

Tereshan

When we get to my office, I close the door behind her. "I need the files for the alliance with Alpha Keegan."

I watch as she goes to the filing cabinet, digging through the files before she pulls out the one that I need. I go sit at my desk, motioning for her to bring it to me.

When she does, I pull her onto my lap. "There's another pile of files for you to work on." I tell her, before leaning forward and opening the file on Alpha Keegan. I breathe in her scent as I work.

"A small pack, only 50 to 60 pack members." I mumble to myself. "But with a lot of land. They must be farming the land, hence the food." I say, continuing to talk out loud to myself.

As I look over his proposal, I snort. "He wants us to provide him protection while his pack farms the land."

I slam the file shut and Claire jumps in my lap. I look at her. "Are they wolves, or slaves, do you think?" Claire shrugs, not looking at me.

"Farming." I say with a snort. "What self-respecting wolf would farm. We're hunters and killers, not farmers."

I'm about to say something about last night when I smell Roman, just before he knocks on my door.

"Come in." I tell him.

He walks in, noting Claire on my lap again. His raises his eyebrow but says nothing.

"Alpha Keegan is here. Do you want me to bring him up?" He asks.

"Yes." When he walks out, I tap Claire on the hip.

"Get up. Go change and bring some drinks and snacks for the visiting Alpha when you come back."

"Yes, Alpha."

As she leaves, I stand, waiting for Alpha Keegan to be shown in.

When Roman brings him in, I walk to him, greeting him. I have no issue with Alpha Keegan, I just don't want an alliance that will weaken me and my pack. And bringing on dead weight that we have to protect will weaken us.

"Have a seat, Alpha Keegan." I gesture to a seat before returning to my desk.

"Thank you for seeing me, Alpha Tereshan."

"I have some refreshments being sent up." I say and a moment later, Claire knocks on the door before coming in with a large tray. I see she has changed into an omega uniform, used when other packs visit. Feena is with her and helps her carry the tray in.

"Thank you, Feena, that will be all." I say, not wanting Feena in the

room while we talk.

"Yes, Alpha." She says before walking out and closing the door behind her.

"Would you like something to eat or drink, Alpha Keegan?" I ask, motioning for Claire to bring it over to him.

When she does, he smiles at her. "What's your name?" He asks Claire.

I watch Claire look at him and give him a tentative smile. "Claire."

"Claire. A beautiful name for a beautiful girl."

She glances at me before looking down. "Thank you, Alpha."

"What did you bring today?" He asks her and I can tell that she's responding to the kindness in his voice. Maybe this is how he runs his pack, and it would explain why he needs my protection. He encourages the weak.

"We have some cakes, some quiche, some coffee and tea." She says quietly.

"I'll take a quiche, a cake and some coffee. Cream and sugar, please." He says and I see my ex-mate blushing under his kindness.

Magnor begins growling in my head, not happy that someone else is giving Claire attention. Claire serves Keegan before turning to me.

"Would you like anything, Alpha?"

"The same." I order. She turns and makes the plate before handing it to me.

"You can begin your cleaning duties in the bathroom." I tell her before turning to look at Alpha Keegan.

When she closes the door behind her, I turn my attention to Keegan.

"I've reviewed your proposal, Alpha Keegan. And while I appreciate you coming to me and requesting an alliance, I'm afraid that I must decline." I tell him, taking a bite of the quiche.

"You're declining?" He says, looking at me as if I have two heads.

"Yes. I'm afraid your offer of food isn't sufficient for me to use my warriors to protect your pack."

I watch as his eyes narrow and he looks at me while taking a bite of his cake.

"A delicious cake. Is that Madagascar sugar?"

How the fuck would I know what kind of sugar is in the cake?

"I don't know. I'd have to ask my Gamma female. The kitchen is her responsibility."

He nods again before setting his plate aside. "Are you sure you don't want an alliance with me, Alpha Tereshan. I know you have a

strong pack, but there is more to running a pack than strength."

"We will have to agree to disagree, Alpha Keegan. I think being the strongest pack in the country is the most important thing. We can get food anywhere, that is not a commodity that we need. You, however, seem to need our strength. A strength that your pack does need. Unless you have something else more valuable to offer for our security services, I'm afraid my answer is no."

"I see. Well then, I won't disturb you any longer." He says, standing.

I walk around my desk, extending my hand. "I hope our packs can continue to remain friendly." I say.

"I guess that depends on who I end up in an alliance with." He says as Claire comes out of the bathroom.

"Claire, it was a pleasure meeting you." He says to her.

"You as well, Alpha Keegan." She says.

Did I introduce them? I didn't think I did, but then, how would she know his name?

'Roman said his name at breakfast. And you said it earlier in her presence.' Magnor says, watching our mate and Keegan closely.

That's right, that must be what it is.

"Perhaps you can walk me out, Claire." He says and Magnor snarls in my head.

"I'm afraid she's busy. My Beta, Roman, will see you out." I say, not wanting him around Claire any longer.

"Very well." He says, before turning and walking out of the office. Roman is there, waiting to escort him out of the packhouse.

I turn and look at Claire. "Are you done?"

"Yes, Alpha."

"Good, go clean my bedroom." I say, dismissing her.

Claire

When I finish cleaning Alpha Tereshan's room, I rush back downstairs wanting to make sure that Jacoby is okay. We all knew that it was Gamma Ivy that hit him. Hit him hard enough to crack his cheekbone and cause that horrible bruise.

Usually, she makes sure that the bruises aren't visible, especially when she knows someone is coming from another pack. So, if his face looked like that, I'm not sure what the rest of him looks like.

When I get to the kitchen, I see Feena limping. She gives me a look and I know it's because Beta Roman was here with her while I was in Alpha Tereshan's office. Since he wasn't here when I came to get the food, he must have been waiting for her after Tereshan dismissed her from the office.

"How is Jacoby?" I ask.

"Dane gave me some pain pills and I had him take them. I think he's got bruised ribs and obviously he's got the black eye and cracked cheekbone." She tells me.

"Gamma Ivy?" I whisper. I don't even know why I ask, I just needed to confirm it for myself.

"Where is he? Where is that sniveling little bastard that almost got me into trouble today." Gamma Ivy says, stalking into the kitchen.

"Who did you need to see, Gamma Ivy?" Feena asks her, knowing full well she wants Jacoby.

Ivy narrows her eyes, looking at Feena. "You know exactly who I'm talking about. Why the fuck was he out on the floor this morning with a black eye?"

"My apologies, Gamma Ivy. We had to send some of our omegas to the store for food this morning, so we were short-handed. I thought, since the visiting Alpha wasn't due until later in the morning that it would be okay."

"Okay? Okay?" She snarls, getting into Feena's face. "Does it look like it's okay? Do I seem like it's okay to you?" She says, backing Feena into a corner. Feena's neck is bared to her, but Ivy doesn't stop, getting in her face.

"I asked you a question." She says, punching Feena in the stomach, causing her to double over. That's what Ivy usually does. She hits you where the bruises don't show.

I don't know what comes over me, but I've reached my limit with people being abused today. Maybe it's because I know Feena has already suffered with Beta Roman, or maybe it's because Ivy got her own self into trouble by hitting an omega, not that Alpha Tereshan did anything. But I can't stand by and watch Feena get abused again.

"Leave her alone!" I say, startling us both.

"Claire, no." Feena says, but it's too late. Ivy turns on me.

"What did you say to me, omega?"

I grit my teeth, standing my ground. "I said, leave her alone. It's not her fault Jacoby was bruised and that we don't have enough omegas to take care of this pack house."

She steps away from Feena, backhanding me in the same motion. The force of it sends me to the ground. She grabs my hair, yanking my head up to look at her.

"That's insubordination, omega. I'll be sending you to the cells for that. Let's see how sassy you are after a month in a cold, dank room." She says before dragging me by my hair to the kitchen doorway.

"Guards!"

"Wait, please." Feena says, looking at me. I shake my head at her, telling her not to help me.

"Did you want to join her, omega?" Ivy asks Feena. I plead with her with my eyes not to do it. The omegas need her, and she knows it. I can survive a month in the cells, I have before. We all have.

"No." Feena says, stepping back, her head bowed.

"Good choice." She says as a guard walks up.

She tosses me at his feet. "Take her to the cells. She gets the usual, one bucket of water, one empty bucket and a piece of bread each day."

"Yes, Gamma." The guard says before helping me to stand. I realize he's one of the nice warriors. A mean one would have dragged me by my hair to the cells.

When we're far enough away, the guard, Jesiah, looks at me.

"Claire, what did you do?"

"I couldn't let her hurt Feena, Jesiah. She's already in pain." I can tell by the flash of his eyes that he knows about Beta Roman.

"Your lip is bleeding." He stops at the top of the stairwell that will take me down to the cells. It's more like a dungeon down here and we aren't given any blankets. He quickly has me wash the blood off my face, knowing my water supply will be limited. The one bucket of water we get has to last us the entire month. It is for drinking, washing and cleaning up after we use the bathroom. It's barely enough to drink over the course of the month, much less anything else. The empty bucket is for using the bathroom or vomiting because the smell gets to be so bad, even with the cold.

"Take a couple gulps of water, quickly before the other guard shows up. I think it's Turner." Turner is a mean warrior who doesn't care about omegas. He's one of the ones we have to worry about getting kicked by in the workout room.

I do as he says before he begins walking me down the stairs.

"Well, well, well. What do we have here? Another omega who thinks too highly of herself. Being the Alpha's pet isn't helping you, now, is it little girl?" Warrior Turner says as he walks up behind us.

