

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Chapter 36-40

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Quirin

I was annoyed early this morning. First, I knew Kennedy was upset last night about no one going to the pack hospital. It's the first time she's been in bed and acted like she was asleep. She's a terrible faker and while I knew we should probably talk, I was exhausted after the battle and rather than starting an argument, I just went to sleep.

I knew she was still upset about it this morning, but the reality is that this pack has been taking care of itself for a very long time. We're strong and we've gotten on just fine. And as much as I know that Kennedy wants to be like her mother, she's not there yet. She will be, I know she will, but she has several years to go.

Then when we started warrior training, Kier had been bouncing around like he hadn't fought in the battle yesterday like the rest of us.

"What is with you? How do you have so much energy this morning?" I finally snapped at him.

"Luna helped me to heal last night. I'm surprised she didn't insist on healing you as well," he said casually, taking down another warrior.

"What do you mean she healed you?" When did that happen? Kennedy didn't mention anything about healing Kier last night.

"While you were showering, I guess. Anyway, she made a good point. Why make Rowd work harder than he has to when she can help him heal faster? And she did. He and I both got a great night's sleep last night and I feel good as new this morning."

Jealousy had flared until Raif reminded me that it was my fault that we hadn't gone to see our mate. Our Beta chose to see her and he's obviously the only one based on him being the only person who seems completely fine this morning. I can almost feel the pack's questioning stares as they look from me to Kier, wondering why their Beta went to see their Luna and I didn't.

I was still fuming over it, especially since Raif still has an injury that he hasn't healed on me yet, when Kennedy called me to the hospital. I'm pretty sure she's going to argue with me about not coming by there last night and if it makes her feel better I'll have her look at

the injury that Raif is still healing. Her point to Kier was valid. Why weaken my wolf when I don't have

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I was shocked to find one of my warriors in the hospital who was obviously not happy about being there. In an effort to support him and let him know that I don't consider him weak for being there, I tried to tell Kennedy that he would heal. And that was when my mate snapped.

In all the years I've known her, I've never heard Kennedy use her Alpha command. That was the first shock. It's possible she has in her family's pack, but somehow, I doubt it. The second was her angrily cutting me off and telling me to listen to her. I listen to her. I even came over here with the intention of listening to her. But the final shock and aggravation was when she openly challenged me in front of our warriors. As sexy as it is to see her showing her strength, I don't appreciate her doing it so publicly. And while the idea of sticking my finger into some disgusting, bloody mess, seems useless and gross, I'm not going to back down from a challenge, even if it comes from my mate.

The instant my finger touched it, I felt the burn. All aggravation at Kennedy's challenge went out the window. She found this in Lane's wound? And when did she treat their pup, Tommy? She never mentioned that.

'Are you sure? Maybe that's what you haven't been listening to,' Raif says, watching our mate carefully.

"Okay, back up a minute. You treated Tommy and found that he had silver in his wound?" I ask.

"Well, I didn't know it at first. I had to wait for the microscope to get here. Remember when I was at the pup play area and

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you asked what I was looking for?"

"Well, I was trying to see if there was any sort of mold or fungus that could explain his scrape not healing. At the time, I didn't realize that it would help, but I scraped his skin so I could examine it under the microscope when it arrived. I must have scraped the silver off of his skin because he was able to heal after I did that"

"That's right" Emily says, nodding "His wound has completely healed, which is why I insisted that Lane come see Luna"

"How did you know what to look for?" I ask her

"Well, I didn't, but when I saw the silver from Tommy's swab, I started wondering how it got there, Like I said, I swabbed Beta Kier's injuries, and he had no silver in them. So, I was thinking that maybe it was specific to the play area or some contaminated part of the pack lands. But when Warrior Lane arrived and told me that he had an injury that has been open for over a week, I knew it had to be the same cause, and I was right?"

My mind is going in all different directions. What Kennedy is saying makes sense, Jasper hasn't been able to get the upper hand on us in a fight, but it hasn't stopped him. And lately, he has been attacking more frequently. If he's slowly poisoning the pack with silver, it will weaken us. And without treatment, Kennedy is right. We will eventually lose to him.

Have her check the wound that I can't heal, Raif says,

"I have a wound I want you to swab," I say and watch as she presses her lips together tightly. I know she's angry that I didn't seek her assistance before, but I am now. "And then, I'd like to see what you're looking at."

"You mean under the microscope?" she asks.

