

The One He Claimed Chapter 10

Chapter 10: Scent

Hunter

Lucas and I head to my office after morning warrior training. We walk in, ready to look over the patrols and everything else that we need to tackle today. I sit down at my desk, and he sits across from me. I noticed something different about him this morning, A spring in his step, but didn't want to ask in front of everyone. Now, however, it's just the two of us.

"Something's different. What's going on with you?" I ask.

He gives me a smug smile. "Why would you say something's different?"

"Besides the fact that you're my Beta and my best friend, I've known you for a long time. What's up?"

"Kinsley invited me to sleep in the bed with her last night."

I look at him a moment, not exactly sure how impactful this is. They've been together over a year. "Was that..."

"After I marked her, I told her she could have the bed and I would sleep on the couch until she invited me to sleep with her. Last night was the first night that she finally invited me. Nothing happened and I'm okay with that, but she let me hold her all night. I haven't felt this calm since I met her."

"Congratulations, Lucas. Seriously, I'm happy for you."

"I think you were right about giving her choices. It seems the more that I'm giving her options, the more open she is to including me in her life. We still have a long way to go but we took a step in the right direction last night."

"Good. I'm glad to hear it. And I hope you continue to make steps in the right direction."

We begin going through the work for the day, making sure our patrols are scheduled properly, making sure we account for our she-wolves who are no longer able to shift because of pregnancies. Unlike ranked members, the warriors and the omegas don't claim their mates publicly. So, generally speaking, once they're mated, they begin having pups right away.

It's getting close to lunchtime when Kinsley knocks on the door. I'm about to tell her to come in, but Lucas is up and heading to the door before I have a chance to. He opens the door, smiling at his mate.

“Hey Kins, come on in.”

She returns the smile, and a soft blush flushes her cheeks. She

looks down a moment before looking back up at Lucas. “I needed to speak with you and Alpha Hunter for a moment,” she says, stepping into my office.

“Hey Kinsley, what do you need?” I ask.

“I need to go into town tomorrow. I usually go once a month, just to make sure that our grocery bill is paid and there aren’t any problems. It’s never been an issue before, however, now it means I won’t be able to leave food for the she-wolves because I’ll be in town. I was wondering if one of you would be willing to go and leave the food and water for the she-wolves. I don’t know if word has gotten out or if perhaps it’s the same person coming back multiple times, but the food is gone every day now. I’d hate to think that somebody’s going hungry just because I had to go into town,” she says.

“Don’t you normally go in the mornings?” I ask her.

“I do, and I know that that won’t be possible for you. That’s why I was wondering if maybe it would be Lucas that would go instead,” she says.

“Actually, I would like to go. I’d like to see how you have it set up, and I’d also like to check to make sure that there are no Alphas around. If we’re just getting the word out to she-wolves on the run, I would hate to think that the Alphas have started staking the place out. I don’t want us to inadvertently leave a trap for these, she-wolves,” I say to her.

“I’m glad you said that, Alpha. I’ve been thinking the same thing, wondering if we shouldn’t change the spot where we’re putting the food. My only concern with that is will they know how to find it if we move?”

“Let me check it out tomorrow and see. I won’t be able to go in the morning, but I’ll go in the afternoon. Hopefully if it’s a new person every day, the time of day won’t matter. I hope, anyway.”

“I can take you this afternoon, show you where the place is, where I leave the food. How I hide it,” Kindley suggests.

“Perfect. Let’s plan to go after lunch. You usually drive right?”

“Yes. That way I can clean up if there’s anything left behind and then I can leave the food and secure it.

“OK, let’s go this afternoon then. We may as well bring another supply of food since we’re going anyway. That way if someone does come in the morning, it won’t be as fresh as when you leave it, but there will be food and water there for them.

“That’s a great idea, Alpha. I’ll have another food basket put together and then I’ll have lunch sent up for both of you?” she asks, looking back and forth between us.

“I think we’re done here,” I say to Lucas, giving him the opportunity to invite Kinsley to have lunch with him.

“I’ll get the patrols posted, Alpha,” he says before turning to his mate: “I’ll take lunch in my office, Kins. If you have time, you’re welcome to join me.”

She looks down and blushes again. “I have time,” she says softly.

“Good. I’ll see you in a few then,” he says, gently kissing her cheek as he passes her.

She turns her head and watches as he walks out the door. Before he steps out, he turns and winks at her making her blush an even deeper shade of pink.

I feel jealousy for their relationship flowing through me again. I want a mate. I want a relationship with someone, someone who I can grow old with, someone who I can love and dote on, someone who loves me in return. I get angry all over again about the process that we have for claiming ranked she-wolves which is impacting my ability to find and take a mate.

“Alpha?” Kinsley asks and my head snaps up to her.