Jesiah doesn't say anything and neither do I. He puts me in the cell, closing the door behind me. The cell has one wall, which is very cold, being that we are underground, and three sides made of iron bars, so you can see in the cells beside you and the guards can see you from anywhere in the room. This also means that there is no privacy. When you go to the bathroom, or you are sleeping, someone is always watching you. That can be good or bad depending on who the guard is on duty.

Dane has required two guards to be on duty to watch the cells any time one of us is in here. I say one of us, meaning omegas, because it seems that only Ivy still uses these cells as punishment. Dane began requiring two when he heard that some of the guards were requesting sexual favors for water.

I settle against the wall, waiting for my buckets. I can hear Jesiah filling one with water, talking quietly to Turner I guess, when I hear the door at the top of the stairs open.

"Take a break, Turner." I hear Dane's voice.

"Sir, I just got here." Turner protests.

"Then you should be happy that you get an extra break during your shift." Dane says, leaving no room for argument.

I hear Turner huff before walking out the door and Dane speaking quietly to Jesiah. Then I hear him coming down the stairs. "Claire, what happened?" He asks me.

I stand, walking to the front of the cell. Dane hands me some ice

wrapped in a washcloth for my lip. Now I know why he got rid of Turner.

I press the ice to my lip. It burns before beginning to soothe the ache and swelling.

"Ivy was going after Feena because of Jacoby. Feena was already limping because....you know." I say, not wanting to say it out loud.

"I do know."

"When Gamma Ivy punched Feena in her stomach, I couldn't stand by. I told her to leave Feena alone."

He sighs, pulling a pill out of his pocket. I shake my head, no.

"Give it to Feena, she's in more pain than I am. I'll be fine."

He smiles at me. "She said the same thing when I tried to give it to her."

"Make sure she takes it, Warrior Dane." I lean in closer to him. "She was limping. I know he hurt her." I whisper the last part.

I watch as he clenches his teeth before nodding. "At the rate they are injuring omegas, I won't be able to keep up with the need for pain meds." He says, as Jesiah steps up with the water.

He opens the door and sets them on the floor against the wall before handing me a bottle. "Down it quickly. That will keep you until tomorrow."

I do as I'm told and hand it and the ice back to them. "Thank you both."

"It's not enough, but it's all we can do." Dane says, as the door slams closed, and I turn and walk back to the wall.

"I'll check on you again when I can. Jesiah is on duty with Turner tonight, so you'll be safe.

"Thank you." I say, knowing I'll be going through my usual evening suffering before long as I sit in the cold while Tereshan has sex with another she-wolf.

Tereshan

Thankfully last night's she-wolf was a good fuck, and she didn't wear too much perfume, so I didn't need Claire to come change my sheets afterward.

When I get downstairs for breakfast the next morning, I'm surprised that Claire isn't waiting for me.

When I sit down, a different omega comes over to serve me.

"Where the fuck is my omega?"

"I don't know, Alpha. I was told to come serve you this morning."

"Go get Feena and tell her to come out here, now!" I bark, watching as the omega jumps before running to get Feena.

If Claire thinks she can avoid me....

"Good morning, Alpha." Ivy and Bryson say, sitting down to join me.

I don't answer. I'm pissed.

Feena comes rushing out of the kitchen. "Alpha, is there a problem?"

"Yes, Feena. I think I've been very clear that the omega Claire is my personal omega. Where is she? Why isn't she out here serving me?"

I notice Ivy look down at the same time that Feena glances at her.

"I'm afraid that Claire is in the cells, Alpha."

"Excuse me? How is that possible since she reports to me and me alone. Who put her in the cells?"

She looks down and doesn't answer.

"ANSWER ME!" I roar, my Alpha aura pouring out of me as Magnor comes forward, angry that someone put Claire in the cells.

Feena yelps. "Gamma Ivy, Alpha." She says hurriedly.

I turn, looking at Ivy. "Why the fuck would you think you could put my omega in the cells?" I snarl at her, trying to maintain control of Magnor as he thrashes around in my head. He's ready to kill Ivy for doing that to Claire.

Ivy makes the mistake of looking up at me defiantly. "She was insubordinate, Alpha. The punishment for insubordination is a month in the cells."

And Magnor snaps. He's across the table, lifting Ivy up by her throat before anyone can move. Bryson jumps up, trying to come to his mate's defense, but Magnor isn't having any of it. He knocks Bryson aside, throwing him across the room before dragging Ivy across the table and holding her off the ground in front of his face.

"Which part of 'she's mine' was unclear to you, Gamma?" He snarls in her face.

She's grabbed onto my hands, scratching at them, trying to get Magnor to release his grip on her throat so she can breathe.

Roman rushes up beside me. "Alpha, what's going on?" He asks.

"I'm waiting for a response from this Gamma." Magnor says, using her title to show how little she means to him.

"Wont. Happen. Again." She sputters out as her face starts to turn blue.

"Magnor, you're killing her." Roman says and Magnor turns, snarling at him. He bares his throat to Magnor and I'm finally able to regain control.

I release Ivy and she drops to the floor, gasping for air. Bryson rushes to her side, holding her.

"No one punishes my omega, but me. AM. I. CLEAR?" I snarl, Magnor still thrashing around in my head.

"Yes, Alpha." Roman says, but I'm looking at Ivy.

"Yes, Alpha." She says, more humble than I've seen her in a while. Maybe this is what she needed to knock her down a few paces. She's the only ranked female in the pack and sometimes it seems she thinks she's this pack's Luna.

"Go get my omega from the cells and bring her to me. NOW!" I snarl at her.

She yips before standing.

"I'll get her." Bryson says.

"Did you put her in the cells?" I ask Bryson.

"No, Alpha."

"Is your name, Ivy?" I ask, sarcasm dripping from my voice.

He grits his teeth. "No, Alpha."

"Then have a seat. If your mate can put someone into the cells, then surely she can get them out."

I watch as Ivy scurries away toward the cells. I knew she used them, but damn, thirty days for insubordination? That sounds harsh even to me.

The dining room is deathly quiet, everyone waiting to see what will happen.

When Ivy returns, she's dragging Claire behind her, forcing her to jog to keep up with her. She practically tosses her at me. Claire stumbles, falling into me. I grab her by the arms, pushing her back up and tilting her head up to me.

"Why is her face bruised?" I say, glaring at Ivy.

"She must have fallen." Ivy says, but her glance away from me let's me know she's lying.

Magnor pushes forward again. "Tell me the truth, Gamma before I send YOU to the cells for insubordination." He snarls.

"I hit her. She mouthed off to me and I backhanded her." She says hurriedly, baring her neck to me again in the face of Magnor's anger. I can see Roman shaking his head at her. She should have known better.

Magnor pushes forward before I can stop him.

"Touch her again and I will kill you, am I clear?" He snarls, nipping at her throat to show his displeasure.

"Yes, Alpha." She says and this time, I hear her wolf in her voice.

I pull him back. "Lie to me again, Gamma, and you'll not only be demoted, you'll spend a month in the cells. Am I clear?"

"Yes, Alpha."

"Get out of my sight."

Ivy can't race out of the room fast enough, Bryson on her heels.

"Alpha...." Roman starts.

"Don't." I tell him before turning on my heels. I have to get out of here before Magnor gives us away.

"Omega! With me." I say, striding from the room.

I hear her feet tapping against the floor as she jogs to keep up with me.

I walk into my office, holding the door open for her. As soon as she's inside, I close and lock the door a bare moment before

Magnor forces the shift. The moment his paws hit the floor, he's moving toward Claire.

"Magnor?" She asks, watching him closely. Funny, my wolf scares the shit out of everyone except this little omega. Maybe that's because he's still so sweet on her.

He sniffs her mouth where it is split. Her wolf should have healed her, but I know Damara isn't strong enough. Magnor begins licking her wound and Claire holds very still while he does. Then he begins sniffing around her body. She smells of sweat and fear and mold. He growls low inside our head space so he doesn't scare her.

"It's okay, Magnor, I've had worse." It's the wrong thing to say. This time when he growls, it's out loud, making her jump.

"Not recently. Not since....that night." The night I rejected her, the night I decided to make her my personal omega.

When he's done, I pull him back and force the shift. She turns her head away and the more relaxed stance she had with him is gone, and she's back to her typical rigid stance.

"Tell me what you did to anger Ivy." I ask her, standing in front of her.

"I told her to leave Feena alone. She was yelling at her." She continues to look at the floor and I'm not sure if it's because I'm naked or because I'm her Alpha.

I go to a drawer and pull out a pair of shorts, sliding them on. "Why

Chapter 14: Ivy
would you do that? Ivy is your Gamma. She is in charge of the omegas."

I watch as she clenches her teeth but doesn't answer me. I walk up to her slowly. "So, you'll mouth off to your Gamma, but not answer me? Or is this because you just got out of the cells?"

"She was blaming Feena for something that wasn't her fault. She knew it wasn't her fault, but she didn't care."

"Next time you mouth off to one of my ranked members, your punishment will come from me. So I suggest that you think twice before opening your mouth again. Do you understand me, omega?"

"Yes, Alpha."

"Now go take a shower, you can use the one in here. You stink."

She nods before turning and heading into the bathroom.

Claire

I race into the shower when Alpha Tereshan dismisses me. I feel disgusting after spending the night in the cells. I'm not sure why I got released, but I do know Gamma Ivy wasn't happy about it.

