

The Pack's Nemesis

– Chapter 76 – 80

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Kier

When Arianna said she had an announcement, my heart stopped. My mate isn't one to stand in front of people and speak much less the entire pack. So I knew it was important.

When she turned to look at me, I could barely breathe. I was terrified that I'd miss something or misunderstand something that she was saying. Then, she said she accepted me. She said the words that I've been waiting to hear for over a year. She wants me. I can't even believe she thought she had to ask if I still wanted her.

I probably shouldn't have kissed her like that in front of everyone, but thankfully, she didn't seem to notice that the entire pack began cheering for us.

When I finally dragged myself away from the kiss, I brushed the tears off of Arianna's cheeks. "I have wanted you from the moment I first smelled your lavender and chamomile scent. From the moment that I first laid eyes on you, there has never been anyone else for me."

I kissed her again, more quickly this time as I could feel the pack pushing in to congratulate us. First was Alpha Quirin and Luna Kennedy. Since Luna already knew about us, she just smiled her knowing smile and congratulated us.

'We'll talk more later. I need to get Kennedy settled, but I can't believe you kept this from me, Alpha Quirin said in the mind link.

I wasn't willing to do anything that would scare Arianna away, and my Alpha can be one hell of a scary man, sometimes without even trying.

After he took Luna Kennedy upstairs, the pack congratulated us. I kept Arianna tucked against me, partly because I'm desperate to touch her now that everyone knows that we're mates, but partly because I know this is a lot for her and I don't want her to feel overwhelmed. Even Luna's family and Henry congratulated us.

We've just made the rounds when Alpha Quirin returns.

"Is my daughter asleep, Alpha?" Luna Yara asks.

"She is, Luna. She's resting comfortably now," he says, before turning to me. "Take the night off. Go be with your mate."

I look at Arianna, desperately wanting to complete our bond now that she's accepted me, but I know that the pack needs a leader and Alpha Quirin still needs to be with Luna Kennedy.

"Alpha, I know Luna needs you ..."

"Kier, one thing I've learned through all of this, is that you never put anyone above your mate. Kennedy is in the packhouse. I'll know if she wakes up. Luna Yara is here if I need her. Go be with your mate. You've waited a long time for this day. Go enjoy it," he says.

"Thank you, Alpha," I say, turning to Arianna. "Will you come with me?"

She nods, looking shy and embarrassed. I take her hand and lead her upstairs. Most of the pack wish us goodnight as we go. It's strange feeling the difference in the pack. A year ago, I'd probably have been scoffed at for taking an omega as a mate and she might have had warriors try to bully her. I wouldn't have allowed it, but men like Arlo and Slater would have gotten their jabs in when I wasn't around. Now, however, the pack feels like they not only accept our bond, but are glad that we've finally come together.

When we get to my room, I can feel her hesitation. I know tonight, if we can complete our bond, will be difficult for Arianna. I'm willing to take whatever time she needs. She's accepted me. That's the most important thing.

"Thank you for accepting me," I say, shoving my hands in my pockets as we both stand in my bedroom.

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"Thank you for being so patient with me," she says,

"What made you finally decide?" I ask, curious to know why now. What did I do right that made her finally see that I'm a good enough man for her to accept?

"I've been thinking about it for a while, thinking about how kind, loving, and caring you are, not just with me, but with the entire pack. And then, when I was talking to Christy yesterday, it just clicked for me. There's no reason for me to keep waiting. What am I waiting for? I love being with you. I feel safe with you. When something upsets me, it's you that I seek out to help me feel better. I hope it's okay that I told the entire pack" she says.

As she's been talking, I've slowly moved closer to her, wanting her in my arms again.

"I love that you claimed me in front of the pack. I love that you feel safe with me and that you come find me when you're upset, I want to be everything for you. I want everything with you," I say, wrapping my arm around her waist and pressing her against me, while running my fingers over her cheek and into her hair. "I love you and no matter what happens tonight, I want you with me forever."

She frowns. "What do you mean, no matter what happens tonight?"

"I know it might be too much for you to complete our bond. I want you to know right now that I understand and it's okay if you aren't comfortable with that."

She reaches up, taking my face in her hands. "I do want that. I want your mark on my neck so I can proudly show off that my mate is the amazing Beta Kier. I want our pack and the world to know that I'm yours and you're mine," she says, making Rowd growl possessively.

"You ARE mine, whether my mark is on you or not. But I will be much happier when my mark is on your pretty neck," I tell her.

