

The Pack's Nemesis – Chapter 41

Quirin

I feel like the darkness is moving in on me again. It feels like nothing that I say to Kennedy is right. I'm trying to be understanding, but she needs to understand that her father killed people, people that were important to the members of this pack. You don't just get over that, no matter how many years it's been.

I wasn't surprised that so many of our warriors had asked to accept her as their Luna early. I was, however, surprised to see them waiting for her when we came downstairs. I hadn't realized that my pack members were starting to have problems with their wolves. Or actually, that the wolves were starting to feel incompetent.

'I would have eventually felt that way too,' Raif says, watching the warriors talk to Kennedy. 'Since the silver was weak enough that we didn't realize that's what was impacting our ability to heal, I can understand why the wolves were starting to second guess themselves. It would definitely put a wedge in the relationship because no matter what you would have said, I'd have felt your disappointment, anger, or frustration that I couldn't heal you. When you share a consciousness, you can't hide those things.'

I wait, nodding to the warriors as they walk away. My mate turns without another word and starts walking toward the kitchen. "Kennedy..."

She stops and turns to look at me, taking a deep breath as if steeling herself for a blow.

"I don't want to fight either. I love you. Get some food and have good day."

"You too," she says.

Kier and I send out the scouts to start watching Jasper's pack. I really want to know where he's keeping this silver powder and I love Kier's idea to spread it around his pack. After that, he and I start working to find ways to clean up our pack lands. While I know we can't clean it completely until we eliminate the source, I need to have an area that is clear for Kennedy's Luna ceremony this weekend.

That night, I had planned to let Echo run, but I could tell that Kennedy was still exhausted. I heard that several more warriors went to see her today. I'm glad about that. While I wanted to be with my mate, to make her feel good and to find a way to connect with her again, she was too tired, so instead, I wrapped myself around her. She was asleep almost instantly.

The next day was much the same, except this time, Kennedy was up early with me.

"I need to order more supplies for the hospital, Quirin. I used a lot to clean up the wounds of the warriors."

“Kennedy, I’ve told you that you can order whatever you need. I’ve told Kier to push it through. If you have any problems with that, just let me know.”

“Okay,” she says, but frowns.

When we get downstairs, there are more warriors waiting to apologize to her and ask if they can stay for the weekend.

She graciously accepts their apologies and then goes about her day.

Later in the day, boxes started arriving. When I get the notification from my gate patrols, I frown.

‘Kier, did you order a bunch of stuff?’ I ask him in the mind link.

‘No, Alpha.’

‘Did Kennedy?’

‘No. She ordered less than I thought she would have after treating so many warriors. But I didn’t question it. Why? What’s going on?’

‘There’s a delivery. The gate guard said it was a large truck,’ I say, standing and heading to the front of the packhouse.

Kier joins me and just as I see the large truck headed this way, my cell phone rings.

I quickly look at the caller ID and answer.

“Hey, Farrah.

“Quirin, the first delivery of my decorations for Kennedy’s Luna ceremony have just arrived. Did you get them?”

“This is a delivery of decorations? Farrah, what the hell did you buy?”

“You told me that money was not object, Quirin. I took you at our word.”

“What is all this shit?” I ask as the delivery truck backs up and the delivery guys get out, sliding the back door up into the roof of the truck.

“Holy shit,” Kier says.

“Farrah, where am I putting all of this?”

“Put it in your conference room. You never use it anyway, since you don’t have allies except for Henry.”

I ignore her jab and watch as the guys start unloading the boxes.

“The conference room?” Kier asks, having heard Farrah.

“Yeah,” I sigh. “Farrah, what am I doing with all of this?”

“YOU are storing it. Luna Yara and I are going to set it all up.”

“Fine. It’s here, you can check that off your to-do list.”

“Oh no, Quirin. There are two more deliveries coming. See you tomorrow!” she says in a much too cheerful tone.

Two more? What the actual fuck?

By the time afternoon warrior training comes around, I have a headache. Since my mind is still trying to figure out how to make things better with my mate and dealing with the multiple deliveries that have arrived today, I’m in no mood for training. However, I get another shock when we start training. My warriors are stronger. I can feel it and when I look at Kier, I see that he can feel it too.

Raif begins purring in our mind. ‘Our mate did this.’

For the first time in a while, I have to actually focus in warrior training. He’s right, the pack is getting stronger and the only thing that’s changed is Kennedy’s intervention.

When we finish warrior training, I head inside and I’m surprised to see Kennedy waiting for me.

“Hey, can we talk for a minute?” she asks me.

“Yeah, what’s up?”

“I was wondering what you’re planning to do about the silver in the pack lands during my Luna ceremony. I don’t want people getting hurt and each day I’m spending a lot of time scraping your patrols hands and feet to get the silver off of them.”

“Is there still a lot?” I ask, wondering just how much silver is in my pack lands.

“No, it’s becoming less, but that doesn’t mean that I want them to stop coming in. And it doesn’t mean that I don’t want to make sure that my family and our guests don’t get silver on them while they’re here. My sisters and brothers are all underage except for Connor. Wade and Yvonne only got their wolves last year, Quirin. They aren’t strong yet and silver could cause all sorts of problems for them and for the others.”

