonight. I'd like the two of you to get to know each other."

"Alright," I say quietly. Quirin glances at me, a hint of a frown on his face, but he doesn't say anything as we walk to the table that doesn't look like it has enough room for two.

Beta Kier sees us coming and tells the others to move down. They do, but there isn't a lot of space and I end up sitting beside Beta Kier and across from Quirin.

"Hello everyone," I say as I sit.

"Hello, Luna," they murmur before going back to their conversation. It sounds like they're talking about their most recent battle with Alpha Jasper's pack.

"Luna, how are you settling in?" Beta Kier asks me.

"Very well, thank you, Beta," I say before someone farther down the table calls out to him, asking if he saw some large warrior during the battle.

"That guy! He was huge!" Beta Kier says, returning to the previous conversation.

I take a bite of the food, struggling to swallow it. I know I should try to engage in the conversation, but I don't know anything about fighting and they all know it, so I stay quiet.

"Hey, Little Pup, try this. It's delicious," Quirin says, holding out his fork with a bite of food on it.

It feels like the last straw for the day. My fork slides out of my hand, clattering against my plate. I'm pretty sure the entire room goes quiet, watching me. Quirin

is frowning at me like he's confused about my response.

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"I think I'm going to go for a run," I say, standing up and walking out the back of

the packhouse without looking back. I force myself

to walk to the tree line before stripping down and shifting. Then I let Echo take the lead, but I don't let her howl her sadness at Quirin once again disrespecting us in front of his warriors.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Quirin

GO

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I watch my mate leave the dining hall and packhouse, still holding the food in my hand. I'd noticed that she was unusually quiet, that my apology hadn't had the desired effect on her. I'd hoped that maybe joining in with the pack would bring her out a bit, but it seems to have had the opposite effect. It hasn't even been a week and already my darkness is invading her light.

I look at her plate and realize that she didn't eat. Again. She hasn't eaten all day and now she's out burning off energy. Angry, upset energy if I'm understanding the feelings I'm getting from her. When I'd opened the link through our bond this morning, she'd shut me out and she hasn't reopened that link. Now, all I have is my Alpha link to her. It's not as strong as the link through our mate bond but I don't like being shut off from her.

I open my link to the patrols, wondering where she's going.

"Alpha, is our Luna okay?" one of the omegas asks, coming over and looking at her plate still full of food.

"Can you keep that warm for her. If she's not back when I'm done, I'll take it upstairs with me."

"Yes, Alpha," she says, and takes Kennedy's plate.

'Geez! Who was that?' I hear a patrol say. I tune in, wondering who they are talking about.

'Shit, is that our Luna?' I hear another say.

'Fuck, she's fast!' another one says. I push into their minds and see my mate running full out, pulling away from my patrols who have increased their speed to try and keep up with her.

I feel pride in my mate. She may not be a fighter, but she's an Alpha and she's fast. I wonder if I can tap into that. I'd seen it briefly when she'd sparred with Cameron this morning, ducking under his jabs. She needs to learn how to defend herself, at least long enough to give herself the chance to get away, because once she's running, I'm not sure anyone could catch her.

'We need to work on her stamina, too,' Raif says, also worried about our mate's response to us. 'Do you think she's feeling this way because...because I lost control last night? Do you think she's angry with me?' he asks.

'I think she's angry at both of us, Raif. I'm just not exactly sure what she's angry about. We both lost control and not just when we were mating with her. I lost my temper this morning and I did it in front of the warriors.'

'We need to fix this. It's only been a couple of days. We can't destroy her beautiful light,' he says, whining in my head.

"Alpha?" Kier says. I turn and look at him, seeing that everyone at the table is watching me closely. I shake my head. I'm not saying anything. It's none of their damn business. Kier turns and gets the conversation going again, but I can still feel my warriors watching me.

Christy walks by again. "Christy, can you keep my food warm as well. I'm going to wait to eat with my mate."

"Sure thing, Alpha. She's really great," she says, picking up my plate. I turn and focus on her.

"She is, but what do you mean?"

Christy smiles. I'm not sure I've ever seen my omegas smile. Have they? I really don't know.