"Yes,"

She nods curtly before starting to walk out,

"Am I allowed to get up now, Luna?" Lane asks her.

"You can sit up, but you can't leave yet. I want to make sure I got all the silver out of your wounds and then I'll stitch you up she says.

"That's not nec..." he begins but cuts off when she turns around to glare at him. "Yes, Luna."

I follow her out of the room and into the next room. It's set up exactly the same as the room we were just in. Everything in here looks new. I guess these are the items that she purchased.

"I need access to your wound. Where is it?" she asks briskly, pulling on gloves.

"My hip."

"Pull off your shorts and get on the table," she says.

"I can stand."

She turns and looks at me, the challenge still on her face. I have to fight hard not to smile. Damn she's sexy.

"Do you want my help or not. If not, stop wasting my time. Warrior Lane needs my assistance," she snaps.

I step forward, getting in her space. She doesn't back down. "I asked for your help, didn't I?"

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created that you great bare silver in your wound which is why Raif isn't healing you. If you had come to me last ng Trail have rund i them and we could have not only had this discussion, but also Raif could have healed WAD AND WANE WA be suger tod

Yes Fear Lers quite a bit strange wody than the rest of us"

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The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Quirin

This is definitely a side of Kennedy that I'm not used to seeing. I step back and pull off my divorts, getting on the table,

"You didn't mention seeing Beta Kier last night when you returned to the packhouse" I say, watching as she looks at the

wound.

"Would it have mattered? You still wouldn't have asked me to look at your wounds. You were quite clear about Raft being strong enough to heal you. Your arrogance and the arrogance of this pack is astounding"

"My arrogance?" I ask, biting off a hiss as she begins scraping the wound. She looks at the scraping, tilting it in the lig before nodding and putting the scrapings in a glass cylinder. That looks new too. I frown, how did she know she would pr

these things?

"Yes, it's arrogant to force your wolves to do all the work of healing you when you could help them. You expect them to ligier and then expect them to heal you and your wolves do it without any complaint. But you, as the human, could help them and you refuse because of your own arrogance," she says, stepping away, "Put your shorts on and follow me," she says sharply, barely looking at me. The anger in her is palpable,

Raif pushes forward, gently grabbing her arm. "Thank you for helping to heal me, little mate,"

I watch her features soften as she looks at us. "You shouldn't have to do all the work, Raif. Try to convince him next time that I can help."

He leans forward and presses our forehead to hers. I watch her close her eyes and take a deep breath.

"Come on. I'll show you what I'm looking at," she says, her tone softer.

'You heard our mate. Next time, I'm dragging your ass over here, Raif says to me, 'Fine. She obviously likes you more than me right now.

'Maybe because I listen and appreciate what she's doing. You're just arguing with her.

I follow her across the hospital, nodding at Deborah who looks uncomfortable having so many people in the hospital. On the other side of the hospital, where I found Kennedy yesterday, she has a small workstation set up. The microscope is sitting in the center of a counter with a chair neatly tucked underneath it.

She pulls out the chair and points. "Have a seat. This will take a moment." Instead of sitting, I watch her as she walks about the room, pulling out small glass plates and swiping the scrapings across them. She tilts it in her hands and then nods again before putting it under the microscope. Then, she looks through the lens, moving the knob on the side of the microscope before stepping back.

"There you go," she says. I frown but step forward and look at the slide.

I have no idea what I'm looking at, but... "What's that moving?" I say, looking at her and feeling revulsion that something's alive in my wound.

"Bacteria. You don't have as much as Lane had, but his injury was over a week old, as I said. Raif has done a good job so far of keeping the wound clean, but that would have changed over time. With warrior training, running, pretty much anything and everything you do allows bacteria to get into an open wound," she says.

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I frown and sit as I look back at the slide, watching the nasty little blob squirm around. "Is that what I'm supposed to be looking at?"

"No. Do you see what looks like little crystals?"

"Yeah, there's a lot of those," I say, looking at them. They're almost pretty.

"That's silver," she says.

"WHAT?" I ask, looking up at her, then back at the slide. "That's..."

I stare at all the silver she scraped off my wound, then sit back, thinking. "So, Raif would never have been able to heal that wound?"

"Probably not. I mean, if you'd gotten in there with a scrub brush maybe, but you would also have run the risk of pushing the silver farther into your body instead of scraping it out like I just did."

I narrow my eyes as I think it through. "But not everyone has silver in their bodies. You said Kier didn't and you checked multiple wounds on him, right?" I ask.

