

A Pack of Their Own

I watched as we were driving away to go park 121

[1,526 words]

RACHEL: I just nod my head. I send my response back to the alpha. Once Larz came into view I waved him over, and introduced him to my mate. They shook hands, and I went over to Liam to find where I was on the roster for the tournament, and to let him know that I would be in a meeting with his father if my turn came up before we got back. He nods his head in understanding. We head up to the Alpha's office.

DRAKE: I get the response back (Yes Alpha.) I only have to wait about 10 minutes until there is a knock on my door. "Come." I call out. The door opens and in walks prince Trent, Rachel and a stocky bald-headed guy that's built like a wrestler. A bit shorter than your average wolf. "Thank you for coming, I just got off the phone with Alpha Fredrick, everything is fine." I say as I see them start to get nervous. "Just some business, some of which we discussed yesterday." I see Rachel visibly calm then. "I asked for a volunteer, and he suggested Larz? Correct?" I asked him. He nods his head. "But this will be a two-fold issue, first if you agree, you will be marked, before you get to worked up, it is NOT, I repeat NOT a mating mark. To bring you up to speed, the short story, there COULD BE a possible war with another pack to the south, if everything we know is correct, they don't play by the rules. So, we need to take advantage of the time and information we have. It is an experiment, involving linking, so yes you can say no." I tell him. "Why would there be a war, and what does it have to do with my pack?" He asked, and he sounded like he just spent the night smoking and drinking his voice was that raspy. "Well, there are two possible reasons, one is, the peace treaty, that we have, to help each other when trouble arises, the other is that every pack here right now could be construed as aiding and abetting Harvest Moon. Yes, there is a story there as well, it's a mate issue." "I'm in." he states before I can finish explaining. "Ok, that was unexpected." I say to him. "You should have lead with the mate issue." He says nonchalantly. "Now my next question is not meant to be disrespectful, or nosey, but do you have a mate, or did you find one?" I asked him. "Found her." He says. "Good glad to hear it. May I meet her?" I asked. "Why?" "Well, all of this is also leading up to the second part of an issue I have with my children." I say. "Well now I don't mean to pry into things that don't concern me, but what would my mate have to do with your kids." He asked me. "Just her general size and shape." I tell him. "If she fits the right size and shape I can sell the fact that I am sending my middle child with you, back to your pack." I tell him. He nods in understanding then. And I watch as he pulls out his phone and dials a number. "Love I need you to come to the pack house, I am in the Alpha's office, and he would like to meet you." He says to his mate. Then he hangs up. Again, it's about a 10-minute wait and I get a knock on my office door. "Come." I call out. In walks a petite brunette with light brown eyes. "Thank you for coming." I say to her. "Yes

Alpha." "What do you think Rachel, do you think she could pass for Kes from a distance, and from the back?" I asked her. "She very well could Alpha, as long as she wasn't in direct sun light, and she was seen from the back." She says. I nod. "May I know your name?" I ask her. "Erica." "Well Erica, I know you are a bit confused, but the long and the short of it, is I am going to tell my oldest daughter, I am sending my middle daughter home with Larz here, and you are very close in size to her to pull it off." I say. "But here's the thing, when you start out, you will have to be in the back seat and looking a bit dejected, when you leave here, when you get beyond the pack then you can sit where and how you wish. I will let the both of you go pack and get ready to leave. Once you are packed please come back here, and I will have my warrior here to mark you. And I will have it set up so that my oldest will see the two of you leaving, just whatever you do don't look back at the house as you drive away." I tell them. "Yes Alpha." They both leave. I open a link to Frank. "Please come to my office." "Yes Alpha." I wait just a few minutes and Frank knocks on my door. "Come." I call out to him. "You wanted to see me, Alpha?" he asked as he entered. "Yes Frank, there is a lot going on right now, I don't have time to fill you in on all the details yet, but I want you to sit in on some of these meetings, and you will get the jist of what is happening." I tell him. "Yes alpha." I then send out the text to the other alphas to get everybody on the same page. I also text Camron, I want him in on all the meetings with all the alphas, so he can pass on what he knows first-hand. The Alphas', start to show up one and two at a time. I have them get seated and then Alpha Camron shows up. "What's up Drake?" he asked me. "I just wanted you here to pass on your knowledge first-hand, in case they have questions that you might have the answers to." I say to him. He nods. We get about halfway through the facts of what is going on when I get a knock on my door. "Come." I call out. Larz walks in. "Alpha." "Yes Larz, come in. Gentlemen, this is Larz he is from Burning Ember Pack. He has been gracious enough to be our first volunteer for this fact-finding mission." I say to the room at large. "Frank here is going to mark his arm and then he will be returning to his home pack, then tomorrow after breakfast we will send I link to him to test the distance. Once that is done I will send out a text to all of you to let you know the outcome of that test." I look around the room and see they all nod their heads in acknowledgement. Larz takes his shirt off and holds out his arm, Frank steps up to him they shake hands and then Frank bites him in the upper part of his arm, licks it closed and then retakes his seat. "Be for you go, please link each other, I will link in with Frank and I will repeat the conversation to the room, so that they can see and understand what we are trying to accomplish with this experiment." I say to them. They both nod. I link with Frank. "Ready?" He nods. I then nod at Larz, then he links in. "I am glad that I get to be a part of this, but I am also glad that I get to go home, nice to meet you Frank, look forward to hearing from you tomorrow morning." "Nice to meet you Larz, I to look forward to finding out if this will work." Frank links back and then closes the link, and I to come out of the link. "Now to let them know that what I repeated was correct, please tell them what the conversation was." I tell Frank and Larz They both pretty much repeated what was said in their conversation. "Now Gentlemen please excuse me for a few minutes, there is an issue that I must deal with, but Alpha Camron can continue with this portion of the meeting." I say as I get up and escort Larz out. "Is your mate ready?" I ask him. "She is Alpha." "Good, go get in the car, and when you see me come out of the pack house, you can leave." He nods at me. I then link Jessie. "Meet

me at the front of the marquee.” “Yes daddy.” I close the link. And head over to the marquee to meet up with Jessie. “ What’s up daddy? You needed to see me?” “Yes Jessie, I wanted to tell you that I am sending your sister to Burning Ember for the rest of the ball, so she will not be here on Wednesday when you shift.” I tell her, and watch her face very carefully. She just smiles and nods.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

I watched as we were driving away to go park 122

[1,418 words]

DRAKE: I take her out to the front of the : pack house and watch Larz drive off. The whole while I am watching Jessie’s face and demeanor. I see a flash of something in her eyes, but she masked it before I could really see, but I hope that now she will just stop whatever she is trying to do. “I have some meetings I need to get back to.” I say and go back into the house. I open a link to the front gate guards. “There is a car leaving, a man and a woman sitting in the back seat, if Jessie should ask any of you that is Keska got it.” “Yes Alpha.” I then close the link and head back to my office.

