

Chapter 89: Gammas

Haynes

As we drive to Simon's pack, I look over at my mate. She's staring out the window and I can feel her nervousness through our bond.

"What's on your mind, beautiful?"

She turns and looks at me, smiling bashfully. She's used to worrying on her own without anyone noticing or caring. She's still struggling with me being in her mind, constantly focused on her thoughts and emotions. She loves it when we're in bed together, but at times like this, she forgets, and I think it embarrasses her to get caught.

"Have you ever done anything like this before?" she asks me.

"Nope, I've never been a Gamma before. Just a warrior, like you."

She turns, looking back out the window.

"You didn't answer my question," I say. I'm glad that it's just us. I wouldn't be so direct if there were others in the van with us. But since we had to bring so many vans, we doubled up and I made sure that my mate came with me.

"How do you know we won't be attacked when we arrive?" she asks.

I shrug. "I don't. We might, but I doubt there are very many warriors left and any that are left will be young, too inexperienced to have fought with Simon, or suffering from a broken mate bond. There could be other warriors left to patrol the pack, that's possible, but I doubt it. Simon was focused on getting our Luna. He doesn't strike me as the type of Alpha that cared about his pack."

"So you're not worried about possibly walking into a fight?" she asks.

I shrug. "How is that any different than what our lives have been like until now? Why, are you nervous about it?"

I watch as she thinks through my question. I feel the turmoil in her. She likes knowing what she's walking into and the not knowing is making her nervous.

"What's the worst thing that could happen?" I ask.

She turns and looks at me and now I understand the fear.

"I could lose you," she says, barely above a whisper.

I take her hand and pull it to my mouth, kissing it while watching the road.

"I'm not Noelle, Laney. I'm a strong warrior and I know you've spent a large portion of your life trying to keep her safe, but you don't have to worry about me. I'm not going anywhere. My life has improved dramatically since I met you. I'm not giving that up. I'm not letting some asshole take me out now, just when I've found you and I finally get a taste of the life that I've always wanted. No way that's happening. I have too much to live for now, and not only that, but I have a kick-ass mate who I know will always have my back. So, even if someone gets past me, there's no way they're getting past her," I say, smiling when I see her lips twitching.

"Yeah, she is pretty awesome," she says, chuckling.

"She's the most incredible woman I've ever met," I say seriously. "And that's impressive considering who our Luna is."

I feel her settle as we talk. The fear is still there, but it's not at risk of overwhelming her. My mate likes to be in control, and in the bedroom I'm happy to oblige. But in the real world, that's not always possible. I need her focused on what's going on today, not worried about me and making mistakes because she's too busy trying to protect me rather than protecting herself.

When we pull up to the gates of Simon's pack, it's quiet. I roll down the windows, listening. There's no one here and I don't hear any patrols either.

'Anyone hear anything?' I ask in the mind link.

'No, Gamma,' I get from each car.

'Stay alert,' I say as I pull into the pack lands. Laney rolls down her window and we listen. I know the others behind us are doing the same.

Luna Yara convinced Trena to come with us. She hadn't wanted to, but when she said she would, Bradley insisted on coming along too. He's not going to let anything happen to Trena, not going to let anyone say anything bad about her, but we need her to let the others know that we're not here to kill them.

"This is creepy," Laney says as we pull up to the packhouse. It's still eerily quiet here.

"Stay alert," I say to her as I get out, looking around. I can smell stale food and fear. Lots of fear.

"Do you know if Alpha Simon is dead yet?" Laney asks quietly, walking to stand beside me.

"I would guess that if he isn't, that he will be soon. It took us just over an hour to get here and I'm pretty sure Alpha wasn't going to wait to kill him. Maybe that's why it's so quiet."

I look at Trena as she walks up. I can see that her eyes are haunted being back here. I hate that she has to face this, but it's necessary and she's a tough woman. She wouldn't be mated to Bradley if she wasn't.

"What do you think?" I ask her.

I watch as her focus changes and the haunted look becomes more calculating. "I think the omegas are terrified, worried that we're here to kill them, but someone has taken charge and told them to hide. That's who you need to worry about," she says.

"Any ideas who that might be?" Bradley asks. He's still not one hundred percent, but I know he'll fight if it comes to it.

"His Gamma, maybe. I'm not sure if he's still alive or not. I doubt the Lead Warrior is alive. He'd have been with Simon."

"Hello!" I call out. Nothing.

"They don't do booby-traps here, right?" I ask Trena.

"Not to my knowledge," she says.

I turn and look at the warriors behind me. "You five, in the back, the rest of you, with me."

"Get behind me, Trena," Bradley says, gently pushing her behind his back.

"You're the injured one, Bradley," she growls softly. He ignores her.