As desperate as I am for her, I take my time, kissing her and slowly stripping her blouse and bra off of her. We've shared some intimacy, kissing and touching, but I've never pushed it, never wanted to give her a reason to not trust me.

I kiss my way down her neck and chest before kneeling in front of her, taking off her shoes, then slowly pulling her pants and panties down. I slide my hands up her thighs, taking a deep breath of her lavender and chamomile scent, the scent that makes my head spin and my heart settle.

She slides her fingers into my hair, watching me as I breathe in her scent. I lean forward, kissing the spot where her thighs come together.

"I'll be back for more of you later," I growl softly, before kissing my way back up her body as she chuckles at me.

I slide my hands over her backside and up her back as I kiss my way up her stomach to her breasts. I wrap my arms around her, leaning her back as I suck first one, then the other nipple into my mouth, slowly swirling my tongue in circles until her nipples are hard peaks and her moans of pleasure are filling my ears.

"You're wearing too many clothes," she whimpers, her eyes still closed.

I hold her with one arm, pulling my shirt over my head with the other, unwilling to stop touching her. I've had my shirt off before with her, but that's as far as we've gone.

I carefully reach down, picking her up bridal style and carrying her to the bed, pressing my lips to hers as I lay her down. I kick off my own shoes, then lie down beside her,

gently stroking my fingers over her body as we kiss. When I feel her body. shiver, I pull back and look at her.

"Are you cold?"

She shakes her head no. "Actually, I feel very warm."

I prop my head on my hand, looking down at her. "You're so beautiful," I tell her, while I let my fingers run over her body. "How are you doing? Is this okay?" I ask, looking back up at her.

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She smiles at me. "It would be better if you were naked ton"

Her chocolate brown eyes are full of trust and love

"I don't want to scare you Again, if anything is too much, we'll stop"

She nods again and I reluctantly leave her to get off the bed and strip off my pants and boxers. Her eyes widen and I catch the faint hint of fear in her scent when she sees my cock standing at attention, so I don't move. I wait for her to tell me if this is too much

Finally, her eyes meet mine and she taps the bed beside her. "Are you coming back to bed?"

I smile and crawl beside her again, returning to my previous position of being on my side with my head propped on my hand while looking at her body and skimming my hands over her.

When I slide my hand over her stomach, she slowly spreads her legs for me. I look back at her face. Her breathing has hitched, but I'm not sure if that's with excitement or fear, maybe a little of both.

I hold her gaze as I slide my hand over the apex of her thighs, feeling her wet heat. I moan at the feel of her, wet for me even with her nervousness about tonight.

She gasps as I slide my fingers on either side of her clit, putting just enough pressure to make her feel good. I know from our previous conversations that she's never had an orgasm, has no idea how good sex should feel. So I take my time, rubbing my fingers over her clit as I watch her face, seeing what she likes and doesn't like.

Because she's pressed against me, I can feel her body tensing, feel her responding to my touch. When she cries out in pleasure, her face looking shocked at the feeling of her first orgasm, I growl possessively. This is the first of many orgasms that I'll give her in our life together. Her orgasms, all of them, belong to me. Just me.

I lean down and kiss her, gently bringing her down before I sit up to look at her again, checking to make sure that she's okay.

"Are

are we done?" she asks. She's so sweet and so shy.

"Oh, my beautiful little mate, we're just getting started."

AD

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The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Arianna

I knew Kier would take his time. I knew he'd told me that being intimate was supposed to feel good, but I'd never guessed that it would feel THAT good. I was shocked when the heat that was building in my core like a hot furnace, exploded in my body. I had grabbed on to Kier's body, holding him as my own body felt like it was shattering into millions of pieces.

Then he'd kissed me and slowly helped my body piece itself together again. After that, what was left?

Apparently, there's more. A lot more.

I know he's watching me to make sure I'm okay with everything he's doing, but I also get the impression that he likes my body, likes watching how I'm reacting to his touch.

"Did you like that?"

"That was..." What do I say? There are no words for what that was. No words that

I know anyway.

He smiles, as if he understands the feelings that I'm incapable of putting into words.

"Can I make you come again?" Is he asking my permission or is asking me if my body will respond. The answer to the first question is yes, and I'm pretty sure the answer to the second is too, so that's what I tell him.

"Thank you," he says, turning to watch his hand.

"Oh no, thank you," I say and he looks back at me with his easy, sexy smile. Then he leans down to kiss me as his hand slides between my thighs. I don't remember ever feeling so wet before. I'm pretty sure that's a good thing.

