

Tereshan

Ever since I've gotten out of the hospital, I've been sleeping in my old room. Claire had invited me, saying she would take the couch, but after the first night, I realized that having her close to me was not only helping me heal, but also Magnor. Not only that, but I had started having nightmares. I start to relive that night again, waking in a cold sweat, sometimes screaming.

When that happens, Claire curls herself around me, engulfing me in her arms, her warmth and her scent. It helps to calm me and between that and Damara's purring, I'm able to sleep much better than I would if I were sleeping without her.

So, we begin sleeping in the same bed. Somehow, no matter how much Claire tries to give me space, we always end up tangled in each other's arms in the morning. On the rare mornings I wake up before her, I realize that I'm practically laying on top of her. Rather than crawling off, I take advantage of the time with her, taking in her scent and enjoying the feel of our skin touching.

'It's how it should have always been.' I hear Magnor in my head.

'Yeah. You're right buddy. I didn't listen to you. But you were right.'

'Did hell just freeze over? You admitted that I was right about something?'

Goddess it's good to hear him giving me a hard time again. I was so afraid that I'd lost him forever.

'I'm here, it's just going to take some time to get strong again. It's not like I'm an Alpha that can rebound quickly. But being here with our mate is making it a lot easier.'

Claire's scent of lemon verbena surrounds me in the morning, and I can't wait to get back to our room at night so I can breathe in her scent again.

Today, Claire's meeting with Alpha Keegan and Dane. I'm guessing he's heard about what happened with Roman and he will want to know that his borders are secure.

I go to the kitchens, like I do every morning and begin to help make breakfast. It's blueberry season and the kitchen staff are making blueberry cobblers, muffins, pancakes, pretty much anything that you can make with blueberries, they are making it. These particular blueberries come from the patch of land that Alpha Keegan planted on our pack lands.

I've noticed that, while Claire doesn't actively look disgusted at the scent of blueberries any longer, she still doesn't choose to eat anything with blueberries in it, including our specialty jam that Feena has Alpha Keegan making only for our pack. Everyone in the pack raves about it. We can barely keep enough to have it available for breakfast every day. Feena even had to start yelling at some of the warriors who would grab a spoon and eat it straight from the jar.

As I put the tray of food together for Claire, setting aside the treats for when Alpha Keegan arrives, I swipe a single

blueberry. I set it on her plate. She's been amazing, not just with the pack, but with me. She's so strong in so many ways but loving too. I realize that is what our pack was missing with me as Alpha, loving kindness. I never had time or the inclination to take care of the pack beyond keeping them safe and I had failed miserably at that. Looking back on it now, that's mostly because I didn't do the other things I needed to do to take care of my pack members. All of the things that Claire is doing now.

It sounds condescending, but I'm proud of her. She's worked so hard to become physically stronger so she can be a true Alpha, but she has spread happiness through the pack, making the entire pack more cohesive and therefore, stronger.

I grab a tray, putting her breakfast, Dane's breakfast and the treat plate for later together before telling Feena I'm heading up. I've just begun to set up the table as Dane walks in.

"Thanks Tereshan." Claire says as she sits down at the table. "Did you want to join us before Alpha Keegan arrives?" She asks.

I look at her, surprised, but more and more, I've noticed that she's been wanting my input on things. Almost as if she's started to trust me. I hope it's true, because my feelings for Claire have changed dramatically over the time I've been an omega. If things were different, if what happened with Roman hadn't happened, maybe I would try to make things work between us. But now, now I don't know that she'll ever look at me the same way. I'm certainly not the strong man I used to be. I don't know what I could even offer her if she were to accept me as her mate. She's become so strong, she

doesn't need anything from me.

"I didn't bring a tray of food for me." I tell her.

"Did you already eat?" Dane asks, coming to sit down.

"Not yet."

"Go grab a plate and join us then." He says. I look at Claire, but she's staring at her plate, a frown on her face.

She looks up at me, the frown remaining before looking back down. I watch as she takes the blueberry, looking at it as if it's going to bite her before popping it into her mouth.

I hear the skin on the blueberry pop as her teeth sink into it, and I have the pleasure of watching as her eyes roll back into her head as she chews the blueberry slowly before swallowing it.

"I feel like I'm missing something important." Dane says, looking between us.

I shake my head. "Just trying to remind Claire that she really does like blueberries."

Her eyes lock onto mine.

"I had forgotten how much I really love them."

I smile as I leave to go get my breakfast. When I return, I sit with them, and we go over the possible concerns that Alpha Keegan will have and our plans to ensure minimal risk to his pack and pack lands.

When Claire hears that he's arrived, I grab our plates and

take them downstairs, getting some coffee for the meeting.

When I come back in, they are already sitting around the table.

Alpha Keegan smiles at me. "Good morning, young lady. What do you have for me this morning?" He asks me.

Knowing his penchant for sweets, I grab the tray we made earlier and present it to him. Feena also made sure to put some of the specialty jam that his pack makes for us on the tray.

"All made with Madagascar sugar, just for you, Alpha." I tell him, smiling. I've really started to like this old wolf. I hadn't paid attention before, but Claire has asked him about himself and his pack when he's been here. He lost his mate and his child in childbirth nearly a decade ago. Since then, he's been alone. At first it was hard for him, the loss of a mate always is, but he's gotten stronger, and he hopes to someday find his second chance mate. Now, he dedicates himself to his pack. From everything I've seen, he's a really good Alpha. His pack adores him.

I pour him coffee and when he's done eating, he wipes his mouth and gives me a pointed look before looking at Claire. "I'm not sure we should have this conversation in front of Claire." He says, meaning me.

"It's okay, Alpha. Claire is very good at keeping her mouth shut. Nothing you say will leave this room, if that's what you're worried about." Claire tells him.

He looks at me again.

"It's not just that. I have something serious to tell you and I wouldn't want to scare your omegas."

I look at Claire, but she barely glances at me. "Claire is stronger than you know, Alpha. She will be fine to hear whatever you have to say."

He looks at me once more before starting. "Well, obviously the news of your Beta being banished from your pack is well known now. I believe he thought someone else would take him on as their Beta, but all of those positions are filled, and in truth, no one really believes his story that you've gone crazy." He says, looking at Claire.

She snorts. "I probably have, by his standards. However, his standards are not nearly high enough for me." She says.

Alpha Keegan looks down at the table before looking back up. "Are you aware that Alpha Franco has taken Roman into his pack?" He asks.

Claire and Dane look at each other. We all expected this.

"No, but it's not surprising. We've found many people that Alpha Franco has tried to use to infiltrate our pack." Dane tells him.

He nods. "I wanted to warn you. I'm hearing rumors that Alpha Franco is planning to attack your pack."