

## Chapter 15: Concern

Yara

Oh this man is so frustrating! Why the hell is he telling his pack that I'm their Luna. And now, they're all calling me Luna. It's infuriating!

Warren walks me to the pack hospital, basically handing me off to Charlie.

"Everything okay?" Charlie asks him.

"Yeah, thanks. I need to get back and show my face. Can I leave Yara with you?"

"I got your back, Alpha," he says, and begins leading me to a room where I find Haynes already seated on a bed.

"Okay, let's take a closer look at what we've got," I say to him, getting some scissors and cutting away the shirt.

I wet the bandages that are covered in dried pus and blood. Then I carefully begin pulling them away to see the massive infection underneath.

"UH!" Charlie says and I turn to see he's covered his mouth and nose. "What the fuck, Haynes?"

Haynes just looks down. There's no way he's not feeling terrible if the infection is this bad.

"I'm going to have to debride this which means I have to scrub all the

Chapter 15: Concern

infection out of the wound. I need to see the flesh underneath and make sure it's healthy."

"Okay," he says.

"It's going to hurt. Would you allow me to give you something to numb the area as best I can. It won't numb it all, the infection will block it, but it will help."

"No," he says, still not looking at me. I stare at him in disbelief. What is with these guys?

"There's no shame in letting me numb this area. I won't be knocking you out or anything," I say, trying again.

"No," he says more firmly.

I turn back to the tray of things that I need to clean the wound.

"The whole friggin pack is as arrogant as their Alpha. No one feels pain anymore? What the hell kind of pack is this?" I mumble as I get my things together.

"She's not expecting an answer. She keeps forgetting we can hear her," Charlie says and I turn to see Haynes frowning at me.

As I get ready to start, Haynes speaks.

"I do feel pain, Luna. But I'm a warrior. Pain is a part of my life. I've just accepted that," he says, and he sounds so defeated. I hate it. I hate that this is the only life that he sees in his future.

"Well, I don't accept it, just so you know," I say ferociously. I take a

Chapter 15: Concern

deep breath and look at him. "I'm going to get started. If at any time you change your mind about being numbed, let me know."

He nods and I begin to wash out the wound. "Why didn't you come see Dr. Stevens when this first got infected?" I ask him.

"I did. He said my wolf would heal me, but he hasn't."

I stop, looking over at Charlie before turning back to the wound. "Did he have you come back to check and make sure your wolf was healing you?"

"No, he just said to give it a few days. By then we were fighting again, and I didn't have time to do anything else about it."

"How is your wolf? He must be pretty weak if he hasn't healed you," I say. I have to give the guy credit. He really is used to pain. I know what I'm doing is painful but he hasn't once flinched.

When I realize he hasn't answered, I stop, moving so I can look him in the eye. "Warrior, when was the last time you heard your wolf?"

"It's been at least a day," he finally says and I can see that this, more than anything is upsetting him. Not for the right reasons, in my opinion. He's sad his wolf is gone. I'm mad that he's going to die because he didn't get proper medical treatment.

"The infection has moved up into your shoulder and down your arm. I'm guessing you don't have a lot of use of this arm now?" I ask him.

"No, Luna."

I ignore the title and look at Charlie. "Charlie, come look at this."

He walks over, still covering his nose and mouth. "Do you see this black area here?"

"Yeah, what am I looking at?"

"That's gangrene," I say, then tilt my head to look at Haynes. "Do you know what gangrene is?"

"No."

"It means your flesh is dying. You are literally rotting to death. And without your wolf, I'd guess you had about three days to live."

"What?" he asks. "How?"

"Your infection is rampant. We'll be lucky if it hasn't gotten into your blood stream. Remember what I said in the dining hall? You're no good to your pack if you're dead. Well, you would have been dead, and they would have been down a warrior, a good one."

"But Luna, I asked Dr. Stevens," he says defensively.

"Well, I'm the lead doctor here now and what I say goes and what I'm saying is that you've earned yourself a couple of days in the hospital. So make yourself comfortable. I'm going to have to cut this dead area out. Blood is healing, so I have to cut until I get to healthy, bleeding flesh. And I'm going to tell you now, you've lost a lot of muscle, muscle that you won't get back. This arm will always be weaker than your other arm. You're going to have to readjust your fighting style to account for that. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Luna."

"Good. Okay, lay back. Let's get this done, then I'm going to get you started on some heavy duty antibiotics to help heal your body since your wolf has gone silent. When he's back and you're as healed as you're going to get, I'll release you, but not until then."

When I'm done, I order the nurses to start an IV fluid bag and some heavy duty antibiotics to ward off any additional infection.

"I'll be back to see you in the morning. I'll let them know that if anything changes, they need to call me. Don't give my nurses a hard time, do you hear me?" I say to him, seeing the two nurses in the room look at me out of the corner of their eye then at each other. I'm hoping that's a good sign.

When we step out of the room, another nurse comes up to us.


"Luna, there are several warriors in the waiting room. They said you told them to come."

"Put them in room, triage them and I'll start with the most critical."

"Yes, Luna," she says, smiling as she turns away.

When she steps away, I turn to Charlie. "I have a question for you. This pack, several warriors, more probably since we got to the hospital, are challenging Warren, testing his ability to lead this pack. But when a fight nearly broke out, you were ready to fight with him. You're his Beta, the most likely person to take over if Warren isn't capable of doing so. I want to know why you're fighting to keep him in his Alpha position when everyone else seems willing to knock him down?"

"You don't miss much, do you?" he asks me, giving me a appreciative look. "He's my Alpha. I'm his Beta because I respect him and because I have no desire to be in charge. His job sucks, all the time. Everyone constantly tests him. In the world we live in, that's the way it is. The packs need someone strong to lead them. The moment he's not that person, the pack will remove him and put someone that they feel is stronger in his place. Personally, I think it's about more than strength, physical strength anyway. Alpha Warren is strong mentally, not just physically and I think the pack forgets how important mental strength is, especially in times like these."

I look at him for a long moment. "Hmmm, I think I like you again," I say. "One more thing and this is important. I don't know why Dr. Stevens didn't treat Haynes when his infection started, but that's not being lazy, tired, or old. That's medical neglect, it's malpractice. I showed you that gangrene because you're going to have others who have it. If he neglected one of your pack members, he'll have neglected others. I don't know what the reason is, but I'd suggest you and Warren figure it out." 

I turn and head to the nurse's station to see what's happening with the others. Seven warriors have come in, wanting to be seen. I'm surprised, but glad. Maybe word will get around quickly and more will start to come in. This pack will be stronger, fight harder, if they're healthy.

It's several hours later before I finally finish. I'm exhausted but happy that I was able to catch so many problems before they became the infected mess that Haynes has.

"We'll see you tomorrow, Luna?" one of the nurses asks me.

"Yes. Please make sure you check on Warrior Haynes regularly and I want to know if anything changes for the worse overnight."

"Yes, Luna."

Charlie is waiting to take me back to the packhouse. When we arrive, I turn to him. "I'm sure Warren is asleep. Is there somewhere else that I can sleep for the night," I ask, hoping that Charlie will put me in my own room. <sup>1</sup>

"I've already linked him, Luna. He's waiting up for you."

"Oh. Great," I say smiling a fake smile.

Charlie snorts and gestures for me to precede him up the stairs. He walks me to Warren's door.

"Good night, Luna."

He walks to the top of the stairs and turns to look at me.

"He's not leaving until you come in, Yara," I hear Warren say from inside the room.

I take a deep breath, open the door, and step inside.