

## Tereshan

What the fuck does Bryson want? I was just starting to connect with my mate when the mind link comes through.

'Is Ivy with him?' I ask the patrol.

'No, Alpha,' Jesiah answers for them.

'Jesiah, where are you?' I ask.

'I just got here. And, Alpha, Bryson looks bad,' he says.

Why the fuck would I care what that traitor looks like?

"I'll come with you," Claire says to me.

"I don't think that's a good idea," I say.

"I thought we agreed that if we're going to survive this timeline, we have to do it together," she says, looking up at me.

I grit my teeth. It's one thing to work together in theory, it's quite another to put my mate in danger.

"You stay at my side, the entire time. I want your word, Claire. I have no intention of losing you."

"Tereshan, we've died twice on the same day. I don't think today is my day," she says.

"Yeah, and in which of those timelines did Bryson betray us?" I ask her.

"Okay, you have a point."

"At my side, Claire," I insist.

"I'll stay at your side."

I nod, taking her hand and walking out of the office.

"Do you think you can shift, or do you want to ride on Magnor?" I ask her.

"I'm not sure how long it will take me to shift, so I'll I ride on Magnor if he's okay with that."

"I will take you anywhere, little mate," Magnor says, pushing forward.

When we get outside, I strip and shift, Magnor laying down so Claire can climb on top of him. I notice that this time, she holds on tighter, recognizing that Magnor can handle her grip and her hands holding his fur.

When she's settled, we race to the borders. I'm not sure how Claire will feel about me killing Bryson, but I don't want to scare her by killing him in front of her. I'm hoping he'll do something to make it unavoidable to kill him, so she'll understand.

When we arrive, I quickly shift, taking Claire's hand and walking toward where I see Bryson sitting on the ground.

I growl as I walk up.

"Alpha," he says, baring his throat to me.

"I'm not your Alpha. You gave that up when you betrayed not



only me, but your pack by releasing a prisoner and I'm guessing giving pack secrets to Alpha Franco," I snarl at him.

"I never gave pack secrets to Alpha Franco. I didn't betray you, or at least, not like that."

"Then why?" Claire asks beside me. "Why did you let her go after everything we told you?"

He looks up at her and then at me. "She's my mate."

"Your cheating, whore of a mate that also betrayed this pack? Are you telling me you betrayed us for her?" I snarl at him.

"I didn't say I was smart, Alpha. But I am a man who loved his mate. I hoped that maybe, finally, she would see how much I loved her, how much I was willing to give up to be with her." He shakes his head, looking down at the ground.

"I'm guessing that's not what happened?" Claire asks gently.

"You could say that." He says, looking up at Claire.

"You knew, didn't you? You knew exactly who she was? All this time?" he asks Claire.

"Yes," Claire says.

"Would it make you happy to know that she rejected me?" he asks her.

"No, I know that a rejection significantly weakens you. I can only imagine how much it would weaken you if you were already marked and mated," Claire says.

"And it hurts like a fucking bitch," he says. "And not just the physical part. But to know that there was nothing that I was ever going to be able to do, ever be able to give her that would be enough, hurts more than the actual rejection."

"Where is she now?" I ask him.

"Don't know. When we left, she told me to follow her, that she knew of a place we could go. There was a log cabin in the middle of the woods. I could smell that she'd been there before, but her scent was faint. It wasn't long before Alpha Franco showed up. As soon as he did, she told him that they could finally be together. Them, not us. Then, she rejected me."

"So, she's with Franco now?" I ask.

"Oh, now, there's the kicker. Alpha Franco looked at her, while I'm rolling on the floor in agony and asked her why he'd want a Luna that treated her mate like this, pointing at me. Then, he told her the best thing she had going for her was being mated to me, telling her that before she was at least a Gamma. Now that she rejected me, she is nothing more than a willing whore."

He scrubs his hands over his face. "While they were arguing, I accepted her rejection and she collapsed. Alpha Franco told his men to pick her up and they took her away, I have no idea where, and honestly, I no longer care. Then, he told me that I should thank him, that my mate never loved me anyway. And they left me there. As soon as I was strong enough to move, I came back."

He looks up at me. "I'm sorry, Alpha. But I swear, I never



betrayed you. I tried to protect my mate, to make a life with her, that was my sole reason for what I did," he says.

"You do realize that I can't trust you and you've lost your position as Gamma in this pack?" I ask.

"Yes."

"What is it that you're expecting from me, Bryson?" I ask him.

He looks up at me and I recognize the pain in his eyes. Rejection is a terrible thing and if Ivy was trying to get Franco to accept her as his mate in front of him, I'm sure the pain was even worse.

"Whatever you think I deserve, Alpha."

'Do we have to decide right now, Tereshan?' my mate mind links me.

I turn to her. 'What other option are you thinking of? Surely you don't expect me to let him leave?'

'No,' she replies. 'But we don't have to decide to kill him right now, do we? Can we put him in the cells, away from Roman until we make a decision that is not based on anger?' she asks.

I reach out and stroke her cheek before turning back to Bryson.

"Luckily for you, my mate believes in making decisions that are not solely based on emotions. So, the choice is yours. You can go to the cells until we decide what to do with you,

or you can die now."

Bryson looks at Claire. "Thank you, Luna," he says, looking back at me. "I choose the cells."

I look at Jesiah. "Get him out of my sight."

"Yes, Alpha."