

Chapter 7: The Pack

Kennedy

I'm distracted by the fact that Quirin was in a battle today before he arrived at my party. I had been disappointed when I didn't see him at first, and it was because he had been fighting.

Those thoughts are still rolling through my head, reassessing every move he made tonight. When we were dancing, I didn't notice anything off. I didn't realize that he might have been injured. Some doctor-in-training I am.

When I first stepped out of the car, I immediately sensed the difference in the feel of this pack. Where my family's pack feels welcoming, this pack has a definite feeling of unwelcomeness. They don't like outsiders here. I wonder if Quirin ever has anyone here to visit. Alpha Harold has been here, as have Luna Farrah and Henry, but I don't believe that anyone in our family or our pack has ever been invited to Quirin's pack.

"Welcome home, Alpha. How was the party?" a man asks, I'm assuming this is Beta Kier. He's looking at me like I'm one of Quirin's one-night stands. I expect Quirin to introduce me, but instead he tells his Beta to have everything sent up to his room. Since he was clear that this is OUR pack, I'm wondering if he's planning on the two of us having separate rooms. My parents always shared a room. Always. I can't imagine not sharing a room with him.

I'm still not sure what it means that he hasn't introduced me to his Beta when the warriors walk up and one, in particular, looks me over like he thinks he'll get his chance with me after Quirin is done with me.

"Who's the peach?" he asks.

Faster than a viper's strike, Quirin has the man by his throat and off his feet. The man's eyes go wide as Quirin growls a low, angry growl that is somehow more menacing than a snarl because of its controlled fury. It promises a slow, painful death from someone capable of such violence, and someone who revels in it. 1

"That 'peach' is your future Luna," he growls. I hear the gasps and then the judgmental looks from the warriors and even the Beta. I realize that while I'm dressed in a bright sparkly dress with diamonds around my neck, everyone here is dressed in utilitarian clothing, all browns, blacks, and dark greys. I stand out like a sore thumb. The only thing that would have made me more of a 'peach' is if my dress was the color of the fruit. 1

I reach out and put my hand on Quirin's arm. "He didn't know who I was, Quirin. You haven't introduced me yet. I'm sure he thought I was another one of your one-night stands," I say, watching as the man's face begins to turn an ugly purplish color. I also notice that my mate's arm isn't even shaking with the effort of holding this very large man off the ground.

"Excuse me?" he asks, looking at me as if he's surprised that I know this.

I just raise an eyebrow at him, daring him to deny it. He shakes his head and turns back to the man who is still struggling to breathe in his hand.

"Your lucky your new Luna hasn't taken offense and is willing to give you another chance, Slater. But if you ever disrespect my mate again, I'll kill you," he says. Rather than letting him go, he moves his arm, basically setting Slater aside while still holding him off the floor as he looks at the room that has gone deathly quiet.

"This is Kennedy Hill, your new Luna," he announces to the room.

"Hill? As in the daughter of Alpha Warren Hill?" someone asks.

"That's correct," he says. If it's possible, the looks I'm getting become even more judgmental and definitely more disturbing. Apparently, Quirin's dislike for my father is well known in this pack. 1

"She's also the daughter of Luna Yara Hill," he clarifies as if that will make a difference. Based on the looks I'm getting, it doesn't.

He finally turns to Slater, setting him on the ground. "Now apologize to your Luna."

He releases his throat and Slater sucks in a breath. "Sorry, Luna," he grumbles.

I can tell that he's not happy about having to apologize to me. I'm not sure if that has more to do with the public embarrassment or because I am my father's daughter.

"Apology accepted," I say quietly. I've never felt so uncomfortable in my life. I'm pretty sure that this is the worst possible first impression that I could have made on my new pack.

Quirin turns to his Beta. "Kier is there anything pressing?"

"No, Alpha."

"I'm going to give my mate a tour of the packhouse and then we'll be in my room. After the car is unpacked, I don't want to be disturbed unless we're attacked."

"Yes, Alpha," Beta Kier and the warriors say, continuing outside to get my things.

"Come on. I'll give you a quick tour," he says to me.



"Maybe I should change," I say, feeling very overdressed.

"We won't be long," he says, taking my hand and beginning to lead me around the packhouse.

My level of discomfort only increases with every room we enter, as people stare, looking me over as if assessing my worth and finding me lacking. I try to pay attention to what Quirin is saying, but I'm distracted.

"Kennedy," he says insistently, as if he's said my name several times and I haven't responded.

"What?"

"I said, is there anything else you'd like to see tonight? The car is unpacked, we can head upstairs now." 1

"Oh, sure. That's fine." Anything to get me out of the limelight.

He leads me to the stairs, and I realize that everyone is standing around and openly staring.

"Goodnight," I say.

