

## Chapter 71: Catching Up

Yara

I probably should care more that Simon will die a painful death because of what he did to me, but I don't. He didn't just hurt me. He hurt Piper, he hurt my pack's warriors, he hurt Bradley, and most important, he hurt Warren. My mate is a strong, powerful man and I'd felt the lack of confidence in him, the feeling that he'd failed me. No one gets to make my mate feel like that. No one. So for all of that, he can suffer.

I know Warren and the pack will make him suffer in their own way but I know how to hit Simon where it hurts. He's wanted me for a very long time, he even killed his father for protecting me and keeping me hidden. So, yeah, I knew that flaunting my relationship with Warren in front of him would make him crazed and I'd been right.

Of course, I had the added benefit of claiming my mate in front of the pack. As angry as they are with Simon, and there's a lot of rage there, I felt their excitement when I announced that Warren and I were trying for a pup.

When we walk into the packhouse, Charlie and Noelle are there.

"Luna!" Noelle cries.

"Let's see it," I say, smiling at her.

She blushes prettily, looking at Charlie who is smiling possessively at her. She pulls her shirt away from her neck and I make a point of

looking over her fresh mate mark.

"Nice job, Beta," I say.

"Thank you, Luna."

"I was talking to Noelle, Charlie," I say, making Warren chuckle.

"We definitely have a lot that we need to do. Not the least of which is to have an entire pack ceremony. We have our Luna, our new Beta female and we need to make a decision about our Gamma," Warren says.

"I thought we'd already made that decision," Charlie says, raising an eyebrow at Warren.

"We're in agreement?"

"Absolutely."

"Let's make it official today then. Do you know if we'll have our Gamma female as well?" Warren asks.

"Not yet," Charlie says as the four of us get some food and sit. This feels nice, like what a morning in a packhouse should feel like. Like we're talking over our plans for the day before we go off to our respective jobs. No one is talking about war, which is a nice change.

"Who are we talking about?" I ask Warren.

'Haynes,' he says in the mind link.

"Oh. Good choice."

"Yara approves. We're good to go," Warren says.

"Is it possible for me to accept you as my Alpha so I can get into the pack link? It would be really helpful for me to be able to hear everyone and not just Charlie now. Oh, and Laney will need to as well."

"Laney already did, but we can do that quickly before you go with Yara this morning. I'd prefer it if you could contact me or the warriors if something happens."

"When did my sister accept you as her Alpha?" Noelle asks.

"Before you got here. That's how I knew I could trust her."

"Oh, so it's just me then. Well, we definitely need to fix that!" she says.

"Once we get our Gamma's agreement to the position, I'll announce to the pack that anyone can challenge him for the position, then we can schedule the pack ceremony," Warren says, smiling at Charlie. "It feels good that it's more than just you and I now."

Charlie smiles at Noelle and then at me. "It really does."

As we finish eating, I have Noelle tell me what she did with Bradley. She's so nervous that she did something wrong.

"Noelle, you saved his life. He's alive and we can fix anything else if his wolf hasn't already," I tell her, reaching out to squeeze her hand.

"See, I told you. You did the hard part, Little Beta. You got that bullet out."

When we're done, Noelle quickly accepts Warren as her Alpha. Then she and I kiss our mates and start to leave the dining hall. It's full of our pack members who are having breakfast, talking to family and friends, saying hello and welcoming me back as we pass. The feeling is so much different than it used to be, so much better. Because it is, I turn back.

"Alpha Warren, don't forget you have work to do later," I say, raising my voice so he can hear me across the room. The room goes quiet as everyone looks at Warren. He frowns and I can see him trying to figure out what he forgot.

"Until you put a pup in me, I won't give you a moment's rest," I smile, hearing our pack members chuckle as Warren smiles wide.

"Oh my little Luna, there is nothing about putting a pup in you that is work. But you're welcome to put me to 'work' as long and as often as you'd like," he says, the smile on his face now twinkling in his eyes. Damn my man is hot.

I smile at Warren as the pack howls and cheers. Happy with our interaction and the feeling in the pack, I turn and head to the hospital with Noelle.