"You keep your fucking mouth shut, omega." She had said as I was dragged up to the dining room.

I wasn't sure what to expect, but Alpha Tereshan's anger directed at someone else, wasn't it. However, when we got to his office, and he shifted into Magnor, I understood. Magnor has always been gentle with me, kind to me.

When I get done showering, I realize I have a problem. I have no clothes to change into. I can either put my dirty clothes back on, which I know smell and is why Alpha Tereshan sent me in here, or I can walk out in a towel and see if he'll let me go back to my room.

The thought of having to race through the packhouse in nothing but a towel terrifies me, but I'd prefer that to being naked.

I step out of the bathroom, the towel wrapped tightly around me, my strawberry blond hair dripping water down my back and on the towel.

"Excuse me, Alpha Tereshan?" He looks up from his desk and his eyes go dark before they narrow at me.

"What is it?" He barks at me, making me jump.

"I don't have any clothes. I need to go to my room and get some."

He watches me for a moment then stands, walking up to me. "No."

My heart rate increases to the point where it feels like my heart will pump out of my chest.

Alpha Tereshan turns and moves to the drawers he opened before. He pulls out a pair of shorts and a t-shirt tossing them at me. "Put these on." He orders.

I take the clothes and turn to go back into the bathroom.

"No, here." He says.

I know my eyes go wide, but I can't argue, so I pull the t-shirt over my head before pulling the towel away. The shirt falls just below my knees and smells of blueberries. I can almost feel the frustration rolling off of Alpha Tereshan, so I quickly grab the shorts and pull them on.

They are long shorts, basketball shorts and even after I pull them on, they are dragging on the floor.

"Oh for fuck's sake." Tereshan says before turning me around. Before I realize what he's doing, he's ripped the shirt up the back and he ties it in a knot at my waist. I can feel the ties hanging down below my butt.

Then he spins me back around and pulls the drawstring of the

shorts, making them as tight as he can. Once he's done that, he begins rolling them up until he can't roll them anymore. The end result is that they fall between my knees and ankles but at least I won't trip.

He looks at me a moment. "There." He says before turning away.

"I need the files on the rogue attacks. Where did you put them?"

He asks. I grab the towel off the floor before following him to his desk. I open the drawer and find the file he was looking for, handing it to him.

"Put that away, then come organize today's files." He says, pointing to the towel.

I do as he says and when I return, he pulls me into his lap as usual and I begin to work.

"What do you know about the rogue attacks?" He asks.

I turn to make sure he's actually asking me. "Nothing, I'm an omega."

"Surely you know something about them." He says.

I think for a minute. Every time the rogues attack, all the omegas have to get inside the safe rooms. We aren't trained as warriors, so we don't know how to fight.

Safe rooms are located in several parts of the pack house.

Depending on where you are when they attack, you go to the

nearest room. I realize that the last few times I've had to go into

the safe rooms, it was the same safe room, meaning, I was in the same part of the packhouse.

I think back and realize it was always during a time when I was on kitchen duty, and it was always evening kitchen duty.

"They always happen around sundown." I say.

Tereshan's eyes focus on me. "Why do you say that?"

"Because of the safe room that I was in. It was close to the kitchen and when I think back, it was always at the end of dinner time."

Alpha Tereshan turns back to his reports, pulling them out and laying them side by side. "Son of a bitch." He says quietly.

He doesn't speak to me again and I go through his files, putting them in order. We've been working for a couple hours when he taps my hip, his request for me to get off his lap. I jump off, moving to let him stand.

"Go get two trays of food and bring them back in here." He says, not looking up from his work.

"Yes, Alpha." I say.

I head down to the kitchens to get two trays. Feena races up to me. "Are you okay." She says, frowning at my clothing. "What are you wearing?"

"Alpha Tereshan wanted me to shower, and I didn't have clothing, so he gave him his clothes. They didn't fit, so he fixed them." I tell

her.

"He didn't hurt you?"

"No, he scolded me." I turn looking to make sure we're alone. Feena pulls me into the pantry, where no one will overhear us.

"Magnor came out. He licked my wounds and checked me over."

She takes my chin in her hand, looking at my face. "That's why the bruise is almost gone, and your lip is healed." She says. I reach up to touch my face and realize she's right.

"So, Magnor still recognizes you as his mate?" She asks me.

I shrug. "I don't know, but he's always nice to me."

"That would explain his reaction to Gamma Ivy." She says and we walk out of the pantry.

"Did she hurt you or Jacoby?" I ask her, worried about what happened after I ended up in the cells yesterday and after I left with Alpha Tereshan today.

"No, this morning, Gamma Bryson pulled her away and she's been in his office all morning."

I begin putting together two trays of food, as requested. "Who is the other tray for?" She asks me.

"No idea. I guess he has someone coming to visit him."

She frowns. "Not that I've heard of, I'll double check, in case we

need to get drinks and snacks prepared again.”

I turn, ready to head back upstairs and nearly run into Beta Roman.

He looks down at me. “Omega, that was quite a show our Alpha put on this morning.” He takes a step closer to me. “And all for a little omega. Why is that?” He asks, reaching out with his fingers over my cheek.

I grit my teeth and hold very still, not wanting to drop the food and not wanting to anger Beta Roman.”

“I don’t know.” I say, my voice shaking with my fear. I feel Feena step up behind me.

“Beta Roman, is there something that you want?”

His gaze lingers on me a minute longer before turning to Feena.

“Oh yes, Feena, there is definitely something that I want.” He says, his intent clear. My stomach churns.

“You’d better get going, Claire. Alpha Tereshan doesn’t like to be kept waiting.” She says, pushing me out the door.

“None of us do.” I hear Beta Roman says before the door closes behind me and I race back to Alpha Tereshan’s office.

Tereshan

When Claire walked out of the bathroom in just a towel, her sweet lemon scent swirling around the room, I felt desire so sharp and strong it was nearly impossible to ignore it.

Then I had looked at her and Magnor realized we could practically count every bone in her chest and arms she was so thin. So, when I gave her my clothes, I had refused to let her go into the bathroom to change, wanting to see just how thin she was. If she thinks she's going to starve herself to death, she's wrong. Magnor won't allow it.

She had tried to hide her body from me, but when she was practically swimming in my clothes, I turned her around and ripped my shirt so that I could see if I was right. Magnor snarled in my head as we realized we could not only count her ribs and every other bone in her back, but also that she had bruises on her that we hadn't seen before. I'm guessing when Ivy hit her that she fell against something. She's lucky she didn't break anything.

So, when it was time for lunch, I had her bring two trays. And when she walked in, I told her to set one up one on the side of my desk after she served mine.

"Pull up a chair." I tell her.

She goes and drags a chair over to the desk, standing beside it,

looking at me.

"Sit." I say, pointing to the chair.

She does but continues to stare at me.

"Eat."

"What?"

I take my knife and tap the plate. "Eat the food."

She looks at the food before looking up at me. I stop, a bite of food on the way to my mouth.

"Problem, omega?" I growl at her.

When she doesn't respond, I snarl at her. "Don't make me command you."

She jerks and grabs the fork, scooping up a bite of food and shoveling it in her mouth. I watch her as she struggles to swallow the food before washing it down with some water.

I turn my attention back to my work as I eat. When I'm done, I look and she that she's barely touched her food.

"EAT!" I snarl at her. She yips before grabbing the fork and swallowing another mouthful of food.

I lean over and get in her face. "If you think that you are going to starve yourself, you are mistaken, omega. You are here for the rest of your life. And I don't intend to let you end that life because you

refuse to eat. So, finish that plate of food.”

Her eyes go wide as she looks back at her plate.

“Problem, omega?” I snarl at her again.

“I can’t eat all this.” She says quietly.

‘She’s smaller than we are, idiot, of course she can’t eat it all. It’s a plate meant for a ranked member.’ Magnor says to me, watching our mate.

“Half.” I say to her.

She looks back at her plate and it’s almost as if she’s dreading to eat the food. I glare at her until she finally puts another bite of food into her mouth. I swear she gags and almost throws it up.

I’m on the verge of force feeding her when there is a knock at the door. “Come in.” I bark.

Roman walks in and as soon as he does, Claire jumps up and runs into the bathroom. I can hear her throwing up the food I just made her eat. I grit my teeth and turn my attention to Roman.

“What?” I ask sharply.

He’s looking at the plate of food. He looks at me and raises an eyebrow. “Going soft, Alpha? You’re feeding your omega now?”

I’m up and have him against the wall by the throat in an instant. “I’m not in the mood for your sarcasm, Beta. How I treat my omega

is none of your business. Did you have something you wanted or are you just here to antagonize me?"

He holds his hands up. "You wanted to speak to me." He says, gasping it out.

I put him down. "Come in and I suggest you keep your opinions to yourself."

When Claire comes out of the bathroom, wiping her mouth, I snarl at her. "Get the plates and take them to the kitchen, then clean my room."

"Yes, Alpha." She says, grabbing everything quickly before racing out of the room. Roman watches her, but wisely doesn't say a word.

When he turns back to me, I show him the rogue reports. "Notice anything?" I ask, sitting back. I had never put it together that they were all happening at the same time of day. But once Claire said it, I looked and realized she was right. Then, when I laid the reports side by side, I saw something else.

I watch as Roman looks over the reports, one after the other. He looks up at me. "What am I looking at?"

"Notice the times of the attacks." I urge.

He does and I see when it hits him. "You think we have a traitor in our midst?"

"That or a weak link that is being exploited." I say. "Call Dane in."