"That's correct. I think, again I'm not sure, but if I'm right about them putting silver on their claws where it wouldn't hurt them and there is silver on the ground, then some of it is rubbing off during the battle. While it's not an immediate danger, it is contaminating our pack lands. Tommy's a perfect example, and I'm going to guess that he's not the only one."

"How do you know all of this?" I ask, waving at the microscope.

"It's a cross between biology and chemistry."

I frown. "They taught you this in your high school classes?" I never learned any of this, but then, I didn't care to learn it either.

"No, not like this. I got most of this in my college level classes."

I turn and look at her.

"When did you take college classes, Little Pup?"

She huffs at me. "I've been taking college classes for years, Quirin. I have undergraduate degrees in biology and chemistry."

I feel pride swell in my chest at my mate. How did I not know this about her?

"You just graduated high school, and you already have two undergraduate degrees?"

She crosses her arms over her chest. "Yes."

She says it like she doesn't expect me to believe her.

I stand, stepping up to her, stroking my fingers over her cheek. "I've been severely underestimating you, haven't I?" I ask quietly.

She nods and I can smell the saltiness of tears that she's fighting.

"I'm sorry," I say, and her eyes snap up to mine, obviously surprised by my apology.

"I will work harder to not underestimate you again and I will strive to listen when you talk to me," I say.

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"Thank you," she says, leaning into my caress.

I lean in and kiss her gently, slowly deepening the kiss, but pulling away before it turns into something else.

"How about you finish with Lane and then we'll go address the pack together. If there are others with wounds that aren't healing, they'll need to come get their wounds cleaned out so they can heal."

"I can stitch your wound up too," she says.

"Already healed, thanks to you, little mate," Raif says to her.

As if she doesn't believe him, she reaches around me and pulls my shorts down

to look at the now-healed wound

"I mean, if you'd rather make Lane and Emily wait while I make you scream." I say, teasingly.

She looks up at me, her eyes wide, before looking down at the growing evidence of my attraction to her.

"I have work to do," she squeaks, pulling up my shorts and stepping around me. She stops and looks back at me. Tze, though, I'll take you up on that offer."

"It's a date," I say, falling into step beside her as we walk back to the room where Lane is waiting. When we walk in, I can already tell that his wounds are healing.

"I think one still has silver in it," Derion, Lane's wolf, tells her. She finishes cleaning it out and then stitches him up. I wait while she cleans up the room and herself and then extend my hand to her.

"Ready to address the pack?"

"Let's do it," she says, taking my hand.

I still need to figure out what I'm going to do about Jasper and about the silver on our pack lands, but it feels good to have Kennedy happy with me again.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Kennedy

I feel like Quirin is finally starting to recognize that I'm not just some silly little pup, but I'm actually an intelligera wor that can help the pack. At least, it feels that way. He apologized, which was totally unexpected but very much appreciated

When we walk into the packhouse, I take a deep breath. I'm guessing that this conversation isn't going to go over well. This pack is very arrogant. I wasn't joking when I called Quirin that earlier. That's all it is, arrogance that the human sits back and leaves the brunt of the work to their wolf.

"It looks like we're on a mission," Beta Kier says, walking up to us. "Anything I need to know about?"

Yeah, Kennedy has found silver in two of our pack member's wounds. Since she didn't find any in your wounds, she believes, and I'm inclined to agree, that this is Jasper's doing."

"How would that even work?" he asks me.

I give him the quick version of my suspicions as we walk into the dining hall.

"Everyone, listen up. I have two announcements," Quirin begins. Two?

"First, I intended to announce this last night, but obviously we were attacked. Everyone knows that this weekend is Kennedy's Luna ceremony. For those of you who don't know, her family will be here and will be staying one to two nights. I have no intention of allowing anyone to cause problems this weekend. This is Kennedy's weekend, and you will respect that If you do not believe that you can be civil and respect Kennedy's family and

my guests this weekend, you may leave the pack for the weekend. However, you will be required to accept Kennedy as your Luna before you leave, or you will not be allowed back in the pack."

This is so not the way to start the conversation about me finding the silver powder. If anything, this is going to make the pack members feel put off and unwilling to let me help them.

"Where would we go? Back out to the wilderness?" someone asks and I sigh. They're already planning on leaving.

