

War of Threes - Chapter 1 - Arya by owlonyrist |

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Another blow lands on my cheek, forcing my head to the side. I refuse to scream out my pain. I just spit the blood from my mouth, a tooth falling to the floor with it. I turn back to Mathias, defiantly glaring at him. How quickly his “love” for me has changed to pure hate.

Mathias has waited to find his mate for years. He’s 30. It’s unheard of for any wolf, let alone an alpha, to not be mated by that age. Imagine how overjoyed we all were when he found his mate at the Eclipse Pack. Imagine our horror when her brother turned out to be gay.

Mathias is a stubborn prick. He feels that he knows what is best in almost every situation, and he fights for his way. Though this is a pain in the ass when interacting with other packs, it helped with getting what our pack needed out of every deal. Mathias is highly flawed, but he is a good alpha. He cares for all of his pack, making sure that we prosper. But he has an enormous chip on his shoulder for homosexuals.

Apparently, his father left his mother for a male. His mother was a choice mate, only taken to create an heir. Once Mathias became the alpha, his dad rejected his mother and left the pack. When Mathias found him six months later, he was shacked up with some male, living as a rogue. Mathias killed them both.

So, when he found out that his mate’s brother was gay, he went ballistic. He insisted that she break off all ties with him, screaming, breaking things, and throwing an alpha-sized tantrum. Annoying when they’re two, deadly when they’re adults.

His mate, Alessandra, had rejected him on the spot. Her alpha, Diego, had kicked him out of their territory and refused to work with him again. Which is why we were in this situation now.

We need to run some underground pipes through to some outposts at the edge of our territory. Unfortunately, some pipes need to go through Eclipse land. Diego refuses to interact with our pack after what happened with Mathias and Alessandra, who also happens to be the beta of the pack. It’s a complete clusterfuck. We had hoped to get some help from the Artemis pack. That is, before my mates showed up.

I think that seeing that I had two male mates who were also mated to each other was too much for Mathias to handle. He has been asking me to be his chosen mate for months. I am one of the few unmated females in the pack, and he has made it clear to me, nearly from my induction into the pack at 16, that he wants to bed me. It isn’t that Mathias isn’t attractive. And we get along fairly well. But...I wanted my mate. I just turned 21 a few months ago. I hadn’t given up looking for him.

And Mathias is a bit...volatile. His temper often gets the better of him. Though he is quick to apologize and acknowledge that he is wrong, it is after the damage has already been

done. Anything from hurt feelings to destroyed rooms to broken bones have occurred as a result of Mathias's anger. It is a really bad idea to get on Mathias's bad side.

Which is where I am right now. I had told him that I wanted to go back to my mates. I couldn't do it. The pain was just too much. And I hadn't rejected them because I wanted to, but in fear of Mathias's reaction. I wanted them back.

Another blow catches me in the stomach and the breath rushes out of my lungs. I can't breathe. I can't speak. Air can't make it into my throat. I double over, attempting to force my lungs to work while blows continue to rain down on my back. All the warriors that came with us to the Artemis Pack, as well as those that were waiting outside the territory are here. Fifteen warriors in all, ordered by Mathias to beat me nearly to death.

I put up a good fight. I'm the Delta of this pack for a reason. I come from a long line of warriors in South Africa. I know fighting styles that they have never heard of in the Blue Crescent Pack. It is lucky for many of the wolves that I fight that they are able to heal quickly. Many would have had fatal injuries and some would not have been able to have children without their healing abilities. I'd managed to incapacitate six of the warriors before I was overcome.

I tried to maim and injure more than kill, and it handicapped me. The warriors were not extending me the same courtesy.

Four warriors attacked at once. I quickly dispatched two of the three that attacked me from the front. As I was engaged with the third, I lost track of the fourth warrior. He attacked me from behind with an elbow strike to the back of my neck. Were I human, I'd be dead or paralyzed for life. Luckily, I'm not. Doesn't save me from passing out, though.

When I wake, my hands are tied behind my back and to my ankles.

"Finally, she's awake." Mathias's disembodied voice comes from my other side.

Bleary-eyed, my thoughts still scrambled, I laboriously roll my head to the side to face him.

He kneels in front of me, gently pushing my hair out of my face. His eyes search mine, concern clear on his features. "How do you feel, *Geluksalig*?"

That fucking nickname. I had agreed to go out on a few dates with Mathias in the hopes that he would realize that we weren't compatible. What should have been a sweet gesture, learning some terms of endearment in my native tongue, became the bane of my existence. Not only could the asshole not pronounce it correctly, but he insisted on calling me his "bliss" in front of everyone in the pack.

He has ignored my attempts to get him to stop. I am the head warrior of the pack. I can't have the alpha calling me a nickname like that in front of the entire pack, especially as a woman. As I said, there are only a few unmated females in my pack. That is because we are treated as property. If a woman doesn't find her mate within a year of turning 21, she is forced to become

a chosen mate or made a slave. Granted, it's all prettyed up so that the other packs don't know what is happening, but this has been the law in Blue Crescent Pack since its inception. I had to fight and claw my way to keep my position and have been challenged more times than I can count.

But there is only so much I can do against an alpha.

I swallow thickly before answering. "How do you think, Alpha? You ordered my warriors to beat me senseless. At least I trained them well." A dry laugh escapes my mouth, though there is no humor in it.

Instantly, Mathias's body goes rigid. His eyes darken, but he does not remove his hand from my hair. He takes a deep breath, obviously trying to calm himself. "I am sorry, *Geluksalig*. I know that you are still in pain. It was necessary for us to...restrain you...from leaving."

I try to pull away from his touch, but my body is not responding as it should. The last strike had done some damage, though not permanent. I can't move my body below the neck, but sensation is there. Could also have something to do with the restraints I am in.

But my face automatically scowls. My eyes flinch. And none of it escapes Mathias's gaze.

He grips my hair and bends towards me. His breath fans my face as he speaks. "Do not pull away from me, Arya. You are mine!" His eyes begin to bleed black as his wolf moves toward the surface.

"I'm not!" My whisper is fierce, my gaze intent on conveying my hate for him. "I belong to Devin and Xander."

"You fucking whore!" Mathias screams in my face. He slams my head into the floor. Black spots dance in front of my eyes and I can't track his movements.

When I can focus again, he is pacing in front of me. He has partially shifted, his claws and fangs extended, fur sprouting on his skin, his snout growing on his face. "You would rather have those two assfuckers instead of me? Two fucking faggots instead of an alpha?" He is pacing the room rapidly, and I see the other warriors flinch away from him. Mathias punches a wall as he turns to me, screaming, "Answer me!"

"Yes!" I hiss at him through clenched teeth.

Mathias roars his anger. And then the blows begin to rain down on me, again.