

Chapter 6: Heading Home

Quirin

While Kennedy was upstairs with her mother, I took the opportunity to give Connor his birthday present. I haven't given Kennedy hers yet. I almost don't want to. Her parents gave her a diamond necklace and it looks beautiful on her. My wolf's head necklace looks like a trinket in comparison.

'I want her wearing my face around her neck,' Raif growls.

'I know. I'll give it to her later,' I say. I know Raif won't allow me to go without giving her our gift, but I'm not giving it to her here in front of everyone. I don't want to see the sneering looks of the other Alphas. I'm sure their gifts were all expensive. I'd prefer to throw them all away and if any of them are inappropriate, I will. I didn't spend as much money on Kennedy as I could have. Instead, I gave her something that matters to me and Raif. Hopefully, she'll understand and appreciate the gesture.

'Of course she will,' Raif says confidently. I'm not so confident.

"Alpha Quirin, this is extremely generous," Connor says. His gift was purely about money and making a statement about my wealth. As the incoming Alpha to this pack, I wanted him to know that I'm powerful in more ways than one.

"You're going to be Alpha. Every Alpha could use a start-up fund."

"I... thank you," he says.

I nod and step away, letting others approach him. Alpha Warren gives me the keys to Kennedy's car looking like he wants to say something, but wisely chooses to stay quiet. I take the keys and begin to pack the car with



her birthday gifts.

"Dad says we have to help you since Kennedy got so many gifts," Wade, her youngest brother and one of the other set of twins says as he comes out carrying several boxes. Right behind him is Yorick, also laden with gifts.

"How many presents does she have?" I ask, wondering if her car is going to be big enough for everything.

"My sister is well loved by everyone. They all wanted to do something nice for her," Yorick says, as if warning me that I'd better do something nice for his sister. He's the next oldest son and at sixteen, he's already got the build of a strong Alpha. He, like Connor, looks just like his father, only he has the grey-green eyes of Luna Yara and Kennedy.

By the time Kennedy comes back downstairs after packing her things, I'm ready to go. If one more person tries to warn me about not being good enough for Kennedy, telling me that I'd better make sure that I'm worthy of her, or any other type of warning, I may have to kill someone. I already know that I'm not good enough for her. I know she deserves better, but I can't seem to stop myself from accepting the undeserving gift that the Moon Goddess has given me. 2

When I see her walking down the stairs, everything in me calms. She didn't try to run; she didn't change her mind about me while she was upstairs with her mother. I can tell that she's been crying, but I'll ask her about that when we're gone from here. Right now, I'm practically desperate to get her away from all these unmated Alphas and make her mine.

When I step forward to take her bag, her father does the same. I don't back down. Kennedy is mine now. Mine to protect and mine to love, even



if my love is different from what she's used to.

There may be only one person in this world that could give me another warning about Kennedy without me losing my shit. Luna Yara doesn't exactly warn me though. No, her words are much more powerful to me. She said she's putting her trust in me to care for her daughter. The woman who saved my life several years ago is trusting me to care for her daughter like she cared for me. I can't promise her that I'll do that. I'm not the same kind of person that Luna Yara is, all glowy and bright. But I do tell her that I will take care of Kennedy, and I will. I will always keep her safe.

When we get in the car and pull away, I see her watching her family in the rearview mirror and I hear her sigh. I know her father and brother are worried about her. I get it. I'm not exactly friendly with either of them. But just like I would never hurt Luna Yara, I would never, ever hurt Kennedy.

"What's on your mind, Little Pup?" I ask her.

She huffs. "I'll be glad when I give you a pup and you can call them Little Pup instead of me," she grumbles.

I don't think she understands the tremendous impact that her simple words have on me. I've gone years without finding my mate, had basically given up on ever finding her, much less having a pup or heir. When I realized she was my mate tonight, I'd been so overwhelmed with Raif's pride and possessiveness that pups hadn't even entered my mind. But now ... the thought of having little Kennedys running around our packhouse, having a son, my own heir, has me struggling to breathe. Kennedy has just casually handed me a future I never expected to have. The beauty and glow of a future that I don't know how to comprehend or accept. So, my response to her is probably a little sharper than intended.



"You'll always be my Little Pup."

She huffs again. "I'm an adult, you know?"

"Were you yesterday?" I counter.

She looks out the window and I feel bad for antagonizing her. I just...I can't get my hopes up for a future that I may never have and I one that I definitely don't deserve. Darkness doesn't get to live in such bright light.

"Tell me about your pack," she says, changing the subject and surprising me.