"I've spoken to Alpha Henry and he is willing to take in anyone wanting to leave during the days that we celebrate Kennedy officially becoming our Luna. He cannot guarantee that he'll have rooms for all of you, but you would be welcome to sleep on his pack lands where you would be safe."

I feel nearly all eyes turn to look at me. At this rate, it'll just be my family and Henry's at my Luna ceremony. Great. I wish Quirin had mentioned this to me before. And when did he and Henry even have time to talk about this?

'Probably when he was here the other day,' Echo says distractedly, watching the pack members. I can feel that she's upset that so many of our pack members seem to want to leave. It's just another reminder that they don't respect us.

"If you have any questions about that, come see me or Beta Kier. The second announcement is that your Luna has found something that impacts all of us. Kennedy, do you want to explain it?" he asks me.

I go through the process of how I found the silver, first on the pup and then on Warrior Lane without mentioning any names. I tell them my suspicions about the silver powder and let them know that if any of them have wounds that their wolves can't heal, they need to see me for medical attention.

"So, does anyone have wounds that need to be treated by Kennedy?"

I'm not surprised when no one says yes. Once again, this pack has become too arrogant.

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"No one?" he asks again. When no one responds, he nods. "Okay then." He turns to leave, but I'm not done.

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"Just a moment," I say and Quirin turns to look at me. "Show of hands, how many

of you fought against Alpha Jasper or his pack members in last night's battle?"

I wait as everyone looks at each other.

"I know I wasn't the only one," Quirin growls and people slowly begin raising their hands.

"Everyone who fought against Alpha Jasper or his pack, stand up please," I say, receiving a lot of grumbles.

Quirin's angry growl shuts them off and they begin to stand. Along with my mother's interest in medicine, I inherited her ability to sniff out infection. I'm sure there will be others, those like Lane, but for now, this will do.

I begin walking around sniffing each of the warriors who is standing.

"What are you doing, Luna?" Beta Kier asks. He's still standing by Quirin. Quirin

is standing with his arms crossed, watching me intently. I hold up a finger, telling him to give me a minute.

When I'm done, I return to the front of the room. "Every one of you who is standing and many who aren't, have wounds that are becoming infected. I will tell you what I told your Alpha earlier tonight. It is arrogance that allows you to sit there, making your wolves suffer and probably feel like they are letting you down because they can't heal you. You are weakening yourselves and this pack from the inside out because of your arrogance."

"No offense, Luna, but how could you possibly know that we have open wounds. If we got them yesterday, they wouldn't be infected yet," a warrior says to me.

I give him my best fake smile. "Why don't you pull up your shirt so we can see your stomach and let's talk about it," I say, watching the smirk fall off his face. "Or you," I say pointing to another warrior, "take off your pants and let's look at that leg. Or you, let's see your shoulder, or you," I say, pointing to the warrior who has multiple wounds, some of them infected. "Take your pick, you have three, back, arm, and thigh. Anyone else want to question my nose?"

"Lift up your shirt, Terrance," Quirin says.

He presses his lips together and pulls up his shirt, exposing the wound that is covered in bandages but is obviously seeping through.

"Son of a bitch! After everything your Luna just said, no one thought it was important to say that they have injuries that aren't healing? Are you trying to get yourselves and you pack members killed?"

I desperately want to call Quirin out, letting him know that he's exactly the same, but I don't. I've already challenged him once today in front of his pack members.

"Every one of you better get your asses to the pack hospital. Tonight! Anyone that isn't standing and has a wound that isn't healing better get their ass to the pack hospital tonight as well. Anyone who has a pup with a wound that isn't healing, get them to the pack hospital. Anyone who doesn't, will answer to me," Quirin barks.

"Yes, Alpha," the group says.

"Well, I guess I'd better get back to the hospital. Sounds like I'm going to have a busy night," I say.

"Is this what you were doing earlier today, Luna?" Deborah asks me from across the room.

"Yes. I needed to confirm my suspicions, and I have."

"I'll come help you, if you'd like," she says.

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"That would be great. When you're done, head over," I tell her.

"You need to eat something too, Kennedy. You're not a machine," Quirin says.

I look at the dinner options and none of them are things that I can eat easily with my hands.

"I can make you a sandwich, Luna," Susie says.

"That would be great, thank you."

"I'll come check on you in a bit, Kennedy. I need to talk to Kier about how we're going to handle this and what we're going to do to make sure our pack lands aren't contaminated with silver."