"She spent a couple of hours with us this morning going over the schedules and food ordering. She's got a great system and

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we're going to start using it," she says.

"Good. That's good." I say, just as I hear my patrols again.

'Shit, is she lapping us?'

'Are you fucking kidding me? She's already run the border and ught us again?'

Based on the level of energy and frustration emanating from my mate, I'd say she's going to be out there for a while.

Raif whines in my head again, wanting to join our mate.

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'Not tonight, Buddy. If she wants space from us, we need to give it to her. Let her burn off her frustration and then we can talk to her.'

I get up from the table, heading to my office. I keep the links open with my patrols and as much as I can with Kennedy. When I feel her wear herself out a little over an hour later, I go get the food that I had the omegas keep warm and I take it to our room. I stay focused on her, sensing that she's by the overhang. It's dark now and I'm glad that it's a safe part of the pack. If we're attacked, she'll have time to get back to the packhouse and a safe room.

413

up

I set the food down and wait for her It almost feels like she's resistant to return to me and the thought makes me ache. If she doesn't come soon, I'm going to go get her. I don't know how to make her happy, but I do know I can't live without her.

When I finally feel her returning to the packhouse, I settle a bit, feeling something tight inside me relax. I set up a table with our food so it's ready when she returns and then I wait.

It isn't long before I hear her on the stairwell and then she opens the door to our bedroom. She stops when she sees me, her eyes going to the food and back up to me.

"What's this?"

"You didn't eat all day. You just burned a serious amount of energy and even if you're still angry with me, Echo must be hungry."

She closes the door. "I need to shower."

"I'll wait for you," I tell her, watching her carefully. I have no idea how she's going to react. This is not the Kennedy that I'm used to.

She steps past me and just as she reaches the door to the bathroom, she turns back.

"Why do you call me a little pup?"

I frown. "I've always called you Little Pup."

"But I'm not. I'm not a pup anymore, Quirin."

"I know that Kennedy. But it's been my name for you for so long, that it's just what I call you."

"I'm not sure you do know that I'm no longer a pup, Quirin. I'm really not sure that you do," she says, turning and walking into the bathroom. I stare after her, listening to the sound of the water turning on and then her showering herself off.

I think about her words. I don't think of her as a pup. I think of her as my mate. The feelings that I have for her are much too intense, too possessive for me to consider her a pup. She's my mate. Mine. I wouldn't feel that way if she were still a pup I never felt this way about her when she was a pup. I've always been drawn

to her and that feeling got stronger as she got

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older, but never the possessiveness that I feel for her now. I would have protected her before. He now. I'd kill anyone who tried to hurt her.

When she steps out of the bathroom, she stops, seeing me standing right where she left me.

"What are you doing?" she asks.

"Waiting for you. You didn't eat and you need to eat. I'm not saying that because I think you're a pup who needs to be told what to do," I clarify. "But you're my mate and I don't like you going all day without eating. Especially when I'm pretty sure that it was me who put you off your food today."

She looks at me, then at the food behind me.

"You didn't eat either?" she asks.

"I waited for you."

She nods and rubs the towel through her hair before taking it back into the bathroom. I wait while she brushes out her long hair, then comes to sit down. I pull the chair out for her and push it in as she sits.

"Thank you," she says.

I sit across from her and remove the domes from the food. She stares

at it

for

a moment.

"Which one did you say was good?" she asks, looking up at me. For the first time since she walked out of the dining hall tonight, I feel like I can breathe.

"This one," I say, stabbing a bite of the chicken with my fork and holding it out for

her. This time, she leans forward and takes the bite of food, humming her agreement as she chews.

"Arianna made this. I'll make sure to tell her it's excellent."

"Christy said you worked with them this morning to set up a new system for ordering food? That's great," I tell her.

The rest of dinner, we keep things light, talking about her new system with the omegas. I tell her that I'll give her the company information that we order our food from so she can order directly from them. I'm thankful to be able to take this off my list of things that I need to do for the pack. It's not hard, but it is time consuming.

When we're done, I put our plates outside our room, letting the evening omegas know that they can come get them and then I go shower. When I return to the room, Kennedy is asleep in our bed.

