

Chapter 3: Warnings

Quirin

When Henry and I pulled up to the packhouse, I smelled her before I even opened the door.

“Quirin, where are you going?” Henry asks as I quickly leap out of the car and make my way to the packhouse. I ignore him. I have to see her. It’s all I can do to keep Raif under control as he pulls me into the packhouse.

Once inside, the place is packed and I can’t see her, can’t find her. Raif snarls angrily and the party guests part like the red sea.

There, across the room from me, is Kennedy. My mate.

Raif announces it before I can stop him. Part of me is thrilled. There’s always been something about Kennedy that has drawn me in, something that has made me feel protective and even possessive at times. And now, I know why, she’s my fated mate.

The other part of me knows that the words that I spoke to her all those years ago were accurate. ‘Men like me are no good for little pups like you.’ I hadn’t been lying. She deserves someone like Henry, or even someone like her brother. Instead, the Moon Goddess has decided to punish her with someone like me. I should reject her, I should set her free, but I know I can’t. I’m much too selfish for that.

“Mate,” she says. I know it’s her wolf who replies to Raif, but watching her sweet mouth say the word that I’ve only dared to dream that she would say to me, makes the possessiveness that I’ve held on to tightly flare inside of me.

It didn’t escape me that everyone, every single person in the room, turned to look at her when I called her my mate. I’m sure they all thought she’d reject me. And maybe she will. If she’s smart, she will.

‘I refuse to accept it,’ Raif says. ‘She’s ours. I want her. I want them both.’

Raif has wanted Echo from the moment he first saw her. Of course, back then she was much too young for me or him to do anything. I’d always felt the pull to this little pup, but once she had her wolf, the pull had become even stronger.

I stare at her across the room, not moving as I watch her big grey-green eyes go wide. I realize that her dress brings out the color of those eyes, making them stand out against her pale skin and dark brown hair.

‘Stop making our mate think we don’t want her,’ Raif growls before literally pushing me forward. Rather than stopping and looking like a fool, I slowly walk up to Kennedy. Some might call it a prowl, the predator hunting his prey. But since the prey looks eager to be captured, I’m not sure it’s an accurate assessment.

“Happy Birthday, Little Pup,” I say to her and instantly I get the response I expected. Her lips press together but before she can come back with some smart retort, I wrap my arm around her and pull her against me, pressing my lips to hers.

Her submission is instant, and it makes me hard as I press myself against her, devouring her. I’m not gentle with the kiss, growling possessively as I take her mouth and finally get to taste her for the first time. Her citrus and mint scent tastes better than any dream that I ever had of her. My mouth waters and my desire to shred her clothes and make her mine right now is almost overwhelming.

When I finally pull back I look at her, my mate.

“We’re leaving,” I growl.

“What?” she asks, frowning while still looking dazed. I love that dazed look on her face.

“Alpha Quirin, it’s Kennedy’s birthday. The party has just begun. Surely you don’t intend to take her away from her party already.”

I don’t have to turn to know that it’s Alpha Connor who is speaking. The man looks exactly like his father and for that alone, I despise him. But he’s Kennedy’s twin and I know that she considers him her best friend. It’s the only reason I don’t kill him for trying to keep me from taking my mate.

“There are too many unmated Alphas in this room for my liking,” I growl, never looking away from my mate.

“No one is stupid enough to try and take your mate from you, Q. Everyone saw that the two of you are mates. Let her have her birthday party.” That comes from Henry. He’s come up behind me and is speaking softly.

“Of course they won’t. I would kill anyone who touches her,” I growl loudly, making sure every Alpha here knows that she’s mine.

“Alpha Quirin.” This time it’s the sweet voice of Luna Yara. She, like Henry, is one of the few people in this world that I would never ignore or hurt. “We worked very hard to have a nice party for our twins. Would you please reconsider your need to take Kennedy from us so soon?”

I realize that, through all of this, my mate hasn’t said a word. “What do you want, Kennedy?” I see the instant happiness that I used her name, rather than calling her Little Pup.