I gasp when I feel his fingers pressing against my entrance. He lifts his head, watching me carefully. "Remember, if it's too much, you just need to tell me."

"Okay," I say. It's scary for me. The times I was forced to have sex, it hurt. But when Kier's finger slides inside me, it doesn't hurt at all. Instead, it actually feels pretty good.

"How is that?" he asks.

"That doesn't hurt," I say, watching his eyebrow go up.

"Does it feel good though?" he asks.

"Umm, yes." It does feel good. That heat from before is already building inside me again.

He leans forward, sucking my nipple into his mouth and doing that thing where his tongue swirls around, making the heat

in my body ignite. Without thinking I press my hips up, begging for him to ease the growing ache inside me.

He growls approvingly, sending waves of pleasure through me and I feel a second finger slide inside me.

"Oh goddess," I moan.

He pulls off of my nipple looking up at me. "Hold on to me," he says. His voice is deeper than I've ever heard it, and I can - Rowd shining in his eyes. My wolf, Leiana, pushes forward as well.

I slide one hand into his hair, while the other grips his shoulder as he sucks my other nipple into his mouth.

"Kier," I say, my voice trembling with the pleasure that he's giving me. He growls again and I can tell that he likes hearing me say his name.

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I press my hips against his hand again, needing more

"Yes, Yes," I moan as that feeling, the upcoming explosion, builds and he presses over the age and my baby dance again

"Kier" Lory with, my hands grabbing his hair and squeezing his head, sing him as my how white glare with through my body.

I feel tears beginning to leak down the side of my face as I let my mate bring me pleasure unlike anything I've ever felt in my life.

He either senses the change in me or smells the salt of my tears because he pulls off of my breast, his fingers stinging immediately.

"Did I hurt you?" he asks, his voice full of concern.

I can't answer, so I just shake my head no. I'm not even sure why I'm crying, it's just that I never thought I could feel something like this with another person. I never knew that this is what it was supposed to feel like.

He slides his fingers out of me and pulls me into his arms. "I've got you. I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere?"

He kisses my tears away, nuzzling his nose in my hair, kissing, my cheeks, my nose, my eyes, and my lips until I finally get my emotions under control.

"Maybe we should stop for tonight," he says.

"No. No! I don't want to stop," I say, scrambling to sit up and taking his face in my hands.

"Arianna, it's okay..."

"No, you don't understand. I'm not crying because I'm scared or because it hurt. I'm crying because it felt so good."

He brushes his hand over my hair, thinking about what I said. "Are you sure, Arianna. I'm more than happy to curl up with you and go to sleep."

"No. I really want to continue. I want your mark on my neck. You're so perfect. I don't want to let anyone think that they could take you away from me."

"No one could ever take me from you, Arianna. That's not a reason to push yourself into something you're not ready for."

I take a breath and hold his face in my hands. "I want to complete our bond. I want you to show me, just like you have been, that what happens between us is nothing but pleasure. I want to wake up tomorrow with your mark on my neck and leave the past where it belongs, in the past. I don't want to wait to start my future, our future, any longer."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive," I say without an ounce of doubt in my voice, my heart, or my soul.

I hear and feel that deep, rumbling growl again and my eyes roll back in my head. Even sitting on his lap like this, the sound is making my body heat.

"Can I taste you?"

I frown. "Taste me?"

"Yes," he says, laying me back down and shifting his body so he settles between my legs. "Here," he says, a finger sliding from my clit to my wet entrance.

"You want to taste me?"

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"You smell fucking delicious. My mouth has been watering for this taste for a long time. Is that okay? Can I taste you?" he asks, his dark eyes look up at me from between my legs. Why is that so sexy?

"Yes," I say, not exactly sure what I'm agreeing to, but I'm really glad that I did when his warm tongue licks a line from my entrance to my clit.

His moan of pleasure turns to a possessive growl as he sucks my clit into his mouth. He licks and sucks, sliding his hands under my backside and pressing me more tightly against his mouth.

I begin chanting his name as once again, my body heats. Now I know what to expect. Now I know that I'm going to explode and that my mate will carefully hold me together until I'm back to normal.

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After the first orgasm, I expected him to stop, but instead, he continued teasing my clit, sliding his fingers inside me again. This time when my orgasm ripped through me, I could feel my body contracting around his fingers. He must have too because he growled again causing another spike in my orgasm.

When I came down the second time, I looked down at him. His eyes were nearly black as he looked up at me.

"You taste so delicious, I don't want to stop. Is that okay?"