I curl

up around her, thankful to have her in my arms and hoping that I don't screw things up again tomorrow.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Kennedy

"Kennedy, wake up," I hear Quirin's voice.

I open my eyes and see him sitting beside me on the bed. "Listen, I know training didn't go well with you yesterday. I understand you haven't really received any training, but I'd like to at least work on your defensive skills. I'd like to know that you can defend yourself if we're attacked. Echo is really fast and that gives you the upper hand if something were to happen. But if someone got to you, you'd need to be able to get away from them in order to run or at least fight them off so you could run. I'd feel better knowing that you had some knowledge and skills in that area, but I don't want to train you in front of the other warriors, not right now anyway. Are you okay with that?"

"I have no problem learning defensive skills, Quirin. I've just never been a fighter. It's not who I am," I tell him.

"I understand," he says, then looks away. "Well, no, I don't really, but if you're against fighting, then at least let me train you on defensive maneuvers so I know you can protect yourself if something happens and I'm not around to protect you."

I think about what I overheard the other warriors saying yesterday. "I don't want to be a liability to you or the pack, Quirin."

"You're not a liability, Kennedy. I just need to know that you can protect yourself, okay? Maybe this evening after dinner we can spend some time away from the others and we can start practicing."

"I'd like that."

"I would too," he says, smiling his Quirin smile and leaning over to kiss me. I wrap my arms around him, but much too soon, he's pulling away. "I have to go."

"Okay," I say, watching him leave.

When he does, I get up and shower, ready to start my day. He told me I could order whatever I thought we needed for the hospital and since I have no idea what we can afford, I'll put in an order for what I think is most critical and see if it goes through.

As I walk downstairs, I smell the scent of fear coming from one of the hallways.

"Leave me alone, Arlo." It sounds like Christy.

"Don't be like that, Christy. I saw you looking at me. I know you want me."

"Let go of me," she says, and I stride into the hallway.

"Is there a problem?" I ask. I can see that he's got her cornered in the hallway.

"No problem. Christy and I were just talking, weren't we, Christy" "Shouldn't you be in warrior training, Arlo?" I ask, stepping up beside Christy. Arlo turns and looks at me, sneering. "Mind your own business, pup."

Before I can respond, there's a snarl from the other end of the hallway. "You'd better watch your fucking mouth, Arlo. Don't you dare disrespect your Luna," Beta Kier snarls.

He looks me up and down and snorts, as if he doesn't accept me as his Luna. I'm sure he doesn't but at the moment, I don't

care. I have no intention of letting him or anyone intimidate any other member of my pack.

"Get your fucking ass outside. NOW!" Beta Kier snaps.

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He steps away, but not before giving me an angry look. I don't budge. I may not know how to fight, but I'm still an Alpha female and I refuse to back down or show fear.

When he's gone, Beta Kier walks over. "Are you okay, Luna?"

"I'm fine. Christy, are you okay?"

"Yes. Thank you, Luna."

I look at Beta Kier. "Did you need something, Beta?"

"No, Luna. I came looking for Arlo when he didn't show up for training. Are you sure you're alright?"

"I'm fine. We're fine. Thank you."

He nods and heads back outside. I turn to Christy. "Are you sure you're okay?"

She nods. "Thank you for stepping in, Luna."

"I don't agree with our pack members intimidating or hurting each other. We need to make sure that you stay safe, Christy."

spend some time talking to her about ways that she can keep herself away from Arlo and to let me know if he continues to bother her. I know she said she didn't want me telling Quirin, but I'm concerned about Arlo's intention with Christy. She's an omega and could never fight against him if he tried to force himself on her.

I walk her back to the kitchen, checking to make sure that everything is running smoothly before turning to find Arianna.

"Arianna," I say, stopping when she jumps.

"Yes, Luna?" she squeaks.

"Are you alright?" I ask her. The other omegas around us begin giggling.

I look behind her and see that she's working on a beautiful cake that looks like it's meant for one person.

"Is it someone's birthday?" I ask her.

"She's got her eye on someone, Luna," one of the other omegas says, making Arianna blush.

"Anyone I know?" I ask and they all burst into giggles again.

"Please, Luna. Don't say anything. I like to make him nice dishes and he seems to really like them."

