

The Alpha's Bride

#Chapter 849: Rescuing an ally

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Talia paused at the sight of one wounded wolf who was surrounded by five rogues.

Two unmoving rogues on the ground had their necks torn.

Talia didn't recognize the wolf they came to rescue, but Damon said it smelled of the Spring Leaf pack as he shifted into his wolf and joined the fray.

Talia's heart was beating wildly. The injured wolf was visibly wobbly, and the ones circling it only waited for a chance to deliver the fatal attack. This didn't look good.

With Damon's appearance, four rogues turned to him, but one was still eyeing the chance to attack the wounded wolf, who seemed to be at the end of its rope.

Talia wanted to get the baddies and save the ally, but she could not do so in one swift swoop. The injured wolf was too close, and Talia could harm it from that distance. Her anxiety rose when she saw that Damon, tired from running and fighting, was now facing four enemies.

Talia steeled her resolve and got closer to the fight, and her hands shimmered in silvery light, ready to strike.

Talia circled the group until she got close to one of the rogues focused on Damon, and then she rushed toward the rogue with her palms forward.

Rogue's yelp was cut short when light from Talia's hands pierced his back and came out on the other end.

Everyone froze.

After a moment of stillness, rogues attacked like someone flipped a crazy switch.

Damon told her that most of the rogues don't have good fighting skills, but their recklessness and ferociousness are making them dangerous enemies, and this was the perfect example of what he meant by it.

Talia's palms flared, and Damon's fangs tore into flesh. They were attacking while avoiding deadly attacks, and a minute later, it was over.

When Damon confirmed that the rogues were down, he shifted into his human form and dashed toward Talia.

"Kitten, are you alright?" Damon asked while inspecting her visually.

Talia looked at her bloodied hands. "It's not mine." When two rogues attacked her at the same time, Talia didn't have time to avoid them, and they were too close, so their blood splattered on her. The scent of blood and burned flesh was nauseating.

Talia raised her gaze to see Damon. He didn't look much better, and some of those were definitely injuries. "What about you?"

Damon shook his head. "I'm fine. Just a few scratches."

Talia's eyes moved to find the wounded wolf, and her throat constricted when she saw it lying on the grass with hind legs twitching.

Talia swiftly kneeled next to it and her hands lit up to deliver healing rays.

With a whimper, the wolf started changing shape, transforming into a human.

Talia stared at the familiar face. It was mangled and bloodied, but she recognized the person. Arya.

Arya coughed weakly. "My unit... they attacked us... I came to lead rogues away... you need to help them..."

"Don't move," Damon said sternly to Arya while pressing on her shoulder. Why did she try to get up? Her body was wracked with deep bites and scratches everywhere, and she had an open fracture on her left forearm. "You can't help anyone." And if her unit was fighting nearby, that was over.

Talia's mind stuttered. There was so much blood.

'Lis? Why is this not working?', Talia asked.

'It's working, but her injuries are grave.'

Images of Lulu dying flashed in Talia's mind, and her eyes filled with tears.

'Help me, Lis. We can't let another one die.'

Liseli was not moved. 'She looked down on us.'

'But she is a good person. Didn't you hear that she was worried about her people?'

Liseli grumbled in displeasure, but then Talia felt her output increasing.

'This is as much as we can go without endangering your pup,' Liseli warned Talia.

'I thought my baby is fine if I use my powers.'

'If you use them, yes. But not if you run empty.'

A whimper was heard from behind Talia, but she had no capacity to turn and see what was going on.

'Damon?' Talia called through their mind link.

'It's Keith,' Damon responded. 'He delivered the message and then rushed back to find us.'

'Is he hurt?' Talia asked. Why else would he whimper?

'Not that I can see...'

Talia felt a presence on her left and she knew it was Keith. He was on his knees, right next to Talia, reaching to push Arya's hair off her face.

Arya opened her eyes and stared at Keith in a moment of clarity, and then her eyes lost focus.

"No... no..." Keith said under his breath. "Save her, Talia. You must save her." He pleaded.

Talia glanced at Keith to see that his eyes were full of tears, and his desperation hit her hard.