We wait for Dane to arrive. When he does, I have Roman hand him the reports.

"Notice anything?" I ask him. I watch as he looks over the reports. His brows furrow and he starts quickly shuffling through the papers.

"All of these attacks happened at the same time of day." He says and I'm surprised that he got it when Roman didn't.

"Exactly. Notice anything else?"

He looks back and I watch him study the papers. I can see Roman is getting antsy. He's never been very patient.

"Heath." He finally says, looking at Dane.

Dane looks up at Roman, before turning his attention to me and back to the pages. This time he looks it over more slowly, realizing that during every rogue attack, Heath has been on patrol.

"That doesn't mean that he's a traitor." Dane says, carefully setting the papers on my desk. I can see that his mind is spinning. He's my Lead Warrior. Heath reports to him.

"No, but it is a significant coincidence, wouldn't you agree?" Roman asks him.

"I'll talk to him, find out what he knows." Dane says, standing up.

"If he's a traitor, he needs to be interrogated." Roman says.

Dane turns to me. "He's one of my warriors. Give me a chance to speak to him."

I shake my head. "If he's a traitor, I need to know that sooner rather than later." I look at Roman.

"Bring him in." I say and Roman gets that malicious grin on his face. He loves interrogating others.

Claire

The thought of eating when I knew exactly what Feena was suffering through was intolerable to me. I tried. I tried to gag it down, but as soon as I saw Beta Roman and knew where he'd just come from, I raced into the bathroom and threw it all up.

Thankfully, after that, I was able to leave and go check on Feena. I found her throwing up in the bathroom too. I hold her hair and give her a cool washcloth when she is done.

She wipes her mouth and looks up at me. "What are you doing here, Claire."

"Alpha Tereshan told me to bring the plates back and then go clean his room. There's food left. The second plate was for me, but I couldn't eat it. We can set it aside for the other omegas."

We walk back out to cleanup just as Warrior Dane walks in.

"Pain med?" He asks Feena.

"No, I'm okay." She says and we watch his eyes go unfocused.

"What the fuck does Beta Roman want with me?" He asks, turning to head out of the kitchen.

"He's in Alpha Tereshan's office." I say. He turns back to look at me.

"Do you know what they want?"

"No, he arrived right before I left, I'm sorry."

"Nothing to be sorry for, I just like to know what I'm walking into." He says and heads to Alpha Tereshan's office as I head up to his bedroom to clean.

When I'm done, I head back downstairs to help with dinner. When I walk into the kitchen, everyone is talking quietly and Selah is in Feena's arms, crying.

"What's going on?" I ask one of the omegas.

"Beta Roman took Warrior Heath for interrogation." He tells me.

My eyes go wide. We all know how cruel Beta Roman can be, and since Selah is Heath's mate, she'll feel everything that he feels during the 'interrogation'.

"You need to take this." Feena says, I can see that she has several pain meds, enough to knock Selah out.

"No. Whatever he suffers, I will suffer with him." She says bravely.

"Selah, it could kill you." Feena pleads.

"So be it. If they kill my mate, I don't want to live. I hate it here as much as everyone else. Death would be a blessing." She spits out through her tears.

Feena looks up and sees me. "Claire, would you be willing to take

Selah to her room and sit with her?"

I nod. I don't want to, but I don't want her to be alone either. Watching someone suffer like this isn't something I like to witness. I walk over and wrap my arms around Selah, helping her to my feet. Feena pushes the pills into my hands. "Try to get her to take them." She mouths to me.

I nod, before taking Selah to her room.

When I get her to her room, I walk her to the bed. I'm just about to get her to lay down when she screams and arches her back. Her head is thrown back and her face is contorted in pain. Heath is getting whipped.

I hold her as she screams and writhes in pain. Finally, it lets up and she pants, trying to catch her breath.

"Are you sure you don't want a pain pill?" I ask her.

"He doesn't have one." She grits out as she screams again, this time grabbing her arm. Beta Roman also enjoys using a knife to stab, slice and carve those that he is interrogating.

I don't know how long it goes on, but eventually, it stops. I get Selah settled into bed, asking her again if she wants the pain meds. She declines, rolling over and curling into a ball, crying for her mate.

"Do you know why they are interrogating him?" I ask.

"Yes." She whispers. I watch her and finally she turns her head to

look at me over her shoulder.

"He's been giving the rogues information so they can attack when we are at our weakest. It hasn't worked, but we were trying to get Alpha Tereshan and Beta Roman killed, hoping someone else would take over the pack."

"Oh Selah." I say, not knowing what else to say. Her mate will be put to death for treason, and she will die too. No wonder she won't take the pain meds.

"He should just confess. It would be faster." I tell her.

She nods. "I'll tell him when he's awake."

I begin to cry, rushing to hug her. "I'll miss you." I know there is nothing that I can say to make her change her mind. If I had a mate that loved me and then died, I'd want to die too. Actually, I have a mate, and he doesn't love me, and I want to die.

She wraps her arms around me. "Don't cry for me. I'll finally be with my mate and free of this hell. Cry for yourself and for the rest of you. I'm just sorry we couldn't do more to help everyone."

I leave her, taking the pain meds to Feena. I pull her aside and let her know what Selah told me. She sighs, taking the pain meds and putting them back in her pocket.

"Go get some sleep, tomorrow is going to be a long day. Once he confesses, it will be a public execution."

As I walk to my room, I realize that I'm the reason they caught

Heath. I told Alpha Tereshan about the timing of the attacks. It wasn't long after I left that they called Warrior Dane to their office. My hand goes to my mouth as I realize that, while I may not be directly responsible for the actions that are getting them killed, I am the reason they got caught.

My stomach sinks and I've just gotten to my room when the pain begins. It's so much more intense and it lasts longer than usual. It's early morning before the pain subsides and I'm finally able to fall asleep.

The next morning, I wake, dreading the day to come. When I walk into the kitchen, the atmosphere is somber. We make breakfast and I go to Alpha Tereshan to serve him. Today he doesn't speak to me. He doesn't even look at me, but I can smell the multiple scents of she-wolves all over him. That's why last night hurt so badly, he was with multiple females.

I'm exhausted so I'm not as alert as I should be, and my response time isn't quick. When Alpha Tereshan stands quickly, his seat scraping across the floor before falling over backward, I jump.

He looks at me for a moment, disgust clear on his face before turning back to the dining room.

"This morning, Warrior Heath will be put to death for treason. He allowed rogues into our pack, helped them to try and infiltrate this pack, willingly putting all of our lives at risk. Everyone is required to attend his execution."

He turns on his heel, leaving the room.



"Omega!" He barks and I rush to follow him.

Tereshan

I was furious realizing that one of my pack members had been betraying not only me, but the entire pack. I had watched while Roman had tortured him, trying to get information, to get him to confess.

When Heath had passed out, I had left, needing to burn off some of this energy. I knew exactly where I was going to go, a place where I could be as violent as I want without anyone batting an eye.

I pull into the werewolf equivalent of a brothel. This one in particular, caters to the extreme. I've been here before when I've felt the need to dominate someone completely or, like tonight, when I needed to hurt someone. I pay well and they never complain.

Tonight, because I'm worried that I might accidentally kill one of the girls, I order three. I have them placed in the room before I arrive and the minute I walk in, I rip the clothes off the first girl I see, lifting her by her throat and slamming her on the bed. I barely get my pants undone and a condom on before I'm thrusting into her like a fucking jackhammer. I continue to choke her, watching as her lips turn blue and finding my release just as she passes out.

I let go of her, changing my condom and grabbing the next girl, flipping her so she's bent over the bed. I'm pounding into her

before she's ready and when I hear her whimper, I begin smacking her ass so hard I'm leaving handprints and bruises.

When I find my release again, I pull out, switching out my condom and turn to the third girl. Her eyes are wide, and her heart is pounding. I ignore that and grab her, slamming into her. By the time I'm done with her, she has so many bite marks that she looks like a fucking vampire has been feeding on her.

Just as I finish, the first girl regains consciousness and I start again. When I've finally exhausted my anger, I lay down on the bed. All the girls are werewolves, so they will heal, and I pay well, so they have nothing to complain about.

I fall asleep, and when I wake, the girls are gone. I check my phone and see a text from Roman letting me know that Heath has confessed to betraying me. The frustration I burned off last night is back in full force. I can't believe one of my warriors was disloyal to me, trying to have me killed.

I get up and head back to my packhouse. I don't care that I smell like cheap perfume and sex. I walk into the dining room and sit down to eat. Once everyone is here, I stand, my chair flying backward. I watch Claire flinch. I'm so angry at my pack members right now, that I practically snarl at her. I better not find out that she knew anything about this. If she had any part in this, I'll have her executed, Magnor be damned.

I announce that Heath will be executed, and that it will be public. I want everyone to know what happens to them when they betray

me.

I bark at Claire to follow me and when we get to my office, I slam the door closed, turning on her.

I see her jump and her eyes go wide. I can hear the pounding of her heart. "Did you know?" I snarl, prowling up to her.

She backs up until she's against the wall. She shakes her head, quickly. I get in her face.

"Are you sure?"

She nods and I slam my hand against the wall beside her head making her jump.

"Words, Omega!" I shout.

"No, I didn't know anything about it. Yes, I'm sure."

"Who else?" I say. Magnor is thrashing around in my head, angry at my treatment of Claire. My aura is hot and strong, and I know it's hurting her, but I don't care.

She whimpers, her head turned away from me, her eyes closed.