“We won’t have time to clean up the area for your Luna ceremony, Kennedy, but we will be able to lay fake grass down. The bigger issue is going to be letting their wolves out to run. You and I have pretty much avoided the silver when we’ve run...”

“I wash my hands all the time. I noticed the stinging, but didn’t think much of it until I found silver in Tommy’s wound. Now I know why my hands and feet were tender.”

“Right. I think the best thing to do is to be let them know that it’s not safe to run around the pack. They won’t be here too long so hopefully it will be okay. If they really want to run, I’ll let them know that they need to see you immediately afterward. Does that work?”

“Yeah, that works,” she says.

“And there’s one more thing we need to discuss.”

“What’s that?”

“Arlo.”

“What about him?”

“He’s done his time in the cells for disrespecting you. I don’t want anything to mar your day, Kennedy, so I’m going to release him and tell him he needs to leave the pack lands until Monday.” 1

“Quirin, I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Kennedy, he’s done his time. Do you really want him here over the weekend?”

“No, it’s just...”

“Look,” I say, taking her hands. “If it wasn’t your Luna ceremony, he’d be released. He’s done his time, Kennedy. I can’t hold him indefinitely and I can’t hold him just because it’s your Luna ceremony. As an Alpha, I have to be fair. Do you understand?” (1

I can tell she doesn’t agree with me, and while I know that she’s much more intelligent when it comes to running the pack hospital than I gave her credit for, I’m still the Alpha of this pack and I’ve been in my position for a very long time. She may know medicine, but I know how to run a pack.

“I understand, Quirin. But I’m putting it on record that I don’t agree with you.”

“Duly noted,” I say. Then I smile at her. “Now, can we get some food? I want to make sure we have everything ready for your family when they arrive tomorrow and I’m going to let the pack know that anyone who wants to leave needs to be gone by 9am.”

She nods, obviously still not in agreement with me. “Okay.”

“Okay. Oh and by the way, you should see the amount of decorations that Farrah bought.”

“What? Why?”

“Because it’s your Luna ceremony. Why else?” I say, taking her hand and leading her over to the food.

I have no idea what Farrah has planned, I just know that in two days, this amazing woman will officially become the Luna of my pack and I can’t wait.

The Pack’s Nemesis – Chapter 42

Kennedy

I’m not sure how I feel about becoming this pack’s Luna. On the one hand, I feel like the pack, or at least some of the pack members, are starting to trust me and believe in me. On the other hand, I still have a mate who says he’ll try to listen to me but doesn’t.

I don’t give a crap about how Arlo treats me. I can handle him. But I worry about Christy and I worry about him being let out before my Luna ceremony. What if he tries to hurt someone that I love, someone in my family? I don’t see Arlo being the kind of man who forgives and forgets. Of course, my mate doesn’t seem to be that kind of man either, but I trust him to keep the peace for me.

I’ve been pleasantly surprised that several warriors changed their mind about leaving and this morning, while I expected that many would leave, it wasn’t as many as I thought. Some who hadn’t come to speak with me had decided to stay on their own. It felt like each warrior who decided to stay was a win for me.

Warren stood at my side while Arlo and his brother Slater both accepted me as their Luna before they took off. From what Quirin said, most of the pack was going to Henry’s pack. At least I know they will be safe. I hate that they refuse to stay, but I can’t force them and I won’t. And if they are going to leave, I’d rather know that they are safe. At least no one decided to leave the pack permanently. I’ll take that as a win as well. 3

After the warriors leave, I rush to the pack hospital, making sure everything is in order knowing that my mother will want to see what I’ve done here. Then, I go back to the packhouse to make sure that the rooms for my family and Henry’s family are in order. As the current Alphas, my brother and Henry will both have rooms on the Alpha floor. Since all of the other rooms up here are vacant, there’s no problem with that. We’re also putting my parents on this floor along with

Alpha Harold and Luna Farrah. My sisters and brothers are going to stay on the Beta floor with Kier.

I check all of the rooms, making sure they have everything that my family and our guests will need, and I smile when I see the flowers that I requested we order. Since I know my mother loves flowers, I had Christy order flowers for all of the rooms. My brothers probably won't even notice, but my sisters will, and my mother definitely will.

Once I feel that everything is in order, I head back to my room to shower and get ready to greet our guests. They should be arriving early this afternoon, and I know that Quirin wants to talk with them right away about the silver on our pack lands so they know not to stray too far from the packhouse.

I'm just getting out of the shower when Quirin walks in. I expected him to be a bit broody because my father is coming, but he surprises me with his Quirin's half smile.

"I can feel your excitement Little Pup. Are you happy to have your family here?"

"I am! I'm disappointed that we won't be able to show them around, or at least not everywhere, but I'm really excited for them to see our pack. And ... I'm happy that more warriors stayed than I expected," I say honestly.

"Me too. I know that was bothering you and I don't like to see my Little Pup to frown."

"You're not going to call me Little Pup during my Luna ceremony, are you?" I ask him, narrowing my eyes at him.

"No. I realized when Arlo called you pup that the pack has never heard my pet name for you. So, we'll keep it just between us, agreed?"

"Hmmm, as long as you realize that I'm not a little pup, Quirin," I say.

