

Tereshan

When Claire steps back, I pull Magnor back. I stand, taking her hand and walking into our office. I close the door and look at my desk, stopping mid-stride.

I turn, looking down at my mate, smiling.

She looks up at me frowning. "What?"

"We have to clean my desk again." I tell her.

Her head jerks to my desk to see the mess before falling back. "UGH! How many times will I have to clean this up!"

"Hopefully only one more. But not right now. Now, we need to talk." I say.

I guide her to the seating area in my office. I sit, pulling her beside me.

"Claire, we've been here three times now. First, I made a big mess of things. I know that, and we both died because of it. Then, you did everything right, made this pack stronger and we both still died. I think, I'm not sure, but I think, we need to do this together if we're going to survive this next year."

I stand, needing to move, my restless energy back in full force. I begin pacing in front of her.

"You've heard the saying, 'Third time's a charm'?" She nods yes.

"Well, there's also the saying, 'Three strikes and you're out'. We're not going out, Claire. We can do this, we can win this time, but I think we have to work together."

I stop, kneeling in front of her on the couch. "I know you don't trust me. But we started to come together when you were Alpha. You took care of me, showed me what it truly means to be an Alpha. I saw what was really happening in this pack and what a difference small things, like an Alpha's praise, can do for a pack."

I look down, seeing her wringing her hands in her lap, a habit she lost when she was an Alpha. I reach out, putting my hand over both of hers, engulfing them.

"I know that Damara is weak again. I know she can't shift, but we will get her strong again. I swear it."

I see her eyes fill with tears.

"I know. I know it's hard to feel them weak after they were so strong." I say softly, wiping a tear from the corner of her eye.

"You know, you were the heart that this pack was missing, Claire. You were kind, showing love to our pack, and they thrived on it. I am the head. You never wanted to kill anyone. You didn't until you had to. Who knows, maybe things would have ended differently if you had killed Roman, maybe not. But I did kill Franco last time and we're still back here in some freakish version of Groundhog's Day."

I look at her, giving her what I hope is a gentle, tender look. One similar to the ones she used to give me.

"We need to do things differently this time, Claire. And the

first thing that we need to do is accept each other.”

Her eyes go wide.

“I know you’re not ready to trust me yet. Not ready to accept me as your mate, but I want you to consider marking me. I won’t mark you until you’re ready and we won’t mate until you’re ready. But if you mark me, it won’t impact you if I die, however, you’ll be able to feel my emotions. You’ll know that I’m being honest with you. You’ll know that I’m sincere in what I’m saying.”

I stop, reaching up to stroke her cheek. “We have to work together as a team, Claire. I think that’s the only way we will survive this year. And I intend to do everything in my power to make sure that you survive this year, that we both do.”

She looks at her hands for a moment before looking up at me.

“What do you have in mind, Tereshan?” She asks.

I smile. She called me Tereshan, not Alpha. That’s a good sign.

I move to sit beside her again. “Well, I need to know what you did first last time. I was angry and thought you were making a mess of things, so I wasn’t paying close attention. Plus, you had just rejected me and I was dealing with that.” I tell her.

I watch as she begins thinking.

“I told Feena to report directly to me, that no omegas were to be harmed, making sure that Roman couldn’t hurt her

anymore. And then you and I talked about Ivy stealing from you. I spent most of the rest of that afternoon finding someone to come fix the heat and the hot water heater. I also ordered blankets but those weren't delivered until the next day. Then, I made the announcement to the pack. By that time, I had to get ready for your party and that's where I talked to Alpha Keegan."

I look at her in awe. She doesn't even realize how amazing she is. She did all that in her first day as Alpha.

"Then, we have a lot to do today before our party this evening." I stop, looking at her. "I'd like you to accompany me as my mate, Claire. I want everyone to know that I've found you. I'll address the pack, ordering them to not harm the omegas, but I'd like to announce that you are their future Luna then, so everyone knows."

I can see her hesitation.

"Please Claire."

She looks at me for a long moment before she finally nods.

"And please give some thought to marking me. I really want your mark on my neck, and I think it will make you more comfortable, knowing that I'm sincere."

"Okay, Tereshan."

"Okay. Now, I asked Feena, Dane and Bryson to come to my office in..." I look at my watch, "ten minutes."

I stand and begin pacing again. "I know you only told Dane last time, and he was true to you, but I think we can trust

both Feena and Bryson." I stop, looking at her.

"Do you agree?" I ask her.

She frowns. "What about Ivy? She's still a wild card. Bryson hasn't rejected her yet. If we tell him and he doesn't reject her, she'll get it out of him. We already know she's feeding Franco information. That's not something that we need or want to get out."

I nod, thinking, before realizing that, as usual, my mate is thinking like the true Luna that she is. I smile at her, gently chucking her under her chin.

"You, my little mate, are very wise. What do you propose? Should we leave him out, test his allegiance or give it a try?" I ask, wanting her opinion. She has a much better understanding of how people react to stressful situations than I do.

I watch as she thinks it through, giving her time to decide how she thinks we should progress.

"I say we give him a chance. If we feel that he isn't going to believe us, then we ask him to leave."

"Fair enough." I say, just as the first knock sounds on the door.

I turn, extending my hand to her. "Together?"

She looks up at me and I see the indecision in her eyes before she takes my hand, letting me pull her to her feet.

"Together."