KESKA: I pull out the laptop after breakfast dishes are cleaned and put back. I call Mackie over. “I want to find out about this war that happened with Stone Claw over a 100 years ago.” I tell her. “Yeah the more we know the better prepared we can be now.” She agrees. I actually let her take control of the computer as I am not that good with the thing, she likes to tease me that I am lucky that I can turn the thing on without it crashing. Through our search we find that what had been discussed at Nana’s was the norm for the pack, they would travel in a zigzag pattern across the state or states acquiring rouges, and the smaller packs that couldn’t stand up to them, and make them train and then fight in their makeshift army. No wonder the packs back then did what they did. We also found that it was a mate issue back then as well, only it was in the Alpha line, as the story goes, the third born son of the alpha took a chosen mate, and she found her fated mate and left the pack to be with him. Then due to all the destruction that Stone Claw caused marching across the states, the four biggest packs moved against them in a coordinated and strategic strike. But there was nothing about the marking issue in anything we found online. “I wonder if they didn’t know about it, and that’s why it’s not mentioned.” I state to Mackie. “Possible, and the text from Cold Moon is from their own elder, and historian.” She tells me. I nod “I would like to know what is in them though.” I tell her. “Well, you can always ask for a copy, the worst he can do is say no.” “True.” I link father. “Father, sorry to interrupt you, but do you think it would be

possible to get a copy to the text from Cold Moon?" "I will see what I can do. And by the way, I told and showed Jessie that I was sending you to Burning Ember until the ball was over." "Ok, showed?" "Long story, but I had someone pose as you, leaving." "Thank you." I close the link, and turn to Mackie, "you need to go back to the pack house, you can go hang with Dutch, or whatever, but you have to go back." I tell her. "Why?" "Because father in his infant wisdom told, and showed Jessie he sent me to Burning Ember, and that means, me, by myself. And if you're not around she will get suspicious, because she won't see you." I tell her. "He really didn't think that one through did he." She says. I shake my head. "Oh well hopefully it will only be until Wednesday." I say to her. She just sighs. She gathers her things and heads out to go back to the pack house. After she leaves, I grab my bow and some arrows and head out to do some target practice, I can't go to the range, but that doesn't mean that I can't shoot.

LIAM: Once breakfast is finished, and most of the cleanup is done, I again get volunteers to get the tables pushed back and the pool table moved back in to start the days tournament. I text the first two players to come to the marquee by 10:30 so we can start the game. I am happy that so far no one has been found cheating. : But I am also amazed that right now the leaded in the pool tournament is a delta elite from Ranier Lake Pack. I have watched him closely. He is all skill, very finesseful with just the right amount of strength behind his shots, I think I would like him to teach me. We were halfway through the second game of pool when I see Mackie. I link her. "Hey, I thought you were supposed to be with Kes." "I was, but the Alpha told your sister that he was sending her to Burning Ember. So now I am here, because if I weren't Jessie would get suspicious, and we can't have that now can we." "I just wish Wednesday would hurry up and get here. And then Jessie and her mate whoever he or she may be could just leave. I miss Kes." "I know Liam I know, patients ok?" "As best as I can. Are you going to join in the Archey tournament? Other than Mitch, and Kes you're the best we got." "We'll see, ok, I am not going to promise anything right now, unless there's a deadline for signing up." "I never stated a deadline, was I supposed to?" "Usually, so that people can't come in last minute without going through the rounds." "Oh. I didn't know that what do I do?" "Make it now, over the PA system, that way everyone can hear, and no one can call foul." "Ok." I close the link and make my way over to the mic. "your attention please, I was informed that I needed to make this announcement, the sign up for the pool tournament is now officially closed. Thank you. There is still time to sign up for the dart tournament and the archery tournament." I put the mic back on the stand. And go back to my spot as I hear chuckling around me. Oh well live and learn I guess.

TREVER: I see Mackie, "Hey Dutch, there's your mate" I say to him quietly. He turns his head and sees her. I watch as his eyes glaze over. And I wait. "I guess the Alpha in all his infant wisdom showed Jessie that he was sending Kes to Burning Ember." He whispers to me. *infant wisdom? Stupid idiot is more to the point.* I think to myself, now she has to be alone, goddess I could strangle him. "Let's go play some darts before I lose it." I tell him softly. I stand up and walk inside the pack house to the game room.

MACKIE: I wasn't expecting to get the link from Dutch, it startled me a little, but I recovered before anyone could notice. I headed into the pack house, and I went up to

Kes's room to put my stuff in her room. I then headed to the kitchen to see if Sarah need any help. "No pup, thank you though, for asking, but where is Kes?" "The Alpha sent her to burning Ember." I tell her. "Who will look after the orphanage while she's gone?" "Don't worry Sarah, they still have me." I tell her. She just smiles and nods. I get another link from Dutch. "Hey beautiful, come into the game room." "Ok." He closed the link, and I walk to the game room to find him and Trever over by the dart board. "Hi." "Hey beautiful." Dutch says. I just shake my head at him. "So, what are we doing? What game are we going for?" I ask them. "I have maybe an hour or two before I go help with lunch service." I tell them. "500" Trever says. "Ok. I get the yellow darts." I say, and let them pick their colors. We are in our third game when I see Jessie walk by the door headed to the kitchen. "Hey guys, I will be right back." I say to them quietly. And head to the doorway at the other end of the room that leads into the kitchen, I stay hidden as best as I can and watch her. She goes to the back pantry, and I sneak to the far end of the kitchen pretending to

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I watched as we were driving away to go park 123

[1,079 words]

MACKIE: be busy with the dry staples, while keeping an eye on what she is doing. I watch as she dumps a salad bowl and some kind of slimy fish or something in the garbage, and then I watch as she takes a smoothie and dumps that in the garbage as well. I then quickly move back out to the game room so she doesn't know that I was watching her. I am back with the guys before she walks back past the door to the game room. "Where did you go?" Dutch asked me. I linked him to answer him. "I followed Jessie to see what she was up to." "What did she do?" "Threw out a salad, some slimy fishy something and a smoothie." I tell him. And take my turn. After that game was done, "Time for me to head to the kitchen guys, and time for you to mingle with the others." I say as I put my darts back in the holder.

DUTCH: After our last game and Mackie left to go to the kitchen, I link Trever. "Mackie said that Jessie threw out a salad, some slimy fish something and a smoothie, do you think she was slowly trying to poison Kes?" "No, I don't think poison, but I am thinking she did have some ulterior motive, I would like to see just what it was that was in that salad though." "I can have Mackie go take a picture of what it was that Jessie threw out." "Do that." I close the link with Trever and open one to Mackie. "Hey beautiful, can you get a picture of what it was that Jessie threw out, Trever is curious." "Yeah I can do that, and I will send it to him." "Thanks love." "Welcome." I can almost hear the blush in her voice.

DRAKE: I get through the first round of meetings with the other Alpha's, letting them know what we found in the text, what we did, and what we are doing, to ensure that everyone is on the same page, I also make sure that they all know that it is a mate issue that may be the catalyst for this possible war. That even though the majority of them were not involved directly, it could be construed as guilt by association. Not that I would do that, but we don't know about Stone Claw. I look up and see that it is already close to lunch when I get another link from Kes. "Mackie and I did some research online, the issue over a 100 years ago was a mate issue as well, but it was the Alpha's third born son, who caused all the problems. We didn't come across anything involving the linking issue though, so we weren't able to determine what that was all about, or how long it would last, or how far it would go. Sorry." "That's ok baby girl, we are dealing with the distance issue right now as we speak, the person driving your double to Burning Ember is marked, so we will know tomorrow if it will reach at least to them." "Ok." She closes the link, and I head downstairs for lunch. When I see Mackie bringing out the hot plates I realize my mistake. Sh.it. Well, there is nothing I can do now, unless I can find another body double and driver. But I doubt that is going to happen. Only two more days. I think to myself as I pinch the bridge of my nose.