As quick as a snake, he reaches out and tugs the towel off my body, his eyes darkening.

"This is not the body of a pup. This is the body of a grown woman. My woman. My mate," he purrs, reaching out to stroke his fingers over my nipples. As if my body is proving his point, my nipples instantly respond to his touch, hardening into tight peaks and sending heat straight south.

"Quirin, my family will be here soon," I say breathily. It's been days since we've been together. Between the warriors needing to get the silver out of their wounds, my argument with Quirin, and long days for both of us, we just haven't had time to be together.

"I know they will be. I want them to smell me on you," he says, leaning in to run his nose over my jaw and breathing deeply.

"What about you? Do you want my scent on you?" I ask, running my hands up his chest.

“Always,” he says, turning me to face the mirror.

“Quirin?” I ask. This is new.

“You should see how beautiful you are when you come undone for me, Kennedy.”

I blush as his hands come around and begin teasing my nipples. I press myself back against him, feeling his hard length under his clothes.

“Shouldn’t you be naked too?” I ask, my head falling back against him.

“I will be. I have to fight to maintain control when I’m with you, Kennedy. You know that. And I want you to see how beautiful you look when you get lost in my touch,” he says, his eyes, focused on his fingers and my breasts.

“Don’t close your eyes,” he murmurs. I hadn’t even realized I’d closed them.

I open them, looking into his fiercely possessive gaze as he growls softly behind me, adding to the raging heat already flowing through my body.

He slides one hand down my stomach to my slick wet heat as his other hand wraps more tightly around me, moving to the other nipple. It feels like he’s holding me in his embrace as he slowly brings me to the point where I will shatter in his arms.

He growls when his fingers slide through my soaked lips.

“Quirin,” I moan as his fingers begin working in circles around my clit.

“You’re so fucking wet, Kennedy. So fucking ready for me. But I want you to see yourself. I want you to see how fucking gorgeous you are when you come for me,” he growls, the fingers on my clit moving more quickly.

My body begins to shake as I get closer to my orgasm.

“Open your eyes, Kennedy,” he growls when I close them again.

I open my eyes, seeing a woman who barely looks like me as the orgasm rips through me. I cry out, grabbing onto his arms trying to hold myself together. His body seems to wrap around me as he holds me while my body jerks.

“Look how fucking beautiful you are,” he growls.

I’ve just started to come down when he pulls away, quickly stripping off his clothes before he’s behind me again.

“Hands on the sink,” he commands, his voice a deep growl of desire.

When I comply, he lines himself at my entrance and grabs my hips, bottoming out inside me in one thrust. I'm not sure what it's like for others, but I love that my mate loses control when we're together. He's so tightly controlled about everything else in his life, but not here when he's with me. With me, he can't maintain that careful control that he keeps with the pack. With me, it's raw need and desire and I love it.

This time, he doesn't have to tell me to watch. He grabs my hips and begins thrusting into me, his control obviously on the verge of snapping.

"It always feels so fucking good being inside you Kennedy. So fucking good," he growls and I watch as he lifts his head as if basking in the feel of being inside me. It makes me feel powerful that my strong mate wants me so desperately.

"I need you to come for me, Kennedy," he growls, his eyes snapping back to mine. I bend forward even more, arching my back and taking him deeper as I feel my body climbing back up the peak.

"Yes, Quirin," I say as he continues growling behind me, maintaining his punishing pace.

"Yes," he growls just as my orgasm rips through me. I cry out, watching as he lifts his head to the ceiling and roars his own release, pushing both of us through the orgasm until he collapses over top of me, both of us panting.

"Okay, you might think I'm beautiful when I come, but you're really sexy when you come," I tell him.

He bursts out laughing, the sound warming my heart. I watch in the mirror as he presses his forehead against my back while he laughs.

"Oh, goddess I love you, Kennedy," he says, kissing my spine at the nape of my neck and sending a fresh wave of shivers through my body.

"I love you too, Quirin."

He looks at me in the mirror. "I know we still have a lot of things to work through, Kennedy. But I'm so happy you're officially taking your place as Luna of our pack this weekend."

"Me too," I say. He's right, we do have a lot to work through still, but I know one thing. I love this man with all my heart. I always have.

And I am my mother's daughter, so I know I can find a way for us to come together, to work together as the leaders of a pack should.

The Pack's Nemesis – Chapter 43

Quirin

I know the next few days are going to be difficult for me. For Kennedy, I need to be pleasant and even welcoming to Alpha Warren and Alpha Connor. But the way I've been feeling, the darkness starting to settle back into my mind and body, I knew it was going to be hard for me.

However, the moment I saw Kennedy get out of the shower, I knew what I needed. I need her light, her shining brightness to push the darkness away.

It was fun watching my mate watch herself and sexy as fuck to watch her come undone. I know how beautiful she is when she comes, but I wanted her to see it too. I hadn't expected her to tell me that it was sexy when I came. I don't know what it looks like to her, but to me, it's like my body is blasted with her light, warm and loving. My darkness is slayed by the bright knights of her light. It's fucking nirvana every time I'm inside her.

It's been a few days since we've been together, and I almost forget how light I feel after I'm with her. It's like the weight of everything that pushes down on me is blasted away and I feel lighter than air. I don't know how she does it, but this woman ... she is incredible.