When I arrive, I see Piper who looks exhausted, and standing beside her is Travis.

"I need to check both of you, but I need to check on Bradley first. Piper, you're overdoing it. Your off duty starting right now. Who else is here?"

"I am, Luna," Erica says, walking out. "It's good to have you back."

"It's good to be back. Piper, have a seat. Travis, you too."

"Yes, Luna," they both say.

"Noelle, with me."

We walk into the Bradley's hospital room and I look over his medical file before checking the incision.

"Let's open him up and see what his lungs look like," I say, pulling on gloves as Noelle gets what I need.

"The tissue of the lungs was weird. I wasn't sure how much pressure I could put on the stitches, so they might be too tight or not tight enough," she says as I slice through the stitches on his chest. When I have to cut flesh to get to his lungs, I know his wolf is trying to heal him. That's a good sign.

I retract the skin and muscle and see Noelle worked around his rib cage instead of cracking him open.

"That must have made things much more difficult for you," I say, looking over the stitches on his lungs.

"I used a camera so I had a better view and because the bullet was low, I was able to go in from under this rib cage. Do you want the camera?" she says, holding it out for me.

"Sure. Let's have a look."

When the camera is in, I realize that Noelle did a really good job, especially since this was her first time and she had very little space to work, having to go under and between his ribs to access his lungs.

"Nice job. In the future, make sure you get all of the singed lung out," I say, taking a scalpel and slicing off a piece of lung that was dead. "Otherwise, it could decay inside the body and cause other problems. But well done, Noelle. If this is what you want to do, and I hope it is, you need to start taking classes. Warren and I talked about me doing online classes and I know there are werewolf universities where we can go too. They'll be more agreeable to us working in the packs and using our work here for our practical knowledge," I say as I stitch Bradley back up.

"I would love that. And I think Piper and Anna would like to take classes as well," she says.

"We might have a fully functional hospital here one day. Who knows, Noelle, maybe once things settle with the packs, we could bring others in here and help train them to care for their pack members."

I turn off the sedation that was keeping Bradley under. "Let's let him wake up. He won't be going anywhere for a couple of days, but once his wolf isn't drugged, he can start healing him faster."

When we walk out, I stop. Piper and Travis are in the hallway, and he has her against the wall, kissing her in a way that mates kiss each other.

"Am I interrupting?" I ask, teasing.

"Oh my goddess, Luna, I'm so sorry," Piper says, her voice raspy.

"You're sorry for kissing your mate? Or you're sorry for speaking before I checked your throat?"

"How did you..." she begins before Travis gently puts his hand over her mouth.

"She just warned you about speaking, Pipes. From everything I've heard, you don't want to cross your Luna," he says, smiling at me.

"Hi, Luna. Yes, we're mates. Since I don't have a mind link, I've been waiting for Piper to be able to talk. But I don't want her to injure herself to do it."

"Looks like you've found a way to communicate," I say, walking over to her. Noelle hands me a mini flashlight and I look at Piper's throat.

"This is healing nicely. Is your wolf back?" I ask her.

She nods.

"How are you vocal chords?" I ask.

"Still healing, Luna," the deeper voice of her wolf says.

"What about swallowing? Are you able to get regular food down?" I ask and she nods.

"Minimal conversations only. Do as much as you can in the mind link. Come back and see me tomorrow," I tell her, before turning to Travis.

"How about your wolf?" I ask.

I watch his wolf push forward. "I'm here Luna."

"Full strength?"

"Not quite."

"No fighting until I clear it. If another battle breaks out, come here. You can help guard the hospital or triage like you did before."

"Yes, Luna."

They turn and head out.

"Is this what our lives would be like if there was no war?" Noelle asks.

"Probably," I say, just as Trena walks in the door.

"Hey, Trena, how are you..." I stop, seeing tears filling her eyes.

"I can't! I can't!" she says, turning and rushing out of the hospital.

"What's that about?" Noelle asks.

I turn, looking down the hall behind me. There's only one person in the hospital and he's unconscious. 3

"I'm pretty sure I know."