LIAM: We are getting down to the nitty gritty for the Pool tournament. Just three more games, then we hit the semi-finals, but right now I get some volunteers to move the pool table back into the game room to make room for lunch. I approach the leader of the pool tournament. "Hey, I know this might sound crazy, but can you teach me to play the way you do?" I asked him. "What's your name kid?" "Liam, I'm the baby so to speak of the alpha family." I say to him. "Well Liam, I'm Thorne, and it will take longer than this mating ball to teach you how to play this game the right way, but I will give you what I can while I am here." "Thanks." I walk away from him and head over to the mic to make an announcement. "May I have your attention please, we have three more games and then we hit the semi-finals, registration will close for the darts tournament at that time, so if you are not signed up for the darts and want to be, get signed up before the end of the pool tournament. Thank You." I turn the mic off and go find the princes, and Mackie. I see that Mackie is still working helping the kitchen omegas like usual. I link her. "I thought that you weren't supposed to do that during the ball?" "No one told me I couldn't, so I will keep doing it until I am told I can't, and as we both know, there are only two people that can truly tell me that." "Dad and Kes." "Right." "What about Dutch?" "He can ask me not to, but he can not tell me or order me not to." "OK, did I do the announcement right this time?" "Yes Liam you did good." "Thanks." I close the link, and get in line to get lunch. During lunch I am going over the list for the dart tournament. There is only 18-20 signed up for the darts, that's a relief.

MACKIE: In the course of getting things done for the lunch service I am able to get a picture of the salad fixings, even though they are covered with the smoothie, I then send it to Trever. And continue to put out the hot plates and bring out the food. Once all the dishes are out I grab a plate for myself and go sit with the guys. "So why did you want to know about the salad stuff?" I asked Trever as I sat down. "Well, Kes has been having a salad the last 2 to 3 meals, plus the smoothie for both breakfast and lunch, I am just

curious if it is what she was eating, and if Jessie had something to do with it, then there has to be something behind it.” He tells me. I just nod, knowing Jessie.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

I watched as we were driving away to go park 124

[1,460 words]

TREVER: Dutch and I hang out in the marquee to help Liam with the rest of the tournament, so that it can go a bit quicker, as far as transitioning times. But during the actual game times, Dutch and I are checking the ingredients of the salad. And the smoothie, once we have everything identified I put them into a database and ask what they are. It comes back as aphrodisiacs. I just about drop my phone. I show it to Dutch. “Oh damn” he says, I nod my head, and I head to the alpha’s office. I know he is having meetings, but he still needs to see this, I know that it won’t make a difference as to whether or not Jessie get a punishment, but he still needs to know.

DRAKE: I am in the second round of the same meeting that I had this morning, just with the next batch of alphas, and I get a knock on my door. “Excuse me one moment gentlemen.” I get up and go to my door and open it to see Prince Trever standing there. “I am in a meeting right now Prince Trever.” I say to him. “Yes, I know, but you need to see this, it is concerning the other issue you have.” He says to me. “What is it?” I ask as he hands me his phone with a picture of what looks to be some kind of salad and something pink poured all over it in the garbage. “So, what am I looking at?” I ask him. “This is what Kes has been eating for the last 2 maybe 3 meals other than breakfast today, after identifying every single thing in that salad I put them in a database and it came back as aphrodisiacs, even everything in the smoothie.” My mind isn’t working correctly, because I can’t seem to wrap my head around why Kes would be eating aphrodisiacs. And I guess it was showing on my face because Trever says, “Jessie has been giving it to her, Mackie just caught her throwing it out.” “Damn. Go talk to Dr. Grant at the clinic and find out if she is in any kind of danger from any of this.” I tell him. He nods and leaves. I head back into my meeting, with my mind going in so many different directions I have James and Camron take the lead, as I just can’t think straight right now. I want to strangle Jessie. Why couldn’t she leave well enough alone, and why can’t this be this be Wednesday?

TREVER: I link Dutch as I head out and over to the pack clinic. * “I am heading to the clinic to talk with their Dr. Don’t panic, I don’t believe that it is anything serious, but the Alpha said to talk with the Doc just to make sure that there isn’t any side effects or issues with how much Kes may have ate.” “Ok, I will be in the marquee, just link if you

need anything.” “Will do.”* I close the link. And walk into the clinic and ask to speak to Dr. Grant. “I am Dr. Grant; how may I help you young prince?” “Well for starters, call me Trever, but I need to know if there is any side effects to someone eating aphrodisiacs for 2 to 3 meals in a row?” “Well, that would depend on just how much was ingested and if there were other things, other herbes and in what concentrations in with it as well.” “I don’t know. But here see for yourself.” I hand him my phone and let him look at the mess in the garbage. “I suppose I could run a few tests to find out how much other herbs are in there. Where is all this now?” He asked me “I believe in the garbage in the pack house kitchen.” Well, let’s go, the longer it stays there the more contaminated it gets, and I won’t be able to get anything from it.” We rush back to the pack house and into the kitchen startling the staff. “Sorry everyone, but I need to get to the trash.” The Doc. Says. We find the container that has the salad and smoothie in it, and he is careful as he pulls the bag out, we were lucky enough that there was nothing thrown in on top of it, and we head back to the clinic where he can run his test. “This will take a few hours to get the results, why don’t you go do whatever you were doing, I will call you when I have the results.” I write down my number for him and head back to the marquee. I get a link from Dutch as I come back in. * “What’s the verdict?” “Won’t know for a few hours, that’s how long he said it would take to run the test.” “What’s he looking for?” “To see if there were other herbs, and at what dose, and concentration.”* He closed the link. “So where are we in the standings? I asked as I got to the table to take my seat. “We should be able to finish with the pool, after dinner.” Dutch says. “Who’s on the leader board?” I asked. “Delta elite Thorne, from Ranier Lake, your brother Trent, Rachel’s sister Renae from Burning Ember, and Alpha heir Vance from Black Crescent.” Dutch tells me. “Well, no offence to my brother but I hope that Thorne takes this thing.” I say. He just nods. Mackie comes to join us at the score table. “Who’s winning?” she asked. “For this particular game it looks like we could lose Renae.” I say watching the game with some interest. “Who is she playing? I haven’t seen her before.” she asked. I check the sheet and see that she is another Delta elite from Black Waters. “Max, I’m assuming it’s short for Maxine, Delta elite, Black Waters.” I say.

