

## Owned by the Alphas 2: Claimed by the Alphas |

### The Humans

LORELAI

I had never called a council meeting before. But I had no choice.

The humans that were hiding in the initiate wolves' quarters were in danger if they were found before I could tell anyone.

They were not in good shape, bruised and beaten, used and abused thanks to my father and his men, who thought that it was the right way to treat the women and children of the village.

Vaughn excluded, of course. He had helped them make it to the gate, cradling a shivering Ryleigh protectively, calling in his favor that the wolves still owed him.

Luckily that fact had bought us some time, but we were out of it.

I stood at the head of the table, my alphas on either side of me, facing numerous faces of varying levels of annoyance. Derik said that was just their faces, but his parents were definitely not impressed.

Galen seemed flat-faced as usual, but there was a tiny hint of a smirk there that let me know he was happy to be there. I had a feeling his vote was going to sway my way.

Then I recognized Anetta's husband. He looked intrigued, but I wasn't sure what his stance on humans was just yet, so I had no idea how that was going to go.

I just had to hope that they understood where I was coming from, that not all humans were like Elias and my father.

"Another meeting? Surely there is nothing further to discuss? Or is the attack on the humans an issue now?" Derik's father said bitterly, and I shook my head.

"The humans who hurt you, killed some of our own, are not my issue."

"I understand the wolves have been watching them, making sure they are not planning on killing any more of us, and will attack as they see fit. I don't think it'll make much of a difference, but I do understand the need for revenge.

"This meeting is to discuss the ones who did not hurt our own, the ones who are innocent, the women and the children of my village, who did not and do not want the divide between our races."

A table full of sneers and scoffs met me, something I had been expecting, but it still hurt all the same. I wanted them to be reasonable, but it was asking a lot when it came to age-old traditions.

Especially when I technically wasn't one of them...yet.

"Those women and children could be spies, could infiltrate our walls and report back the second we are stupid enough to trust them," one of the older men said.

He had graying sides to his dark brown hair, his face big and stoic, but I didn't care who he was. He was one of the traditionalists, and he was in the way of making my mother safe.

I would do what it took to make sure that was a reality, no matter how far away it seemed.

"They are not. Our women are not like the ones I've seen here. We do not train, we do not get a voice, we are simply slaves. The ones I want to bring here are no threat," I assured them, but with the slip of my tongue came another round of gasps.

"You mean to bring them here?" Derik's mother gasped, and I nodded, standing firm.

"They are being punished, used and left out in the cold by cruel men who should not be in charge of their futures.

"I want them to be strong, I want them to train, I want them to be like the women here. I want them to be like you, Mrs. Achlis.

"I don't want them to rely on men to protect them, or to always be the sacrificed. I want a future for them, and if they stay in the villages where my father has taught men the wrong values, then I know they will not survive."

As I pleaded my case, I felt my alphas strong within me. They believed in what I was fighting for as much as I did, and their support was everything to me.

Without it, I probably wouldn't have even got a meeting, but I needed to make them see that this could be a good thing.

"And you believe humans will be safer here? Are you mad, or simply delusional? The wolves want the blood of humans, not to babysit them!" Derik's father stormed.

I shook my head. "They can have their blood, from those who deserve it. Not the ones who have also suffered because of Fractum.

"These are women who no longer have crops to farm or food to feed their children, who have to earn it through disgusting means put there by disgusting men.

"Their livelihood is being destroyed the same as ours, and without the balance of the realm supporting them, it means the livestock are withering, the crops dying, the men growing angrier by the day at them for it.

"I can't leave them to be punished for this. I won't," I said, huffing, crossing my arms.

I didn't want to get angry, but I was. At the situation, at my father, at so many things, and the council had to agree or that anger was going to turn into something worse, like threats.

I didn't want to go there, but for my mother's safety, I would.

"You won't?" Galen prompted, but not in an insulting way. It was more like a way to coach me, like he wanted me to follow through.

I appreciated it, I just had no idea what else to say to convince them.

"I won't. My mother and the humans are the other half of my child's lineage. I won't let him miss out on that part of him.

"I'm bringing in some humans and I want an assurance from the council that this will be accepted and that the humans that are under my protection here will not be harmed," I said forcefully, pulling the luna card, the baby card, every card I had and laying them out.

“They will be guests of the alphas, safe from the human hunt that has currently kept our wolves sane,” Derik said.

Brax leaned forward. “I will monitor any suspicious behavior or emotions, and they will be chaperoned at all times.”

“And they will be confined to the mansion grounds, out of the way of the wolves, so no one is tempted to get handsy or violent,” Kai said.

I smiled at the way they supported me. It felt good to have them there, squashing every doubt the council might have.

“The wolves will not be happy. They will riot, revolt, or even challenge you all as alphas,” Derik’s mother breathed, like this was the worst thing imaginable, the worst day of her life.