"I won't say a word. It's beautiful. Oh, and your chicken dish last night was delicious. Even Alpha Quirin commented on it."

"Thanks, Luna," she says, blushing again.

I compliment the other omegas on dinner, then head over to the hospital.

"Oh, Luna you're back again." Deborah says to me.

"Hi, Deborah, Yes, I have plans for this hospital. I'm going to put in an order for supplies today.

"Oh. Do you think we'll need them?" she asks, obviously skeptic

"I'm only going to order the things that I think we absolutely need," I tell her.

I begin putting together an order form, surprised when Christyrings me a sandwich.

*Alpha said we were to make sure you ate lunch today,"
saysmiling at me.

88%

"Oh, that was sweet of him. No problems with Arlo after training

"No, Luna. He apparently had a meeting with Alpha and Beta, and he's got extra patrol duty now."

"Good. Stay alert and like I said, if he continues to bother you, let me know."

"I will, Luna. Thank you."

I've nearly finalized my list when I hear someone calling out in the front of the hospital.

"Hello? Lurra Kennedy?"

I step out of the room I've been working in and see Susie holding a young pup who is crying and clinging to her.

"What do we have here?" I ask, walking over.

"Luna, can you help us? I saw Deborah in the packhouse, and she said you were here," she says, obviously very concerned for her pup. It looks like he's stepped, on a stick that has punctured his foot.

"I think we can do that," I say, looking around. I'm not putting him on one of those creaky hospital beds in case it can't hold his weight. Instead, I take him from Susie and carry him to the counter."

"What's your name?" I ask him.

"Samuel, Luna."

"Samuel, you stay right here while I get what I need. Will you do that for me?"

He nods and I turn to make sure that Susie is standing close. Thankfully, Deborah

has kept the hospital stocked with items. needed for pup injuries. There's a fairly new pair of tweezers, a sharp scalpel, antiseptic, and bandages.

I grab what I need and walk back out, pulling a chair over so I can sit at the height of Samuel's foot.

I set my items down beside him and sit.

"I'm just going to take a look at what we've got here, okay Samuel?"

He nods.

"How did you get this stick in your foot?"

"I was running through the woods," he says.

"You were running barefoot after your father and I both told you not to," Susie scolds him.

88%

"Your parents are right, Samuel. Until you have a wolf, you'll have to heal slowly.

I'll get this pic of wood out of your foot, but it will be sore for a couple of days and you'll have to keep puting antiseptic on it so it doesn't get infected," I tell him.

"Is it going to hurt?" he asks me, big tears hanging on to his long eyelashes.

"Your father is a warrior, right?" I ask him.

"He is! He's a strong warrior too. Everyone says so."

"Well then, I'm guessing that the son of a strong warrior won't have too much of a hard time with me removing this and putting some antiseptic on it. It will hurt, but I'll bet you're tough enough to take it. Are you ready?" I ask him. Susie takes his hand, and after slicing the smallest possible amount of his skin, I use the tweezers to carefully pull the stick out of his foot. Samuel hisses, his foot jerking as I tug it out.

"Look at the size of it," I say, laying the large splinter on his leg as I look at his foot which is now bleeding.

"Samuel! You're lucky it didn't go all the way through your foot! Next time, wear your shoes!" Susie scolds him.

"Yes, momma. Am I done now?" he asks me.

"Not quite yet. I need to wash it off and make sure there aren't any more pieces of wood in your foot before I bandage it up," I tell him.

I gently press around his foot and not feeling any more splinters. I wash it off and pour the antiseptic on it. Then I wrap it up and stand.

"There! Good as new!" I tell him.,

"Thanks, Luna," he says, throwing his arms around me. I laugh, picking him up off the counter.

"You're very welcome. Now, I'm sending your mother back with some more antiseptic. You'll want to put it on twice a day and if you see any redness, swelling, or if it doesn't seem to be healing, come back and see me," I tell Susie.

"Thanks, Luna," she says. "Come on, Samuel. Let's go."

"Bye, Luna. Thanks!" he says, waving as they walk out.