I get my sandwich from Susie and head over to the pack hospital. The first few warriors to come through not only acted aggravated to be there, but also asked if they could accept me as their Luna while they were there. As upsetting as it was, I agreed.

When the warrior with three injuries came in, he actually thanked me. "My wolf was getting nervous that there was something wrong with him," the warrior, Leo, tells me.

"There's nothing wrong with him. Next time, don't wait until it gets this bad. I don't bite," I tell him.

"Thank you, Luna," his wolf says to me.

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

"Javier, Luna."

"Javier, don't blame yourself next time. Tell your human to get his butt over here to see me," I say as I finish stitching him

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"Yes, Luna," Javier says.

I turn as I pull off my gloves. "Did you want to accept me as your Luna now, so

you can plan to be away from the pack this weekend?" I ask him.

When he doesn't answer right away, I turn to look at him. I see Leo is having a conversation with Javier.

"Luna, do you mind if I think about it?" he asks.

"No, that's fine," I say. He's the first one who needed more than a couple of seconds to decide, so I'll take it.

The next patient is a patrol member, Randall.

"I didn't know what was going on, Luna, but I think the reason my hands and feet

are burned is because we're running over silver on our patrol runs," he tells me.

I look at his hands, then carefully scrape them before doing the same for his feet. "Give me a few minutes, will you?" I ask him.

"Sure thing, Luna," he says, smiling at me. I think he might be the first warrior who has smiled at me.

When I put the skin scrapings under the microscope, it's definitely silver.

'Quirin, the patrol routes have silver on them. They're burning our patrols' paws and it's causing blisters and making their 3/5

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hands and feet raw,'

'Since when?' he asks. I walk back into the room and ask Randall how long he's noticed this problem.

"Honestly, it's been a couple of weeks, maybe a month. At first it was just a little bit. I thought maybe Ridley and I were just out of practice with running, but then it started getting worse and hurting more and Ridley couldn't heal me. When you mentioned the silver tonight, I thought I should have it checked out."

"Well, you were right, Randall. It's silver."

Two to four weeks, Quirin,' I tell him in the mind link.

'Son of a bitch,' he growls before closing the mind link.

"Can you fix it, Luna?" Ridley asks, pushing forward.

"It will sting, but I'll scrape it off and you let me know if you can heal it." I start with his hands and then move to his feet, carefully scraping them until they bleed. By the time I get to the second foot, his first hand is already healed.

"How does that feel, Ridley?" I ask him.

"Great, Luna. I'll have us healed by morning."

"Good! You may have to come in every day you have patrols for a while until

Quirin and Beta Kier figure out what they're going to do."

"No problem. I'm just glad we could get it fixed. Ridley was starting to get depressed thinking he was letting me down," Randall says.

"You're doing a great job, Ridley. You both are. Ahh, did you want to accept me as your Luna while you're here?"

"Are you kidding? And miss the party? Hell no! I'm excited to have you as our Luna. I think you're exactly what this pack has been needing. I look forward to accepting you as my Luna along with everyone else this weekend."

"Well, I'm not sure how many will be there," I say to him.

He looks at me, his face becoming serious. "Give it time, Luna. You said it yourself, we're an arrogant group of people. They'll see it eventually. I saw it when you and Echo passed us over and over when you were running. You may not know how to fight, but you can run

faster than any wolf I've ever seen. And don't get me started on your sense of smell," he says, making me laugh. "Thanks, Randall," I say, feeling better.

"Thank you, Luna. I guess I'll be seeing you again soon."

"Anytime," I say as he walks out. I take a moment to breathe and collect myself. Tonight has been stressful for a lot of reasons, but that conversation reminded me of my purpose and my resolve to earn the respect of this pack, one warrior at a time.

"That's three," Echo says.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Quirin

"I can't believe our fucking warriors. They just sat there, not expecting that they needed to go to see Kennedy to get treatment," I say as Kier and I walk into my office. When he doesn't reply, I look at him. His lips are pressed tightly together.

"Just say it," I tell him, crossing my arms over my chest.

He shrugs. "I didn't see you there last night, Alpha. Packs follow their leader, they follow your example. If you don't trust your mate to treat you, why would they trust her to treat them."

"I can't afford to look weak to the pack," I growl.

"Well, then, neither can they. Personally, I had a great time kicking everyone's ass in training this morning, so I hope no one goes to see her next time. Then I can get in and out, get a good night's sleep and still kick ass the next day.

"Why did you go see her? I wouldn't have expected you to go either."