I nod my head and the roller coaster of pleasure starts again. I lose track of how many times Kier makes me come before he finally pulls away and begins kissing his way up my body.

"You taste so sweet. I hope you enjoyed that as much as I did," he says, making me laugh. I can smell myself on his face and when he kisses me, I can taste myself on his tongue.

"Are you ready for me to make you mine, Arianna?" he asks, watching me as he lines himself at my entrance.

I feel fear trying to raise its ugly head, but I push it down. Kier has shown me nothing but pleasure for hours, and I don't expect that to change now.

When I nod, he slowly and gently slides inside me, filling me and stretching me as he pulls out, then slides deeper.

"Arianna," he breathes my name like prayer. His forehead is pressed against mine and while I'm fighting to keep my demons at bay, he's struggling to maintain his careful control so he doesn't hurt me.

"Kier," I whisper as his body presses tightly against mine and he holds still. I fill full in a way that I never have before. It feels so good to have him inside me.

"Are you okay?" he asks, his voice sounding choked. His body is quivering with his carefully maintained control.

"I'd be better if you started to move," I tell him. My mate has done nothing but bring me pleasure all night. Now, it's my turn to let him find his release. He's large and I feel the slight sting as he stretches me, but it's worth it. He's worth it.

He continues his slow movements, pulling one of my legs up and somehow sliding even deeper inside me. "You are so beautiful, and you are all mine." "Yes, I am. And you, Beta, are all mine," I tell him.

When I can't take his slow movement any longer, needing more friction, more of him, I begin moving my hips to press against his. He seems to know what I need and his thrusts start coming faster.

"Kier, I love you," I say, feeling the sting in my gums as my canines start to extend. Leiana is ready to mark her mate.

"And I love you," he lisps, his canines already extended.

I turn my head, giving him the access he desires. He sucks the skin of my neck

into his mouth, careful not to puncture my skin as he softens it. Then he carefully slides his canines into my neck.

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The intensity of my orgasm is so powerful that I feel like I'm going to pass out. Before I let that happen, I sink my canines into his neck. His blood fills my mouth and his power as a Beta flows into my body, energizing me, and pushing my orgasm to new heights.

His body jerks and he roars against my neck as he finds his own release, just as the mate bond snaps into place, Love, admiration, passion, respect, and gratitude flow from Kier through the bond. I feel my tears start again as I feel the strength of his love for me and I open myself to him, letting him feel how proud I am to be his mate, how much I appreciate the care he's taken with me, and how much I love and adore him.

I don't know how long our wolves push their venom into each other, changing our scents so that they combine and mingle together, but when he finally pulls his canines from my neck and his body from mine, he collapses behind me, pulling me against his body.

"You've made me the happiest man in the world, Arianna," he says,

I press my body against his, intertwining our fingers, and smiling happily,

"And you have made me the happiest woman in the world, my mate."

AD

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Quirin

I spent some time celebrating Kier's and Arianna's mate bond with the pack, a celebration that continued even after they went upstairs. The pack is excited and happy. It's such a different feeling, something I'm so unused to that I feel a bit lost without Kennedy here to help me navigate through it.

"I need to head home tomorrow, Alpha Quirin. Now that I know my sister is safe, I need to return to my pack. But I'm only a phone call away if you ever need me or the pack. I'd also like you to know that you have an open invitation to my pack. Not only are you my sister's mate, but now we're allies. You're welcome any time," Connor says.

"Thank you. When things settle, maybe I can bring Kennedy for a visit. A real one this time. I think she'd like that," I say.

"Are you going to come visit me too, Q? Maybe for more than a day?" Henry asks.

"Yeah, yeah, we'll come see you, too. I need to deal with Slater and Kennedy needs to heal. And I also need to figure out how to clean my pack lands. It was a problem before, but now that Kennedy's is pregnant, I have no intention of letting anything put my pup at risk."

"Did you get the information that I sent you on that?" Alpha Warren asks.

"I did. You're right, it's expensive, which isn't the biggest issue. It's the time it will take to clear the lands. It looks like it will work, but I just need to find time and men to do it," I tell him.

"I'm willing to stay and take that on for you, if you'll accept my assistance," Alpha Warren says.

"You want to help me clean out my pack lands?" I ask. It's going to be an arduous task and very time-consuming.

He smiles looking at Connor. The two share a knowing look. "I've been struggling with stepping down as Alpha. After so many years of running a pack, I feel a little lost. I've been trying to find something to take up my time and give me some purpose and this would do it, but it would mean that Yara and I would be here a lot and so would our younger pups. I know that's a lot, but in return, I would handle the silver clean up. I'd make sure it was safe for you and your pack, and I could report to you as often as you'd like on the progress or any problems that arise."

