



Chapter 8: Honesty

Quirin

I don't remember ever being this nervous in my life. I'm trying to push it down by acting relaxed and maintaining a calm demeanor in front of the pack. But inside, my stomach is twisting in knots. I knew I'd always been drawn to Kennedy, always enjoyed her presence more than nearly anyone else in my life. But now, I get to make her mine. This sweet, beautiful woman is mine. And I'm terrified that I'm going to lose control tonight and tear her apart.

When she says goodnight to the pack, I look around, suddenly realizing that everyone is watching us. I don't know if it's the surprise that I've returned with their Luna or if they feel my own unease, but I don't like worrying that anyone in my pack is thinking of challenging me for my Alpha position or my mate. Thankfully when I bark my own goodnight to them, they scatter like ants.

I have no idea where Kennedy got the idea that we were going to have separate rooms. My parents did but I have no desire to sleep in a room that doesn't smell like Kennedy. Maybe because my parents weren't fated mates it was different for them. But I want her body pressed up against mine every night. I want to wake up with her citrus and mint scent in my nose every morning. So, there's no way in hell I'm agreeing to separate rooms.

As soon as we walked into my room, our room, her entire body responded. I was already struggling with mine and Raif's desire for her, but the moment she moaned, I lost the battle. Raif growled possessively while my cock went so hard I thought it might crack. Then she let her head fall back and all I wanted to do was sink my canines into her pretty little neck and bury myself in her warm, wet heat.



I thought for sure when I ran my finger down her throat, she'd regain her senses. Not only did she not stop submitting to me, but she and Echo seemed perfectly happy to do it. I had nearly gotten carried away kissing her neck. I have to keep reminding myself that my mate is a virgin. I can't press her against the wall and bury my cock inside her like I'm desperate to do. I pull back before I lose control of myself and Raif and do what I'm trying so hard not to do – tear her apart. Temptress indeed. She has no idea how tempting she is and the danger she's putting herself in by stoking the fire that is already burning inside me.

Thankfully, I ordered food up to our room. I need some time and space from Kennedy so I can get control of myself. I've never had any trouble being in absolute control, but right now, I feel like Kennedy is taking every last ounce of it. The other thing I'm desperate to do is hear her thoughts. I need to know that she wants to be here, that she isn't afraid of me. I don't care if the rest of the fucking world fears me, but I don't want Kennedy to ever fear me. So, I have her agree to accept me as her Alpha before we eat. I need to know that she understands exactly what marking and mating entails and that she's truly ready for this. If she's not, I'll have to put Raif and my cock on ice until she is, but I'll do it. I don't want her to fear me because I pushed her too far, too fast.

As soon as she says the words and licks my blood, it's like the sun bursts through the clouds pushing my darkness aside and encompassing me in her warm glow. Kennedy isn't like me. She doesn't hide her thoughts or her emotions keeping them under tight control. Instead, I can feel her love for me, spreading throughout my mind and body. I can feel that she's loved me for years. This sweet woman fell in love with an angry, dark man when she was still a young girl. She's always loved me. Only me. The thought both thrills me and terrifies me. The small part of my brain that was willing to let her go if she told me she didn't want me dissolves. No one else can ever bask in the loving glow of this woman.



That pleasure, that bliss, is reserved for me and me alone. 1

I feel her shock when her bright light blasts through my darkness. She knew I was dark, but unless you're inside my head, you'd never know just how dark. Even now, I'm not showing her everything about me. There are still shadows where her light is shining. But she's finally getting a good understanding of who I really am.

I sense the first hint of fear in her, and I don't like it. She told me years ago that she wasn't afraid of me and she never has been. Not once, until now.

I reach out and stroke her cheek. "You don't ever need to fear me, Kennedy. I will never lay a hand on you in anger. I will never let anyone hurt you. I know I'm ... not what you're used to. But you've gone your entire life not being afraid of me. Don't start now. Please," I say.

There are very few things in life that are worth pleading for in my opinion. But Kennedy's trust in me is definitely one of them.

"I know you would never hurt me," she says, and I feel her push her fear away, trusting that I'm still the man she's always known. I am, she just didn't know me as well as she will by tomorrow.

"Let's get some food and you can tell me what those tears were about earlier," I say, taking her hand and leading her to the table.

"What tears?" she asks. I can tell she doesn't think I know that she was crying when she packed her things at her pack.

"When you came down the stairs with your mother and your bags, you'd been crying. What were those tears about?"

I pull the domes off the two plates of food and hand one to her, waiting



for her answer.

She pushes her food around for a moment before answering, but I can hear her putting her answer together in her head before she speaks. I realize that she's moderating her response for me. She doesn't want me to know how sad she was to leave her family, especially the times she used to spend with her mother.