After sliding out of her, I jump into the shower, surprised when she joins me.

"Didn't you just shower?" I ask, looking over her body again. If I'd thought about it the first time we were together, I'd have realized that she's not a warrior. She's lean and muscular in the way that an Alpha who runs a lot would be, but not the way a warrior would be.

"I did, but you made a mess and I need to wash it off of me," she says, grabbing a washcloth and beginning to wash between her thighs.

"I made a mess?" I ask, sliding my fingers over her nipples and watching as they respond to my touch. I love that.

"Yes you did," she says, her tone changing to something more breathy and needy. When I gently tug on her nipples, she

moans.

"Quirin, we don't have time," she says, but she leans her head back.

"You're already a mess," I say, lifting her up and pressing her against the shower wall. She's right that we don't have a lot of time, but I know it doesn't take me any time at all to come when I'm inside her and if she isn't too sore, I can probably bring her up and over again quickly.

I thrust inside her, watching her as I feel her body responding to me instantly. I smile, taking her mouth and her moans as I bring both of us up and over again. Then, I kiss her neck before setting her on her feet and chuckle when she wobbles.

“If I fall in front of my family, it’s your fault,” she says, glaring at me.

“I will happily explain to your father and brother how I fucked you over the sink and then in the shower to make your legs wobbly,” I say, expecting her angry look. I’d never tell them anything. What I have with Kennedy is all mine. I’ll never share it with anyone, but the threat is well aimed as I knew it would be.

“You...” she growls, her eyes narrowing. Then she stops and tilts her head at me. “Are you teasing me?”

“I don’t know, am I?” I say, backing up into the spray of water and watching her.

I’m surprised when I see her eyes go nearly black with desire. Now it’s my turn to tilt my head at her.

“You are amazingly sexy all the time. But damn, Quirin. When you smile, really smile like that?” She shakes her head. “Maybe it’s a good thing you don’t smile a lot. I’d have to beat back the she-wolves and you’d be lucky if I let you out of bed. Ever.”

I didn’t realize I was smiling. I was just enjoying my mate. But this time, I do know that I’m smiling. It’s a very naughty smile and I know it.

“Did you want me to buy you some handcuffs so you can keep me locked to your bed, little mate? I know I’d enjoy using them on you,” I say, watching her mouth drop open. I have to hold back my smile when I see her mouth set with determination.

“Maybe I’ll buy my own and surprise you some day.”

“I look forward to it. Now, you’d better hurry. The gate guards just let your family through.”

That gets her moving. She’s out of the shower and the bathroom before I can grab the washcloth. I quickly wash myself and then get dressed before jogging down the stairs to stand beside Kennedy as we greet her family.

I look around at the pack members when I get to the bottom floor, making sure that no one seems tense or ready to do something to threaten her family and when I’m sure that it’s safe, I step outside.

“You’re bouncing on the balls of your feet, Little Pup.”

“They’re here!” she says excitedly. They pull up in a large SUV. Alpha Connor, Alpha Warren, and Luna Yara’s guard, Bradley, all step out first. I watch as the three of them face different directions, sniffing the air as if expecting an attack.

“Seriously, Dad? Do you think Quirin or I would allow anyone to attack the family?” Kennedy scolds her father. “Hey Bradley. Did you bring Trena and the kids?”

“I did, little Alpha.”

“She’s a Luna now,” I correct automatically. 1

His eyes flash up to me. “Of course.”

“Alpha Warren, Alpha Connor, welcome to our pack,” I say, walking down the stairs. “Kennedy is very excited to have her family here,” I say, smiling at my mate who has thrown herself into her twins’ arms.

“So I see,” Connor says, smiling at his twin.

“I told you that there was nothing to worry about, Warren. I’m sure Alpha Quirin has ensured our safety while we’re here,” Luna Yara says, stepping out of the SUV.

“I absolutely have, Luna. I will not allow anything to mar this weekend for Kennedy.”

“Of course you wouldn’t,” she says, smiling at me and cupping my cheek like a proud mother. I always feel like my heart softens a little when Luna Yara is around.

“There is one thing that we do need to discuss and I’m afraid we need to do it as soon as you get settled.”

“Is there a problem?” Alpha Connor asks, instantly in Alpha mode.

“I’m afraid so, but it can wait until after we get your things into your rooms. I know Kennedy is excited to show you around the packhouse,” I begin.

“And hopefully the pack hospital?” Luna Yara asks her daughter as the rest of the brood begins piling out of the car.

“Of course,” Kennedy says. I greet the others as they get out, Kennedy introducing me to Bradley and Trena’s two children, one boy, one girl. Then, Kennedy and I walk everyone inside.

“Wow, it’s so ... umm... different here,” Wendy says, looking around.

“Different how?” I ask, looking around.

“Oh, well...” she begins then looks like she doesn’t know what to say.

“No flowers,” Luna Madison says, and Wendy looks gratefully at her. 1

“That must be it!” Wendy says.

I notice that Alpha Warren, Alpha Connor, and Bradley are all looking around again as if expecting an attack at any moment.

“Do we get to see your pack lands?” Yorick asks, also looking around. Yana and the younger twins are whispering and pointing as they walk in.

