

Chapter 39: Drastic Measures

Yara

When we get into the surgery room to look over the woman with the infection, I realize just how desperate and angry she was.

I don't have a choice but to slice her open. With this severe of an infection, I have to make sure I get it all. However, when I slice her, the smell is disgusting. I take a minute to steel myself against the smell. It would be bad for a human, but it's worse for a shifter since we have enhanced senses.

Noelle quickly covers her nose and mouth. "If you're going to vomit, get out of here," I tell her.

She shakes her head and I can see her trying to get her nausea under control. "Breathe through your mouth. It doesn't take the stench away, but it helps," I tell her.

"It's like you can taste it," Erica says, looking nearly as green as Noelle. "I have a young pup and this out stinks anything my pup is producing."

"What is that?" Noelle asks, pointing to her uterus as I open her up. I realize exactly why her infection is so terrible. 1

"She tried to abort the fetus herself," I tell her. There are holes in the woman's uterus. I have no idea what she shoved up inside herself to get rid of this pup, but she made sure she'd never be able to carry it to term. There are multiple ruptures in her uterus and the infection is

everywhere. 1

'Her name is Farrah, Luna,' Savannah's voice floats into my head.

'Thank you, Savannah. Is everything okay?'

'We're good out here. Alpha is interviewing some of the pack to see where they came from originally.'

I close the mind link, knowing that Warren will figure things out while I'm in here.

"Farrah, you sure did a number on yourself," I say, getting to work. I walk Noelle through everything that I'm doing, seeing that Erica is just as interested and while she continues to monitor Farrah's vitals for me, she's paying attention and asking periodic questions as well.

I get another flash of what my life could be like with Warren. I could start a teaching hospital. I haven't seen the werewolf school, but I'll never get as much experience there as I am here and thankfully, I know enough to figure out what I don't know. Maybe, if we ever get out of this constant war, I'll actually be able to continue with my studies.

"Is the infection caused by what she did?" Noelle asks.

"I think that might have started it and probably what's caused it to get to this point. She should have miscarried when she lost the pup, but instead, it began rotting inside her, adding to the infection."

"Wow, that's so terrible," Noelle says.

"Terrible things happen in times of war," I say sadly.

"I'm not sure I've ever realized just how much Laney protected me until this moment," she says.

"Well, when we're done here, you can go tell her how much you appreciate her. For now, you have to focus on what's in front of you," I say.

She nods, pulling herself together. It takes another couple of hours to finish but when I'm done, I've gotten as much of the infection cleaned out as I can and Farrah's uterus and fetus have been removed from her body.

"I'm going to order her some heavy-duty antibiotics. Do you know if we have any, Erica?" I ask.

"I can check, Luna, but we never ordered the strong stuff. Dr. Stevens ..."

"Yeah, I know. He didn't see a need for it. Okay, we'll start her on what we have, let me know what that is, and then we need to get an order in today. I'll talk to Savannah about that.

I can see that Noelle is starting to crash. It's been a long, exhausting night for her, first thinking she lost her sister, then finding her mate, now helping me with the surgery.

"Why don't you go check on your sister and then we can find you a room for tonight. I know someone who will be thrilled to at least have you sleep in his floor," I say to her, making her blush.

She looks up at me. "You seem to think highly of him, Luna."

"Charlie is a good man and a good Beta from everything I've learned about him. He's true to Warren and therefore, true to me. I don't think that you could go wrong with a man like that," I tell her.

"She's right. Beta Charlie is a good man. I take it he's your mate?" Erica asks her.

She nods, making Erica smile. "Just like our Alpha, everyone will be glad that he's found his mate. He's waited for you, just so you know."

I see Noelle's surprise, then her happiness that her mate waited to find her.

"Go see your sister, then go see your mate," I tell her.

"I don't know how to find him," she says, as we make our way out of the room. I lean my head into the waiting room and nod.