KESKA: I am feeling a little antsy, I take my sketch pad and go through the cabin making a diagram of each room and what’s in them once I have that done, I sit down at the lap top and type interior design into the search bar. Well, that gets me to a whole bunch of companies that do interior design. Oops, I modify it to say interior design apps. And now I get closer to what I actually want but I still am a lost cause, I finally give up, and close out of the search. I then just open up to some of the games I play, I like match 3 games, especially ones that have some kind of story base to them. I play for a while just getting more and more board and antsy. \[Corla?\] \[yes?\] \[Do you want to go for a run?\] \[sure, we can do that, beats sitting around doing nothing.\] \[Well, if I were better with the computer, we would be getting designs for the cabin.\] \[Wait for Mackie, she will help.\] I strip down and go outside and close the door and shift. I let her go where she wanted, with a reminder that we do need to be cautious of the border patrol guards. We run and explore the whole of the northern border and see if there’s anything we can recommend improvements wise to father for the next time we talk. We chased a few rabbits, and squirrels watch a porcupine waddling around and an opossum, we even came across a few skunks. Caught the scent of a black bear, and a deer, but didn’t

actually see them. It was a fun run, and it seemed to help calm whatever it was that was making me antsy. I get back to the cabin and shift back, go back inside, I get dressed and start my dinner. Checking the fridge, I notice there is only hamburger, bacon, and ground pork for protein. I link Mackie. "Hey." "Hey, what's up?" "James, he didn't think things through, so could you stop and pick up a turkey loin, and a small ham, and maybe a few steaks, all he got us was hamburger, bacon, and ground pork." "Sure, I will let the guys know." "Thanks." "Welcome." I close the link and start grilling some burgers, and I shred up some potatoes for hashbrowns, I like mine a little more brown, and a little crunchy, and slice up some tomatoes to put on the burgers, shred up some cucumbers, broccoli, and baby asparagus stems to make a slaw. I make enough for all of us, not sure whether they're coming back here or not to eat. Once everything is done, I sit down to enjoy my dinner.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

I watched as we were driving away to go park 125

[1,426 words]

MACKIE: I link Dutch after getting Kes's link. *"Kes would like us to stop and pick up a turkey loin, a few steaks, and a small ham. Before we head back for the night." "I will let Trever know."* I nod my head to him and close the link.

DUTCH: After getting the link from Mackie, which still gives me butterflies, I link Trever. "Your woman want some steaks, ham, and turkey. I guess we go shopping before we head back tonight." He looks at me and nods.

TREVER: With it getting close to dinner, the game ended, and we lose Renae, but she did make it quite far in the competition. I acknowledge the link from Dutch that Kes wants us to go shopping. I know it's new for her, but I am going to have to remind her that she can link me directly. Now it's down to Trent, Thorne, Vance, and Maxine, it's going to be an interesting evening. Dutch and I help move the pool table back inside and help to reset the room for the evening meal. After the marquee is reset, I grab both Dutch and Mackie and head out. "Where is the best store to get what she wants?" I asked Mackie. "Marty's meats." She says. "Lead the way." I tell her. And we head off in the direction of the local shopping area for the pack. Once inside the meat market, I link Kes. *"Hello gorgeous how many steaks do you want us to get?" "one a piece, and only a small ham and turkey loin roast, because we won't be staying for the whole week only through Wednesday, because I have no intention of going back until Thursday afternoon some time, and any food that we have left over will go to the orphanage." "Ok love."* I close the link and walk up to the meat counter. "4 of your best steaks please, a

2 lb. ham or the closest you have and the same for a turkey loin roast.” I tell the man behind the counter. “What kind of steaks?” “What do you mean?” “I mean, we have elk, moose, deer, beef, buffalo. So which kind?” “Oh, just a minute.” I link Kes back. *’What kind of steaks were you thinking of.’ “Either beef, or just regular venison.” “Ok.”* I close the link. “My lady says either beef or regular venison, I will leave the choice up to you as the expert in your craft.” I tell the man. He nods. I collect the meat from him and go to the check-out counter and pay for them and we head to the closest tree line and walk in a bit then Dutch, and I strip and fold our clothes and put them in the bag with the meat and shift, I pick up the bag and Dutch picks up Mackie and we head to the cabin.

DRAKE: We have just finished with the last of the meetings and I feel good about having everyone on the same page, there were even a couple of the Alphas that had contacts with some of the smaller more southern packs that they could contact to help monitor things and keep us up to date if anything seemed to be out of the ordinary, like a sudden decrease in the rouge population in their area, or if any small packs near them suddenly didn’t check in, or respond to any correspondences, that kind of thing to let us know, so that we could send help, or have them move to a safer area for the time being. And now it’s time for dinner, and I feel like I’ve been put through the ringer. I will feel much better once James and Jessie shift on Wednesday, or I should say midnight Tuesday into Wednesday I just hope that Jessie’s mate is here, and he is just waiting to claim her until she dose shift, and that will be one less problem I will have to deal with.

LIAM: We are coming down to the wire, with the pool tournament, the next time I get a bright idea just shoot me, but I started it, now I have to finish it. I wish Kes were here, but I suppose I could recruit Lissa to help out. I look around for my twin, I spot her sitting in a corner with Demi, I head in their direction. “Hey Lissa, hey Demi, do you two want to help with the tournaments at all?” I asked them. “What do we get if we do?” Lissa asked. “A chance to be in the spotlight, all eyes on you, the center of attention.” I say. “Why are you asking us now, why not from the beginning?” “What do you mean?” I asked Lissa. “Look, ever since Kes got stabbed you have basically ignored me. I just want to know why!” She states. “I guess I didn’t realize I had, but part of it is because you were always so quick to judge Kes, you were too caught up in Jessie’s aura that you couldn’t see how bad she was being to Kes. I didn’t want to fight about it, so I just stayed away, because I knew that, that whole issue would come up.” I say to her. “But if you feel like I’ve ignored you, I want you to put yourself in Kes’s place for a moment, mom, dad, James, Jessie, you, and yes even me, we have all ignored her, left her behind, remember the picknick at the lake, a few years back? It was before her birthday; she would have only been 12. We were all there, except Keska. Now ask yourself why.” “I don’t know! Why?” “Lissa you have just made my point, none of us thought about her, **NONE** of us. I started to see things the way they actually were, and that’s when I started hanging out with Kes more, I thought that you were starting to see them as well when she had to do that week of training, and you seen how Jessie was towards her, but you fell right back under Jessie’s spell. I am sorry if you thought I was ignoring you, but one Jessie, and Mimi Sutter in this family is enough, and I don’t want to spend my time and energy trying to make you understand the mistakes you are making as you make them, eventually you will understand those mistakes, but hopefully it won’t be to

late, at least you didn't reject her, like Mimi and Jessie did." "I want to help." She says. I just look at her. "What! You asked if we wanted to help, I want to help, I can't speak for Demi, but I want to help, I'm bored out of my mind with this ball." "Can you keep a secret? Especially from Jessie?" I asked her. "Yes I can keep a secret, even from Jessie." She says. I lower my voice to a whisper and lean into the table. "Prince Trever is Kes's mate." I tell them. And stand back up and watch their reaction. "What? No way, wouldn't that get Jessie's goat." Lissa giggles. "Come on let's go eat." I say to them.

JESSIE: I look around the marquee, I see Lissa and Liam chatting in a corner, and Demi is with them, I'm glad to see that they are taking again, I didn't like it when there was a rift between them, like James and I they are close always sharing everything, well almost everything, but because of that annoying bit.ch of a brat Kes, things have been strained between them. So, it warms my heart to see them back to where they were before all the crap went down with her. I haven't seen much of James today wonder what's going on. I keep looking and I finally spot him with dad and mom and a few other alphas. I head in their direction. "Hey, what's all the secrecy about?" I ask as I approach them. "There is no secrecy, dear, just the possibility of a war, and that is only a maybe." Daddy says as he kisses the top of my head. "What? Why haven't I heard of it before now?" "Because of the other issues involving you." He says pointedly. "But a war, really?" "Yes, but as I said it's only a maybe, we don't know anything for certainty at the moment." "With whom?" "Stone Claw, it stems from the mate that one of Alpha Camron's men found." Daddy states.

