

Chapter 11 - Caught by the All-Seeing Eye in the Sky

Miles

We hadn't been playing cards for an hour when the migraine began. The pounding on my head was followed by nausea and vomiting. "Guys." I moan from the bathroom. "I think I need to take a raincheck." I spit and wipe my mouth, flushing the toilet. "This may be a stomach bug that has set in."

The guys start clearing up the spread we had laid out. "Let me take you down to med bay to get checked. They can give you something for nausea, too." Knight offers.

"Yeah. Sounds good." I croak, hoarse from the non-stop projectile vomiting.

As we begin the descent down the stairs, Veronica comes in nearly carrying a comatose Hannah. "What's wrong with Hannah?" Knight asks.

"I don't know. She and I were having a girl's movie night; she suddenly got sick and started vomiting everywhere." Veronica looked panicked. "It was non-stop. Next thing I knew she was out cold."

Knight pointed to her shirt. "Where's the blood coming from?"

Veronica looks down at Hannah's shirt and we notice a blossoming red stain. "What the hell! Knight!"

Knight, still holding me up with one arm, grabs Hannah with his other arm and orders, "Go get help, Veronica, now!" Veronica takes off running down the corridor to med bay.

Knight struggles to pull both Hannah and I down the hall. He is solid muscle, but I am a big guy, so he struggles a bit but manages.

Veronica races back to us with Rachel and another shifter that works down there, Billy, in tow. Each of them is pushing a wheelchair.

"Veronica, I thought you all were having a spa night with Marissa." I state. "Where is Marissa?"

"Oh." She startles, looking like she'd been caught out. "She went out to get us some drinks. She should be back any minute. What's going on with you?"

"Same. Vomiting, nausea. It all started with a migraine though."

"I guess I better catch up to Hannah." She gestures toward the wheelchair carrying Hannah that is racing away from us.

Rachel comes around the corner as Knight wheels me closer. "Oh. Knight. How bad is Miles?"

"He's finally stopped vomiting."

"Are there lesions on his body?" She asks quickly.

I lift his shirt and am startled by the welts covering his torso. "Y-yes!"

"Okay, Hannah is worse off than him. Put him in #2 while I stabilize Hannah and get her ready for transport."

"Transport?" Knight asks.

"Yes, she is in the last stages of Cheating Mate Syndrome. I hope we can get her to the main hospital in time."

She races away to the emergency bay and I hear her yelling instructions to her team who were already working on her. Enf. North sprints by the open doorway and enters the emergency bay. In about 15 minutes, North and a few of the other medical team members are racing towards the helipad.

A ragged Rachel walks in the room a few minutes later and looks at me. "Miles, I pretty much know what's wrong with you as well."

I peer into her eyes. "I don't want to hear any bull about Cheating Mate Syndrome, Rachel. Just because Hannah shows signs of it, doesn't mean that's what's wrong with me."

"You need to open your eyes, Miles." Rachel rolls her eyes.

"No! Marissa has never cheated on me. She just fights sometimes and just takes off. But she promised not to do that this time and she hasn't." I bellow. "This is just a migraine!"

"Lie back on the table, Miles. Let me examine you." She exhales sharply.

"I'm fine. Just give me something for a migraine." I growl.

About that time, Alpha Stone walks in the exam room. "Lie back on the table, Miles. Doc needs to examine you." His voice rippled with Alpha command and I was forced to obey.

Rachel approaches me and peels back my shirt, exposing my stomach for them all to see. My entire torso is covered in painful raised red welts. "Miles, are you taking the drug Amra?"

"That's the medication that treats Cheating Mate Syndrome, right?" She nods. "No! I am not. I told you Marissa is NOT cheating on me. She promised."

"This is very curious, Miles, because it looks as though you have received a dose of Amra, but not a high enough dosage to counter all the symptoms." Rachel traces a particularly angry-looking mark with her gloved finger. "See, this one is nearly at the lesion stage. I have been studying this condition relentlessly since Paisley...since our first patient."

"How are you studying it?" Alpha inquires.

"Our medical database." She tells him. "It is extensive. All medical records, doctor notes, nursing notes, films, videos and photos are uploaded to the database. I nearly have my doctorate degrees and am about to become a full-fledged doctor, with a minor study in CMS. I am dedicated to saving all victims of the condition." Rachel swears.

"Do you have a photo depicting this?" Alpha Stone points to my stomach.

"Sure." She lifts her cell, taps a few times and hands the phone to Alpha Stone.

"Goddess, they are identical. Even to my untrained eye, I can see it." He shoves the phone in my face.

"I've had enough of this." I spit, trying to sit up.

"Stay." Alpha Stone orders again. "Rachel, is Miles safe to leave in his condition?"

"It would probably be better if I could give him an additional dose of Amra, but first, I really want a blood and urine sample. I want to see if he has any traces of Amra in his system. It won't take long, just a few minutes once I load the samples into the machines."

"Do it."

"Alpha, this is insulting to both Marissa and I." I plead.

"Miles, there is something you don't know that Rachel spoke with me earlier about. And since it involves you, I am going to talk to you about it. Are you give the samples." He nods to Rachel who takes out a syringe and collects a tube of blood. Then she hands me a urine collection cup. I comply.

About 30 minutes later, everyone joins me back in the exam room, which I was not allowed to leave, like a prisoner! "Well?" Alpha asks, looking at Rachel.

"The tests confirmed that Miles had the equivalent of one dose of Amra in his system. However, due to his large size, he probably should have had two doses. It was enough to save his life, though."

"Now, Miles." Alpha eyes me. "We need to bring you up to speed on what Marissa has been up to. Today, she came in to see Rachel, claiming that you are cheating with Paisley."

"What the ~?" I hiss.

"Rachel wasn't sure what she was up to, but didn't buy into it. Therefore, she basically sent Marissa on her way without Amra. However, as Marissa was leaving the med clinic, a delivery of Amra was dropped off at the nurse's station, which Marissa stole."

"What proof do you have that she stole anything?" I roar. As if he was ready for the question, he takes out his cell which already has a video cued up. I watch in horror as I recognize Marissa slip a box labeled Amra into her bag and leave the med bay. Of course, there are security cameras everywhere. Not only am I married to a liar and a thief, I am apparently married to an idiot liar and thief.

I blow out a deep exhausted breath. "I see. But that doesn't prove that she slipped any in my drink. Maybe she really thinks Paisley and I are cheating and wants to be prepared. Maybe she felt desperate."

Alpha sighs as he pulls up another video feed and crams it in my face rudely. "I thought you might not believe it unless you saw it." I watch again in horror as Marissa pours two glasses of orange juice from the main kitchen fridge and empties a capsule of powder in one of them. At this point, I would have to believe it was Amra.

Realization hits me as to what Alpha is leading up to. She wanted to go out and cheat on me tonight. "You know where she is now, don't you?" I ask Alpha Stone.

He sighs deeply and nods. "She's been at the local bar all night, Miles. She been up two shifters and went to the first-time door. They've been there for a couple of hours now."

I nod, blinking my eyes as they start to burn with unshed tears. Goddess, I love Marissa, but she has never really loved me. At least not enough to be loyal...like Paisley. I shake my head. No sense going there now. That's a burned bridge. H3ll! It's an obliterated bridge. Why couldn't Marissa have just let me alone to heal and move on. I was happy...but I was tempted.

"Who are the shifters?" I ask.

"One is from another pack, but the other is Seth Hill, Hannah's husband." Alpha states.

"Makes sense now. How's Hannah?"

"It doesn't look good." Rachel offers.

"Ironic. Hannah and Veronica make excuses for her so she can cheat and who does she cheat with? Hannah's husband. That's a double dose of Karma if I have ever seen it. She got me and Hannah with one shot." I lean my head back and pinch my nose. "So, what are we looking at, Alpha? What are the consequences?"

"What do you want, Miles? The only law she has broken is stealing. With restitution, she'd probably spend a couple of months on Prisoner Island and then get probation for a first-time offense, and some community work. But what do you want, Miles? Her biggest disloyalties are against you."

"Miles, if I could interject." Rachel hesitates. "Miles, if you are willing to live with Marissa's ...uh...indiscretions, you can elect to take Amra on a daily basis until Marissa decides she wants to be monogamous. Or, you can break the mate bond and live together, while Marissa has her boyfriends or lovers. As long as there isn't a mate bond between chosen mates, you don't need Amra. It is only needed for actual mate bonds and fated mates, whether bonded or not."

"Thanks, Rachel. Right now, I just want answers." I insist. "I'll wait for her in my apartment. Are I get my answers, Alpha, you can lock her up for the theft. Are that, I don't know anymore."

"Done, Miles. I am sorry it didn't work out for you." Alpha sighs. "We just have to live with the consequences of our choices."

Rachel gives me another dose of Amra, along with a bottle of water. I swallow the pill. "That should help the welts to disappear and take care of the nausea."

I nod. "Thanks, Doc."

She smiles. "If you need anything else, just let me know."

The first thing I do when I get to my apartment is to search for the pills. In that video, the box she took would contain quite a lot. I first found a few odd pills in her nightstand drawer. Sure enough, the word Amra is printed on the side. Next, I dig around and find an old make-up bag in the main back of her sink that is filled with bottles of the medication. Jackpot!

While I am digging, I locate a couple of bottles labeled "Scent-O Lotion" with the manufacturer being "A Helping Hand". So that's how she has kept me from scenting other males on her. We have used this here, at the pack, in stealth work when we didn't want other shifters to know we were around. Our border patrol guards use scent-off frequently for stealth. I never thought about using it to cheat. If Marissa used her con-artist brain for good, we would have solved all the world's problems.

I run my fingers through my hair and sit on the edge of the bed to wait for her. I hope her fun night was worth it. If she really cares about me, which I doubt, she has lost me. I can't go on this way. I may just resign my position and lose myself for a while.