“I’m afraid not. That is what I need to speak to your father and brother about once you get settled.” From the corner of my eye, I see both men’s eyes zero in on me.

‘Alpha, Alpha Henry has arrived along with Alpha Harold and Luna Farrah,’ my gate patrol says in the mind link.

‘Thank you.’

“Kennedy, Henry is here with Harold and Farrah. Do you want to show your family where they are staying, and I’ll greet them?” I ask.

“I can take them,” Kier says, jogging up. “Hey everyone.”

“Thanks Kier,” Kennedy tells him.

“When they’re settled, bring Alpha Warren and Alpha Connor to my office. I’ll have Henry and Harold join us as well.”

I extend my hand to Kennedy. “I’ll see you in a few minutes,” she says to her family before taking my hand.

“While they’re meeting, you can give me a tour of the pack hospital,” Luna Yara says.

“Okay,” Kennedy says, happily.

We walk outside and I can feel Kennedy’s happiness that her family is here. “You don’t have to wait with me. It’s just Henry, Harold, and Farrah,” I tell her.

She frowns up at me. “They’re your family. You were here to greet my family and I’m the Luna of the pack. I should be here to greet them.”

I wrap my arm around her shoulders and kiss the top of her head. “I’m glad you are.”

The moment Henry gets out of the car, he frowns at me. “Oh goddess, you’re smiling again. What is wrong with you? Kennedy, is this your influence?”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. Quirin always smiles like this,” she says, teasing my brother.

He gives me a look. “Really?”

I just shrug and hug Farrah. “Hello, Farrah.”

“Hello, my son. You look well. Better than you did last weekend.”

“Some things have been resolved since last weekend,” I tell her. She pulls back and looks at me in the way that very few can, as if she’s looking into my soul.

“But not everything,” she says, more as a statement than a question.

“We’re working on it.”

“I’m glad to hear it’s a ‘we’ and not a ‘me’ that is working on it,” she says. I just shake my head.

I welcome Alpha Harold, letting Henry know he’s in the room he’s usually in when he stays here.

“I’ll show you to your room, then I’d like to speak with both of you,” I say to Harold and Henry. “Alphas Warren and Connor will be joining us as well.”

When we walk back in, the sounds coming from the floors above us already sound chaotic. I can hear someone running through the halls, there’s laughter, and loud talking.

It’s going to be a long couple of days.

The Pack’s Nemesis – Chapter 44

Kennedy

When we walk upstairs to show Harold and Farrah to their room, my sisters and brothers have already taken over the Beta floor.

“Oh, Kier, I’m so sorry,” I say watching them act in a normal way for them, but in a very rambunctious way in this pack.

“Are you kidding? It’s great!” he says. “I never had laughter like this is my first pack and we don’t have it here. It’s ... loud, but good.”

“Alpha Henry!” my sisters and brothers cry all racing over to hug him until they see Harold and Farrah. “Alpha Harold! Luna Farrah!” Then they divide and conquer, rushing to give all of them hugs. Henry ruffles their hair, while Harold and Farrah ask them questions about their life and what’s been going on with them since they last talked.

“Aww, Henry! I just brushed my hair! What if my mate is in this pack and this is the first impression I make on him,” my sister Wendy whines, smoothing out the hair that Henry just ruffled.

“If your mate is in this pack, neither of you will know it for three more years, Wendy. And if anyone in this pack thinks that they can tell you otherwise to try and get you into their bed, there will be a line of men, myself included, to remind them that you are not to be touched,” he says seriously.

“As if anyone in this pack would want us anyway, Wen. They all hate us here. You saw how Dad and Connor acted when we arrived,” my sister Yana says to her.

Almost as one, Henry, Harold, and Farrah turn to look at Quirin and I. I glance at him and shrug. “They weren’t entirely sure that things were going to be safe. But they are. We’ve made sure of it. Quirin has been very clear with the pack, haven’t you?” I ask him.

“No one would dare do anything to disrupt your Luna ceremony,” he says confidently.

“So, that’s not what we need to talk about?” Harold says as we make our way up to the Alpha floor. It’s much quieter here.

“No. I wish it was that simple. But this is a much larger conversation,” he says. When we get upstairs, I realize that my parents, Connor, and Madison are all still here.

“I’ll admit I’m intrigued and a bit concerned. If you’re worried, there is obviously something to worry about,” my father says coming out of his room.

“There is. Let me get Harold and Farrah settled and then we can meet,” Quirin says.

“Are you ready to take me to the pack hospital, Kennedy?” my mother asks.

“Absolutely.”

“Since we’re not allowed to walk around the pack lands yet, do you mind if I come with you,” Madison asks.

“We’re not allowed on the pack lands?” Henry asks, as he, Harold, and Farrah turn to look at Quirin.

“It’s what we’re going to talk about. As a matter of fact, Kennedy is the one who found it. You should ask her about it while you tour the hospital, Luna Yara,” Quirin says, smiling down at me

proudly. It feels like my heart might burst from his praise. I had no idea how important it was for me to feel like he believed in me and was proud of me.

“Well, I’m not at all surprised. My daughter is a brilliant young woman and will make an incredible doctor someday soon,” my mother says, easily giving me her praise.