"He's waiting for you," I say, glancing at Charlie before my eyes move to Warren. He's waiting for me too.

I watch as he assesses my level of fatigue. I vaguely see Charlie pass in front of me, going to check on Noelle.

"Luna," Savannah says, walking up. She looks at Warren then back at me. "There weren't any others who were as serious as Farrah. I've got the mates of the dead warriors in rooms being monitored. There are a few pups and after talking to Alpha Warren, we decided to keep them here so they could go see their parents if they needed to."

"Good, that's good. You need to get some sleep Savannah."

"You too, Luna. Alpha sent Katie to bed hours ago. Anna is sleeping here, ready to take the first shift when I leave."

"Yeah, Erica needs to go too," I say, yawning hugely. The adrenaline is once again draining out of me in a rush. My body is starting to feel heavy and I see Warren stand. Whether he was listening or he feels my body's exhaustion, I'm not sure.

"How are you still on your feet?" I ask him when he walks over.

He strokes his fingers over my cheek. "I had someone very important to me who was worth staying awake for," he says softly. "Come on. Time for you and I to get some sleep."

He scoops me up into his arms and I snuggle against him. The man really is incredibly strong. I'm not sure I could carry a baby right now and he's carrying me back to the packhouse.

"When you love someone, they feel light as a feather in your arms," he murmurs, kissing the side of my head. I'm asleep before he even leaves the hospital.

Laney POV

I can't sleep. I've been worried about Noelle most of the night, only to find out that she's been assisting Luna Yara with patients and surgeries. Between that and finding her mate, I'm not sure I've ever seen my sister so excited. 1

I'm happy for her, truly I am. I'd probably be happier if I hadn't smelled my mate too.

I'd been on the battlefield when I'd first smelled his hops and barley scent. I love a good, cold beer when I have time. I once passed a beer processing plant, and I had nearly moaned out loud at the scent coming from the packaging plant. The moment we'd passed Alpha Warren's border, I'd known my mate was here. His scent was even better than that processing plant.

I avoided him on the battlefield, unwilling to fight against the person the Moon Goddess chose for me. And then, my stupid leg had snapped, and I'd gotten captured. I'm not sure if he had been avoiding me as well, or if the thought of his mate fighting against his pack had disgusted him, but I haven't smelled him since I got to the hospital. 3

After Noelle left with Beta Charlie, I leaned back, closing my eyes and trying to relax enough to sleep. As exhausted as I am, I still feel on edge. The pack is unknown and at some point, I'll have to face my mate.

I feel the air shift and I know the door has opened a moment before I smell his scent. I open my eyes and see him standing there, watching me.

"Have you come to reject me?" I ask him. If so, I'd rather rip the band-aid off, get this over quickly.

"That depends," he says, his voice resonating deep inside my mind and body.

"On what?"

"Are you still going to be fighting against my pack?"

I shake my head. "I accepted Alpha Warren as my Alpha."

"I heard, but that doesn't mean that you won't renounce him."

"Well, my sister is apparently mated to your Beta, so I'm not going anywhere and I won't do anything to hurt her."

He walks into the room, looking down at my bandaged leg. "How's the break?"

"Healing. Apparently for the first time it's healing appropriately."

He smiles. "Yeah, our Luna's pretty awesome."

The smile fades as he turns back to me. "How do you want to do this?" he asks and my throat gets tight.

"The rejection?" I say, trying to sound strong, but even though I never expected to find my mate, now that I have, I don't want to lose him.

"No, the getting to know each other so we can build trust and decide if we want to accept each other as mates," he says, and the knot in my stomach relaxes. I hold out my hand.

"Hi. I'm Laney," I say, introducing myself and smiling softly.

"Hi Laney. I'm Haynes," he says shaking my hand. 4

My body lights up with tingles when his hand touches mine. We continue to shake hands, staring at each other for a long time as we feel the power of the mate bond flow between us.