It's more than I would have ever asked for and it means I can focus on other things while he manages that for me. I know I can trust him, not only because he's Kennedy's father, but he's an Alpha who understands the need to protect his pack.

"Having you here longer would make Kennedy very happy," I say, thinking of her excitement at having her family here. "And it would give the pack an opportunity to get to know you in a different way. It would give them time to come to terms with what happened all those years ago and if they can't, then I'll know that they need to find a new pack. My Gamma floor is empty. I never assigned anyone to the Gamma position because the pack was so small that Kier and I were able to manage it on our own. Lately, I've been reconsidering that, but for now, that floor is vacant and available for you and your family, if that works for you."

"That would be fantastic. And if you do select a Gamma, my family and I can move to any rooms that are close together," he says.

"You know Quirin, Mom and Dad have their own house on our pack lands. Before I took over as Alpha, Dad recognized that Madison and I would need the Alpha floor for ourselves and our pups. It gave Dad some distance from the pack, but I think it also gives them their own space. If they're going to be coming and going between our packs, it might be worthwhile for you to allow them to build their own house here, if you're willing," Connor says.

I look at Alpha Warren. "Would you like that? That way you'd have our own space and you and your family could leave our things here instead of constantly living out of suitcases."

Luna Yara reaches out to put a hand on Warren's arm. "I could help Kennedy with her medical school from here, so she doesn't have to travel to our pack. It would make it easier with a small pup and I could go back and forth if you had to stay here," she says, then turns to me. "That's a very generous offer, Alpha Quirin."

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I shrug, as always, feeling embarrassed by her praise.

"Alpha Warren would be working hard to get this pack safe again. I think his offer is more generous than mine. But just know, we don't have a lot of pups in this pack. We have some, but Yana, Wade, and Yvonne won't have as many pups here to hang out with. We don't have any older teenagers yet, so there would be no one here for Wendy and Yorick, I say,

"It would be good for the younger ones to see how other packs run. There's no guarantee that they will stay in Connor's pack, especially my daughters once they find their mates. Knowing how different packs operate can only help them as they get older. And Yorick and Wendy are old enough that they can stay in Connor's pack if they choose to, or only come here for short periods of time," Alpha Warren says.

"We can look around the pack lands tomorrow. We can begin our assessment of where the silver has the highest concentration while we look to see if there is an area that you'd like to build a house. The only place that's off limits is the overhang. That's Kennedy's favorite part of the pack and I want it to remain open for her, although I need to set up some security measures to make sure no one else ever sneaks up that cliff face," I say.

"I can help you with that too," Warren says excitedly. I watch Luna Yara smile at him. I'm sure she can feel his happiness and excitement at having a job again. I'm guessing she was worried about him and now, that worry is easing. This will make my mate happy and Luna Yara happy. It's a win-win for me.

"I'm going to check in with my patrols and then go be with Kennedy. Let's meet tomorrow after I have Kennedy settled and fed and we can begin our walk around the pack lands," I tell him, standing.

Warren stands too. "Thank you, Alpha Quirin."

I look at him a moment, making a decision that I never thought I would. "We're family, Alpha Warren. You should call me Quirin. That goes for you too, Luna, and you Alpha Connor."

"About fucking time," Henry mumbles. I give him a look, but he doesn't look repentant at all.

Suddenly, Luna Yara wraps her arms around me in a happy embrace. "I always wanted more children. My mate told me no, but now I have another son."

Somehow, her words and her love feel so much like a mother's, that I wrap my arms around her and let her hold me. She and Farrah have a different way of mothering, but both are very effective.

"I've never told you no about pups or anything else in our life together, Yara." I can't see him, but I hear the exasperation in Warren's voice.

When she pulls back, Luna Yara has the naughtiest grin I've ever seen on her face. "Good, because maybe I do want another pup," she says.

Connor barks out a laugh. "You walked right into that one, Dad."

"We'll talk," Warren says, coming to wrap his arm around his mate's waist. "And as for what you said, Quirin, yes, we're family. So please, call me Warren."

I say goodnight to everyone, then check on the patrols, making sure they're all running smoothly and have no concerns. I let them know that they need to wake me if there's a problem and leave Kier alone tonight, before heading to my room.