“She is her mother’s daughter, after all,” my father says proudly, wrapping his arm around my mother as he smiles at me.

“Luna Farrah, why don’t you get settled and we’ll head over to the pack hospital,” I say.

“I’m just going to drop off my bag. The one place in Quirin’s pack that I’ve never seen is the hospital.”

“Well, they didn’t use it before I arrived,” I say.

My mother is instantly alert. “Who treated their wounds? You are attacked by other packs, are you not?” my mother asks, looking from me to Quirin.

“As I told Kennedy when she first arrived, my pack is made up of previous rogues. They had to learn to treat themselves in order to survive. They’re only just starting to go see Kennedy in the hospital,” he tells her.

“I see,” my mother says and this time, her eyes are on me. “Well, let’s get going, shall we?”

As we walk downstairs, Susie and Christy rush over to us.

“We hope your rooms are okay,” they say, looking at our guests. “Oh, they’re perfect and the flowers are lovely!” my mother says.

“I thought the same! Whose idea were the flowers?” Madison asks.

“Oh, that was our Luna’s. She wanted everyone to feel at home. If there’s anything that you need while we’re here, please let us know,” Susie says.

“Actually, I should probably start looking through the decorations for tomorrow. Luna Madison, would you mind helping me while Luna Yara goes to visit the pack hospital?” Farrah says.

“Twist my arm!” Madison says excitedly, making me chuckle. I watch as Luna Farrah takes charge, like the previous Luna she is, as she and Madison walk off together.

“Is it bad that I’m glad it’s just you and me, Ken?” my mother asks, sliding her arm through mine.

“No. I’m kind of glad too,” I whisper to her as we walk outside.

“The feel of this pack is very different, Kennedy. How are you doing here?”

I wave at a warrior, who nods at us as we pass.

“It’s been an adjustment. Not having a medical team here, they didn’t recognize the value that I can bring to the pack. Some of them still don’t. They expected Quirin’s mate to be a warrior, and of course, I’m not that,” I tell her honestly.

“You are strong and powerful in other ways, Kennedy. And don’t get me started on how smart you are,” she says.

“Thanks Mom. I didn’t realize that Quirin didn’t know that I’d already double majored,” I tell her.

“How would he? You’ve only ever seen him on rare occasions over the years.”

She stops and looks around. “Do you want to tell me what happened last weekend at your brother’s Alpha ceremony? You left early.”

I blush brightly, but if there is anyone I can talk to about this, it’s my mother.

“Quirin and I were having ... intimacy issues.”

“I see. Are they medical issues? Or something else?” she asks me.

I sigh. “I tore the first night, the night of my birthday. He, umm...well, he lost control and well, I bled a lot. It scared him. He didn’t want to hurt me and even though I told him it was to be expected, he was refusing to be with me again.”

“Did you heal?”

“Of course. Echo healed me in a day, but he refused to touch me. Well, until that night. I was struggling watching Connor and Maddy touch each other and watching Connor steal kisses from her every chance he could get. I knew Quirin wouldn’t be outwardly affectionate like Dad or Connor, but I didn’t think that it would be so hard to get him to be with me. I accused him of making me into one of his one-night stands,” I tell her.

I’m surprised when I see a smile spread across her face. “Good for you! And apparently that worked,” she says and turns to keep walking.

“Yes, it did,” I say.

“Stupid Alphas who underestimate their mates,” she mumbles. I smile. I miss my mother’s mumblings.

“So things have gotten better in that department? I mean, you smell very strongly of him, so I’m guessing those issues are resolved?” she asks as we walk into the hospital.

“Yes, they are,” I tell her as I introduce her to Deborah. My mother begins asking her about her medical history, training, and other questions she normally asks anyone in her hospital. I can tell that Deborah is a bit overwhelmed by my mother, but for the most part, she holds her own.

“Has anyone come in, Deborah?” I ask her.

“Not today, Luna,” she says.

I nod and begin by showing my mother the two rooms that I’ve put together to see patients. While she looks them over, nodding her head in approval, I tell her about finding the silver in the warriors’ wounds.

“They couldn’t feel it?” she asks shocked.

“No. Even Tommy, the pup who had it in his wound, didn’t say it hurt like it should. It was only when his mom was trying to wash out the wound that he said it hurt. In hindsight, that was probably a good thing because when I scraped it, it took the silver off and he started to heal.”

“Are the rest of the rooms the same?” she asks as we step out of the second room.

“No, not yet. I’m slowly making updates and changes to the hospital. I don’t want to cause undue stress to the pack’s finances, so I’ve just ordered what I thought was critical.”

She frowns at me, but nods. “I’m assuming you have a microscope if you found the silver?”

“Yes. It’s in the room that I’ve set up as my office and it’s next to the supply room.”

“Is your supply room set up like mine is?” she asks as we walk to the other side of the hospital.

“Yes,” I say, smiling.

I take her to the storage room first. “What is that archaic piece of equipment?” she asks.

“That’s the x-ray machine that was here when I got here.”

She turns and looks at me. “And you didn’t replace it?”