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I watched as we were driving away to go park 126

[1,389 words]

JESSIE: "But that has nothing to do with us." I say. "In a way it does, because it happened here, and every pack here could be construed as aiding and abetting or guilt by association." He says. "But how is that fair?" I ask, "I mean, just because it was here, it's not our pack that she is mated into." "Correct, but we are the host of the ball, therefore it's our fault that such a thing happened at all, even though it all happened off of pack territory, and she was found in the human town, we are still responsible, because we are holding the ball. We don't know what they will do, they have been known to go to war over less offences." Daddy says. "That is why I have been having these meetings, so that every pack can be made aware and be ready in case trouble comes to them, and that we can offer aid in whatever form we can." He says. I nod my head.

JAMES: I listen to Jessie's and dad's conversation, then a thought hits me. "We need to continue to train the females of the pack." I say. Dad looks at me like I just grew a second head. "Look I'm not saying every one of them, but the ones that want to become warriors, we should let them, it will help make us stronger, and help the pack be better protected, mom was a warrior, warrior's daughter, Nana is a warrior, Kes is training with Nana, and she has been taking Aikido, to be a better fighter, I think we need to embrace that and let the women of the pack choose for themselves." I say. "He has a point dear." Mom says. "I love the fact that you have always protected me, but I know that if it comes down to it, I can defend myself and do it relatively well." She tells dad. "What do you mean Kes is taking Aikido, and what the heck is Aikido?" Jessie asked. "Aikido is a form of oriental martial arts." Dad tells her. "And you let her take it?" "No, she just went and did that on her own, and don't cause a scene about it now." He tells her in a hushed voice. I can see she is fuming about it. I just shake my head. "Let's eat please, I'm starving, we can pick this conversation back up at the table." I state as I move to get in line for dinner.

LIAM: After we get our plates I ask the girls, "Do you want to meet the princes?" "Sure." They both say. So, I direct us to where they are sitting. "Hi, can we sit with you?" I asked them. "Sure." We take our seats with them, and I reintroduce the girls. "This is my twin Lissa, and third born gamma Demi. Lissa, Demi, this is prince Barrett, his mate, Alisha, prince Trent, and you both know Rachel from Burning Ember." I say as I point to each person as I say their names. "Hi" the girls say. "Where is Trever and Dutch?" I ask. "Don't have a clue, the last any of us saw them they were helping reset the marquee and then they headed out." Barrett says. "So, you're Mackenzie's little sister?" Trent asked Demi. "Yes I am." She says, like she's proud of the fact that he even asked her. Inside I'm just shaking my head, because they treat Mackie the same as our family treats Kes. "So, are you ready for your next challenge Trever?" I ask him "I'm always ready. Who do I get?" "Delta elite Thorne, and Alpha Vance is taking on Delta elite Max, then the winners go on to take on each other and that will conclude the pool tournament." I tell them. And they all nod. "What about the Darts?" Rachel asked. "I already made the announcement that if they wanted to get in on the darts they had to register before the end of the pool tournament, I will have Lissa at the score table with me so she can register any late commers. I tell them.

TREVER: We get back to the cabin and shift back, we redress and head in. Just as we were going to sit down my phone rings. "Hello?" I answer. "Hello Prince Trever, this is Dr. Grant, are you with Kes?" "Yes." "May I speak to her?" "Ok." I hand my phone to Keska. She just looks at me questioningly. "It's Dr. Grant, he wants to speak to you." She shrugs her shoulders and takes the phone. ("Hello?" "Hello Keska, how are you feeling?" "Fine, Why?" "No anxiety? No slight rise in body temperature?" "I was a little antsy a bit earlier, but I shifted and went for a run." "Ok, good." "What's going on?" "Put me on speaker dear, if you are ok with the others knowing your medical stuff.") I watch as she takes the phone away from her ear and puts the call through the speaker. "Ok doc., you're on speaker, mind telling me what's going on?" "Some one has been feeding you aphrodisiacs, not just in food form but in herbal form as well, I don't believe that you got enough in your system to do any great harm, not that they can really do harm,

except make you more susceptible to wanting to have sex.” “What!?” “Don’t worry it isn’t going to harm you in any way.” “Thank you Doctor.” “Your welcome Kes. Hope that answers your questions prince Trever.” “Not completely, how much did she get?” “That’s hard to say, but as I said before it’s not going to hurt her any, they are all good foods and they are very nutritious for you, other than being aphrodisiacs.” “Ok thank you doctor.” “welcome. Is there anything else?” “No, I don’t think so.” “Then I will let you go and have your dinner. Goodbye.” “Goodbye.” Kes hand’s me back my phone, and I hang it up. “So, is some one going to tell me what that was all about?” Kes asked as she was warming up the dinner that she had made.

MACKIE: “Jessie was feeding you aphrodisiacs.” I tell her. “What?” “Yeah, that salad that you kept getting, and the smoothie. Both aphrodisiacs. If she put anything else in them we don’t know, but I doubt it, or the doc., would have said something.” “There are other herbs that can also enhance the effects of those foods.” Kes says, and shakes her head. “What did I ever do to Jessie to make her hate me so much?” “It’s not on you Kes, it’s on Jessie, it’s Jessie’s problem to figure out, you can only do so much to help her, but if she doesn’t want to have an amazing sister as good as you that is on her, not on you.” I tell her, and give her a hug. “Thanks.” She hugs me back. “Now sit and eat, you guys will have to go back after dinner, and be seen and to continue to do the things that you’ve been doing.” She says, “Oh but before you head back Mackie, can you get me into a design site, one that simple and easy to use?” She asked me. I just have to chuckle at her sometimes. “Yes.” I tell her.

TREVER: “What are you up to?” I ask Kes. “I am trying to come up with a better reconfiguration of the cabin, to add a washer, drier, dish washer, put the shower in the main part of the cabin with the bathroom, all while not enhancing the footprint to much, but still keeping it cozy and comfortable.” She tells me. I just can’t help myself. I just wrap her up in my arms, I just need to touch her, hold her close to me. Take in her scent. “Trever, you need to sit down and eat. I know it’s not much, but you can get more when you get back to the pack house.” She says. “I hate that you can’t be there.” I tell her. “Hopefully it will only be for two more days.” She says. “Two days too long.” I say to her, as I kiss her ear and watch the shiver run through her, I just hold her tighter.

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I watched as we were driving away to go park 127

[1,267 words]

DRAKE: James just had to go and open a can of worms, not to mention the fact that Jessie was trying to get Kes, I don’t know, sexually frustrated? None of it makes any

sense to me. "Give me your reasoning, the thought process behind why you think we should continue training the women?" I say to James. "It's like I said, only if they want to continue with it, but it will increase our warrior count, it will make the pack safer, because there will be less that we would have to try to defend, between the boarders and the pack house, they will be right beside us helping to defend their home just as much as we are." He says. "Not just trying to defend themselves." "Ok, I will make the announcement after the ball is over." He just nods his head.