Quirin looks at me, then at everyone else. "Goodnight everyone," he says sternly. His tone has everyone scattering.

"Will you be in warrior training tomorrow, Alpha, or should I plan to run it?" Kier asks him.

He looks at me for a long moment. "I'm not sure. Plan to run it just in case."

"Will do. Sleep well," he says but not before I see the smile on his face.



I blush, suddenly realizing that the entire packhouse knows what we're about to do. Is that why everyone was staring at me?

Quirin leads me up the stairs to the Alpha floor.

"Are you putting me in my own room?" I ask him, wondering about his word choice earlier.

"Why the hell would I do that? You're my mate. You sleep in my bed."

"Wouldn't that make it our bed?" I ask him.

He looks down at me and I get that glimpse of a smile from him. "Yes, our bed. Come on, I had food sent up for us. You didn't eat anything tonight. I want to talk to you, and I want you to accept me as your Alpha. Then we can move on to...other things."

When he opens the door, his scent surrounds me like a warm blanket. My eyes roll closed and I gasp as my head falls back and I breathe in his scent as liquid heat goes straight to my core.

I hear a very possessive growl and open my eyes, struggling to get the unexpected desire under control.

"Your room smells really good," I pant, trying hard not to moan.

He strokes a finger down my exposed throat, before leaning in and gently kissing my neck. My entire body shivers with need and desire.

He growls again as he kisses my throat, his arms going around me. I relax, holding on to him and letting him have my submission as Echo loudly purrs her agreement at our submission and his attention. His body is hard, sculpted muscle against mine, evidence of his strength. When he pulls back, he nips at my throat, accepting my submission before



releasing me.

"You are a temptress," he says, his eyes narrowing.

"I'm your temptress, now," I say, biting my lip.

"Yes, you are," he growls again.

"Come. You need to eat. And we really do need to talk. But first, I want you to accept me as your Alpha."

I nod.

"Do you know the words?"

"I do. Do you have a knife?" I ask him.

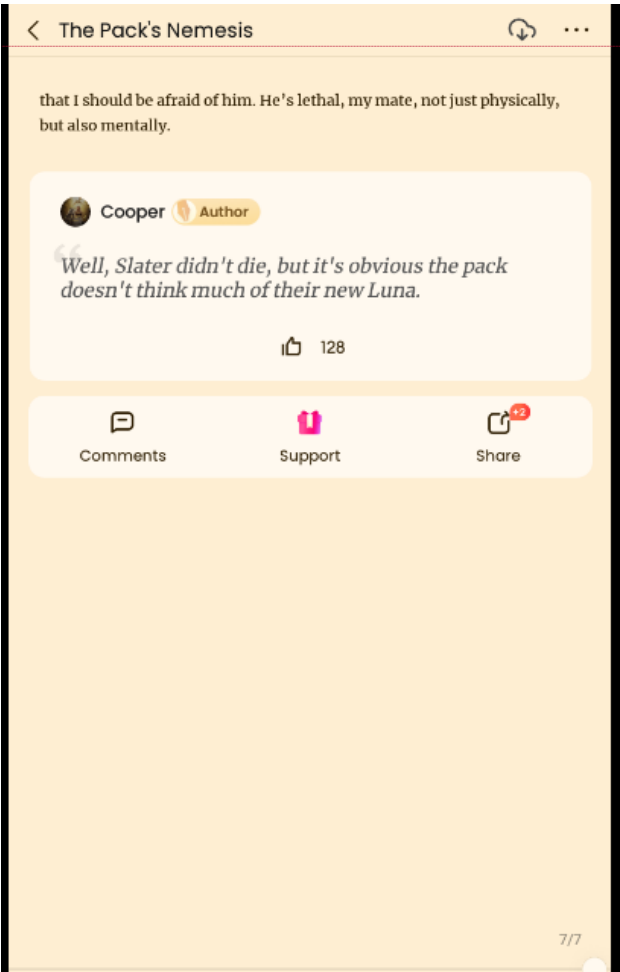
He extends a claw, letting it hover over his hand.

"I, Alpha Kennedy Hill, accept you, Alpha Quirin Harris, as my mate and Alpha," I say. His gaze holds mine as he slices the palm of his hand and holds it out to me.

I take his hand in both of mine, looking down to see that the wound is already healing. Raif is just as strong as Quirin is. I look up and hold his gaze as I lick the blood, and a moment later, I feel the link to my old pack snap, and my mental connection to Quirin snap into place.

As well as I thought I knew Quirin, I'm still not prepared for the emotions inside of him. His mind is strong, just like his body and his wolf. But it's cold, hard, and dark, like the sharp edge of a sword. If I'm not careful, that sharp blade could cut me to pieces.

I wonder if this is what Quirin meant all those years ago when he told me



Commented [Ma1]: