

## Chapter 12: Truth

Warren

Whether it's the exhaustion of the battle, the broken leg that Arric is working hard to heal, or just life in general, I feel exhausted. But no matter how tired I am, I'm not going to miss my mate getting in the shower with me. I'm not even disappointed that she'll leave her shirt on. Humans have wet t-shirt contests for a reason.

I stand under the water, letting it loosen the dried blood and gore in my hair. When I look down and see that the water running down the drain is bright red, I wonder how bad I look. Under any other circumstances, I wouldn't care, but I don't want my mate to think less of me. She doesn't seem surprised by the fighting and she seems to understand the need for me to maintain a strong image in front of the pack, but that doesn't mean that she's okay with it.

"Okay, let's see what we've got," she says, walking back in and setting the clothes on the counter by the sink before stepping into the shower with me. "You're pretty tall so I'm going to need you to bend down a bit. You'll have to close your eyes the water doesn't wash all this junk and soap into your eyes."

I do as she says, and instantly feel myself wobbling. I feel her hands on my arms. "Hold on to me. If you start to feel like you're going to pass out, tell me. I'd rather not have you tackle me in the shower breaking my bones on the way down."

"I won't hurt you," I say.



"If you pass out, you won't know," she says.

I open my eyes realizing that I'm much closer to her in this position. "I won't hurt you," I say insistently.

She nods. "Hold on to me," she says again and I gently grab hold of her hips. Since my hands are there, I begin running my thumbs over her hip bones.

"You're too thin," I say absently as she begins to scrub soap into my hair.

"I don't have a lot of time to eat. I'm double majoring with a minor in zoology."

"Why zoology?" I ask.

"Wolves. You can learn more about them in that class, but what I needed to learn was more on the veterinary side. So, I decided to make it a minor to get the specific information I needed."

She pushes my head under the water and rinses the soap out before scrubbing more in. This time, I can feel her nails gently scraping against my scalp. I moan out loud, not caring if the entire pack hears me. "That feels fucking incredible, Yara."

She doesn't answer, and it's quiet a moment.

"Can I ask you a question?" she asks.

"You can ask me anything."

"Why haven't you taken a mate?" she asks me. I open my eyes, ignoring the burn of the soap so she can see the truth in my eyes.

"I was waiting for you. I've only ever wanted my fated mate."

She looks at me, her eyebrow raising in disbelief. "You're telling me that you've never had sex before, Alpha? I'm not buying it."

"I didn't say I'd never had sex. I've had sexual partners but that's all they were. I said I never once considered taking anyone as my mate except you, my fated mate."

"Why?" she asks, looking adorably confused.

"My parents were fated mates. As hard as my father's life was, as filled with war as it had been, he always had my mother. They loved each other in a way that chosen mates never can. He adored her and she adored him. She made the life he lived bearable, enjoyable. I knew from a young age that I wanted that, that I needed that in my life. No one else would do, except you, Yara."

I watch the surprise flicker over her face, watch her mouth open and close as if she doesn't know what to say before she refocuses on my hair. I close my eyes again, but not before looking at the wet t-shirt clinging to her body. She's thin, but with gentle curves. Her round breasts are outlined against the shirt and her nipples are hardened nubs, just begging to be sucked.

"Can I ask you a question?" I ask her as she pushes my head back under the water.

"Yes."

"What do you want in a mate, in a relationship?"

She thinks for a moment. "Peace and quiet."

I shake my head. "I can't offer you that. That's not the life that the packs live."

"Monogamy," she says as if this will be a deal breaker for me. Actually, I'm thrilled.

"That I can offer you. I will never be another woman again. You're it for me, Yara."

She frowns, staring at my hair, so I dip it and she begins washing it for a third time. "I want someone who respects me, who recognizes the value that I bring to the relationship, that I'm an intelligent woman and doctor, someone who will allow me to do the job that I love."

"Well, that I've already given you. Thankfully, you've agreed to be my lead doctor, so I can check that box off," I say, smiling at her because I know I'm about to get her sass.

"I am not your lead doctor," she says firmly.

I put my face right up to hers. "You're as much my lead doctor as you are my mate and this pack's Luna. And to speak to the other things you said, if I didn't respect you and your knowledge, I wouldn't have told my pack that your word goes in the hospital. As far as the value that you bring to this pack, you're not only my mate, but as you could see, we were desperate for a doctor...and now I have you."



"I can't stay," she whispers.

"You can't leave. I've been searching for you for twelve long years. I never gave up, even though the odds were terrible that I would find you, I never gave up, never took a chosen mate. I've always wanted you, Yara. Only you." 1

She looks away from me. Maybe I'm giving her too much truth, but I'd rather she knows where I stand.

"What about pups? Do you want them?" I ask her.

She frowns again, turning to get a washcloth and putting soap on it.

"I...I haven't really given it much thought. I've been focusing on my career and...with the pack wars, it doesn't seem very safe to bring a pup into this world."

"I would keep our pups safe, just like I'll keep you safe."

"You can't guarantee that," she says, softly.

I reach up, stroking her cheek. "I would die for you. I can guarantee you that. I would die for our family. I want a family with you, Yara."

She licks her lips and my eyes snap to her mouth. Her pink lips look positively delicious, and I growl softly. The scent of cinnamon and nutmeg begins to increase in the small space, making my head spin, this time not from fatigue.

Yara looks down, seeing my body's response to her scent and her proximity to me.

"You're getting awfully frisky, Alpha," she says breathily.

"My sweet Yara, frisky would be me ripping that shirt open and sucking your pert little nipple into my mouth. This," I say, gesturing to my erection, "is just my body's response to you."

She's been stepping back, trying to get space from me and I've slowly been moving closer to her, until she's now pressed against the wall.

"And I've been desperate to taste you since the moment I laid eyes on you," I say, leaning in and pressing my lips to hers.

The sweet scent of her arousal swirls around the steamy shower, and I growl possessively, wrapping my arms around her waist and deepening the kiss. Her body responds immediately and she tastes sweet, like a snickerdoodle cookie. I begin to lose myself in the kiss, loving the sounds of her whimpers and how her body is pressing against mine.

"Alpha, you're food's out here," Charlie yells from my bedroom. 1

I growl angrily and pull back from the kiss.

"I'm going to kill him for interrupting our first kiss," I say softly so Charlie can't hear me.

I watch as the embarrassed look on her face turns to surprise at my words, and then her lips begin to twitch.

"You can't kill your Beta."

"For interrupting this, I might," I say watching as she loses the battle

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and begins giggling in my arms, pressing her face against my chest so she stays quiet.

It's one of the sweetest sounds I've ever heard, right up there with her whimpers and moans of desire.



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