I watch as he looks away from me. "Someone said my gashes looked bad, so I said I'd have Luna look at them."

"You got someone on the side, Kier?" I ask him. I've never known him to be shy about telling me that he's slept with one of our she-wolves. But now he's being vague.

He doesn't answer, just looks at me.

"Well, I hope she got to enjoy your healthy body," I say, turning to sit in my chair. "Now, what are your thoughts on this silver contamination?"

"This is a real problem, Alpha, especially if it's impacting our pups. If Luna is right, then we have silver all over the pack lands."

I look at my hand, letting Raif extend his claws. They're long, but not when you consider the contamination of the pack lands.

"How many warriors do you think he attacks us with each time?" I ask, staring at my hand.

"Fifty to a hundred," Kier says.

"And some of that silver is getting into our pack members, but the rest is rubbing off all over the pack lands. Even a little bit could cause problems, especially for the pups. No matter what we do to try and clean it up, the problem will continue until Jasper and his pack are dealt with."

"You want to attack him directly?" Kier asks.

"I don't know. If he's got silver powder sitting around, it could be worse for us. I think we need to figure out where he's keeping it, then we can decide how to get rid of it," I say.

"If he's storing it, we could spread it around his pack lands. You know, break open bags or open containers and dump it out." "I like that idea. Let's get some scouts out to Jasper's pack and see if we can find where he's hiding his silver," I say. "Has Alpha Henry said anything about wounds not healing because of silver?"

"No, but I'll ask him and Alphas Warren and Connor this weekend if they've had any issues. I'm guessing that Jasper is just

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after us for our money so the others wouldn't be getting attacked by him.

'Quirin, the patrol routes have silver on them, Kennedy says in the mind link, making me growl. I don't miss the edge to her voice, making me wonder if she's tired from treating so many warriors.

I look at Kier while I wait for her response, "Our patrols have silver burns on their hands and feet"

"And no one said anything?" he asks, throwing his hands in the air.

I snarl again when I get her response. "Two to four weeks? What the actual fuck? We've been dealing with this for a month and no one thought to say anything?"

"I guess it's a good thing you found your mate when you did, Alpha. Otherwise, we may never have realized that this was going on," Kier says and I realize he's right. My warriors obviously weren't saying, anything, and I wouldn't have said a word about my wound not healing either.

"Well, she did find it and we know now, so let's get this shit figured out. Send out some scouts. I want eyes on Jasper's pack 24/7 now. We need to find that silver and get rid of it, then we can focus on cleaning out our pack lands."

"I'm on it."

Jasper POV

"What was the point of that attack, Jasper?" Brogan growls. I pull the phone away from my car until he's done.

"I needed access to his pack, Brogan, and he's too strong for just my pack members. We've been attacking him almost weekly lately trying to weaken them." "You said this was about money. How much money?" he asks.

"My Beta's been fucking some human girl who works at the bank. Through her, he's found out that Quirin is loaded."

"How loaded?" he asks. This is tricky. While I need Brogan, I have no intention of going in 50/50 with him. My pack has been the one fighting every week. I'm the one infecting his pack with silver powder. My Beta is the one who got the intel. A best, I'm willing to go 70/30. I mean he is fighting but only because I told him it was worth it.

"Millions," I tell him. It's actually billions but this will cause less argument later when I finally get my hands on Quirin's money.

"And if we take him out we're splitting the money?" he asks.

"I'm not sure a 50/50 split is fair, Brogan. I've been fighting with him for longer, I got the intel, but yeah, I'm willing to split the money."

"Sixty-forty," he says.

"Eighty-twenty," I counter.

"Seventy-thirty," he counters back.

"Done."

"Done. You have a deal. When are we attacking again?"

"When can you be ready? I hear he is having some celebration this weekend, a Luna ceremony I believe. We could attack before or after, but I wouldn't attack during. My scouts say that Alpha Henry and Alpha Connor will both be there," I say.

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"Who is his Luna?"

"One of Alpha Warren's brats. The oldest female," I say.

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"Kennedy. She's a ripe little peach. You're not planning to kill her too, are you?" he asks. I could give a shit about the she-wolf.

"Why, do you want her?" I ask, joking.

"Yeah, I fucking do, so don't let your pack kill her. Two Alphas against three. We could probably take them," he says.

What a fucking idiot.

"Let's not push our luck. Before or after her ceremony?" I ask.