“I’m trying to be fiscally responsible, Mom. They had NO obstetric equipment. Since Deborah told me that they lose pups and sometimes the mothers, I prioritized those items. You know the x-ray machine in our pack is like \$60,000? I priced it. I mean, I don’t need top of the line since we’re not a teaching hospital, but a lower end version that I’d want is still around \$30,000.”

“And Quirin said you couldn’t afford it?” she asks, watching me carefully.

“He told me to order whatever I needed, but he didn’t give me a budget and Mom, when I say they had nothing, I mean they had nothing! They had gauze and band aids for the pups. That’s about it,” I say as she looks around, going through the supply

room.

“Well, I’d say you have the essentials here but maybe talk to Quirin about the x-ray machine. Does this one even work?” she asks.

“It does, otherwise, I would have gotten one. But it’s weak. It’s not great. But it’ll do for now.” The thought of trying to get Quirin to listen to me about medical equipment has my eye twitching. I struggle to get him to listen to me about everyday things, much less the medical equipment he doesn’t even think we need.

“Well, it’s your pack. I’m not going to tell you how to run it and as you said, the warriors here are just starting to come to see you. I’m glad they did or they still be getting weak. Now show me what you found when you took the skin samples,” she says excitedly.

It’s so great working with my mother again. I feel like everything inside me that I didn’t know was unsettled, just settled again.

We spend another hour talking through what I’ve found and I explain to her about the silver on the pack lands.

“Oh that damn Alpha. He reminds me of Brady! Stupid Alphas who can’t be happy with what they have,” she mumbles to herself.

“I take it Jasper hasn’t battled against our pack since I left?” I ask her.

“No, but if he does, I’ll make sure to check for silver contamination. I certainly don’t want any pack members and especially not the pups getting silver in their bodies.”

I smile, staring at my mother. When she realizes that I haven’t answered her, she looks at me before smiling and opening her arms.

“It’s so good to have you here, Mom,” I say as we embrace.

“I’m always here, whenever you need me, Kennedy. But I’m so proud of you. I knew this would be hard, but you’re doing a great job.”

“Thanks, Mom.”

The Pack’s Nemesis – Chapter 45

Warren

I've never been to Quirin's pack. I've never been invited to come for a visit, a meeting, a battle, nothing. When we stepped out of the car, I wasn't sure what to expect. Now that I've gotten a taste for the feel of this pack, I'm even more worried about my daughter. I know she's always liked Quirin, which is odd, since he's anything BUT likeable. But being here, I realize just what a struggle it must be for her. 1

I'm not sure how I feel about their scents being so strong on each other. On the one hand, I'm glad that they seem to be getting along together. After barely smelling them on each other last weekend, I was concerned. On the other hand, she's my little girl and I'm struggling to come to terms with the fact that she's now a grown woman.

Quirin has always been closed off, a dark, depressed man. But seeing him now, he seems almost happy. Well, as happy as a man like Quirin can be. I'm pretty sure he actually smiled, or it seemed like he smiled. It was the closest thing that I've ever seen to a smile on his face. My daughter, on the other hand, seems much more muted than I'm used to her being.

I'll be anxious to get Yara's assessment of our daughter after spending time with her today. I don't get the impression that she wants to leave or to reject Quirin, but if she does, I'll do everything in my power to get her away from him.

It suddenly dawns on me that I don't have the force of the pack behind me any longer. I mean, I probably do, but effective six days ago, my son took over as Alpha. The pack is his, it's no longer mine. It would be up to him if he would choose to use the pack's resources to protect his sister.

As I walk into Quirin's office, I remember all those years ago when Yara saved my leg. At the time, I'd had no idea what I would do or who I was if I wasn't an Alpha. Today, while I definitely have more titles such as mate and father, no longer being the Alpha to a strong pack makes me feel uneasy in my own skin. I haven't had to ask anyone for assistance to protect my family. I always knew I had the pack for that. Now, however, that choice would be Connor's. I expect that he would choose to protect his sister, even if it meant going to war with Quirin, but it would be his choice and I would be bound to accept it.

As we sit in Quirin's office, my son turns and frowns at me. He must feel the tension in me, the struggle within myself that I no longer know who I am. My life is changing and it's going to take me more than a week to adjust to that. Maybe I'll take some time to talk to Harold while we're here to see how he managed it. Henry's been Alpha of their pack for over a decade and somehow, Harold adjusted.

I shake my head at Connor, letting him know that we can talk later. I'm thankful that I've raised him to the kind of Alpha that I was, but it's a bit unnerving to be on the receiving end of an Alpha who is monitoring your emotions and is concerned about them. That was my job for so long that it feels strange coming from someone other than Yara.

“So, as I mentioned to Luna Yara before, it was Kennedy who figured out what was happening. And while I can’t confirm that she’s completely accurate in her assessment, I’d bet a substantial amount of money on the fact that she’s right,” Quirin begins.

“You’d win that bet,” Connor says without hesitation. “My sister is smart and intuitive. So, what did she figure out?”

I have to fight a smile of pride. My son has taken to his role of Alpha as if he was made for it, and I guess he was. It makes me feel like I did a good job preparing him for his role and to be the amazing Alpha that I know he will be.

‘You did a great job, Dad, and thanks,’ his voice floats into my mind. I refocus on Quirin.

“Alpha Jasper has been using silver powder to injure my pack members and weaken my pack,” Quirin says.