Maybe it was, but I would not let that stop me.

“The wolves will know that I need humans around me to safely birth their next alpha. They will know the humans are here for my support, and they have been carefully selected.

“The wolves will do as the alphas say because they have no hope at winning a challenge against them and would like to use their strength as a united pack against the humans they are currently hunting,” I said.

Galen grinned before sighing and standing up, buttoning his jacket and emptying his ale. “I support the movement. Let the girl have her humans. She is our luna after all, and that child is far more important than any of this drivel.

“I shall tell the wolves as her doctor that she needs the women and their children for human methods of birthing and child-rearing.

“It is a stretch, as I am sure we have much to teach her and the babe also, but I am sure I can convince the brutes of our pack that it is necessary and to quell their urges while near the selected few,” he said, then looked at the members of the council.

They all shared looks of unease between them, like they wanted to disagree but respected or feared Galen too much to do so. I didn’t care which one it was, I was just grateful for his help.

Anetta's husband—who I couldn't remember the name of, only remembered he was as handsome as she had said—stood up.

"We have coexisted with humans since the Great War, and one just saved our entire race by keeping the border magic inside her, so I do believe we owe her a little bit of compromise on our traditions.

"It is her father we are hunting, and she has not begged for his life once. She understands our ways, let us try to understand hers," he said.

"Her father is the one who created all of these issues in the first place!" the big-faced one growled.

"And I have accepted that. I have also accepted everything else that has been shoved at me.

"I climbed your mountain, I faced your vamps, and I have taken on the magic of the wolves. I have done all you've asked of me—and more.

"Now you are going to let me have this. You are going to accept it, and so are the wolves," I said matter-of-factly, my voice and will strong, before a wind blew through the room.

Yet there were no windows open, there were no connections to outside. We were in a sealed room, the council had made sure of that, and yet the breeze was definitely there.

Derik's mom gasped, and his father froze. The rest of the council stood still and the tension heightened.

I looked over my shoulder at the alphas, who were all frowning. I wondered what they were all worried about when the breeze blew colder.

"The witches," Galen breathed out in surprise.

I raised a brow as the breeze blew in with a purple mist, a soft one that only tinged the air slightly. It settled around my body, specifically my stomach, before growing warm. Like a hug.

I smiled and rubbed my stomach.

"The witches never get involved. Not when the humans are, they are not allowed," Derik whispered, but the warmth heightened, the hug tightened, and I grinned.

"The witches know this is the right thing to do too," I said, and looked up to the council.

"So do we need a vote or should we just accept the fate the witches have chosen for us and announce the new reality to the wolves so they can start getting used to it?" I continued, waiting for the eventual nods.

I left the room fifteen minutes later with my yes. My mother was safe, and so were the humans she had brought with her.

I couldn't wait to tell her, especially because they all needed attention, medical and physical.

The women really had been living in dire need of even the simplest of amenities, but the men put a price on everything. Wives were being shared, used as payment, and being punished for refusing.

I wasn't sure when we had let the men have so much power, but I was going to put a stop to it.

I walked down the hall, waiting until the wolves had shifted and strolled past in their wolf forms, which I was told would happen as they relayed the new information to the pack, then letting my energy deplete.

It had taken all my strength to use the magic I had and to keep myself strong in front of the council. More than my body had at the moment, with the baby taking everything.

I collapsed against Derik, who caught me, holding me up as Kai came over. Brax's shadows moved through me, checking me.

I breathed hard as a tightening pain stretched across my stomach, and my nails dug into Derik's shoulders.

"Lori?" Derik asked, and I shook my head.

"I'm okay. I just need Cain," I said, wincing as the pain got worse and my head swam.

“What do you need him for?” Brax demanded, but I ignored him, concentrating on breathing.

I clenched my jaw, holding Derik as he lowered me to the ground, and Kai let his fangs drop. I turned my head, ready for the bite, when I sensed Cain there.

He ran up, a jar of his purple potion in his hands. He handed it to me and I grabbed it, ripping off the lid and swallowing the liquid down.

Cain was pale and panting as he leaned against the wall, slumping down next to me.

I lolled my head to him as Derik held me. Kai frowned, narrowing his eyes on Cain, while Brax inched back.

“That better be the last stunt you wanna pull for a little bit, Luna. I’m tapped out,” Cain breathed, his eyes closing, his chest rising and falling harshly.

I grabbed his hand and squeezed. “It is. Thank you,” I said, and he nodded before huffing and slowly standing, using the wall for balance.

“Good. Well then, I am off to replenish, which does include my mate. I don’t want to be disturbed, so get biting, wolves.

“She’s going to need it if she’s going to make it through the next full moon, and even the winter that is about to land,” he said before saluting us and running away.

