

Chapter 76: Bradley

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Trena

I know this pack is different than Simon's. It's obvious in everything that goes on here, every interaction that occurs with Alpha Warren, Beta Charlie, and this pack. Even Yara is different than I remember her from before. Somehow, she seems stronger, as if finding her mate and becoming a Luna has brought out something inside her that was waiting to blossom.

But I'm in no mood to celebrate. I begin walking around the pack, hearing the periodic sounds of cheering, music, and laughter. It's so opposite of my own emotions that it feels almost otherworldly.

Eventually, I find myself standing outside the pack hospital. Just like with the patrols, the nurses here are taking shifts so everyone can go to the party. However, I know there is only one person in the hospital right now. My mate. Bradley.

I walk inside and wave to Katie who is currently on shift.

"How's the party?" she asks excitedly.

"In full swing," I tell her.

"I can't wait to go. This pack has never had a party before."

"I don't know of any packs that have had parties. We've had so much war for so long."

Katie looks off to where we can hear cheering again. "It makes me even more proud to be a part of this pack." She looks back at me. "Are you going to stay and join our pack?"

"I'd like to, but...we'll see how things go. Is it okay if I go see Bradley?"

"Sure. He's still unconscious."

"That's okay," I say.

She nods, giving me a knowing look. Why else would I want to see Bradley unless he was my mate?

I walk into the room and over to the bed, taking my first look at the man who smells better than anything I've ever smelled, like cigars and whiskey, warm and inviting. He's very attractive with darker brown hair and a longer mustache and beard. He looks rugged, but that's probably because he's covered in scars like most warriors these days. He's a big man and I can see why Alpha Warren chose him to be Luna Yara's guard. He'd be a hard man to get past. 1

I reach down and take his hand. I wonder what it would have been like meeting Bradley if Simon hadn't done what he did to me over the past year. I wonder what it would be like to find your mate when I'd lost hope, but didn't have the negative feelings to go along with it.

"Luna Yara told me you were a good man. But trust me, you don't want me," I whisper.

"How do you know?"

My eyes flash up to the man who was supposed to be unconscious. I try to yank my hand out of his, but he's surprisingly strong for someone who nearly died.

"Please don't rush off. My wolf is silent but that doesn't mean he doesn't feel your presence," he says.

I nod and lean back against the bed, letting him hold my hand. He begins to rub his thumb over the back in slow circles. It sends tingles up my arm and through my body. It feels so nice, but I know I can never have this in my life. Tears spring to my eyes and I'm angry at Simon all over again for what he did to me.

"You want to tell me why you think I won't want you?" he asks me gently.

I shake my head, no. Then I look at him. "I don't want to tell you, but you need to know so you don't have any misconceptions about us becoming mated."

His eyes narrow. "Okay. Why don't I want you?"

My stomach roils and my throat tightens. I look away from him, unable to look my mate in the eyes when I tell him.

"I was Simon's whore. Whenever he wanted...a sexual release, he called me."

"Was it consensual?" he asks.

I shake my head no. "But he was my Alpha..."

"Simon's a fuckhead who doesn't deserve the title," he growls. "Is he dead yet?"

"No, he's in Alpha Warren's cells. They're torturing him before they kill him."

"Good, I'd like to have a go at him. I'm a little surprised that you didn't have a go at him. You seem pretty angry," he says, watching me.

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I can't hide the smile that comes to my face. This time I do look at my mate. "I ripped his balls off."

He blinks, twice, before bursting out laughing. "Aww, shit, that hurts," he says, wrapping his arm across his chest as he begins coughing. I rush to get him some water and help him drink it.

When I set the water back down and turn back, he's looking at me thoughtfully.

"You know he's the reason I'm in this bed, right?"

I nod. "Luna Yara told me."

"Don't reject me just yet. Get to know me first. I'd like to get to know you."

"I told Luna Yara that I wouldn't reject you until after you're healed, so you don't have to worry about that."

When he doesn't respond, I look back up at his face.

"That's not what I'm worried about," he says softly. "If things hadn't changed, I may never have found you. I never expected to find my mate when I realized she wasn't in this pack. And look, I'm no saint. I didn't save myself for you. So, I don't care that you've been with

others. I DO care that the shithead raped you and for that, I'll finish what you started and rip his dick off. But, if you look at this a bit differently, you and I got lucky. Neither of us died in these wars, neither of us took chosen mates, and we've found each other in spite of everything. So maybe give us a chance. Don't assume I don't want you. I do want you. And I'm a patient man. I can be as patient as you need me to be. Just give us a chance, okay? Will you do that for me, for us?"

I search his face, but only find truth in his words. "Okay."

He smiles, a big, beautiful smile and holds out his hand. "I'm Bradley."

"Bradley, I'm Trena," I say, shaking his hand.

"It is very nice to meet you, Trena."



Cooper Author

“What do you think of Bradley and Trena's first meeting?”

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