When I step in, I take a deep breath of Kennedy's citrus and mint scent. Between our arguments, the issues with Christy and Lillian, and then her abduction, her scent in our bedroom had gotten weak. Now, it's strong again and I smile, quickly stripping out of my clothes and climbing into bed with my mate, pulling her against me and loving the way to snuggles into my embrace, even in her sleep.

"I love you, Kennedy," I say, before falling into my own deep, peaceful sleep.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Kennedy

I wake up warm and comfortable, with Quirin's sandalwood scent surrounding me.

I feel a slight fluttering in my mind and I know that Echo is fighting to come back to me.

'Heal yourself, Echo. I'll be here when you get back. I love you,' I say in our mind. I know my wolf, she won't stop fighting But hopefully she can hear me and knowing that I can feel her trying will help her to feel better. I can still feel the pack holding on to her, helping her to find her way back.

The next thing I feel is Quirin's mind. I smile, loving that it's still open to me. Right now, it's quiet with his sleep, although, images of Slater, the pack lands, and me are flashing on repeat.

Those are the things he's most worried about, Raif says, purring in my mind but loud enough that I can feel the vibration against my body.

'Don't wake Quirin, Raif. He needs his sleep,' I scold him.

'What I need is for my mate to be healthy. How are you feeling, Little Pup? Sorry, I'm still half asleep. How are you feeling, Little Mate?' he asks me in the mind link. Now that his mind is open to me, I can feel that his pet name for me is just that, a pet name. He doesn't consider me a pup any longer. But I can also feel that he's not going to call me that any more, especially since...

"Really?" I ask out loud.

His hand slides over my still-flat stomach. "My Little Pup's pup," he says, and I feel his lips that are pressed against my shoulder spread into a smile. He kisses my shoulder. "And your stomach isn't as flat as it used to be. Our pup is growing."

I put my hand over his and sure enough, my stomach isn't quite as flat.

"So, how are you feeling? Raif says he's getting a hint of Echo returning," he says.

"Yes, she's fluttering around in there, trying to find her way back to me. I know she will. She's a strong, wonderful wolf."

"Just like her human. It still feels like you're weak. Do you feel weak?" he asks.

"Yes, but I want a shower. I'll have Mom help me..."

"Excuse me?" he says, lifting his head and looking at me. "You're MY mate. I will take care of you."

"But, I saw what's worrying you, Quirin. You have a lot of work to do, and..." "Nothing is more important than you, Kennedy. Nothing. I am your mate. I will take care of you. Your

mother can help, but you are my responsibility. Being mine means you're mine to love, mine to cherish, mine to protect, and mine to take care of. I haven't been a great mate to you, and I'm sure I'll screw it up again in the future, but I'm going to try to be the man you want and need me to be, Kennedy." I turn my head to look at him. His eyes, always intense, are burning with his determination and love for me.

"You already are everything that I need and want you to be, Quirin. You're you. That's what I've always wanted," I say, rolling over to face him. I put my hand on his cheek and open my own mind wider, letting my love for him flow through the bond.

He gasps like he did the last time, closing his eyes and letting my love fill him. "Goddess, your love feels so good, so beautiful, so pure," he whispers.

I lift my head and press my lips to his. "My love for you IS pure. Even if we're arguing, even if I'm angry with you, I still love you like this," I tell him.

"I wish we could stay like this all day, but we both could use a shower. I want your mom to look you over and check our pup and I have a meeting with your father this morning. Oh, and Connor and Henry are leaving, I'm not sure you're up to saying goodbye, but I wanted to give you the option."

"Let's see how I feel after the shower," I tell him.

He scoops me up and carries me into the bathroom, setting me down before leaning into the shower to turn on the water. While he does that, he continues to hold on to my waist, making sure I'm steady on my feet. I can't help but smile at my big strong mate being so gentle with me.

"What is that look?" he says, standing in front of me and helping me pull the shirt he put on me last night over my head.

I slide my hands over his bare chest, loving the feel of his body shivering at my touch.

"I thought a lot about you being the father of my pups over the years," I tell him and he goes very still. "I'll admit I wasn't sure what that would look like. I sort of figured that you'd treat our pups like you treat me and the rare few people in this world that you love and respect. But I wasn't sure how you'd respond if they made you angry or did something that disappointed you. Now I know that I was right about you and how you'll be as a father."

"What were you right about?" he asks softly and I can tell that this, my opinion of him being a father, is very important to

him.

"You'll be just as kind and gentle with them as you've always been with me. Even when I was younger, you were firm with me, but you were never harsh," I slide my hands up and around his neck as I smile up at him. "I think that's exactly the kind of father you will be. The perfect father for our pups, firm but kind and loving."

