

Chapter 90: Quirin

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Harold

"What are you expecting to find when we get there?" Farrah asks me as we drive to Quinton's old pack. She and I are taking it very slow, mostly for her but also partly because of Henry. I want him to accept Farrah, not as a replacement for his mother, but as a mother figure in his life. It's something he hasn't had but has desperately needed. I've done my best, but there's a reason that an Alpha needs a Luna.

I'd noticed that Henry had accepted Farrah's touch when we'd watched Warren execute Simon. I'd seen his shock at the state that Simon was in when they brought him out. I was glad that Warren had spoken to him ahead of time, letting him know that this isn't the norm for his pack. Farrah's instinct, the instinct of a Luna and a mother, had been to help support him while he watched. My heart had soared with my pride in both of them, at her offer of support and his acceptance of it. Now that Farrah has accepted me as her Alpha, she'd felt the emotions in me. I don't close my mind to her, wanting her to feel everything that I'm feeling so she understands me and learns to trust me. Her eyes had come to mine and I'd seen the hint of a smile.

Slow means that I get to hold her hand while I drive. It makes both of us feel calmer. And while we were in Warren's pack, she agreed to sleep in the same room with me, which had ended up being the same bed. Nothing happened, but being able to sleep wrapped around my mate felt amazing. And based on how well she slept and with no nightmares, I think it did wonders for her too.

"I know the pack is gone. Beta Charlie attacked them while Quinton was attacking Warren's pack. Since we also know that Simon was there, and Warren's warriors indicated that there were dead bodies littering the ground, I'm going to assume that they haven't had a chance to burn their dead yet. We should all be prepared for the stench of rotting bodies when we arrive. That's going to be first. Then, I'd expect that Quirin will fight leaving. I'm not sure about Luna Yasmin, but I'm guessing after Simon's assault, she must realize how exposed she and her son are out here by themselves. I'm counting on both of you to help me get through to them. Farrah, you can speak to Yasmin, woman to woman, and Henry, you can speak to Quirin, Alpha heir to Alpha heir." 1

"Is he still considered an Alpha heir, Dad?" my son asks.

"He is the son of an Alpha. His pack may no longer exist, but knowing Quinton, he owned those pack lands which means that when Quirin comes of age, he could start his own pack again."

I look in the rearview mirror and watch my son as he thinks through what I've said. "What if he ends up trying to steal some of our pack members?"

"Well, what I would say to you is this. All Alphas are different. Sometimes, people choose one pack over another because they prefer the way a certain Alpha leads versus another. And that's okay. However, I would also say that if it's more than that, if it's more than a simple preference, you, as an Alpha should consider what you aren't doing or giving to your pack members that has them wanting to leave your pack. As a leader, your pack comes first, or at least a close

second to your family and your mate," I say smiling at Farrah. I love that blushes when I say things like that.

"If your pack members start to leave, you need to think about what you, as their leader, aren't giving them. Why are they leaving? What do they need that you aren't providing for them? You can only be a leader and an Alpha if you have a pack to lead. It's not always just about being strong and protecting the pack. Just like you need more than a father who is strong, your pack will too. If I were the type of father that made sure you were safe, fed, and educated, but I never gave you any of my time, you wouldn't like it, would you?"

He thinks about that. "No, I wouldn't. I enjoy our time together."

"Exactly. The pack is exactly the same. Even if you protect them, it wouldn't be enough because you aren't fulfilling their emotional needs, and maybe not even all of their physical needs. Does that make sense, Henry?"

"Yes, it makes sense," he says, turning back to the window. I know my son enough to know that he'll think through what I've said and if he has questions, he'll come back and ask me about them later.

When I refocus on the road, I feel Farrah looking at me.

"What?" I ask her.

She smiles, shaking her head. "You're a good Alpha."

"I try. I don't know that I always succeed, but I do try."

She smiles and looks out the window. While I keep my mind open to

## Chapter 90: Quirin

her, she doesn't always do the same for me. It's times like these that I'm practically desperate to know what she's thinking. But I don't push. I want her to come to me on her own terms.

I'm not sure if she feels what I'm thinking or not, but she turns to look at me, opening her mind to me. What I feel has my heart soaring. She's wondering how she can resist a man who is such a good Alpha, who she knows is a good mate, because she knew me when my mate was alive and she knows that I was always true and kind to her.

She glances back at Henry, who is still deep in thought. 'I don't know that I'm ready to be physical yet, Harold, but I think I'm willing to accept you as my mate,' she says in the mind link.

I pull her hand to my mouth, kissing it. 'I'll take as long as you need. I know you've been through a lot. I will never rush you.'

I see my son turn his head, seeing our silent interaction. He smiles and turns back to looking outside. He's already noticing little things that go on around him, just like a good Alpha should.

'Maybe...maybe when we get back, I could move into your room,' she says, still speaking in the mind link.

'I would love that.'

My heart is full of love as we pull onto Quinton's pack lands. Even from here, the smell of rotting flesh is strong.

"UGH!" Henry says, covering his mouth. "How can they live here? It's awful."

"They may not feel like they have another choice, which is why we're here," I tell him.