"Who else what?" She asks and I can hear the fear in her voice.

"Who else betrayed me?" I snarl at her.

"I don't know. I don't spend time with warriors." She says.

I reach up and take her chin in my hand. "But he's mated to an omega, isn't he." It's a statement, not a question.

"Yes, Selah." She whimpers.

"And you didn't know anything about it?" I snarl again.

"No, Alpha. I swear."

I pull away, slowly. I keep my eyes focused on her. "What about Feena? Did she know?"

She turns her head, looking at me a moment before looking down. "No, she didn't know."

I grit my teeth, my eyes narrowing. "How can you be so sure if you didn't know anything?" I ask caustically.

"After I cleaned your room yesterday, I went to the kitchen to help with dinner and Selah was crying because Heath had been taken for interrogation. Feena didn't know anything about it."

I step back, still furious. "Go straighten my files. Get it done before the execution."

"Yes, Alpha." She says before skirting around me and going to my desk.

I stride out of the room, going to find Roman.

He's in the cells, still interrogating Heath.

"Just tell me why, Heath. This could be so easy for you." Roman is saying as he carves part of his muscle away.

"Fuck you...Roman." He spits out. It's the wrong thing to do,

disrespecting the man who is torturing you.

"It's too bad Alpha won't let me fuck your mate in front of you, that would hurt more than anything else that I could do to you. But, maybe, he'll let me carve on her and you can watch."

I'm not completely sure that he's bluffing. My Beta can be vicious. Thankfully, I don't have to find out. His tactic works and Heath's eyes go wide.

"I did it because you and Tereshan over there," he juts his chin at me, "are terrible leaders. You deserve to die." I walk up and punch him in the face. The anger and frustration behind the punch knocks him out cold.

Roman turns, giving me a look. "I can't interrogate him if he's unconscious, Alpha."

"Doesn't matter. Go string him up outside. Let him hang until he wakes up, then we'll kill him." I tell him.

I go back to my office, but Claire is gone. My folders are put away and I have to assume that she's in my bedroom, cleaning there.

I move to my window, watching as Bryson helps Roman string Heath up. I watch them talk before Roman turns and shouts something to another warrior. In a moment, he has a bucket of water that he pours over Heath's head. Immediately, Heath is awake, shaking his head out.

"Alpha, he's up." Roman says in the mind link.

"Leave them there for a bit. Let everyone see him."

I stand, watching him for an hour. I see his mate come to him. Unlike I expected, she doesn't seem to be pleading with him, or crying for him. She holds him, and he leans into her the best he can, tucking his head against her. They are bringing peace to each other.

I turn away from the window, heading downstairs. "EVERYONE OUTSIDE!" I bark through the mind link. I won't allow Heath to find peace after what he has done.

I stalk up and before his mate can move, I grab her arm and throw her aside.

"Noooo!" Heath screams, looking from his mate to me, hatred in his eyes. Hmmm, maybe Roman was right after all. The mate is the way to get to him.

When everyone is assembled, I tell Roman to grab the girl. He does, holding her against his body facing Heath, his hand on her throat.

"Heath Patterson, you have betrayed your Alpha and your pack. For that, I sentence you to death. Do you have any last words."

I watch as he grits his teeth. "I'm sorry I couldn't kill them for you, for all of you, I tried, I...."

I walk up to him, my claws extending and slash them across his throat, separating his head from his body. His mate screams

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behind me and a moment later, Roman rips her head from her body, tossing it to lay beside her mate. I look up at my pack members, noting the anger and pain in their eyes and through the bond.

"Does anyone else want to try and betray me?" I ask, looking at each one of them.

"Because if you do, this will be your fate."

I say pointing at the decapitated bodies before turning and storming off.

Claire

It's been a month since Heath and Selah were executed. We've all gotten increasingly nervous as it seems that the ranked members expect us to betray them. They question everything we do now, every time we are in their offices, their bedrooms. Most of us have nearly constant bruises from being 'questioned' or for a perceived insubordination. If we thought things were bad before, they are nothing compared to what the atmosphere in the pack is like now.

I have it a bit easier, Alpha Tereshan has been using me as his personal omega for a couple of months now so he's not constantly watching over me while I work. But he no longer has me work on his files. I'm not allowed to come near his desk unless he's in the office and when I'm cleaning, he's standing over me, practically breathing down my neck.

It doesn't help that we can't get food. Feena and I knew this would happen. Feena, especially had stockpiled as much food as she could before the meeting with Alpha Keegan, but eventually, the food has started to run out. Gamma Ivy has not given us permission to go farther out to get food. That would require us to go into the human territories where Alpha Keegan's pack doesn't supply the stores.

I'm standing next to Alpha Tereshan, serving his breakfast as usual. What used to be a loud time of day has become more and more quiet over the last month.

"What the fuck is this shit?" He asks, looking from his food, to me, then around the table. "How many more fucking ways can you make potatoes? Where are the eggs, where is the bacon, the ham?" He yells.

"ANSWER ME!" He barks, slamming his hand down on the table when no one responds. I jump and notice that every other omega in the room does as well. I notice that some of the warriors do too.

I'm not sure who he is expecting to answer him, but when no one does, I speak up.

"We can't get food." I say quietly.

His head slowly turns to look at me, his eyebrow raising slowly.

"We can't get food?" He asks and his tone implies that he didn't hear me properly.

"No." I say.

I watch him grit his teeth. "Why can't we get food?" He asks and it's as if I'm trying his very limited patience.

I'm looking at the floor, trying not to flinch every time he asks a question. "The stores won't sell it to us."

"What did you say?" He asks and this time his tone is one of disbelief.

"The stores won't sell us the food." I say again.

"And no one thought this was important to know?" He demands.

I don't answer, anything I say now will go against Gamma Ivy and while she may not be able to hurt me, she can hurt my fellow omegas. She's been very clear that they take my 'punishment' when she feels I'm insubordinate to her.

"Answer me." His voice is deep, his growl feral and I know he's talking to me now. I glance at Gamma Ivy before looking back down at the floor.

However, Alpha Tereshan notices. He turns to Ivy.

"Ivy, you're in charge of the kitchens. Why haven't you figured out how to feed this pack? Why won't the stores sell food to us?"

She immediately starts deflecting blame. "I wasn't told it was this bad. I was just told that they wanted to buy food in the human towns. You know we can't allow that. No one said anything about the local stores not selling food to us."

It's a lie. Feena has told her several times and explained that the only way for us to get food is to go outside of our territory.

I'm worried that Feena is going to get into trouble, but instead, Tereshan leans toward Ivy. "Aren't you a Gamma, Ivy?"

She frowns at him. "Yes, Alpha."

"And, as a Gamma, wouldn't you think it's your job to know where and how our food supplies are coming in?" His voice is menacing and even though he's not speaking to me, I feel my body trembling.

"Yes, Alpha."

"And if there is a problem, wouldn't you think it would be important to bring that to my attention?" He's speaking to her as if she's slow minded and he has to spell it out to her.

She grits her teeth, not happy that he's berating her in front of the entire dining room. "Yes, Alpha."

He sits back, glaring at Ivy.

"Omega! Why can't we get food?" He asks me, never taking his eyes off Ivy. I see her gaze flick to me before she looks back down.

"Because you refused the alliance with Alpha Keegan. He supplies the food to the stores and now they refuse to sell it to us." I say quietly.

Obviously, this is not the response that Alpha Tereshan was expecting because his head whips around to mine.

"What?"

I nod. "We stockpiled as much food as we could, but ever since you denied him the alliance, we've struggled to get enough food to keep the pack fed."

He snarls and slams his hand down on the table again. When he speaks again, his voice is deadly calm.

"Explain to me, Gamma, why an omega knows what's going on in

the kitchens and you don't?"

I watch as she tries to find a way to get out of the mess she's created.

"It must be that Lead Omega. She must be trying to sabotage our pack. That's the only explanation." She says, a nasty smirk on her face as she looks at me again. She's telling me that she may not be able to hurt me, but she'll make sure she hurts those I care about.

"No, Alpha, Feena would never...."

Before I can finish, Alpha Tereshan is on his feet.

"FEENA!" He booms.

Feena comes walking out of the kitchen, her head held high. I know she heard the entire conversation.

"Feena, why was Gamma Ivy not informed of the issues with the food shortage?"

"She was, Alpha. If I didn't convey the urgency of the situation, I will do better next time." She says, bowing her head in deference to him.

He stalks over to Feena, his towering frame leaning over her. "It's your job, omega, to inform the Gamma of any issues with obtaining food. Am I clear?"

"Yes, Alpha." She says, so quietly I can barely hear her.

"Look at me." He snarls and she looks up at him. Almost instantly, he has backhanded her, and she's sprawled on the floor. I make a move to go to her but Dane locks eyes with me, shaking his head no. He's right, it will only make it worse.

"Next time you don't inform your Gamma of the 'urgency of the situation', your punishment will be much, much worse. Understood?" He snarls, standing over her.

"Yes, Alpha." She says.

"Ivy!" He barks and I get momentary satisfaction that she jumps at his bark as well.

"Yes, Alpha."

"I expect real food on this table by dinner time. Fix it, or it's you that will be punished tonight."

"Yes, Alpha." She says before racing out of the dining hall, her mate right behind her.

Tereshan turns and begins striding out of the room.

"Omega!" He orders, and with a final look at Feena, holding her cheek in her hand, I race to catch up with our Alpha.

Tereshan

As soon as I'm back in my office, I grab the phone and call Alpha Keegan.