"Our pack now," I say. I want her to accept that she's mine. That makes her the Luna of our pack. I'll have to figure out when we can have that ceremony. I'm sure her family will want to attend and while I could give a shit about her father, I would never disrespect Luna Yara that way. I also know it would upset Kennedy to have a ceremony like that without her family in attendance.

I frown, thinking about the Luna ceremony. I don't even know what a Luna ceremony is supposed to be like. I've never been to one, never had the inclination to go to one. I'm assuming it's a big deal, but in my pack, we don't do celebrations like that. We're fighters. We fight and we celebrate winning and defeating our enemies, that's it. Because my pack members have come to me over time, I never even had an official Alpha ceremony. I've just taken in the rogues as they've come, had them accept me as their Alpha individually or in small groups and that's it.

I look over at Kennedy's dress. It's a beautiful dress, as bright and shiny as she is. She'll want a bright and shiny Luna ceremony, I'm sure. I'll have to talk to Farrah. Maybe she can help me. I wonder how the pack will respond to something like that. I guess it doesn't matter. I'll do what



Kennedy wants so she can feel like a Luna in her own pack.

"What do you want to know about them?" I ask her.

"How many pack members do you ... do we have?" she asks, and I smile at her change in words. I glance over at her when she sees me smiling, I get her beautiful answering smile.

"One hundred and thirteen. One hundred and fourteen once you accept me as your Alpha, which we'll do tonight," I tell her.

"That's separate from marking and mating, right?" she asks, timidly.

"Yes," I say, suddenly realizing that my mate is most likely a virgin. Shit! While I'm thrilled that no man has ever touched her, I've never been with a virgin before. I intentionally only had sex with women who were older, usually had their own pups and weren't looking to have one of mine so they could try to force me into a mate bond. That's not to say I haven't had my share of Alpha females, probably hoping for a chosen mate bond. But I never slept with a woman more than once and I always used protection. I never wanted them getting attached and never wanted to worry that I had heirs running around that I may or may not know about. I refused to be forced into a mate bond, and I'd never met anyone that I was interested in binding myself to, until tonight.

"Our pack is a pack of fighters. Every one of them, except me, was a rogue. Although I guess, technically, I was rogue at one time too. They all know how to fight. They all know how to win. They understand the value of protecting what is important to them and us, and that's our pack." 1

She's just about to say something when we pull up to the gate. I hold up my hand, telling her to wait as I roll down the window.



"Alpha ..." the guard cuts off, seeing Kennedy beside me.

"Did I miss anything?" I ask.

"No Alpha, it's stayed quiet since the attack."

"Good. Let Beta Kier know that I've returned."

"Yes, Alpha," he says and I roll up the window and begin driving to the packhouse.

"When were you attacked?" Kennedy asks as I look around, assessing our borders. Now that Kennedy is here, I need to make sure there are no weaknesses in our defenses.

"Earlier today," I say, distractedly.

"WHAT?" she yells.

"What?" I ask her.

"You were attacked earlier today, and you didn't say anything?" she asks, her mouth dropping open. "Are you okay? Are you injured?"

"I'm sure Raif has healed me by now, Little Pup. You don't need to worry about me. I'm a strong Alpha and Raif is a strong wolf. But if it will make you feel better, you can look me over yourself when we get to our room," I purr.

I'm thrilled that Kennedy is worried about me. Very few people in this world have ever worried about me. Since my parents' deaths, it's mostly been Alpha Harold, Luna Farrah, and Henry. But knowing that Kennedy is worried about me, not just worried that I'm injured, makes something inside me feel warm and cared for. It's like her light is shining inside me,

and because this feeling is so unusual and so breathtaking, I flirt with her by asking if she wants to look me over in our bedroom. Our bedroom.

Kennedy, however, doesn't seem to understand the implications of what I'm asking.

"Yes. I very much want to look you over and make sure that Raif is healing you," she says spiritedly, her eyes already searching my body as if she'll suddenly see some injury she missed this evening.

When we pull up to the packhouse, Kier is waiting for me. When he sees Kennedy, he raises an eyebrow.

"Welcome home, Alpha. How was the party?"

"Festive," I say, putting my hand on Kennedy's back and guiding her up the stairs. "Have some warriors take everything in the car up to my room," I say.

I see Kennedy looking at me as if she expects me to introduce her to my Beta. I'd rather introduce her to the entire pack all at once, so I step inside, just as several warriors head our way.

"Welcome back, Alpha. Who's the peach?"



Cooper



Author

I think Kennedy's about to get a crash course on how different Quirin's pack is from her family's pack.



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Commented [Ma1]: