

## Chapter 63: Unexpected Ally

Yara

I come awake slowly. My body is stiff and my arms are aching, like I've somehow managed to get tangled up in them while I was sleeping and they're stuck behind my back. I try to move them out from under me, but I can't. My head feels fuzzy and it hurts. What's going on?

'Wake up, Yara,' Annika says urgently

'I'm trying, Annika. What's going...'

"There she is. Finally," an angry voice says nearby. My eyes flash open. I recognize that voice. I don't, however, recognize my surroundings.

'Annika, where are we?'

'I don't know. He knocked me out too.'

A hand grabs my hair, pulling me into a sitting position roughly. My arms are tied behind my back and my legs are wrapped up tightly. My body is stiff and sore. I must have been like this for a while.

"You just had to go and fuck him, didn't you?" Simon snarls in my face.

He looks crazed. His hair is shooting out in all directions like he's been tugging on it so long that it doesn't bother trying to go back into place again. His eyes are furious and he's glaring at me. Thank the goddess Warren already marked me. 1

the goddess Warren already marked me. 1

I start to reach out in the mind link, wanting to try and reach my mate when Simon backhands me hard. Pain shoots out across my cheek, into my ear and across my nose. I fall back to the floor unable to stop my face from slapping against the rocky floor of this cave.

"Don't you dare try to fucking call your mate." He yanks me back up by the hair, and I cry out from the unexpected pain.

"If you do, I'll kill him," he says, showing me the gun.

"Bradley..." I say, the memory flooding back into my mind. "You killed Bradley!"

"He was in my way. If you had just come with me the last time, Yara, no one would have died, but now...their deaths are on you."

"Warren will kill you when he finds you," I growl.

"Warren..." he snarls, grabbing me by the throat, before taking a deep breath. "Warren needs to die so that I can put my mark on you."

"Then why don't you let me call him, tell him where I am," I say, my tone condescendingly sweet. I have no doubt that Warren will kill Simon. I don't care how many silver bullets Simon shoots into him.

"Oh, I will. When the time is right."

I begin laughing. It makes everything in my body hurt, but I don't stop. "There will never be a right time to kill my mate. You are a coward and a bully. You always have been. I know it and your father knew it. That's why he helped me get away from you."

He snarls, his claws coming out as he slams them into the floor on either side of me. "And he died for betraying me."

"I knew it was you who killed him. Your father was a good man. You must take after your mother," I say, earning me another backhand, this time on the other side of my face. Now each side is throbbing in time with the other, like the ticking of a clock. Throb-throb. Throb-throb.

"Don't ever speak about my mother again," he snarls.

I spit blood onto the floor beside me. "You better hope these bruises are gone before Warren finds me. If he sees that you've hurt me, he'll make your death much slower."

"He will never find us here."

I laugh again. This time, both sides of my face and the rest of my body hurt.

"My mate, the most incredible Alpha and man I've ever met in my life, will find me. He will not stop until he has me back in his arms. Of that, I have no doubt. Your days are numbered, Simon. All you had to do was walk away, but it's too late now."

"You think much too highly of a man who let me get close enough to capturing you not once, but twice," he says, smirking.

"Being attacked by three packs at once would be difficult for anyone. I'm still betting that MY mate finished off those Alphas and is out hunting for me. Tell me, did you leave your pack to die? Did you send

them home, being chased by my mate? He would have killed them, all of them," I say, watching as the smug look falls away, replaced by fury.

"How did you make him so fucking strong?"

"I didn't have to. I told you, MY mate is the most amazing man I've ever met. He is strong in ways that you'll never understand. He's compassionate, and loving, and then he was inside me..."

This time when he backhands me, the darkness surrounds me.

"Yara, wake up!" Annika says. This time, I know where I am. My swollen, bruised face is an immediate reminder.

I feel hands on me, touching me, and I jolt awake, kicking and ready to scream. A hand clamps down on my mouth and when I open my eyes, it's not Simon.

The woman looks at me, putting a finger to her lips, before quickly looking behind me. I turn my head, seeing Simon asleep inside the cave where he's brought me.

"Hurry," she mouths to me. The woman is small, but wiry in the way that let's me know she's stronger than most people probably give her credit for. When she moves into the light, I recognize her. Farrah. 4

She slices through the bindings around my arms, looking over my shoulder at Simon again. I try to move my arms while she moves to my legs. They're stiff and one is completely asleep. I can't move it. The other feels like I have an entire surgical ward of needles stabbing into me at one time.

The moment she undoes the bindings on my legs, I feel blood begin rushing through them, waking them up in the same painful way that my arm is waking up.

"Can you stand?" She mouths to me.

I try to move my legs, but I can barely bend my knees.

I shake my head no.

She nods, as if expecting this. She puts her finger to her lips again. When I nod, she slides her arm under my knees wrapping the other one around my back. The movement sends pain like shockwaves through my body as my blood continues to try and wake up my limbs. I bite down on the cry of pain, as Farrah lifts me, quickly carrying me out of the cave. It's up on a mountain and I already know she's going to struggle to carry me down. 1

"I'm going to throw you over my shoulder. Just stay quiet," she says softly, her voice barely audible on the night breeze.

I'm thankful she gave me the warning because the pain of the movement sends another round of shock waves through my body. My second arm is now waking up and it feels like I'm being stabbed all over my body.

She begins carefully climbing down the mountain. I try to reach out to Warren or anyone from our pack, but we must be too far away.

When I can, I wrap an arm around Farrah's waist to help steady myself on her shoulder. It must work because she begins moving

faster after that.

When we get to the bottom of the mountain, she carefully sets me on my feet.

"Can you shift?" she asks.

"Yes. Do you know where we are?"

"We're between Alpha Harold and Alpha Quinton's packs. You need to get to Alpha Harold. He will help you."

"I don't know the way."

"I'll take you. Hurry, we need to be long gone before Simon wakes up."

"Wait. How did you know I was here?"

"I saw him dragging you over here and I followed you."

"Why did you help me? You ran to get away from our pack," I say. I'm pretty sure I can trust her, but she did leave, and she could still be angry at me for saving her life when she wanted to die.

"A life for a life. You saved mine and I don't like having an unpaid debt."

"Thank you," I say. She nods, then we both shift and begin running to Harold's pack. I need to get a hold of my mate. I know he will be sick with worry, tearing this world apart trying to find me.

you'd come for her."

She looks at my neck. "He won't be happy when he finds out she's marked already. He wanted to make her his Luna."

"Too bad. She's mine," I snarl, turning to go.

"Wait. Please. Take me with you. Please, don't leave me here with him."

I turn back to her. "Can you shift?"

She nods, yes.

"Come on then, you're with me. If this is a trap, or you try to betray me, my mate, or my pack, I won't hesitate to kill you."

She nods again and I leap over the banister, shifting as I go. I look up seeing her looking at me with wide eyes. Arric barks, telling her to hurry. She rushes down the stairs as I howl the retreat. We need to get back to the river. That's where I lost her scent. ⓘ



Cooper  Author

*"The hunt for Yara continues."*

 79