“Son of a bitch! What an asshole! He’s not strong enough to defeat you in a fair fight, so he has to resort to weakening you from the inside?” Henry asks.

“Hold up. You said Kennedy figured it out. Didn’t your warriors know that they had silver poisoning or at least had silver in their bodies?” I ask.

He turns and looks at me. “They did not. The powder was fine enough that it was coating the wounds and keeping them from healing but not enough that they felt more than the injury itself.”

“And your pack doesn’t go to the hospital when they’re injured?” Connor asks, remembering what Quirin said to Yara upstairs.

“That’s correct,” he says.

“So, how did she find it?” Harold asks him.

“Through a pup. He was injured and the injury wasn’t healing.”

“How did a pup get injured during a battle?” I ask, concerned that they aren’t even using their safe rooms.

“Not during a battle. It happened on our pup playground. Kennedy figured this out too. If Jasper and his pack are putting this powder on their claws, some of that silver is getting onto my pack lands. My pack lands are contaminated with silver. That’s why you can’t walk around.”

“Holy shit. What are you going to do? Even if you clean it up, it will just be there again when he attacks again,” Henry says.

“True. Beta Kier and I,” he says, nodding at his Beta, “have sent scouts to Jasper’s pack. We need to eliminate the silver at the source.”

“What are you going to do once you find it?” Connor asks.

Quirin gives another half-smile and looks at his Beta.

“I like the idea of spreading it around Jasper’s pack lands, giving them a taste of their own medicine,” Kier says.

“They could have pups that would get injured, just like yours,” Connor says, looking thoughtful. Then he shrugs. “What if we just attack him.”

“We thought of that. But I’m worried that they could make us even weaker if we were on their territory and they have a lot of silver. They could use it on us and weaken us during the battle. It’s a risk I’m not willing to take,” Quirin says. I have to admit, not having spent a lot of time with Quirin over the years, I’m impressed by his ability to analyze the situation and make a decision that is right for his pack.

“So, what’s your plan and how can we help?” I ask, glancing at Connor, thankful that he seems willing to assist.

“We’re going to find his supply of silver and then eliminate it. But I don’t know the first thing about cleaning up contaminated soil. Does anyone else?”

“I do, actually,” I say. “I was just reading about a new approach to removing heavy metals from soil. It’s some chemical process that draws the metal out of the soil during a filtering process. It’s expensive...”

“Money isn’t an issue,” Quirin says. I already knew that. I knew Quinton was wealthy before he died. If I’d been so inclined, I could have come here and taken everything that I could find and kept his money for myself. But greed is what got Quinton killed and I never cared about the money. My mate, my family, and my pack were the most important things to me.

“If you’re interested, I’ll get the information and send it over to you,” I tell him.

“Thank you,” he says. I can tell he feels like he’s going to choke on the words, but he’s being more friendly to me than I had expected.

“Spending your early days of retirement with some light reading, Warren?” Harold says, jokingly.

“Something like that,” I say, recognizing that he knows that I’m struggling with the transition of no longer having a full- time job while my mate still does.

“What about the Luna ceremony? Is the area where we’re going to be sitting and having her after party safe? Luna Farrah is probably out there right now starting to set up for tomorrow,” Henry says.

“We laid artificial turf down and cordoned off the area where we’ll be having the ceremony. That area will be safe,” Beta Kier says.

“What about your patrols?” Connor asks.

“They have to see Kennedy after their shift. She cleans their hands and feet so they will heal. If the wounds get to be too much while they’re running, they have to see her before the end of shift, but so far, it’s just a light dusting on the ground, nothing the wolves can’t handle. If you have any other ideas for how to clean up our pack lands, I’m all ears. But I would appreciate the information that you have, Alpha Warren,” he says to me.

“Happy to provide it,” I say.

“Well, unless you all have anything else, we can move to the dining hall. I know that Kennedy has worked with our omegas to create a feast for tonight and while I don’t want anyone walking around the pack lands, we can sit out back and enjoy the cool night air after dinner.”

“Thank you, Alpha Quirin,” I say as we stand. Harold and Henry walk out ahead of us and Connor turns to Quirin.

“How are things going with my sister?”

“My personal relationship with your sister is none of your business, Alpha. But I’m sure you’ve realized that my pack is nothing like yours. It’s been an adjustment for her and the pack, but I think they’re starting to come around. It’s hard to resist Kennedy,” he says, a small smile on his face.

“As I said before, she is her mother’s daughter,” I say. Almost as if I’ve conjured them, Yara and Kennedy walk into the packhouse, laughing.

I step up to Yara, having missed her already. “Did you have a nice time?”

“Kennedy is doing a great job, not that I’m surprised,” Yara says, smiling at our daughter.

Kennedy goes to stand beside Quirin. He doesn’t put his arm around her, but I see his hands twitching like he wants to. “It was like being back home. Mom and I just fell into our old patterns of talking about issues and working through them.”

“You’ll have to tell me all about it later, Kennedy,” Quirin says to her.

This time, I see it. I see the love that he has for my daughter shining in his eyes. Quirin may not know how to show love to Kennedy, his father wasn’t the kind of man who did either, but he absolutely loves my daughter.

I just hope that it's enough for her.