JESSIE: I am so pissed right now, if Kes were here I'd probably tear into her, how dare she get to take a martial arts class and the rest of us don't get to train. When did she even go? Where did she even go? Goddess she is just such a little bi.tch I can't stand it. And father knew? How? When did he actually find out? Aarrgg! Too many questions, and not enough time to get the answers. "I have to agree with James, especially if Kes is still training, the rest of the pack should be able to have that choice as well." I say a bit harsher than I intended to.

FRANK: I'm happy to help out the Alpha with this little experiment he is doing, but I'm not sure if I want to have half a dozen marks on my arm for all of this, not to mention not knowing how long any of this will last. I just wish there were more documentation on this stuff. I am happy that I found my mate though, and she happens to be a warrior like me, not that it would matter, I would still accept her no matter what, I have waited 6 years for her. But now that I have her, I think that I will ask the Alpha if we can have one of the front houses/cottages for us to live in. I take my mate, and we head to the marquee for dinner. We are in line, when I get a link, I open for it. "This is Frank, go." "This is Lars, I know this was supposed to happen tomorrow, but the Alpha wanted to get the message to you, he has been trying to reach Meadow Brook Pack, but no one is responding, and since the Alpha to Black Waters is there, and their pack is closer, he was hoping that he could send someone from his pack to go check on them." "I will let the Alpha know." I close the link. "I need to go speak to the Alpha love, go ahead and eat I will join you as soon as I am done." I tell my mate. And head to the Alpha's table. "Alpha, Lars just contacted me, seems they can't raise Meadow Brook and was hoping that Alpha Craig could send someone to go investigate." I tell him. He nods to me and gets up and goes over to the mic.

DRAKE: I walk over to the mic. and turn it on. "Your attention please! I know that we said that we would confirm the distance issue tomorrow, but Alpha Fredrick just sent word through the link, he has lost contact with a small pack that he has ties to. Alpha Craig, a word with you, please." I turn the mic., off and head back to my table and wait for Alpha Craig. "Drake what's up?" "Do you know Meadow Brook?" "Yes." "Do you think you could send someone to confirm whether they are still ok, or if we lost them." "I can do that." I watch as he pulls out his phone and calls someone in his pack. I go back to eating not wanting to eavesdrop. "Done, but it will be at least a couple hours before we know anything for sure." He tells me. I nod. "But at least we have some idea of distance, don't know if it will go farther, but we know it will reach Burning Ember, and that's a 4-hour drive one way." I say. And he nods. It would be nice to know if it will cross state lines. We will just have to wait.

BARRETT: I wait to hear what alpha Drake has to say, then I send a text home to Father. (We have a situation brewing, it seems like Stone Claw may be up to no good, if we have anything in the royal archives, please fax it over to Blue Crecent asap.) I put my phone away. I was about to open a link to Trever when I see him and Dutch come into the Marquee. I wave them over. "Hey, what'd we miss, it seems a bit tense in here." Trever asked me. "Well, the distance issue is somewhat solved, it will reach Burning Ember, but we may have already lost a small pack." I tell him. "What?" I nod to him. "Is anyone going to check, to verify?" "I believe alpha Craig just may have done that. All we can do is wait and see." He and Dutch both just shake their heads.

MACKIE: With dinner almost over I head to the kitchen and start to put things in containers, and start the water to wash the pots, pans, and other cooking vessels that were used to make the dinner. I make sure that there is counter space for the leftovers to come in from the marquee, and make sure that there is room in the refrigerators. I turn the water off when the sinks are full. I then start to bring in the dishes from the marquee. I wonder what happened, the place seems tense. I link Dutch. "Hey, umm do you know what's going on by chance? The place seem a bit tense." "Yes, Barrett just told us that alpha Fridrick was trying to reach a small pack, and no one has responded." "Oh crap. I just hope that everything is ok, and it's not what we think." "I know beautiful me too." I close the link. This all just sucks, and I just wish that my best friend could be here.

LIAM: With dinner over Dutch and Trever get the pool table moved back into the marquee, I go up to the mic stand and make the announcement, "We have 3 games left in the Pool tournament, if you haven't registered for the darts tournament please do so now during these last pool games, once the winner of the pool tournament is announced the darts registration will be closed. With that over can we have prince Trent, and Delta elite Thorne take your places." Then after the announcement I go rack the balls. Both Trent and Thorne come up and shake hands with each other. "Hello gentlemen, I have a coin I am going to flip, Thorne please call it in the air." I say to them. "Tails." He calls. It lands on heads. "Heads, Prince Trent will break. Good luck to you both." I say to them. And go back to the score table where Lissa is sitting and waiting for me.

TREVER: With the start of the pool game the atmosphere changes, it's still tense but it's a different tenseness, it's for the game being played and not impending war.

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[1,478 words]

LIAM: I check the dart list and start making the chart up for that. I have Lissa cut up a piece of paper and write 1-20 on them and drop them in the cookie jar that I had to collect the money for the pool, but now I have the big envelopes from mom, that the money is in, so the contestants can draw their numbers from the jar. I start to send out texts to the contestants to please come and draw their numbers to see who will start the dart tournament. I noticed that Mackie, Trever, and Dutch all three are on the list for the darts, this is going to be fun to watch and see how far she can get and if she ends up going against either the prince or Dutch. I just wish that Kes could be here for this one, but maybe she can do the archery. I text them 5 at a time so that I can keep an eye on the pool game to make sure there is no cheating happening. Once they have drawn their number, I write their name down next to it on my chart and then on to the next one. Mackie pulls # 8, Trever pulls #13 and Dutch pulls #17, I write their names next to the number on my chart and give them the name of the person they will be throwing against if I have it, if I don't I tell them they will have to wait until that number gets pulled. The pool game finishes at the same time that I get the last of the dart people signed in. and Delta elite Thorne won. I watch as the two of them shake hands again. And go take their places to watch the next match. I walk back up to the mic and call up Alpha Vance and Delta elite Max. Then I go rerack the balls and have Vance call the coin toss. He calls heads and it lands on heads, so he gets to break. The pool game progresses at a good pace, it's a back and forth pull as each of them takes their shots, but in the end delta elite Max wins the game. I go up to make that announcement and call Thorne back up and then go rerack the balls for the last game of the tournament. I have Maxine call the coin toss and she calls tails, and it lands on tails, so she gets to break. She ends up sinking both a solid and a stripe, she calls the solids and continues to shoot. She sinks 2 more before she misses and Thorne get to shoot, He sinks 3 before he misses, and again it's a back and forth pull but again delta elite Max pulls out the win. I go make the announcement that Delta elite Maxine from Black Waters Pack won the pool tournament. I then go up to dad. "I need the Pool money from the safe." I tell him. He nods and we head up to his office, he opens the safe and I take the envelope that says pool on it out and I hand it over to Max and have her count it, and dad closes the safe. All \$200 dollars. "Thank you, I had a lot of fun." She says, and we all leave dad's office. When we get back downstairs the marquee is already starting to be rest for the morning breakfast service. I go up to the mic "Thank you to all the volunteers for helping to move the pool table back and forth, I greatly appreciate the help. The dart tournament will start after breakfast tomorrow." I say. And then turn the mic off.