"Alpha Tereshan, to what do I owe the pleasure?" He asks, his voice deceptively friendly.

"You know exactly why I'm calling. Why won't your stores sell food to my pack members?"

"I'm sorry, Alpha. I did warn you that we'd be on good terms depending on who I ended up in an alliance with. Alpha Franco was willing to create that alliance with me and my pack. My understanding, however, is that the two of you are not on good terms. Because he owns much of the real estate in our territories and because we are now in an alliance, I'm afraid that selling your pack food is not possible at this time. However, if I remember correctly, you said, 'I can get food anywhere, that is not a commodity that we need.' So, it shouldn't be a problem for you, correct?" His tone is dripping with condescension.

I'll destroy them both. How dare they try to weaken me by keeping me from feeding my pack. Magnor is thrashing around in my head, angry that these two Alphas feel they can try to weaken us.

"You've made a mistake, Alpha Keegan." I growl.

"No, Alpha Tereshan, it's you who has made the mistake. One that

I'd hoped you would rectify before it came to this. However, in your youthful arrogance, you felt that strength in your pack was more important than anything else. Maybe now you'll realize that strength requires support from those that you consider to be weaker than yourself."

What the fuck does that even mean?

"You've made an enemy with the wrong person, Keegan." I snarl before slamming the phone down.

"Roman." I bark through the mind link.

He's at my office quickly.

"Keegan has entered into an alliance with Alpha Franco. Franco is refusing to sell our pack food in any of his stores. Because Keegan is now in an alliance with him, he's not selling in any of his stores either."

I watch as my Beta's eyes go wide, and he sits. "That's every food store in the entire fucking territory." He says.

"No shit. Get with Ivy, we need a plan to get food coming back into our pack. I don't want our omegas going into the human territory every week. With the amount of food that we buy, it'll bring too much unwanted attention to us."

"On it." He says, before walking out.

I get up, walking to my window. From here, I can see the warriors training and beyond them, the forest.

Fucking Ivy. She's such a lazy bitch. This should have been handled a month ago. Now, not only am I having to handle it, but I have to make sure that my pack doesn't start to go hungry. Hunger makes for cranky pack members, cranky pack members begin questioning your authority, and once that happens, I'll have to start killing my pack members to ensure that everyone knows why I'm still the Alpha.

You kill enough pack members, your pack gets weak. Fewer pack members means fewer warriors protecting your pack lands leaving you open to attacks from other packs. It's a vicious cycle.

Alpha Franco has made it clear that he wants my pack. He's been maneuvering for years trying to find ways to bring me down. It hasn't worked, primarily because I'm smart, I'm strong and my pack is bigger than his.

His pack is the second strongest in our territory. Our territory is made up of 15 packs of various sizes and strengths. We live in the mountains, in an area where few humans come because the terrain isn't good for skiing or hiking.

So, out here, we've become self-sufficient and while we may not have an actual alliance, we aren't exactly at odds with each other either.

That is, except for Alpha Franco. In the past, he's been direct in his approach to attacking me. It didn't occur to me that he would become subtle in his attack on my pack, but maybe it should have.

As I'm looking out over the forest, it occurs to me that someone

did realize right away that declining an alliance with Alpha Keegan would cause our pack problems.

I turn around, watching as Claire cleans around my office, staying away from my desk. She had been sitting on my lap when I had told Roman that I was going to decline the alliance with Alpha Keegan. I remember her responding to the news and wondering why she had responded that way. And this morning, she knew that it was me declining the alliance that caused the problems with obtaining food, she even said they stockpiled food in preparation.

She had known. Claire had known when I hadn't.

"How did you know?" I ask her, startling her so that she drops her cleaning cloth.

"I'm sorry?" She asks, picking up the cloth.

"What are you sorry for?" I ask frowning and walking toward her. Magnor starts snarling again, now because I startled Claire.

'Mate. She's my mate. Even if you refuse to accept her, she will always be my mate.' He says, but his tone is getting softer as I walk toward her.

She's looking at the floor and I take my finger, putting it under her chin to lift her eyes to mine. I don't miss how she flinches at my touch. I've been angry and broody since Heath's betrayal, lashing out frequently.

"I...I didn't hear you." She says.

"How did you know that me declining an alliance with Alpha Keegan would cause the problems obtaining food?" I say quietly. I don't want to scare her anymore right now. I don't think she is trying to betray me, but she seems to understand the inner workings of the pack better than Ivy.

"I knew that he provides most, if not all of the food for the packs to the food stores in our territory." She says.

"How did you know?" I ask. It's not common knowledge. Hell, I didn't know.

She blinks at me, frowning. "I've picked up the food for the pack before. It's in the stores saying where the food comes from." She says, looking at me like I've lost my mind.

Why would they identify where the food comes from in the stores where mostly omegas shop? It's rare that an omega can read.

"What else do the stores say?" I ask her.

She frowns some more. "Well, a lot of things, like the prices, what's on sale, what's fresh."

"What about who owns the stores?" I ask, wondering if this is something else that should have been obvious to me, or at least known by Ivy.

"They are all owned by Alpha Franco." She says, still frowning at me.

"How do you know?" I ask her again.

Her frown deepens. "Because the stores where we shop for groceries are called Franco's Supermarket. The ones owned by Alpha Keegan are all fresh markets, mostly providing produce and other specialty items like honey, jams and imported sugars. But Franco's is where we get all our meats and canned food." She says, as if this is common knowledge.

And I guess if you are an omega, it is. As an Alpha, I've never thought once about the name of the store where my omegas buy the groceries.

Well, at least not until today.

Claire

I don't know why Alpha Tereshan is asking me all of these questions, but thankfully, he's not acting angry or like he thinks I'm trying to betray him.

"Where is the closest food source other than Franco's or Keegan's markets?" He asks me.

I'm not sure how to answer his question. We had asked Gamma Ivy about going to Alpha Elio's pack, but she had refused to allow us to go. His pack works with humans and has large farmlands with cows, pigs and chickens. They work under the 'farm to table' methodology, where you buy direct from them, so they don't sell to Alpha Franco. They are farther away than the supermarkets, but closer than the human towns.

"Claire?" His tone is testy, but I'm so surprised that he used my name that my eyes snap up to his.

He raises an eyebrow in silent question.

"Well, do you mean other than Alpha Elio's pack?" I ask, hoping this way I can stay out of trouble, because if Alpha Tereshan doesn't know about this and Ivy finds out I told him, she'll make someone pay for it. It just won't be me, since she can't touch me.

He frowns. Dang, I was hoping he knew about it.

"Alpha Elio's pack? What about them?" He asks me.

"Well, they are farmers too." I tell him and explain to him about how their pack works.

"Who do they sell to?" He asks me.

I shrug. "I don't know. We've never bought from them."

His face grows dark, and I take a step back, not sure what to expect.

"Fucking Ivy." He snarls, standing up and starting to pace again. "If she weren't the only ranked she-wolf in this pack, I'd fucking demote her. Selfish, fucking bitch."

I'm not sure where this is coming from, but it doesn't escape me that if he hadn't rejected me, he'd have another ranked female in this pack.

"Well, I don't fucking care that he didn't want her as his Luna. This pack needs food. She can fucking suck it up." He says before heading to the door.

"I'm going to Alpha Elio's pack. Finish cleaning in here and then clean my room. I'm having company tonight." He says before striding to the door.

"Yes, Alpha." I say, knowing that tonight will be just as painful as always.

I finish up in the office before moving to the bedroom. I clean up

the remnants from last night's 'visitor', making sure the room is clear of her scent. I'm just finishing up, when one of the other omegas comes running in.

"Claire! Claire, come quick! You have to help me. I don't know what happened, but I swear I didn't do anything." Vivienne, another omega says to me and she's obviously terrified.

I drop what I'm doing and rush to see what is happening. As we go, I ask her what happened.

"I was in charge of cleaning Gamma Bryson's office today. He was in there as they all are now and suddenly, I heard him grunt. When I looked up, he was bent over his desk. I asked him if he was okay, but he fell to the floor. Claire, I don't want to die. I swear I didn't do anything to him." She says tears streaming down her face, just as we get to Gamma Bryson's door.

When we walk in, he's lying on the floor, writhing in pain. I stop, watching him for a moment. I know exactly what this is. Gamma Ivy is cheating on her mate. I also happen to know that she's with Beta Roman.

I turn to Vivienne. "Get me a washcloth with cold water and then go get the garbage from Alpha's room. I'll take care of this." Her eyes go wide, but her face relaxes in relief.

She nods, running into the bathroom as I walk up to Gamma Bryson. "Gamma, it's me, Claire. I'm going to sit beside you." I say.

When he doesn't respond, I sit on the floor beside him. Vivienne

runs out of the bathroom with a wet washcloth, handing it to me and watching him for another moment. "Vivienne, go get everything from Alpha's room and lock the door. I've got this." I tell her again.

I wait until she's out of the room before putting the washcloth on Gamma Bryson's forehead. "Breathe, Gamma. It'll be over eventually."

I watch as his eyes flash to me before closing again as he curls into a ball, his arms wrapped around his mid-section as if he's trying to hold himself together. I know from experience that it feels like you're being torn apart from the inside.

I sit with him until his body finally begins to relax and his breaths start to come more easily. He lays on the floor, looking up at me.

"How did you know?" He asks, his voice scratchy from his silent screams.

I get up and get him some water, coming back to hold his head and helping him to drink. When he pulls away, I help him to sit up. He puts his head in his hands for a moment before looking at me again.