I take a deep breath feeling good about something for the first time in days.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Quirin

+23

When Kier went inside at the beginning of warrior training, I knew someone was missing. Most days I start training and he makes sure that everyone got their asses out of bed to come to training. So, I wasn't surprised when he went inside to collect the stragglers. I was, however, surprised, when it was Arlo who came out. He's one of the few that loves warrior training. He loves the opportunity to hit someone, so he's never late.

'We have a problem, Alpha,' Kier says in the mind-link, joining me at the front of the group as I take them through the warm

1. up.

'What's that?'

'I caught him mouthing off to Luna,' he tells me.

Raif growls angrily and everyone's head snaps to me.

'Is Kennedy okay?'

'Yes. She said she was and it didn't look like he touched her. There was something with one of the omegas, but I'm not sure what that was about. She may have been with our Luna when Arlo approached them, but I'm not sure.'

"Arlo you're with me today," I bark out loud. He glares at Kier, but nods.

I proceed to spend the next two hours kicking the shit out of him. He's a good fighter, but he's not an Alpha. "Alpha, is there a problem?" Slater, his brother, asks at the end of training, seeing how badly I pummeled Arlo. "Your brother apparently needed a reminder of who your Luna is mated to. I would suggest that anyone who thinks that they can mouth off to their Luna, take note. This is your future if you EVER disrespect my mate."

"Yes, Alpha," the warriors say. Slater reaches out his hand to help Arlo up and I slap it away. "He gets up on his own. He thinks he's better than me, thinks he mouth off to my mate, disrespecting both of us, then he can be man enough to pick his own ass up off the ground," I snarl.

I know he's hurt. I dislocated his shoulder, I heard a rib snap, and he started limping about an hour ago.

"Get up and get to my office," I tell him, walking away. "Kier!"

"Right here, Alpha."

"Grab food for the two of us and join me in my office," I say, moderating my tone. I'm not angry at him. "Also, check in with the omegas and make sure my mate was okay when you left her

"Will do," he says, walking off toward the kitchen.

I reach out in the mind link and gently touch Kennedy's mind. I can tell she's busy working through her list for the hospital. I don't sense any concern or worry, other than what she's going to order. I'm not sure why she's worried about it, but I'll leave her to figure it out. I know nothing about hospital equipment or supplies.

Once I know she's okay, I refocus on my plans for Arlo. I'm going to give him two choices and he gets to decide his fate. When he hobbles in, I don't invite him to sit. I let him stand. Depending on his decision, he may not be here long.

1879%

Kier walks in a moment later, sitting a plate of food down in front of me. He pulls up a chair and sits at my desk, following along by digging into his breakfast.

"The way I see it, Arlo, you have two choices. You can leave the pack or you can take extra patrols. You apparently have too much energy if you have time to be disrespectful. Those are your choices. You have five minutes to decide."

"Alpha..." he begins.

"If you're going to make some excuse for what your Beta witnessed, save it. I don't want to hear it, and it will only encourage me to kick you out of the pack. If that's your choice, keep talking" I say, my voice as hard as steel.

"And if you don't think telling your Luna to mind her own business and calling her a pup isn't disrespectful, then I'm sure your Alpha can change your mind," Kier says. I growl again, glaring at Arlo.

"First of all, anything that happens in this pack is as much her business as it is mine. Second, use my pet name for my mate again, and next time, you won't walk away. That's MY-name for her. NO ONE uses it but me." It makes me wonder if this was why Kennedy asked me about calling her little pup. I wonder if someone else has called her that name in a derogatory way. I feel very possessive of my nickname for my mate. It's ALWAYS been my name for her.

"I'll take the patrols, Alpha," Arlo says.

18

"Are you sure? You disrespect my mate again, and you won't have a choice. I'll kill you. Are we clear?"

"Crystal."

"Go get some food. You start your extra patrols this afternoon. I suggest you let your wolf start healing you between now and then."

When he walks out, I turn to Kier. "Tell me what you walked in on earlier," I say.

He goes through it for me, letting me know what he heard, and that Kennedy didn't back down, even though Arlo was towering over her in an intimidating stance and basically snarling at her.

I'm proud of my mate, but this interaction makes me want to work with her even more. If this had been one of Jasper's warriors, they wouldn't have stopped at intimidating. They would have taken her or killed her.