“I’m sorry, did you ask me something?” I ask, not having heard her if she did.

“You were growling Alpha. Is everything okay?”

“It looks as though you and Lucas are finally finding your way together. I’m happy for you, but it frustrates me that our process has caused the problems in your relationship that it has and that it’s impacting my own ability to take a mate. Sometimes I feel it more strongly than others. My apologies. I didn’t mean to startle you.”

“You’re a good Alpha, Alpha Hunter. I have no doubt that you would make a great mate. But speaking from experience, no matter how good your mate is, that initial claiming makes everything so much more difficult.”

“Which is why I’m working hard to try and change it. I want to find my mate, but I don’t want to find her only to lose her.

“I hope that you’re able to make changes to the process Alpha Hunter. Truly, I have no desire to raise a daughter in this environment. To know that she would have to go

through what I went through... And I was lucky enough to be mated to Lucas. He's been more patient with me than I ever expected. Many others aren't as lucky as I am."

I nod, knowing she's right. "Come get me when you're ready to go."

A few hours later, we're in the car driving up into the mountains.

"I intentionally chose a spot that's difficult to get to and requires someone to be smaller than an Alpha. It's going to be hard for you to get into this space," Kinsley tells me.

"I'll manage."

When we park, I grab the supplies and begin following Kinsley up an unmarked trail. I make note of where we are, breathing in the air around me, making sure I can find this place on my own tomorrow.

As we climb, I sniff the air, happy and a little surprised that I don't smell any Alphas or other ranked werewolves in the area.

"You chose a place that's in bear territory?" I ask Kinsley.

"Yes. It's a risk for the she-wolves, but they're out here on their own anyway. The bears are at least a deterrent for the ranked wolves coming after them.

I give my Beta female an appraising look. It was smart of her. She's right. The ranked wolves would b**s the area once they smelled the bears, not wanting to risk an attack. Being a hunting party, they would be in small groups and bears have been known to take on up to ten wolves at a time, even werewolves.

She begins ducking through rocky areas, places that are very small. She helps me through, both of us making sure that I don't scratch myself to the point of bleeding. If my scent is here, the she-wolves won't come. As it is, just having me here is a risk, but it's one I'm willing to take if it means that we might be able to feed a starving female.

After maneuvering through several small openings, I see the spot where Kinsley leaves the food and water. She's found a perfect area. There's a small little pool here with water dripping from a lake or river nearby. The she-wolves could take the opportunity to wash themselves off while they eat and drink before leaving again. In truth, they would probably be safe to spend the night here, but I doubt that any of them would do that.

I lift my nose in the air, smelling the scent of multiple she-wolves who have come to take the food and water that we're offering. There's another scent more potent in the air.

'Fear,' Shaw confirms.

“I’m rethinking you moving this place, Kinsley. You found a nearly perfect place here. My only concern is that they have to get in and out, and there would be ways for the Alphas to lay ambush for them.”

She shows me a note, one that she replaces with one in her -pocket. The note says that the food and water are for anyone. who is hungry or thirsty. It gives an update on the latest that we’ve heard about where the Alphas are hunting, and then it gives directions on how to exit a different way than we entered.

“Are you sure you’re not part fox, Kinsley? I say, yet again impressed with her.

She chuckles at that. “No. I just have an idea of what they’re feeling, what they’re trying to escape from. I’ve used that to guide my notes and my plans for them.”

“Start looking around, see if you can find a place that’s as good. or nearly as good as this one. I would hate to give this place up just because we’re nervous about Alphas being around. Worst case scenario, maybe Lucas and can begin patrolling here, trying to keep the place safe.”

“We’d need to be careful with that too. We wouldn’t want your scent to be too strong or they won’t stay.”

“Agreed. Okay, let’s head back the way we came. I don’t want to know the secret exit.”

Kinsley chuckles again. As we make our way back out to the main area, there’s a moment where the breeze blows in our direction, and I suddenly get the scent of orchids. I stop, lifting my nose in the air and taking a deep breath, wanting desperately to go find the source of the scent.

“Alpha?” Kinsley asks, and I realize that I’ve taken a step in the direction of the scent. I stop, looking around, seeing nothing. I’m pretty sure I know what this scent is though.

‘Shaw is that...?’

‘Yes, that is the scent of our mate.’

I’m not sure how I feel about that. If she’s here, she may be hungry, she may need water and don’t want to scare her off. I’ll be back tomorrow. Maybe I can catch her and at least try and talk to her, let her know that I’m not like the others, that I won’t claim her publicly, that she can trust me.

I take one more look around, lifting my nose in the air, trying to catch the scent one more time.

“It’s nothing, Kinsley. Let’s head back.”

I turn and walk away, getting in the car and looking around as we begin to head back to the pack. I don't see her, but I know she's there. My mate.