

Tereshan

That fucking asshole Roman. If he thinks he is going to take my pack, he can think again. I'm thankful that Claire is on the same page. We will fight for this pack.

However, I know that there are packs that will join him, packs that have wanted to overthrow me so they could have my pack, making their packs larger and stronger.

Claire contacts Alpha Elio and gets his him to agree to support our pack. That's huge, since he is the major supplier of meat to the packs. Alpha Keegan calls later that day to let Claire know that his friends have all agreed to side with him if there is a pack war. He says that both Alphas are coming to his pack tomorrow to buy directly from him, and they will begin spreading the word.

Claire also tells Keegan that if the soil is determined to be clear of poison, she is willing to have him sell our specialty brand if that will assure the other packs of our goodwill.

Bryson comes in that afternoon and lets Claire know that there are some Alphas who believe us, some that don't want to get involved and some that laughed at him, telling him that Roman is going to murder us when he takes over our pack.

"Well, that confirms his intentions, at least." Claire says.

"How many do we know have aligned with Roman?"

"Three. Alpha Myles, Alpha Andrew and Alpha Luca. They are

with Roman." Bryson says and Claire looks at me.

"Those are the ones I knew would side with him." I tell her in the mind link.

"Any others that I should be worried about?" She asks me.

"I'm surprised Alpha Gale wants to stay out of it." I tell her.

"What about Alpha Gale?" She asks Bryson.

"I was surprised about him too. I think he's a wild card. But he's also close to Elio. So maybe he's just straddling the fence, not willing to make an enemy on either side." Bryson says.

We make the list and begin calculating how many we can expect to attack our pack.

A couple of days after taking soil samples, Alpha Keegan calls Claire.

"It's not poison."

"What is it?" She asks him.

"I don't know yet, but your soil seems to have a high mineral content." He told her.

"Is that bad?" She asked.

"Not necessarily. I'd like to send your soil samples out to a lab I use to test it. Would you be agreeable to that?" He asked her.

"Yes, I would."

"Thank you. In the meantime, you can resume consumption of your jam and I'll let the other packs know that you are willing to share it to show your goodwill."

"Thank you, Keegan."

"Don't thank me yet. I have a feeling it's going to get harder before it gets easier." He told her and he was right.

Less than a week after giving Keegan the ultimatum, Roman began attacking his pack. I should have guessed that as well. It's not like Roman to be honorable.

Thankfully, Dane and Josiah were ready. They had increased their patrols, and added watchers, something Dane thought of that we'd never done before. It turned out to be what gave us the advantage and kept Alpha Keegan's pack from being annihilated in the first attack.

In true Roman form, he attacked in the middle of the night and through what he expected to be stealth. However, Dane had decided that Keegan's omegas could be used as watchers. Now that their food production was less because they are only selling to those packs that have agreed to an alliance or at least agreed not to go against us, Alpha Keegan had omegas with idle hands. So, Dane put them to work as lookouts.

They quickly erected mini tree houses in areas around the pack lands that were identified as weak points and easy for attackers to breach the pack lands.

Dane, Keegan and Josiah had created a rotating schedule, similar to a patrol schedule for the watchers. The omegas were thrilled to be part of the protection detail for the pack.

It had worked so well, that we just implemented it in our pack the evening before Keegan's pack was attacked.

This time, rather than emptying our pack of warriors, we only used the warriors that were already stationed in Keegan's pack. It was the lookout that helped give us the advantage in the fight, alerting Keegan and therefore Dane and Josiah of the attackers before they expected us.

I was in bed with Claire, never having returned to my own room after the rape, when she jolts awake. I look at her.

"Claire?"

"Roman is attacking Keegan's pack."

I hop out of bed. "Alert the warriors in our pack. They'll be attacking here soon." I tell her.

We have just gotten our warriors in place when one of our watchers alerts Claire that there are intruders coming into the pack.

That was two months ago, and we've been fighting almost non-stop since then. Roman and his allied packs have surrounded our packs, making it impossible for us to get out, or others to get in. Dane, in all his brilliance, had found an underground tunnel that he is using to have Keegan's omegas sneak food out of the pack to our allied packs.

While Roman and his allied packs don't have access to Keegan's food supply, he's cut us off from Alpha Elio's meat supply. Thankfully, Alpha Elio found out about our tunnel and is sneaking in food as he can, but it isn't enough to support two packs that are in constant battles.

Keegan's friends have joined the fight and are using their periodic breaks in Roman's battle lines to get us food and medical supplies, but it doesn't take long for Roman's side to regain their lines and push Keegan's friends back.

Every morning, I watch Claire drag herself out of bed, still exhausted from the night before. And every night, it's later and later before she comes back. She may not realize it, but I do. We're losing. It may be a slow process, but if something doesn't change, we are going to lose.

Tonight, when she comes in, I've drawn a bath for her. I get her in the bath, helping to relieve her aching muscles.

"You should be asleep, Tereshan." She says, her eyes closed, her head resting on the edge of the tub.

"You can't go on like this, Claire. We have to change our strategy."

"I'm open to suggestions." She says and her voice is so exhausted, it makes my heart hurt.

I recognized several months ago that I was falling in love with Claire. Over the past couple of months, watching as she has tirelessly fights for our pack, I've realized what an absolute fool I was to reject her. Nothing about my mate is weak. She has always been stronger than I am in all the ways that matter.

I begin massaging her shoulder muscles. She moans in pleasure at the feel of it. I continue my ministrations as I tell her my idea.

"Let the omegas fight. At least the ones who feel

comfortable wielding weapons, like me. I may not be able to defeat a warrior in hand-to-hand combat, but I can throw a knife better than most. Jacoby is great with a hammer. He and I talked today about it." I tell her.

While my mate is out protecting the pack and risking her life, I'm stuck here, in the packhouse, taking care of the warriors as they rotate through their shifts. It's important work, I know it is, but it's more important to ensure we all have a pack when this is done.

She opens her eyes and looks at me. "Do you really think that's a good idea? I mean, I know you can protect yourself, even in that body, but the other omegas? They are only omegas, Tereshan, not Alphas in an omega body."

"Remember what I told Alpha Keegan, Claire? If you let them, your omegas will surprise you. I think your omegas will surprise you."

"I'll think about it." She says.

I help her get out of the tub and while she's dressed for bed, I grab her dinner that I set aside along with the surprise that I made for her.

She comes out and smells the food. "I'm so hungry, but I'm exhausted too."

"Eat. You need to keep up your strength, Claire. If you fall, we all fall. That's what it means to be the Alpha."

She sits down, eating her food, her eyes closed. I have to nudge her a couple of times to wake her up so she can finish chewing and swallowing her food. When she's done, I grab

the surprise.

"What's this?" She asks me as I uncover a tray.

"Our birthday is in a couple of days. I've been working with Feena to try and make something for both of us." I tell her. "It's a lemon cake, my favorite, with a blueberry compote in between the layers. Oh, and to get you started," I turn, grabbing a single blueberry, "here." I hand it to her and as tired as she is, she smiles at me.

"I have to admit, I'm starting to like the smell and taste of blueberries again." She says, and it makes my heart flutter. Maybe, just maybe there is hope for us.

She pops the blueberry into her mouth, chewing it and looking at the cake. "Have you tried it?"

"No, I wanted you to taste it first."

She grabs a spoon for me and takes the fork. "Together?" She asks.

I lift my spoon. "Together."