"I'm not sure how much I can do, Keith," Talia said honestly. "She needs medical help. Let me try closing this wound on her abdomen, and then you can take her to the hospital."

Keith didn't move, and Damon's temper flared.

'SLAP!'

A fierce sting lit up Keith's left cheek, and pain radiated to startle him out of his daze.

"Your Luna gave you an order," Damon growled. "You want this female saved? You need to work for it. Take her to the pack hospital, and don't you dare blame Talia if you lose your mate."

Keith stared at Damon. A mate?

Was that what his wolf was telling him?

Keith was running to meet with Damon and Talia, and the sweet scent of cantaloupe reached him before he saw Damon and Talia on the ground, next to a wounded female.

Keith's wolf was howling in his mind, scratching to get out, and Keith didn't understand what was going on, but he could feel the pull to get closer to the female.

A mate. He found his mate!

But why did it look like he would lose her before they even exchanged names? It shouldn't be like this!

"Keith!" Talia exclaimed, making Keith snap to look at her. She knew that when mates meet, the couple in question is dazed to the point of turning stupid, but this was not the time to get lost in emotions.

"Take her to the pack hospital, now. This is as much as I can do. She needs a doctor."

Talia moved to the side, and Keith scooped Arya into his arms carefully while trying not to disturb her wounds, and the lack of her reaction tore his heart into pieces.

"Feel the sparks, Keith," Talia said. "As long as you feel the sparks, there will be hope. Hurry!"

Talia watched after Keith until he was lost among the foliage, and Talia plopped toward Damon, who was quick to catch her.

"You did amazing, kitten," Damon spoke into her hair.

"What if she doesn't make it?"

"You can't blame yourself for that."

"Keith will be devastated."

"Try not to think about it." Or Keith. "You did as much as you could, and that's what counts."

Talia felt comfortable in Damon's embrace. "Do we have time for rest?"

"We can take a minute. There is one more area we need to check, and then we can rest."

"Damon?"

"Hmm?"

"Don't you think that this is strange?"

"What?"

"Rogues. Just as it was in the Blue River pack, if they attacked together, they could cause damage. The perfect timing would be to attack during the party, yet they didn't. It all looked like a diversion."

Damon agreed with this. It looked like a diversion, but a diversion for what?

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Chapter 850: There is hope

Keith stormed into the pack hospital of the Spring Leaf pack with Arya in his arms.

There was a clamor of people there as wounded were coming in from all directions, and nurses were moving among people who were sitting on chairs. They didn't have enough rooms to examine them properly, so the triaging and first aid were done in the waiting room.

There were clashes with rogues in several areas, and even though no fatalities were reported among friendly units, there were a lot of injured.

While coming here, Keith was holding Arya against his body, hoping that she could take his vitality or that his healing ability would be used on her.

She smelled of cantaloupe, sweet and kind of musky, reminding him of a snack his mother used to serve on a hot summer day. Katya would do that now since they lived together. Keith loved cantaloupes so much that he would use them in his protein shake recipes.

Keith looked at his cantaloupe-infused mate, and his heart tightened.

The only thing preventing him from dissolving into rage and anguish were sparks that gently prickled his skin wherever they touched.

Her body was a mess, yet she was beautiful. Why would such a delicate girl be in the forest, fighting rogues? It didn't make sense.

Meeting a mate should be special. They would see each other and be smitten, and... this was wrong. Was his destiny to find his mate only to lose her? Isn't that the same as how he fell for Talia and found out she was taken?

But this was worse... this was HIS mate, yet he was losing her.

It didn't make sense.

Keith stood in the middle of a crowd while looking around in the hope of seeing a doctor.

"Medic!" Keith shouted. "I need a doctor!"

A nurse threw him a side glance, and her eyes widened at the sight of Arya. Who didn't know the youngest female general in the army of the Spring Leaf pack?

"This way!" The nurse waved at Keith. The warrior she was tending to was not in a critical condition.

The nurse flipped Arya's eyelids to point a flashlight there, and then she pressed her fingers on Arya's wrist to check the pulse while asking Keith, "How long is she unconscious?"