DRAKE: after the pool tournament is over Alpha Craig comes up to me. "I have news about Meadow Brook." "Let's go to my office." We head upstairs and into my office. I motion for him to take a seat on one of the couches. Once he is seated, I ask, "What's the verdict?" "They were dealing with a rouge attack, and were doing clean up, my people helped out and then talked to the Alpha there, He told them that it came out of the blue and that they were more organized than usual." "Did he lose a lot of warriors or pack members?" "Not as many as he probably would have but they had some visitors from other packs, so they were on high alert." "Their visitors wouldn't have been from

Stone Claw, would they?" I asked the question. "That I don't know, but I see where you're going with that." He says, "I will call him directly and ask that question." He tells me and takes out his phone and dials up Meadow Brook. "Hello Alpha Douglas, this is Alpha Craig, I am at a mating ball up north, and I would like to put you on speaker, I am with Alpha Drake from Blue Crescent." I wait and then he puts the phone on the speaker. "Alpha Douglas, I am sorry that you suffered an attack, but can you tell me who your visitors were?" "We had a few, from different packs. Why do you ask?" "Were any from Stone Claw?" "Yes, I believe one of them were. Again, why do you ask?" "I am going to fill you in on an issue that happened up here, and I believe that you will need to inform the rest of the small packs near you, and maybe even join forces in order to defend yourselves against Stone Claw. There is a she-wolf that traveled up here from Stone Claw, turns out that she is mated to a warrior from one of the packs that are here for the ball, problem is she was raped by one of their ranked wolves, that is why she ran, and as it turns out, because of that, we were doing some investigating and we learned that they have done things like this in the past, they will actually go out and hunt down rouges, and conquer smaller packs to ensure that they lose as few warriors of their own and make everyone else fight their battles. It is good that you were able to survive, but you will need to get to safety and inform the others around you." I tell him. "I can get the word out, but we really have no place to go." "Doug, take your people and head towards my pack, I will make sure they will be expecting you; you can have your warriors debrief mine so that we can come up with a plan if they indeed come our way." Craig tells him. "Thanks." "Alpha Douglas, tell those you notify to band together, to be safer, and to appear to be bigger than several small packs, I know that it will take some effort, and I know that it can be difficult, especially with several Alphas coming together, but if they want to survive this they will have to work together." I tell him. "Thank you, Alpha Drake, I will pass it on." "Please keep us informed, of any pack that doesn't respond." I tell him. "I will do that." Craig hangs up his phone. "Well, I guess it has begun." I say. "Yes." Is all he says. Then he calls his pack. "I need you to watch for Meadow Brook, they will be coming our way soon, I want a full debrief, and extra guard details, and border patrols." I hear him say into his phone. "If you need, we can send your newly mated and half of your other guards back to help with defending your pack." I tell him. He just nods his head in agreement and hangs up his phone. "I will be making the announcement for another meeting after breakfast tomorrow, so that we can get everyone up to speed on what's happened." He nods his head. And we both leave my office to head back down to the marquee. As I close the door I see alpha Camron.

CAMRON: I watched Alpha Craig as he approached Drake and they both leave the venue. "I need to check what that is about." I say to my mate nodding my head in the direction of the two other alphas. I follow them to Drake's office and wait for them to come out. "What's up?" I ask them. "I was going to make the announcement tomorrow, but you are here now." And he reopens his office, and we walk back in. "Meadow Brook was attacked, they were in the middle of defending themselves when Fredrick tried to contact them, they are still with us but it's only just by sheer luck that they are. It seems that Stone Claw has started to escalate."

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[1,331 words]

CAMRON: “Great. Well at least we don’t have the added anxiety of waiting to know one way or the other, we know now, and we can prepare for the clash as it were.” I say. They both nod. “I will have my people reach out to the small packs around us as well and try to get them to safety as well.” “Yes, I was going to make that part of the announcement tomorrow.” Drake says. I nod and head to the door. We all leave his office.

DRAKE: The next morning after breakfast was served, I look around the marquee, I see that most of the alphas and their heirs are present, so I go to the mic “Your attention please.” “We now know that yes Stone Claw is escalating, the small pack that alpha Fredrick was worried about was indeed attacked, but thankfully they are still with us. It is imperative that you all reach out to the smaller packs close to your own and warn them, have them band together, or try to get to the safety of a larger pack. The more we can save with forewarning the better for everyone. Let them know not to allow Stone Claw into their packs, as that may be a sure sign of scouting. Thank you.” I turn the mic off and go back to my table to have my breakfast.

JAMES: I was hoping to not have to ever be a part of a war, but I am somewhat relieved that I still have the previous generation here to learn from right now, because I’m not sure I would be able to do this on my own. Not having gone through Alpha training yet either, makes this even more surreal and scary for me. I also need to talk to Janica and dad about the shift that is going to happen at midnight, Janica and I are going to have to be seen going to my room tonight, because of the shift, and where normally we head north for the pack run, we are going to have to change that course for tonight, and head down to the lake, to keep Kes safe from prying eyes, namely Jessie. Especially since he made her think he sent Kes to Burning Ember Pack.

KESKA: I wake up wrapped in Trever’s arms and he is snuggled around me like I’m his own little stuffed security plushie or something, it’s sweet. I feel safe in his arms, like nothing and no one can hurt me ever again. I could get used to that. But I have to get up and get us breakfast even if it’s just something small. I try to shimmy out from between his strong warm arms, but he just tightens them around me even more. I try an experiment of my own, to see whether it will work or not. I link him. “Good morning my prince, I have to get up to get breakfast started.” “Hummm not yet, stay just a little longer,

I just want you close to me.” “How long have you been awake?” “Since just now, I like hearing you in my head beautiful.”* I know I am blushing at his words, and I duck my head in his chest. *”Mmm Huh-uhm, don’t hide princess, I love your blushes.”* Which only makes me blush more. But he raises my face so he can see me, our eyes lock and his head moves down to meet mine, his lips brush mine in a soft kiss, that I can’t help but kiss him back. *”Trever, I really do need to get up, I need to get you guys fed, and I need to use the bathroom.” “Only because you need to use the bathroom babe.”* He lets me go. I get up and go do my business, wash my hands and head to the kitchen to start cooking. I am not great at cooking, but I can at least make meals that can be eaten.

JAMES: I link dad. *”Do you have a minute?” “Yes.” “We are going to have to head in the direction of the lake tonight.” “Shit that’s right I almost forgot about that.” “I kind of figured that with the Stone Claw issue and all.” “Thank you.” “Welcome.”* I then take Janica by the hand and pull her with me into the family dining area, I check the room to make sure no one is around. “We are going to have to make a show of staying here tonight.” I tell her. She nods her understanding. “It will be good to have you finally be able to feel the bond.” She says. I nod.

LIAM: I don’t like all this talk of war, it scares me. But I am grateful for the fact that I can provide a slight distraction from the tension building around the issue of the war. I miss Kes too, I swear that once Jessie is gone I am going to make her bind me like she did Mackie. Once breakfast is over I go make the announcement for the first 2 players for the dart tournament. Like the pool tourney this one will take a bit of time too because we only have one dart board. Oh well. But we don’t have to keep score on this one either because the dart board we have does it for you, all we have to keep track of is how many throws the players make to reach 501. It will be fun to watch.