"Do you know that before you, I never expected to have pups? Well, I never expected to have a mate, so pups didn't even enter into my mind. I've never really liked pups, present company excluded," he says, making me laugh. "They're loud and defiant and distracting. But ever since Raif called you mate, I've had a deep desire to have a pup with you."

"Just one?"

He raises an eyebrow at me. "How many did you want? You're not going to be like your mother, are you?"

"What if I am?" I ask, teasing.

"Then I'll tell you what your father told her last night. We'll talk."

I laugh again. "You do realize that ninety-nine percent of the time, their 'talks' end up with my mother getting her way right?"

"Yeah, I figured, which means you may be getting another brother or sister soon."
"Seriously?"

"Seriously. So, how many? I need to mentally prepare for this."

"At least two, preferably a boy and a girl."

"Two I can handle," he says. "Seven I don't know."

"How about we start with one?" I ask.

"Perfect, just like you," he says, kissing my nose and helping me into the shower. While he washes my hair and helps me to bathe, he tells me about his conversation with my father.

"He's going to stay? They both are?" I ask, shocked.

"Yep. They're going to stay, the rest of your siblings will probably be joining them, at least the three youngest. Connor gave

me the great idea of building them their own house on the park lands and that way they can come and go they want or need to. They can leave clothes here or decorate it however they want. I'm sure they'll be back and forth a lex Year mentioned helping you with

school.." he stops, looking down at me. He feeds the strong, surge of emotions that I'm feeling through the bond.

"Did I do something wrong?"

I slowly shake my head. "You really are the most wonderful man in the world," I say feeling a tear drip down my cheek "Thank you" I say, throwing my arms around him and pressing my lips and body against his

I send the love that I'm feeling for him through the bond, the intensity of it making more tears streak down my cheeks. His possessive growl rumbles through my body as he presses me against the shower wall. His kiss becomes demanding, possessive, and the growling never stops, as if he can't get enough of my love for him.

"Fuck, Kennedy! I love the way you love me," he pants when he finally pulls back. "You're not strong enough yet for me to show you just how fucking fantastic it is for me to feel that from you. But when you are, just know, I won't be holding back. I'm going to give you everything, just as you are giving me everything," he says, his voice still growly and deep and oh so sexy.

"I hope that time comes soon," I tell him.

"It can't come soon enough," he says, taking my mouth again in a passionate, possessive kiss that leaves as both breathless and aching for more.

The Pack's Nemesis (Quirin's Story)

Quirin

Even though my mate isn't strong enough yet for us to have sex, just having her love in my mind makes me feel like I'm walking on air.

After our shower, she was feeling tired, so I put her back to bed and let her know I'd say goodbye to her brother and Henry for her.

"I can send Connor up to say goodbye if you'd like," I say, pulling the blankets over her. "And I'll let your mother know that she can come up whenever she's ready."

"I'll text Connor. He'll understand. Tell them both I hope to see them again very soon," she says. I press my lips to her forehead just as there's a knock at the door.

"That will be your breakfast," I say, walking to the door.

I smell her before I open the door. "And apparently, your mother is as anxious to check on you and I am to have her check on you," I say, opening the door to Luna Yara.

"I caught your omegas making Kennedy's breakfast and thought I'd join her while you and Warren talk," she says. I step aside and let her in. She stops and tilts her cheek up to me.

I frown and look at Kennedy. "She wants you to kiss her cheek. She would have kissed yours if her hands weren't full."

"Oh," I say, leaning over and kissing her cheek.

"Have a nice day, Quirin, and don't worry about Kennedy. I'll make sure she's fine," she says briskly as she walks toward the bed.

'She considers you her son now, Quirin. You'll have to get used to kissing her cheek, Kennedy says in the mind link. She's smiling at me, feeling my confusion, surprise, and the bit of pleasure I feel at having a second mother figure in my life

now.

Luna Yara turns and looks at me. "Did you need something, Quirin?"

"No. Y-you have a good day too," I stutter as I step out of the room.

"He is such a dear," she says as I close the door. I'm not sure if she's talking to herself or Kennedy. Either way, I'm confident that no one has ever said that about me before.

When I get downstairs, I see Connor and Warren standing by the front door. "How's Kennedy?" Connor asks.

"She's doing alright, but she's too weak to come say goodbye."

"That's fine, I'll check on her later," he says.

"I hope it's okay that Yara went up to your room. She was anxious to check on Kennedy and your pup," Warren says.