Keith shook his head. "I'm not sure. I found her in the forest, and I brought her here. Maybe ten minutes?" It felt like forever.

The nurse glanced at Arya's body, and she frowned at the open fracture on Arya's arm. "We don't have rolling beds she could use. Can you carry her to radiology? We need to see what's going on inside before we administer any treatment."

Keith had no intention of letting go of Arya, and he reluctantly kept her on the exam bed for the CT scan. Luckily, they took Arya immediately, despite a line of patients waiting in the hallway.

By now, a doctor also appeared with another nurse, and Keith growled when the doctor reached to check under the hospital gown that was thrown over Arya.

"You need to wait outside," a nurse told Keith. "There is radiation and..."

"I'm not leaving," Keith said sternly. The sparks of their bond were getting fainter, and now that he was not touching her, they were gone completely. It was killing him from the inside.

"You can't help here. You need to..."

"I'm not leaving my mate!" Keith shouted. No one will separate him from that female. No one!

Both nurses and the doctor looked at Keith briefly, and then the second nurse approached Keith.

"We need to examine your mate's condition."

Keith's frown eased when he heard the nurse address the female as his mate.

Seeing that he relaxed a bit, the nurse asked, "How should we call you?"

"Keith."

"Keith. I am Betty. I assure you that we will do whatever we can to help your mate." Her soothing voice eased the tension in the room, and it was obvious that she had done that many times before. "It will take us at least ten minutes to get initial things done. How about you clean up and put some clothes on? You don't want your mate to see you like that when she wakes up, do you?"

Keith looked at himself, and he realized that he was dirty. Other than the necklace with a broken pendant around his neck, he was completely naked with mud and blood on him. A lot of blood, most of it from the female he was carrying. His mate.

The nurse nodded at the doctor to go ahead, and she led Keith outside. "Let me show you to the staff room. You can clean up there, and we have extra clothes. When you are done, you can meet us here or ask anyone for Betty, and I will bring you to your mate..."

Keith cleaned up at record speed.

When Keith came out of the shower with sweatpants and a t-shirt on, Arya was in surgery. Other than the open fracture that needed to be fixed, she also had internal injuries.

Keith paced in front of the operating room.

No one told him her name, and he didn't ask. He was determined to ask her when she woke up because she had to wake up. He wanted to hear her voice. It was important.

The door opened, and Keith saw Arya being rolled out into the hallway. She was covered with a white sheet from shoulders down, and Arya was so pale that her complexion nearly matched it.

"The surgery went well."

Keith turned toward the voice to see Betty.

"But?" Keith asked. He sensed there was more.

"We did all we could. Her injuries were extensive and..." She released a long breath. "Her vitals are weak, but they are not gone. Your proximity will help. Skin-to-skin as much as possible. It could be the thing that makes the difference."

Keith followed the bed that rolled down the hallway with Arya on it until it disappeared into one room. Betty and one more nurse were there also, helping attach Arya to monitors.

Keith stared at his non-responsive mate, unaware that more people were in the room.

"I'm sorry, we don't have private rooms," Betty said, pulling the curtain to give a resemblance of privacy between hospital beds. She put a chair next to the bed for Keith to sit.

"Call me if you need something." Betty patted his shoulder and left the room.

Keith stood there like a statue, wondering what he should do.

Now that he could see her properly, Keith realized that the female was heavily bandaged, resembling a mummy. Yet all those bandages didn't diminish her sweet scent of cantaloupe.

Betty told him to stay with the female, skin-to-skin contact, but even just holding hands seemed out of place. He just met her... actually, met was the wrong word because finding someone unconscious couldn't be called as meeting.

Keith was aware that leaving was not an option. His wolf was scratching at the back of his mind, urging him to get closer to the female.

Slowly, really slowly, Keith sat on the chair, and he extended his hand to hold hers.

Keith inhaled a shaky breath when he felt the sparks prickling his palm. They were weak, but they were there.

What did Talia say? Something about hope... that as long as he can feel the sparks, there was hope.

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