"Honesty, Kennedy. I want complete honesty between us. I don't ever want to worry that you're keeping things from me, and I want you to know that I'll always tell you the truth, even if it's a truth that you don't want to hear."

She nods and swallows hard. I can feel her emotions coming back to the surface, the sadness.

"It was hard leaving. Everything and everyone that I've ever known lives in that pack. My bedroom, my family, my friends, my life, it was all there. And now, I'm starting over in a place where I don't know anyone. I'm not yet a Luna, but I am your mate. I don't know what you or the pack expects of me. I already think I made a bad impression..."

"How so?" I ask, genuinely confused.

She frowns at me. "Quirin, you nearly killed one of your pack members over me before we even stepped foot in the packhouse. And then, well, just look at me," she says, gesturing at the beautiful dress she's wearing. I get a glimpse of her thoughts, that she'd gotten this dress specifically for me because of a comment I made about her eyes. But then it shifts to thinking it was a bad idea and that I must think that she's nothing more than a silly, stupid girl.

"Kennedy, I've done nothing BUT look at you from the moment your



party guests got out of my way and I could see you. You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen and that dress ... that dress accents your eyes perfectly. I love your eyes. I always have. They're a beautiful shade of green. I've barely been able to tear my eyes away from you all night."

It's the truth, the honest truth that I promised her. But I wasn't expecting her response or my desire to make her respond like that all the time. I swear I felt her give her heart to me even more than before. I'm already becoming addicted to her gentle sweetness and love.

"I don't want you to feel lonely here. I won't say you don't have to be careful. We do get attacked periodically but there is no place that is off limits to you on the pack lands. In addition, I'm sure you'll make friends here. It will just take time."

I can see and feel that she doesn't believe me. But Kennedy is an outgoing young woman. I'm sure she'll make friends, and she and Echo can explore the pack lands. I think my pack lands are beautiful, and I've expanded them since I've been Alpha to include a lake and more recently an overhang that looks out over a valley. That was more for providing protection on that border, but it happens to have a beautiful overlook as well.

I tap her plate with my fork, encouraging her to eat.

She pushes her food around and if I wasn't so focused on her thoughts that I'd have missed it. She's hiding something from me, something that is upsetting her.

"Kennedy?" I ask her.

She looks at me and shakes her head, unwilling to tell me.



"Honesty, remember?" I ask her. Whatever it is, I can't make it right if I don't know what it is.

"It's nothing."

"If it were nothing, then you'd have no problem telling me what it is."

She looks up at me and narrows her eyes at me. "Are you always this invasive in your pack's minds?" she asks.

"No. For the most part, I don't care what they're thinking as long as they remain true to me and the pack. But with you, I want to know everything that you're thinking, what you're feeling, especially right now since we've just found out that we're mates. There's a lot for you to process, a lot to take in, and a lot that is changing in your life very quickly. It's important to me to know that you're okay, tonight especially because of what tonight means," I tell her.

She blushes a beautiful shade of pink, before sighing and setting her fork down.

"Why didn't you get me a birthday gift? You get me one every year. I always look forward to them. But you didn't get me a gift this year and I was just wondering why you didn't," she says.

I can feel her hurt. She thinks it wasn't important enough for me to get her a gift, which couldn't be farther from the truth.

I get up from the table and go to where I dropped my jacket when we came in. I pull the box out and look at it then turn. I told her we'd be honest, so I will be.

"I didn't think you'd like it after what your parents got you," I say.

She stares at the box in my hands. "You did get me a gift?"

"Of course I did. It's your birthday. Your eighteenth birthday. That's a special birthday," I say softly, handing her the box. "I'm sorry it's not... well, open it," I say shrugging.

She unwraps the box and opens it, staring at the necklace that I had made especially for her. I feel the swell of emotions in her and I'm so glad that I waited until she accepted me as her Alpha for her to open this gift. Otherwise, I might not have believed how much this necklace means to her.

When she looks up at me, there are tears in her eyes and I can see that Echo has pushed forward. "Is this Raif?"

I smile, as Raif pushes forward, both of us pleased that she realized what it is.

"Yes, my little mate, that is me. I wanted to see you wearing my head around your neck," Raif tells them.

"He was very insistent about it," I say to her, watching as she strokes her thumb over it.

"Is there a reason you chose diamonds for the eyes?" she asks.

"It's your birthstone, and it went well with the onyx and pewter of Raif's head," I say as she looks up at me.

"You know my birthstone?"

"I know everything there is to know about you, Little Pup," I say, smiling when I feel her aggravation about the name.

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It's not exactly true. I don't know everything there is to know about her. Not yet anyway. But by tomorrow, there won't be a single part of her mind or body that I won't know intimately.



Cooper Author

What do you think of Quirin's feelings toward Kennedy?

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