I look at Laney. "Ready?"

"Let's do this," she says. We walk up to the front door and I nod for Laney to kick it in. I'm not risking that someone is on the other side waiting to attack.

She does then quickly moves aside as I stand in the doorway, ready for someone to leap out at me, but no one does. The pungent scent of fear increases now that the door is open.

"Hello?" I call again.

"YOU KILLED HIM!" a woman screams, leaping at me from the shadows. Before I can grab her, Bradley's big hand grabs her by the throat, holding her in the air.

"Calm down!" he growls.

"Lina, calm down. What are you doing?" Trena asks her.

"Trena? We thought you were dead."

"I'm not dead. Who's in charge here?"

Bradley sets her down but doesn't release her throat. Lina scoffs. "Well, that's the question, isn't it? No one's left. It's just us."

'We're clear in the back, Gamma,' one of my warriors says.

I nod at Laney to enter along with the men I have with me.

"Where's Gamma Darius?" Trena asks.

"Dead. They're all dead. We felt all of their tethers break, including Alpha Simon's not long ago. So are you here to kill us then?" she

snarls.

"No. We're here to bring you back to our pack or offer for you the option of joining Alpha Harold's pack. You have the option of going rogue, but I wouldn't recommend that," I tell her.

'Mostly terrified omegas and pups inside, Haynes,' Laney's voice says in my mind.

"Trena, can you go inside and talk to the omegas. Let them know that we're willing to take them into our pack," I say. She heads inside leaving Bradley and I to speak to this woman who must have taken charge of the pack.

"Are you going to let go of me now?" she growls at Bradley.

"Are you going to stop trying to attack my Gamma, now?" Bradley retorts.

"How many warriors are left?" I ask her.

"Only those of us who were unable to fight," she says. "Most of them are near death because they lost their mates."

"Our Luna can help them," I say.

"Your Luna..." she scoffs again.

"Yes, my Luna. Maybe you've heard of her. Her name is Yara. She came from this pack. She's the reason that your Alpha and all of your warriors are dead. He came after our Alpha's mate. He didn't care how many of his warriors got killed and, in the end, he died because he tried to take her," I snarl, over her attitude. "So, you have a couple of choices, Lina. Get your shit together and decide which pack you want to be a part of or try and make it on your own. You have until we

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get these omegas packed into the vans to decide. You come after me or any of my warriors again, I'll kill you. Are we clear?"

I watch something in her shift. This woman may be a warrior, but she's no leader. She, like the others in this pack, needs a leader to feel safe. I realize that she's not only suffering from the loss of her mate, but also from not having anyone to lead her and this pack. She took it over, but it's not her strength.

She lifts her neck in submission of my authority and Bradley releases her. "We're clear," she says, much more calmly.

It's at this moment that I realize the importance of my role in the pack. Our pack accepted me because they knew me and knew my strengths. But there will be times, like now, when my position is important for other reasons and being able to show others that they are safe, protected, and cared for goes a long way to making the pack cohesive and calm. I've always respected Alpha Warren and Beta Charlie, but that respect just increased knowing that this is what they have had to do, even in our pack, since they took over.

When I walk inside, I see the omegas are starting to stand. Their eyes go wide when they see me. Maybe me accepting my position, the role in the pack has changed my aura, or maybe they just recognize a ranked member from another pack. Either way, my presence is making them nervous.

"Trena, have you explained to them what we are offering?" I ask, looking around.

"Yes, Gamma. Everyone would like to return to our pack. They don't know Alpha Harold, but I told them if they aren't happy in our pack, we would find a way to help them see Alpha Harold's pack."

"Good thinking. Everyone needs to collect their things and get in the vans. Only take what you can carry or can't live without," I say and they all begin moving to their rooms to get their things.

I look at Bradley. "Let's see what food we can take. They don't look like they've been eating much."

He takes Trena and together they go to collect whatever food is salvageable.

Laney takes my hand and pulls me into an empty hallway. "That was so fucking hot, the way you went all Gamma on that woman," she growls, pressing herself against me. "When we get home, you're mine, Gamma."

I slide my fingers into her hair, gripping it and tugging her head back so she's looking at me. "I'm always yours, Gamma," I say before taking her mouth in a hot, dirty kiss.

We get everyone loaded into the vans, making sure they have food and water. As we drive back to the pack, I look at Laney and I know she feels it too. We may have had the pack ceremony to make us the pack's Gammas, but this assignment, getting these people back to our pack, has made me feel more like a Gamma than the ceremony did.

I understand my role now, understand my position in the pack much better, and I reach out my hand to take my mate's, I know that she feels the change in us as well. We are our pack's Gammas. We are leaders in the strongest pack in our territory.