As we drive, we begin to pass bodies in various stages of decomposition.

"I'd like to offer to help them burn their dead. Even if they don't want to come with us, this will attract predators and could put them into a dangerous situation."

As we approach the packhouse, I see Luna Yasmin with a shirt tied around her mouth and nose. She's attempting to drag some of the bodies into a pile. She stops when she sees us, moving back to the packhouse and calling out to someone. Quirin comes running around the side of the packhouse to stand beside his mother.

I step out of the car, as do Farrah and Henry.

"Alpha Quirin, Luna Yasmin. I am Alpha Harold. This is my mate, Farrah, and my son, Henry. We've come to talk to you and to offer our assistance in cleaning up your pack lands."

"What do you want to talk about?" Quirin asks.

"You and your mother are not safe out here."

"We're fine," he says defiantly.

I look at Luna Yasmin and raise my eyebrow. "You didn't tell him?"

Quirin's head snaps to his mother. "Tell me what, Mother?"

"It was nothing," she says, raising her chin.

"If Alpha Warren's warriors hadn't arrived when they did, it would have been something. You and I both know that," Farrah says, stepping forward.

"Mother?" Quirin asks.

When she doesn't answer, I look at him. "So, you weren't here when Alpha Simon showed up and attempted to rape your mother?"

Yasmin clenches her teeth.

"Mother?"

"You weren't here. Nothing happened. I didn't want to worry you," she says.

"It sounds like a lot happened," he growls, then turns back to me. "How do you know about all of this?"

"I'm in an alliance with Alpha Warren. My family and I witnessed the execution of Alpha Simon this morning. Alpha Warren and I are concerned about you, but he didn't feel that you would listen if he offered you sanctuary because he killed your father."

"Murdered him, you mean," Quirin snarls.

"Your father had a lot of very good qualities, but sometimes greed can turn those good qualities into something that is not good. I'm sure you know that he intended to take Alpha Warren's mate from him. Believe me, if he did, he wouldn't have had the simple execution

Chapter 90: Quirin

that he had. You didn't see Alpha Simon. Your father was not tortured before his death. He was given an honorable death. Alpha Simon was not."

Quirin grits his teeth. "What do you want?"

"I'm here to offer you and your mother sanctuary in my pack. You are an Alpha heir, but without a pack, you are at risk. I'm assuming that your father owned these lands..."

"Yes, he did. We found the paperwork," Yasmin says.

"That's good. When you come of age, you'll have a pack to return to. Perhaps, by then, you'll be able to start rebuilding this pack, gaining some pack members and creating a positive environment here. I'm offering for you to come live with me. You are still an Alpha heir, as is Henry. You are nearly the same age and I would teach you, as I'm teaching Henry how to run and manage a pack. Luna Yasmin, you are welcome to join us as well, however, you would lose your title. But you would be safe and protected within my pack."

I can see Quirin thinking about it, not sure what the right answer might be.

"Why don't we help you clean up your dead and we can give them a warrior's burial. While we do that, we can talk and you can ask questions. I know for me, I usually need to think things through before I make a decision. And your warriors need to be laid to rest," Henry says, coming to stand beside me.

"You're willing to help us?" Quirin asks.

"Of course. That's what good Alphas do. We help each other," Henry says, stepping forward. "And maybe, if you decide to come live with us, we can become friends. Maybe once we become Alphas of our own packs, we can create an alliance."

"I'll never join an alliance with Alpha Warren or his heir," Quirin snarls.

"You don't have to have an alliance with him to have an alliance with me," Henry says, turning to look at me. "Right, Dad?"

"That's right," I say, hoping that I can change this young man's hatred for Warren. Nothing good will ever come of it.

Hours later, we finally get all the bodies into a group, laid out and ready to burn. During that time, I let Quirin and Henry work together, while I helped Yasmin and Farrah. They stopped to make food at one point, and I continued on my own, allowing my son to talk to Quirin heir to heir.

When it was all done, I stood beside Quirin, staring at the massive number of bodies. "Would you like to say something?" I ask.

"Thank you, for giving your lives for the pack. You will never be forgotten," he says, his voice thick with emotion.

I put my arm around his shoulders, squeezing his shoulder so he knows he's not alone, as Henry lights a torch and sets the bodies on fire. We stand in silence, watching the bodies burn as the sun sets.

The fire has nearly died out before Quirin finally turns to look at me. "Okay, Alpha. I'll go with you."



I smile down at him. "I'm glad you made that decision. It's late. Why don't we get some food, get a shower, and you and your mother can pack up anything you want to bring with you. We'll head out first thing in the morning."

He turns and goes inside without another word, his mother watching him. "Will you be joining us as well?" Farrah asks her.

"I go where my son goes," she says.

It's not a restful night's sleep, the scent of death and rotting flesh is in all of our noses, but in the morning, we pack up the car and head back to our pack.

I look in the rearview mirror at Quirin as he stares at his pack lands while we drive away. I have five years to make a difference in this young man. Five years to change his mind about going after Alpha Warren. Because nothing good can come from heart filled with hatred.



Cooper



Author

*“Do you think that Harold can change Quirin's feelings about Warren?”*

 131