I grinned and looked at my wolves, who helped me up.

“Want to explain what that was about and the stunts he is talking about?” Derik asked, but I shook my head.

“Back in our room,” I said, slowly starting to walk down the hall.

“Then let’s go,” Brax said, but I stopped him, my steps faltering a little as the potion fought the weakness inside me.

“No, I have to get my mom, tell her they’re safe,” I said.

Kai scooped me up into his arms, kissing my forehead. “No, Little Human. You have to get some rest. Derik and Brax are going to see to it that your humans are safe, and I will see to it that ours is.”

I grinned and snuggled into him, knowing I could trust them to get my humans to the mansion.

"We'll just make sure you are tucked in before we go," Derik said, and led the way down the halls to our room.

Once we were there, Kai put me in bed, and I smiled.

"So...the stunts. I should probably confess," I started, and they all stopped.

Derik stopped turning the blankets back, Brax stopped opening the windows, and Kai stopped undoing my dress.

"That is a dangerous statement coming from your beautiful lips," Derik teased, and I shrugged.

"Maybe. I just... I may have known that your mother was going to challenge me at dinner. Well, I knew I had to be strong enough to challenge her. Something I just wasn't going to be able to do without help," I said, and the tension grew thick.

"What'd you do, Spitfire?" Brax stepped forward, leaving the door closed.

"I may have sorted it with Cain to overdose on magic. Safely, of course. It meant with him doing his witchy stuff on his end and me using my magic on my end, all hyped up on the good stuff, that I could make all that purple mist come in and make my shield crazy big," I admitted.

Kai laughed. "Purple mist, huh? Kinda like the witchy mist that was just in the conference room?" he guessed.

I shrugged, nodding once before blushing.

Kai laughed louder, pulling my jaw in so he could press his lips against mine. "Every day I love you more."

He grinned against me. I had known he was going to love the idea.

It was the other two I was worried about, Brax with his whole thing against anything Cain and Tabitha, especially witchwise, and Derik because the rules were important to him. His parents too.



I had technically just screwed them both over. For a good reason, but I wasn't sure if he was going to be mad or not.

"And that was safe?" Derik murmured.

I nodded. "Cain wouldn't have done it if it wasn't. I just needed a bit extra, so he kind of did this thing that lent me the magic I needed, I just have to replenish it afterward.

"It's very temporary and can make me weaker after, but that's why he always gives me more potion than normal afterward. I was meant to only do it once, but Tabitha assured me pushing it to two wouldn't hurt the baby."

"You trusted Cain and not us? Why wouldn't you tell us what you were doing?" Brax asked, and the hurt in him pierced me.

I hadn't meant to hurt him.

"I didn't know how far the link with the pack would go, whether you'd be able to keep something like that from them, or even if you were allowed to.

"I didn't want to put you in that position," I said, hating that it came across differently.

"I don't like you working with them in secret. Or at all," Brax bit.

I nodded, going over to him and holding him as his arms eventually wrapped back around me.

"I know. But it was necessary. If I had let the council even consider saying no for longer than a second then they would have stayed there, and I cannot send my mother and the humans away. I just can't, Brax," I said, and he sighed.

"I know, Spitfire, I just wish you had come to us for help first."

"I will next time. I love you," I said, and he found my mouth, kissing me hard before edging me toward the bed. I went with him until my back pressed up against the post of the bed.

"I have to tell my mother," I breathed, turning my head to the side as he kissed down my neck.

Derik cleared his throat, and Brax paused, turning to him.

"Is the pack informed?" Brax asked throatily, and Derik nodded, his eyes roaming over me with that hungry stare I loved so much.

Kai grabbed my hand and pulled me from Brax.

"I believe you two have humans to escort." Kai grinned, his fangs dropping.

My stomach fluttered at the memory of those fangs and the way they felt burying in my flesh. I shivered against him, and he smirked at me. Derik rolled his eyes and made his way to the door.

"I'll go and get your mother and the villagers with Brax."

He sighed, and I felt bad. I felt the responsibility that weighed on him, the responsibility I had put there. It didn't matter that I was claiming the humans as mine, he shared that weight with me and tried to shoulder more than his fair share.

"Derik," I said.

He turned to me, Brax behind him, waiting. "Yeah, beautiful?"

"This will be a good thing for both of our races," I reassured him, and he nodded.

"It will be. Once the humans are safely here and the wolves stop tantruming about the new development."

Derik grimaced, and I did with him, feeling the pain from his headache.

"They are angry?"

He nodded.

"But agreeable?"

"They will be."

"How can I help?"

“Make sure your humans do not leave the mansion, beautiful. That is essential,” he said, then left before I could ask him anything else.

Brax followed and shut the door. Before I could ask Kai why that was so essential aside from the obvious cranky werewolves, Kai had his teeth in my neck.