

Claire

He accepted me. I'm still so shocked, I don't know what to do. Did he mean it? Is this some sort of cruel joke?

I'm on his back and I can feel the fury radiating off of him.

"I'm sorry I scared you back there. That wasn't my intention. I've forgotten what it was like to have an Alpha aura and, well, Roman set me off." He says as he strides quickly back to the packhouse. What must have taken me hours will most likely only take him 30 minutes.

"That's understandable." I say to him, not really sure what to say, or how to act.

He takes my hand, pulling it to his mouth and kissing my palm. "We just need some privacy so we can talk. And I need to get the scent of these she-wolves off of me. It's blocking your scent and I hate it." He says, walking into the back of the packhouse.

"FEENA!" He barks, making me jump. He stops, kissing my palm again.

"Feena." He says, much more softly. "Meet me in my office in forty-five minutes and please bring enough food for five."

"Yes Alpha." She says, but her eyes never leave me. I can see her fear in them.

"Alpha, please, let me take Claire. If she's done something or if she's injured..."

Tereshan stops, looking at her. "She's my mate, Feena. She's fine, although, I would like for you to bring a medical kit with you as well." He says before moving toward the stairs.

I turn seeing her and Vivienne. Both of their eyes are wide and full of fear. Fear for me.

"I can smell your fear, Claire. But you don't need to fear me. Things will be different this time. I swear." He says to me.

When we get to his room, he walks in and stops, growling softly. "It doesn't smell like you anymore."

He gently lowers himself, letting me slide off his back. When he stands, he takes my hand again, pulling me to the bathroom.

When he begins to strip, I turn away.

"Really Claire? You were in this body for a year, are you seriously not going to look at me?" He says and I can tell he's teasing, but all of this is too much.

"Hey. I know we have a lot to discuss, a lot to talk about, and I have a lot to make up for, but I really want to get these scents off of my body. Will you stay while I shower?" He asks. "Please?"

My head whips around and I see the sincerity in his eyes. I wait to make sure it doesn't become something sinister or cruel before nodding my head in agreement.

"Thank you." He says, turning the water on in the shower.

"I'll be quick." He says, stepping in.

He begins washing quickly. "Why the river, Claire?" He asks.

"I didn't know where else to go." I tell him truthfully.

His eyes are closed and he's not looking at me. "So, you weren't planning to kill yourself to get away from me?" He asks and when he turns to look at me, I see the pain in his eyes.

"I was running from you, yes. But I wasn't trying to kill myself."

He nods, putting his head under the water.

"You're banned from the river. At least until I've had a chance to teach you to swim." He says, looking at me again.

When I don't agree, he sighs. "I don't want to command you, Claire. But I will, if I have to. I won't lose you again. So please, tell me you'll stay away from the river."

"Okay." I say. I wasn't trying to kill myself and I really wasn't looking forward to feeling the cold water again. If I have to run, there are other directions I can run in, I guess.

"Okay." He sighs and I hear the relief in his voice.

He steps out of the shower, and I rush to get him a towel. He takes it, grabbing my hands in his. "You're not an omega. You're not MY omega. You're my MATE, Claire. I can get my own towels. Although, I miss our towel origami." He says, frowning at the boring towel I handed to him.

That makes me smile and he leans forward, gently lifting my chin. "There's my sweet mate's smile."

He kisses my forehead before standing up. "I'd like to speak here, but I'm worried it will be overwhelming for you and I have Dane, Feena and Bryson joining us soon, so let's go to your office." He says.

Your office.

He steps around me, heading to the closet. "You mean your office, don't you?" I ask him.

He stops looking at me, his eyes narrowing, before shrugging. "Our office then." He says, before walking into the closet and getting dressed.

"Look, I want you to know," he says, coming out of the closet, pulling a shirt over his head, "I didn't sleep with those she-wolves this morning. I actually talked to them and have some information to share with you. BUT I offered them a safe place here, to live, if they needed it. I want you to know, so that if they show up, you understand that it's not about me wanting to sleep with them. You're my mate and I won't have anyone else but you. But they need help. I'll explain it all when we get to the office."

When he's done getting dressed, he takes my hand again and as we walk, I see the glances we're getting. I also see him mind linking others. I have no idea if this is a setup, some sort of trap or something worse. My heart rate spikes, and I realize he hears it when he stops, kneeling down in front of me.

"You're safe. I won't hurt you and I won't let anyone else hurt you. But, if you don't trust me, trust the one that has never forsaken you." He says and I watch as his eyes go dark.

"Hello mate."

Damara pushes forward, throwing me into Magnor's arms. He wraps his arms around me, holding me close.

"I know what you did, Damara, and I love you for it. We will get you strong again, I swear." Magnor whispers in our ear.

"I love you, Magnor." She tells him before her strength wanes, and she falls back into my mind.

Magnor, of course, is still very strong. "And you, my other sweet mate, I want you to know that Tereshan means everything he is saying. I would know if he didn't, and I would tell you. Give him a chance. Give us a chance." He says, stroking my cheek.

I nod, willing to trust Magnor, who has never once turned his back on us.