“I want to be with you,” she says and it’s like she’s turned her beacon of light on me, pushing away all my darkness. Such is the power that this little wolf, barely an adult, has over me.

“We should stay and celebrate you. But we’re leaving tonight,” I tell her.

“Okay.”

“Okay,” I say, finally pulling my eyes away from her. I turn to the room and see that everyone is staring at us. “Well, is this a party or what?” I growl.

The music starts again and I move to stand behind my mate, glaring at any unmarked male who even looks this way. Others come up to wish my mate happy birthday, but they quickly move away.

“Alpha Quirin, it is customary in this pack that the first dance on a birthday goes to the mother or father of the birthday boy or girl. I’m assuming, since you are well aware of this tradition, that you have no problem with me dancing with my daughter,” Alpha Warren says.

His hand is already extended to Kennedy, and I see that Connor and Luna Yara are also about to step out onto the dance floor. They’re just waiting for me.

Kennedy looks up at me, as if it’s my decision. I guess everyone here knows that I have no problem fighting them if I don’t like what’s going on.

“It’s tradition, right?” I ask her.

“Right,” she says and turns to me, taking my hand. “Don’t disappear on me.”

“I’m not going anywhere,” I say. It’s meant as a threat but rather than the fear that it should cause in her, I get her mega-watt smile. That smile has always fascinated me. How can one person be so happy?

I watch as her father leads her onto the dance floor and the two of them begin to move around the dance floor, easily and gracefully. I’m content to watch her gliding across the floor, but my best friend and brother has other plans.

“Stop being such a prick, Q.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” I say obstinately.

“Of course you do. You’re not stupid. Stopping ruining this night for her.”

“I’m not ruining anything for her. I asked what she wanted, and she said she wanted to be with me. I have no intention of letting any of these lecherous men get close to what’s mine.”

“Do you count me as one of those lecherous men?” he growls, but I hear the hurt behind it.

I turn and look at him. “I know you wanted her. But she’s mine. Maybe I don’t deserve her, but I can’t let her go. If you can respect that, then we’re good. If you can’t, then we have a problem.”

He turns and looks at me. “That will very much depend on how you treat her, Quirin. If you mistreat her…”

“Then what, Henry?” I ask.

“Let’s not find out, okay. And for the record, I’m insulted that you would think that wouldn’t respect the mate bond. Anyone’s mate bond,” he says, walking out onto the dance floor and asking my mate to dance.

I see Kennedy look over at me, as if once again questioning if it’s okay for her to dance with someone else. Am I that overbearing? Probably.

“What are you doing, Quirin?”

“About what, Luna Farrah,” I say sighing. There are maybe five people in this world that I care about. Four of them have approached me tonight. Well, technically, I approached Kennedy, but the other three, Henry, Luna Yara, and now Luna Farrah, have approached me on Kennedy’s behalf. I’m wondering when Alpha Harold will approach me.

“This is her night, Quirin,” she says. I’m not surprised that the massive aura that I’m pushing out to keep people away isn’t keeping Luna Farrah away. It never did.

“And I’m letting her have it,” I quip.

“Letting her. What an interesting way to phrase it. How kind of you to LET her have her birthday party,” she growls softly.

I sigh. “You know I hate these things.”

“And I know that if you love someone, that it doesn’t matter what YOU want, Quirin. And if you can’t love that girl the way that she deserves, then reject her. It will hurt her now, but she’ll thank you later.”

“She’s mine,” I growl, low enough that no one else will overhear.

“Then make sure you treat her like that means something, Quirin. She’s a sweet girl, smart and loving. If you intend to stay mated to her, then don’t you dare take that away from her.”

She walks off just as Alpha Harold walks up to Kennedy. He looks over at me and it’s obvious that he’s daring me to question his intentions with my mate. I don’t. He has his own mate and I lived with them long enough to know that he loves Luna Farrah with all of his heart.

What no one else seems to realize is that I love Kennedy with all of my heart. I just don’t show it the way that others do.