"How did you know?" He asks again.

I shrug. "My mate rejected me, but I was in so much pain that I never rejected him. I feel it every time he is with someone else."

He snorts in a self-deprecating way. "I'd tell you that you should

accept the rejection, freeing yourself from the pain, but it's not like I'm going to reject Ivy. She's my mate but I know I'm not what she wanted. She wanted to be a Luna, but instead she was mated to me, a Gamma. Maybe, someday, I'll be strong enough to reject her."

He moves to stand, and I help him up. "But today is not that day." He says.

I help him back to his desk. "Make sure Vivienne knows that she's not in trouble. I know what this is, and I know she didn't do anything wrong."

"I'll tell her." I say before grabbing the rest of her cleaning supplies. "Do you want me to finish in here?" I ask him, knowing I want to be alone after feeling the pain of the broken mate bond.

"No, I'm good. Thank you again, Claire. And can I trust you to keep this between us?"

"Yes, Gamma." I say. Of all our ranked members, Gamma Bryson is the only one that shows any compassion for us, the omegas.

It breaks my heart that Gamma Ivy treats him as terribly as she treats the rest of us.

Tereshan

After returning to the pack with a whole fucking cow, three pigs and nearly 100 eggs, I feel better. I stop in the kitchen to tell Feena that she can get some omegas to unload my truck.

I don't miss the way she flinches when I call her name or the massive fucking bruise I left on her face this morning.

"Put some ice on that." I say, pointing to her face, but keeping my tone even.

"Yes, Alpha."

I head to my office and it's a couple hours later before Roman and Ivy come strutting back into the packhouse as if they are the saviors of the pack.

"Where the fuck have you two been doing and what took you so long?" I snarl as they walk in. I can smell that Feena already has dinner cooking for tonight. If it hadn't been for me, we wouldn't be having dinner on time.

"Geez Alpha, you're welcome." Roman has the audacity to say.

"Why do the two of you smell like you went swimming in a river?" I ask, sniffing the air around them. Ivy is smart enough to keep her mouth shut, but I see her frowning, smelling the meat cooking in the kitchen.

"We had to wash the scent of humans off of us after going through their stores. They're disgusting. Are you sure you want us buying food from the human towns?" He says, carrying the bag of groceries he has into the kitchen.

"Feena, get some omegas to get the groceries out of the car." He barks at her when he sets them down. I watch as she jumps again at his command.

"You two do it." I snarl. "Can't you see that everyone here is getting dinner ready? Dinner that we wouldn't have if we had waited for the two of you." I say turning my attention to Ivy.

"And I don't fucking care what your grief is with Alpha Elio, we now have an agreement with him and will be picking up our orders once a week. Get with the program or lose your rank in this pack." I snap at her.

I watch as her nostrils flare. "Yes, Alpha." She says through clenched teeth.

I fucking knew we weren't working with them because she's still butt-hurt about him not choosing her as his Luna. She's not Luna material and Elio knows it. She can't even run a fucking kitchen, much less a packhouse.

That night, I relax over dinner. The pack is in much better spirits, the warriors eating their fill. I watch Ivy dote on Bryson over dinner, trying to entice him into whatever it is she wants to do later, but he's not having any of it. I find it interesting, but not interesting enough to ask about it. Maybe he's finally seeing through her

fucking bullshit too.

My good mood continues later that night. It just so happens that Alpha Franco has a rebellious daughter, one who likes to piss her father off. I had invited her over and she had been happy to oblige. So, I make sure to video us fucking in every possible way before loading the videos to send to him.

"Fuck with me and I'll fuck what's yours." I type out before hitting send.

The thought of pissing off Franco has me rolling over, ready to take his rebellious daughter again.

"No, I'm sore." She whines.

"I want that ass one more time before you leave." I tell her, rolling over on top of her and sliding into her tight ass.

"Fuck Tereshan, I won't be able to sit down tomorrow." She complains.

"Good, you'll remember what I good fucking time I am and come back soon. Any time you want to piss dear ol' Daddy off, you come see me." I tell her before closing my eyes and getting lost in the feeling of fucking her.

The next morning, I'm whistling as I get to breakfast. Last night was fantastic. Franco's daughter is a great fuck and has the added bonus of getting my revenge on Franco. Claire has just set my plate of food down, and I'm about to ask her why she looks so

fucking terrible when the howl of alarm goes up.

I'm up and moving before my mind has completely identified what's going on. Magnor takes control for a moment, lifting Claire up and pulling her to our face. "Get to a safe room, now!" He shouts at her before putting her down, more gently than I would have and rushing out the door, shifting as we leap off the back porch.

When I get to our borders, I can see that another pack is attacking us. My border patrols are overwhelmed and are getting killed quickly. I'm about to jump in, tearing into the warriors when a wolf comes out of nowhere, slamming into me and biting into my flank, ripping me away from my warriors.

The force of the throw has Magnor rolling once before he's able to gain his feet again. When he does, I see its Alpha Franco. Well, well, well, I guess he didn't like seeing his daughter with his sworn enemy's cock in her mouth. Or maybe he thought his sweet little angel was too gentle to like it in the ass. Well, she sure as fuck does.

He should have known better than to fuck with me. Now, he's here attacking my pack and I'm going to kill him.

Magnor leaps at him, snapping at his neck. He ducks, swiping his claws along my side, leaving deep gashes. Magnor whips back around, ignoring the pain and slashes at Oskar, Franco's wolf, knocking his leg out from under him. Before we can jump on him, he regains his feet and is leaping at us. Magnor ducks as he flies over top of us, before turning to attack.

This time, Magnor sinks his teeth into Oskar's shoulder. Oskar turns his head, biting into Magnor's cheek, both of them snarling and ripping, trying to tear flesh off the other one.

Magnor gets his pound of flesh first, pulling muscle and sinew away from Oskar's shoulder, but the momentum of the muscle releasing gives Oskar the leverage to rip a chunk of flesh away from Magnor's face.

The pain is instant and can taste the blood from my cheek dripping into my mouth, mixing with Oskar's blood.

I turn to face him again. Oskar's head is down, his teeth bared and he's snarling at me. Magnor takes a similar posture, ready to attack again. They leap at each other, teeth snapping and claws slicing into each other.

I feel his claws slice into my stomach, my teeth clamping down on his back leg, hearing the snap as it breaks.

I don't know how long we've been fighting, but we're both losing a lot of blood. Magnor's body isn't healing as fast as normal because Oskar keeps adding to the injuries. But Magnor has hurt Oskar too. His back leg is broken, and his front leg can barely hold weight since his shoulder injury isn't healing either.

Magnor is about to attack again, when another wolf slams into us, knocking us over. The wolf shifts and the Beta comes over to me as Magnor tries to regain his feet.

"Fuck you, Alpha Tereshan. Stay away from Alpha's daughter." He

says, before spitting on Magnor.

He turns quickly, grabbing Franco who has shifted back. He throws him over his shoulders in a fireman's carry, howling for his pack to retreat.

I feel the blood pooling around me, as Magnor forces the shift back. I hear Roman's voice as I watch Franco's pack retreating from our territory.

My last thought before the darkness takes me is that the bastard almost succeeded in killing me.

Claire

When we were finally released from the safe rooms, we realized that not all of us survived. We had divided into the four safe rooms nearest the kitchen and dining room when the alarms had gone off.

When I stepped out of the safe room, it was chaos everywhere and even as an omega, I realized that the smell of blood was much too strong.

The kitchen has been destroyed, appliances are laying broken on the floor and shattered glass is littering every surface. I'm carefully trying to make my way out of the kitchen when one of the warriors yells at me.

"You, Alpha's pet, get to his room. He's injured."

I nod, turning to head to his room upstairs. It takes me a moment to see it, I'm trying to step around the glass and broken equipment on the floor. But, when I look up, I whimper before I can stop the sound, slapping a hand over my mouth.

One of the safe rooms had been breached. There are seven omegas lying on the floor, all of them savagely murdered. At least one is decapitated, one has a slash so deep in his throat that it's amazing that his head is still attached to his body, others have gashes so deep it's shocking that their bodies are still in one piece.

And the blood, there's so much blood. This must be where the smell is coming from. I watch, unable to move as blood spills into the tile grout, still so liquified that it is following the grout line around the kitchen, staining it red.

Alpha Tereshan doesn't allow omegas to train in this pack, so none of them could have defended themselves. This is just a senseless slaughter.

"Omega!" The warrior that ordered me to Alpha Tereshan's room barks at me.

I jerk, released from my trance before turning and racing up the stairs. When I get to Alpha Tereshan's room, it is filled with pack members, including the pack doctor.

"Why isn't he healing?" Beta Roman asks.

"He's suffered too many wounds. Magnor couldn't keep up with the injuries and now he's too weak to heal him. He'll need to rest. Once he regains his strength, he'll begin to heal. Until then, I'll stitch him up to keep him from bleeding out."

Beta Roman is pacing around, fury pouring out of him. His aura is overwhelming me.

"Why the fuck did he attack us? Why now? There must be a reason."

"Alpha Franco's daughter was here last night." Gamma Bryson says. He's sitting in a chair, also getting stitched up. I know why

he's not healing. His wolf is hurt because of his mate's recent cheating. Gamma Ivy is sitting next to him, trying to soothe him, but I can see that he's not interested. She's the reason he's unable to heal himself.

"Omega!" Beta Roman barks at me. "Get over here."

I walk toward him, my head lowered. "Did you see the Alpha's daughter last night?"