When Kier leaves, I check in with the kitchen omegas to make sure that they send food over for Kennedy if she doesn't come back for lunch. I have a feeling I'm going to have to make sure that food is sent over for her every day. She's a bit like her mother when she gets involved in something. She loses track of time and forgets to eat. Luna Yara isn't my

responsibility, but Kennedy certainly is. I'm going to make sure she stays strong, especially if I'm going to be training her in the evenings.

This evening, when I reach out to Kennedy, I can feel her happiness. It's like a ray of fucking sunshine into my soul.

'What has my mate so happy?' I ask her in the mind link.

I got my first patient,' she says excitedly.

'You did? Who?' I ask, going through the list of warriors in my mind to try and figure out who went to see her.

'Samuel, Susie and Kelvin's son. He stepped on a stick that went into his foot.

'Is he okay? ask.

"Yes. I told Susie to keep an eye on it and to come back if it looks like it's getting infected.

78%

(+23)

'Good. Are you ready for dinner?' I ask, anxious to see my mate after being away from her all day. Not only that, I want to make sure she's okay after the ordeal with Arlo and to hopefully see a smile on her face that reflects the mood I'm feeling from her.

At that moment, there's a knock on the door and I smell her citrus and mint scent. I'm not sure if it's me or Raif who pushes me to the door so we can see her. When I do, I'm rewarded with her radiant smile. The one that blasts the darkness out of me and makes my dick stand at attention.

"Yes, I am ready for dinner. And I understand I have you to thank for having lunch sent over."

"I didn't want you to miss lunch again," I tell her, stroking my thumb over her lips and tracing the smile.

"Thank you. That was very kind of you."

"I'm your mate. I want to always make sure that you are taken care of. Shall we?"

I ask, holding out my hand.

"We shall," she says, putting her hand in mine. Tonight, when we walk into the dining hall I can feel the difference in the pack. I'm not sure if word about what happened to Arlo has gotten around or if they are responding to the difference in Kennedy, but either way, the glances that we're getting feel more positive.

We get our food and I stand by watching as Kennedy gets the information about tonight's meal and who made everything. She compliments certain things as she goes along putting food on her plate.

"What are these pretty little things," I ask, trying to follow Kennedy's lead. She's obviously making in-roads with the omegas which means that her approach is important. I want the omegas to know that I appreciate them as well. "Miniature cheesecakes with berry compote, my absolute favorite," Kier says, coming over and snagging several.

"Is it?" Kennedy asks, much more interested and attentive than I would have thought.

Kier just nods as he pops one in his mouth. I watch as his eyes roll back into his head. "Compliments to the chef," he mumbles around a mouthful of cheesecake.

"What about cake, Beta? Do you like cake?" Kennedy asks him.

"Oh yeah! Ask Alpha. I have a terrible sweet tooth."

"Yeah, he does," I say, wondering at Kennedy's interest. I feel an uncomfortable flare of jealousy until I see her look at the omega who is helping to serve the food. The omega looks away blushing. That's odd.

"Well, I guess I'll have to try one then, since my Beta says they're his favorite. I thought all desserts were his favorite," I say, making the omega laugh.

"Well done, Arianna," Kennedy says softly, before we move on.

"What was that about?" I ask her.

She just smiles and shakes her head at me. Now I'm even more curious but I let it

go as I find a table that doesn't include Arlo and have them make space for us. Kennedy puts her plate down, saying hello to everyone then lets me know she'll be right back.

I watch her walk over to where Kelvin is sitting with his son. Even from here, I can hear Samuel's squeal as he sees my mate. He leaps into her arms, and she catches him easily. Kelvin gets up, talking to Kennedy while Samuel shows her his

foot.

I feel a craving, something deep and visceral in my gut, as I watch my mate holding a pup. I want it to be MY pup that she's

78%

holding. I want her be smiling at our pup while she's talks to me or our pack

members.

When she turns, smiling over at me, that desire takes root. I know that it won't let go and that I'll do almost anything to make sure that one day, she's holding my pup in her arms.

'We need to figure out how to have sex without hurting her first. Raif says.

Yeah. There is that.