JESSIE: The anticipation for tonight is running high in me, midnight tonight, it’s going to be so amazing I will get to meet my wolf, and my mate all in one night. Right now, I need to settle my nerves, I am pretty high on the list for the darts tournament, and I have to concentrate on that. I link Nana. *”Nana can I come run the course?” “Of course you can.” “Thanks Nana.” “Welcome dear.”* I get dressed in a sports bra and biker shorts, and head over to Nana’s. I get one round in, and I had started the second when my phone dinged. I stopped and checked it. (Please come to the marquee, you will be up in one more round.) I read. “Thanks Nana.” I call out, “I have to go I’m up to next to play darts.” “Have fun and good luck.” She call back. I run back to the Pack house to wipe down and dress in a summer dress that highlights my blue eyes, and head back downstairs so that I am ready when they call for the next players.

TREVER: After Kes had fed us the three of us headed out, again Dutch and I leave the cabin naked, I just loved to see her flustered, it’s so adorable. When we get closer to the tree line the both of us shift, I take our clothes, and Dutch picks up Mackie and we take off at a run. We make it back in time to catch the second match, in our Lycan form we can average about 20 miles per hour at a dead run, but we didn’t go all out maybe only half speed, we didn’t want to be tired when we got there. Again, we stop before we

break the tree line, and shift back, get redressed and walk to the pack house. I link Barrett to find out about any news that we should know that we might have missed. *Barrett any news?" "There was an attack on a small pack, but they survived, thank the goddess, but Drake feels that Stone Claw was behind it, and that we need to inform as many small packs as possible to save them." "Do we actually know for sure that it was Stone Claw or was it simply a rouge attack?" "I can't honestly say, I think they will be holding more meetings to get everyone up to speed, and on the same page."*

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I watched as we were driving away to go park 130

[1,344 words]

TREVER: *Thanks for the update." "Not a problem, are you having fun being with your mate? And are you being have?" "Yes to both, big brother." "Good, I sent word home, to hopefully get more information on that war over 100 years ago, to see if we have anything that might help." "Ok."* I close the link.

DRAKE: After I have finished breakfast I head back to my office, I see that I have had several faxes sent to me. After checking their content, I see that all of it pertains to Stone Claw and the war that was fought over 100 years ago. I link my Beta, Mitch, and James, to come to my office before I start the meetings with the other alphas. I only have to wait 5 minutes, and a knock come at my door. "Come." I call out. My door opens, and in come all three of them. "You wanted to see us alpha?" "I need the three of you to go through theses please, we need to find any pertinent information, quickly, see if there is anything on the communication marking, how long, or how far, or anything that the allied packs did that helped them win that war so long ago." I say to them and hand each of them a set of papers and a highlighter. We all got to work going over the information that was in those documents. I send a text to Alpha Craig. (Please come to my office ASAP.) I send him. It's another 5 minutes and there comes a knock on my door. "Come." I call out. Alpha Craig comes in. "What can I do for you Drake?" He asked. "I was thinking about what we talked about last night, and I was thinking that if you want you can leave before the dance tomorrow night or leave first thing Thursday morning." I tell him. "I will ask my people what they want, and let you know." He says. I nod. "What's going on here" he asked seeing the guys and the paperwork. When I came in this morning I found all these faxes and I have them combing through them for anything pertinent to us before I call the first meeting so that I can give a thorough update." I tell him. He nods. And then leaves my office. James comes up with the distance of the link, it will go out as far as 300 miles, but no more. Gregg finds that the mark will last for a month if it is not renewed. Mitch finds the tactics used by the allied

packs from back then and he says he can work with it to make up with our own plan of attack if it should come down to it. "Good work, and thank you." I say to them. They nod and I get the first meeting under way.

KESKA: After I clean up from breakfast I sit down with the laptop and get to my project of reconfiguring the cabin, in order to make it more user friendly and bring it up to date as well. But I can only get so far, and I run into problems again, Mackie is going to hate me before this thing gets done right. I miss being able to run the obstacle course at Nana's. \[Corla, do you think we can make one of our own out here?\] \[I don't see why not. All we have to do is go explore and find natural obstacles, like downed trees, and let's see if there are any other water sources around, up in this area.\] I nod my head and head out to go do just that. I put Corla's senses to work sniffing out any water that might be within a mile of the cabin. We find one, but it is closer to the boarder than I would like, but it's there. I follow it back from where we find it to the path it takes through the woods to where it ends, only it goes beyond where I want to go, but there is a small shallow pool that it passes through, and there are several downed trees and exposed roots, so we can actually plot a course through it all and be able to keep up with our training in that sense. So, I run our course both backwards and forwards to get to know the lay of it, and know it's ins and outs. I also take my bow with me and shoot as I go, I will have to come back through to collect my arrows, and also make targets on the trees that I shot at, but it is good practice to shoot on the move. And that gives me an idea. I link Mackie. *"Are you busy?" "Not at the moment, but I will be soon, I am up to throw shortly, so what's up?" "When I get back, we are going to have to work more on our shooting on the course, it will help us be better at trying to hit moving targets."* I tell her. *"Got it. I will let Nana in on the plan so she can be ready for it." "Thanks, and good luck."* I tell her. *"Thank you."* I close the link.

LIAM: The first two people up to throw are new to me, both omegas from different packs. Gem from Dark Forest, and Larry from Black Waters. Usually with 501 you have to hit the bullseye, or a double to start, that's the way our board is set up as well, but we have it where you don't have to end with a bullseye or a double, it just makes it easier for the players. I make that announcement to each set of players as they take their places to throw. Gem advances. Round two Steve from Wolf Lake and John from Black Waters, I learned after they throw that John is Dedi's mate. John takes that win. Next is Jessie and Mike from Harvest Moon. Jessie takes the win. Then it's Connie from Ranier Lake and Mackie, Mackie takes that win easily. We get through half of the list by lunch, it's actually going quicker than I thought it would, but I can see that it's going to get real interesting after lunch, because Jessie and Mackie are going to be throwing against each other, I hope Mackie smokes her. But we will have to wait and see what happens.

MACKIE: I wait around and watch as the others throw, and I am keeping track in my head as each pair throws, and I know I am going up against Jessie after they get through all the first rounds. I know I can beat her; the question is do I, I don't want her to cause a scene and through a tantrum. I link Dutch. *"Please meet me in the garden." "Of course, love."* I close the link, and head into the garden, Dutch and Trever come in shortly after I do. "What's up babe?" Dutch asked. "I will be throwing against Jessie, I

know I can beat her, and no that is not being cocky, but do I, I don't want her to cause a scene." I say to them. "Screw Jessie, play to win." Dutch says, "Besides I want a rematch." "Ha, ha," I chuckle at him "You can have a rematch when ever you want one, sweets, I will still smoke you." I tell him. And I see his face light up. "You just call me sweets. Did you realize that?" "No." "Dose that mean you will let me win?" "No." "Ok, you two, but seriously Mackie, Dutch is right, play to win, if Jessie can't handle losing that's on her not on you to let her win to keep the peace." Trever says. "exactly." Dutch throws in. "Ok." I say and we head back in, and I head to the kitchen to help with lunch prep. Goddess Tomorrow can't come soon enough, to get Jessie out of here.

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