"My pack needs to heal. I don't know what they've got on their pack lands, but it burned my warriors' wolves' paws." "Yeah, we have the same problem," I tell him, although I know how the silver is getting on the pack lands. "So, after it is." "Sounds good. Talk soon."

I hang up, thinking. Maybe I should consider taking the Kennedy girl as a mate. If

I kill Quirin, then Alpha Connor isn't likely to come after me if his twin sister is mated to me. She'll already be weak from losing one mate. Losing a second could kill her.

Yeah, I like that idea. Of course, if Quirin's put her on the bank account ...

'Darius,' I call in the mind link.

'Yes, Alpha.'

'When are you fucking that human girl again?' I ask him.

'The one from the bank?' he asks.

'You fuck a lot of human girls, Darius?' I ask him.

'No, they have shit for stamina. One fucking orgasm and she's passing out on me.

'Well, go give her another orgasm and find out what you can about Quirin's bank account.'

He sighs heavily. "The things I do for this pack.'

"Shut the fuck up and don't get her pregnant. I'm not bringing a human into the pack.'

'Neither am I. That's why I always come in her mouth,' he smirks.

'Whatever, just find out what you can.'

'I'll let you know tomorrow what I find out. Anything in particular I need to look into?'

'Yeah. Find out if he added his new Luna to the bank account. Her life could depend on the answer.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Kennedy

After a grueling evening of scraping injuries and cleaning out silver from wounds, I felt exhausted.

When the last warrior left, I checked with Deborah and told her to head to bed. I have no idea how late it is, I just know that I'm exhausted. I finish cleaning up and check the room Deborah was working in before walking out to the main entrance. I'm turning off lights as I go, barely able to keep myself standing when I smell him.

"You look exhausted."

I look up and see my mate in the dim light of the waiting room.

"What are you doing here?" I ask.

"Waiting for you. I thought you'd be done earlier but when I got here, there were still several warriors who needed to be

seen."

"A lot of them came in tonight. I was surprised, but glad," I tell him.

His eyes narrow and he takes my hand, pulling it to him and looking at my palm. "Why do you have a wound that isn't healed?"

I shrug, not sure I can talk about it without breaking down. I'm too tired right now.

He looks at me, then back at my hand before pulling it to his lips and kissing it. "Some of the warriors accepted you as their Luna because they don't plan to be here this weekend?"

I nod, feeling myself losing the battle with my tears. Suddenly, Quirin scoops me into his arms.

"Someone has worn herself out today," he says. I nod and lean against his chest.

"Thank you for healing the pack," he says as he turns to carry me out of the hospital. I lean over and turn off the last of the lights before curling up against him again.

"You're welcome. I'm just glad they came. There were too many of them that had injuries, injuries that were getting infected and not healing. Too many of your pack's wolves were beating themselves up, overworking themselves to try and heal a wound that was never going to heal without medical attention."

He stops and after a moment, I look at him. He has lifted his face to the night sky. His eyes are closed and he's just breathing in the air.

"Is everything okay?"

He gives me a half grin before looking down at me. "I don't think I've ever stopped to enjoy quiet moments like this," he

says.

I realize that it is very quiet. It must be very late if the pack is quiet and only the patrols are running. The moon is high and it's a cool night. It would be perfect if I wasn't exhausted.

"It is a nice night," I say, resting my head against his shoulder.

He presses a kiss to my forehead. "You know I love you, right Little Pup?"

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I nod. I do know. "I just wish you realized that I wasn't a little pup anymore," I say.

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He chuckles as he begins to walk again. "Kennedy, I never would have had sex with you if I thought of you as a pup. Believe me. I may not be perfect, but pups are off limits, always have been. It's just my name for you, Kennedy. That's all."

I close my eyes, wondering if that's true.

The next thing I know, I feel like I'm in water. I jolt, but Quirin's strong arms hold me steady.

"Easy, Little Pup. I'm just washing off the scent of the pack. I thought you'd sleep better if you smelled like you and me," Quirin says. I'm so tired that all I can do is nod before falling back to sleep.

Much, much too soon, Quirin is shaking me awake.

"Kennedy. Kennedy!"

"What?" I ask groggily.

"Baby, you need to get up. You need to eat something this morning." The last thing I feel like doing is eating. My stomach feels like it might revolt.

"I'll eat when you're done with warrior training," I say. "Kennedy, it's seven o'clock. I've already finished warrior training." "What?" I ask, forcing my eyes to open before they fall closed again.