"No Beta."

"Do you have any idea when she left last night?" He asks. The answer is yes. I have a general idea of when she left, but if I tell Beta Roman that, he'll want to know how I know. I'm not willing to tell him when I stopped feeling the pain of the cheating mate bond. So, instead, I lie.

"No Beta."

"You're to stay with your Alpha until he wakes. The minute he wakes, I want to know." He grabs my chin in his hand. "Do you understand?" He asks, gripping my chin so hard it hurts.

"Yes, Beta."

He holds my chin for another minute before letting it go and looking around the room. "Everyone out."

Everyone begins leaving the room.

"C'mon, baby. I'll help you to our room." Gamma Ivy says to

Gamma Bryson:

"I'll be there in a minute." He says, pulling away from her.

He waits until everyone is gone before closing the door and turning to me. "He's your mate, isn't he? He's the one that rejected you, but you haven't rejected him." He says, looking at me intently.

I look down, not answering. "That's why Damara can't ever come forward. It's because he's with someone every night."

I grit my teeth, I'm afraid to tell him, but my tears are about to betray me. His hand gently comes on my shoulder. "Your secret is safe with me, Claire. I won't tell anyone. But if you ever need anything, anything at all, let me know."

He turns, heading to the door, but he stops, turning to look at me. "I don't know how you continue to go on, feeling that every night. I only have to deal with it occasionally and sometimes, I wish it would kill me."

I look at him. "I wish it would kill me every night."

"Maybe one day, maybe, things in this pack will be better."

"Not unless we get a new Alpha." I turn and look at Alpha Tereshan. "And I'd rather have him than Beta Roman."

He nods. "I'll send food up for you in a bit."

"Thank you, Gamma."

"Don't thank me, Claire. I wish I could do more. But we're all stuck in our own prisons, aren't we?"

I nod. I understand that he has nowhere else to go either. He'd lose his status, his mate and become a rogue.

When we're alone, I look over Alpha Tereshan's mutilated body. He has gashes and bite marks all over his body.

I go to the bathroom getting a cup and filling it with warm water. I spend the next couple of hours, wiping the blood off of his body. It's everywhere, and I have to change the water and rinse out the washcloth several times.

As I bathe him, I think about what Beta Roman and Gamma Bryson said. If Alpha Tereshan had sex with the Alpha's daughter who attacked us, could it be a direct result of that? If so, then his retaliation for having sex with his daughter cost our pack at least seven innocent lives. What kind of Alpha does that? Or maybe, all Alphas do that, and it's only the omegas, the ones who suffer for their Alpha's arrogance, who truly understand the meaning of life.

I look at Alpha Tereshan. Part of me wants to let him die, but part of me knows that I can't. There is also that part of me that loves Magnor, not just Damara, but part of me too. He's always been good to us. Damara and I both know that it was him that ordered us to the safe room. He was worried about us.

"What are you doing here, Claire?" I jolt, my head snapping to Alpha Tereshan's face. His eyes remain closed.

"Alpha Tereshan, you're awake?"

"No." He chuckles. "It's Magnor."

"Magnor? But I thought you were too weak to heal."

"I am, but that doesn't mean there is anything wrong with my nose. I can smell you."

I sniff under my arm, and I hear him chuckling again. "I like your smell, Claire. You and Damara. Tereshan may have rejected you, but I haven't. You're still my mate."

"Oh." Not sure what else to say.

"Would you be willing to help me?" He asks.

"Of course, what can I do?" I lean over, hoping to help him hear me without straining. He's injuries are still really bad.

"Would you lay with me?"

I squeak. "Lay with you?"

"Yes. Your closeness and your scent are helping me to heal. If you lay on Tereshan's body, it will help me. But only if you are willing."

"I want to help you, Magnor. We both do." I say, going to grab a blanket and laying it over his damaged body. I then move his arm, so I can lay against him, my head on his chest.

His arm comes around me and he turns, burying his head in my hair. "That's better. Thank you, my mates." He says, his voice

trailing off before his breathing evens out and he falls back into a deep sleep.

It doesn't take long before the beating of his heart and the sounds of his even breathing lulls me into the deepest sleep I've had in months.

Tereshan

I wake up feeling sore, but warm and very much ready to fuck. My dick is tucked up against what feels like a perfect ass. My arms are wrapped around a small girl. I frown, she's awfully thin, why is she so thin. I like a girl with meat on her, someone whose hips I can hold on to while I'm pounding into her from behind.

"Magnor, I have to get up. You have to let me go now."

That sweet voice, her addressing my wolf, that can only be one person. I wish I could say that my dick goes limp, but the enticing scent of sugared lemons is surrounding me and instead of being turned off by my ex-mate, I want to bury myself inside her.

"Magnor, seriously. I'm going to get in trouble with Beta Roman. He wanted to know the minute Alpha Tereshan was awake. I need to let him know that he's waking up."

I nuzzle her ear. "Magnor..." She says, sighing, and it's a much sweeter tone than she ever uses with me.

"Not Magnor." I say and instantly, her body goes rigid.

"Alpha!" She squeals and tries to get away from me.

"Stay." I say, and I realize I want her to talk to me the way she talks to Magnor.

She stops squirming in my arms, but her heart is pounding so hard I'm afraid she's going to have a heart attack.

"What happened after I passed out?" One thing I've learned about my omega, she knows what's going on around her and she doesn't lie.

"They brought you here. Beta Roman was worried about you, they had to stitch you up because Magnor was too weak to heal you." That explains the tugging I feel all over my body. I've healed but I still have the stitches in my body.

"Do you know how many warriors I lost?" I ask her.

She shakes her head, but almost instantly, I smell the salty taste of tears. I pull her tighter against me. Maybe it's because I woke up with her in my arms, or maybe it's because I'm still healing, but I don't like that she's crying.

"Who died?" I ask softly.

"They broke into one of the safe rooms." She says, her voice catching.

My snarl is instantaneous. Her yip reminds me that she can't take my aura and I pull it back. They came after my omegas. Those fucking bastards. Franco's message to me is clear. 'You fuck with what's mine, I will fuck with what's yours.'

"How many?" I ask, my teeth grinding as I try to hold my aura back.

"Seven." She whispers.

Seven omegas. I'm already struggling to maintain an efficiently run packhouse with the limited omegas we have, then not having food and now I have seven less omegas. Fuck!

"Anything else?" I ask, moving to get up. There is work to be done. I need to meet with Roman.

"I don't know. I was called up here to watch over you."

That makes me stop. I turn and look at her. "How long have I been out?"

"Just the night. It's late morning, that's why I was saying I needed to tell

Beta Roman that you were waking. He asked me to let him know as soon as you were awake."

"I'll tell him. You can go get ready to start the day. It's going to be a long one." She whimpers before she can stop herself. Her eyes go wide, and she turns quickly collecting whatever is laying around my room.

I step up to her and grab her face. Her flinch is more than what she usually does when I touch her. I hold her chin in my hand as I flick on the light. Magnor begins thrashing around in my head, seeing the fingerprint bruises on her face.

'He was worried about us, but I'll remind him that he doesn't mark our omega.' I tell him.

'Our mate, you fuckwad.'

"Shut it, Magnor." I snarl at him.

'You're welcome for the advanced healing, by the way. Next time, I'll let you heal on your own. Apparently, you continue to forget who the real Alpha is here.'

I push him to the back of my mind while I refocus on Claire's face. "I'll also remind him that if he leaves a mark on you, he answers to me." I tell her. Her eyes go wide, but she doesn't say anything.

It's at that moment that the man in question walks in, without knocking. "How is he?" He asks, looking at the bed.

Before he gets one step in the room, Magnor punches him in the face.

"What the fuck, Alpha?" He asks, angrily.

"I warned you about touching my omega. I shouldn't have to remind you about leaving marks on her." He looks at Claire, his lip curling.

“Don’t look at her, she didn’t put your fingerprints on her chin, asshole. Claire, leave. Roman, get in here and tell me what the fuck happened.” I say, turning to my closet and grabbing a pair of sweatpants.

Claire rushes out the door and I hear Roman growl lowly at her. When the door closes, I look at him. “Don’t fucking make me tell you again about her. She’s my omega, no one touches her, not you and not Ivy. Clear?”

“Clear.”

“What happened? Claire told me they broke into a safe room?”

“Yeah. And Alpha, they slaughtered them. I don’t know if they knew our omegas weren’t warriors, but they didn’t hold back at all.”

“How many warriors?”

“Twenty-three, mostly patrols. They ambushed us.”

His hands are on his hips and he’s looking down before looking back at me. “Is it true you slept with his daughter the night before the attack?”

I walk into the bathroom, looking in the mirror and start to pull out the stitches. “Yeah, I videotaped it and sent it to him. That might have caused the attack, although it was much faster than I expected.”

I can see Roman shaking his head from the mirror.

“Problem, Beta?”

“Yeah, Alpha. You almost fucking died on that battlefield. You didn’t think it was important to let anyone else in the pack know that you were pissing off Alpha Franco? I’m your fucking Beta. You should have at least told me.”

He’s right, I know he’s right. My pack members are dead because I didn’t

think, I just reacted to my frustration and anger.

"Fine. Next time I have a revenge fuck, I'll make sure you know about it."
I tell him.

"And we'll make sure our pack is ready for an attack, so we don't lose so many pack members."

"Agreed."

He shakes his head again and looks up at me. "At least we killed more of their pack than they did of ours."

"Did we?" I ask him.

"Yeah, at least double."

"Good."