"I was anxious for her to check on them. I'd just gotten her back to bed after a shower, so it was perfect timing."

"Well, I'm off. Let's stay in touch. If you need anything at all, please let me know," Connor says.

Warren and I walk him out, waiting until he's pulling down the drive. Just as I turn to go back inside, Henry walks out.

"So, I'm going to start seeing more of you around, right Q?"

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I look at the man who accepted me as a brother from the moment we met all those years ago. He never harbored any resentment that his father took me in and trained me to be an Alpha. He never cared that I was dark and broody. He never pushed me away even though I tried to push him away many times. He's been there for me at every dark point in my life, standing beside me, a beacon of light and support.

Without a word, I pull him into a hug.

"Seriously, Q, I'm really starting to worry about you and all this lovey-dovey shit,"

he says, making me laugh as his arms wrap around me.

"I love you, my brother," I say, not letting go. His arms tighten around me.

"I love you too, brother," he says sincerely.

When we pull apart, he grabs the bags he dropped on the ground and heads to his car.

"You know, if you keep that shit up, people are going to start thinking that you're leaving Kennedy for me," he says, smirking at me as he tosses his bags into the bag of his car. I shake my head at him.

"Luna Quirin. It's got a nice ring to it, don't you think?" he asks, his face creased with a big fucking smile.

"Get the fuck out of here," I say as he laughs.

"We'll talk soon," he says before getting in his car and driving off.

This time I make it back inside just in time to hear a lot of commotion in the kitchen. I turn and head that way, walking into a bunch of omegas hugging and my Beta smiling proudly at his mate.

"Let's see it," I say, walking up to him. He turns, not even needing to pull his shirt away from his neck. He's got his shirt and his mate mark displayed proudly. "Very nice."

"Yeah. It's good, better than good," he says.

"Congratulations, Arianna," I say.

"Thank you so much, Alpha. I feel so silly having waited so long. Kier is so perfect," she says, smiling at him.

open

"Once Kennedy is stronger and you're more settled, the two of you can talk about your duties as a Beta female, but my mate is a very intelligent woman. I'm guessing she'll put you in charge of the kitchen."

"Do you think so? I was already getting nervous about what it means to be a Beta, but that would be perfect. I already know everything about the kitchen."

"When you two talk, make sure you let her know how you're feeling. She'll probably already have figured that out too, but it's good to have open communication from the beginning. Take it from me who has had to learn that lesson the hard way."

"Thanks, Alpha."

I turn, ready to go find Alpha Warren. He must have come back in while Henry and I were talking outside. Instead, I find Terrance, Randall, Leo, and several other warriors waiting to talk to me.

"Alpha, may we have a moment of your time?" Terrance asks.

"Absolutely. Let's go to my office."

"Alpha, wait!" Susie says behind me. She rushes up with several breakfast sandwiches in her hand. "You didn't eat breakfast."

I look down at the sandwiches. "Thanks, Susie." I'd gotten used to making sure that Kennedy had something to eat, but I've never had anyone make sure that I've eaten, not in a very, very long time.

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"You're welcome, Alpha," she says happily, turning to go back to the kitchen.

It's like the entire feel of the pack has changed overnight, changed for the better. When we get to my office, I gesture for the men to sit while I unwrap my first sandwich.

"What's on your mind?" I ask, casually leaning against my desk as I face them.

I watch them all look at each other and then Terrance, who seems to have taken the lead, speaks.

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"Alpha, we can see and feel the changes that are happening in the pack. We all respected you as our Alpha before, but now this pack feels different. For the better!" he clarifies as I raise an eyebrow. I wasn't sure what direction he was about to take this conversation.

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"We know that Luna Kennedy has a lot to do with that and," he turns and gestures to the others. "we've all talked about it between us. We like the changes that are happening in the pack. We like the feel that you and Luna Kennedy are bringing to the pack. There's a confidence that we didn't have before. Beta Arianna is a perfect example. I'm not sure she would have felt comfortable accepting Beta Kier if things hadn't changed like they have," he says.

I finish the first sandwich and wipe my mouth. "Where are we going with this conversation, Terrance?"

He looks at the others and then turns back to me. "We'd like to have a conversation with Alpha Warren, and we'd like for you to sit in with us. If you're willing to forgive what happened, then the least we can do is listen to what he has

to say and make up our own minds."

"When do you want to meet with him?" I ask. I'm thrilled that some of my best warriors and staunchest haters of Alpha Warren are willing to sit down and hear him out.

"As soon as possible," he says and the others nod.

"How about right now?"

AD

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