"I let you sleep in, but you were still sound asleep when I got back. You need to get up and get some food. And Susie says they need you to help them order food for this weekend."

"Oh, right. The Luna ceremony. Maybe we should just skip it, Quirin. Almost all of the warriors told me they were leaving anyway. If they've already accepted me, what's the point of having a stupid ceremony?"

"Hey, that's not you. Open your eyes and look at me, Kennedy," he says, stroking my cheek.

When I force my eyes open, I see Quirin frowning down at me. "This is important. It's important to you and to me. You're my mate. You are this pack's Luna. The pack doesn't have an issue with you, Kennedy, they have an issue with your father."

"You realize that's like saying that they don't have an issue with you, Quirin, they just have an issue with me? He's my father. I'm their Luna. Whatever beef they have with my father they should get over it. How many years has it been, Quirin?"

"It's not that easy, Kennedy," he growls, standing up.

"It is if you actually try," I say, getting up and walking into the bathroom. I close the door so I don't have to continue this conversation. I'm still exhausted and I'm still hurt that so many warriors want to leave this weekend.

Echo is quiet in my head as I get ready and I know that she's feeling the pain of so many warriors leaving the pack as well. When I step out of the bathroom, I expect Quirin to be gone, but he's sitting on the bed waiting for me.

"Kennedy..."

"I don't want to fight, Quirin. I'm tired and I have a lot to do before this weekend.

Let's just go," I say, heading for the door.

"I want to train with you tonight," he says.

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1 11 "kww say, moure where \$ges the energy for that, but find it somewhere

be we get to the bottom of the airs, 1 see several warriors standing around. They have no reason to be standing here unless they ** waiting for me or Quiru Since all of them accepted or as their Luta last night, I expect that they are here for Quin. 1 byw to walk past them, leaving Quirin to deal with whatever this is. "Low, cond we have a word please?" one of the warriors acks. I stop and turn to huma

He smiles. "You're our Luna, figher

1 take a deep breath. "I guess so

I watch as his wolf pushes forward. 1 suddenly remember that this is Terrance. He's the one who challenged me last night and had the path on his stomach "Lama, you may not remember, but my name is Lonan, Terrance's wolf begins. "I remember you, Lonen" I tell him.

"My buman and I had a long talk last night. I was ashamed that he accepted you as our Luna and didn't plan to stay for your ceremony, You beded was, even though we disrespected you. I had started to feel like I wasn't worthy of being a wolf spirit for a fijner as strong, as my human, but now I realize that it wasn't me at all. I feel so much stronger today because of you. 1 don't know how to thank you Luna, but if you can forgive my human for his actions, we'd like to stay for your ceremony this weekend," Loman says,

I feel Echo push forward and before I have a chance to respond, she does. "You did disrespect us, both of us. While I was offended, my human hurt. Pat the still worked tirelessly to help every single warrior and pup that came into the pack hospital last night. Many people underestimate my human. You would be wise not to do it again"

I watch as not only Lonan, but every warrior standing in the hallway exposes their necks in submission.

"Terrance, I won't force you to stay. But if you choose to stay for the ceremony, I would be glad to have you," I tell him.

"Thank you, Luna. You called us arrogant last night and I see now that it's exactly what I was. I wasn't listening to my wolf. You've not only healed him, you've helped us reconnect in a way that we needed to."

"Good. It's never easy when a human and their wolf are on the outs," I say.

"No, it isn't. Today, for the first time in a long time, I feel like Lonan and I are finally back on the same page. Thank you for your forgiveness, I won't disrespect you again."

"We all feel the same way, Luna," a warrior says.

"Yeah. All of us are stronger today because of you. All of us, humans and wolves, know that we have you to thank for healing us and making us stronger," another warrior says.

"All of us would like to stay for your Luna ceremony, if you will have us Luna," a third warrior says.

I look at the group. There are about fifteen of them.

"It's more than we had this morning, Ken, Echo says to me.

Yeah, I guess we're doing something right, I tell her.

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"I would love it if all of you stayed for the ceremony this weekend."

"Thank you, Luna."

"Thank you."

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"Thank you for your forgiveness," they say, as one by one, they lift their necks and head to whatever tasks they have today.

"That's eighteen now, Kennedy, Echo says, keeping track of how many warriors we have on our side. It's more than I would have hoped for and more than I expected. Suddenly, I don't feel quite so tired any more.

AD

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