

# The One He Claimed Chapter 141

## Chapter 141: Calvin

Amelia

As I walk back to my pack, helping Jasper, one of my warriors who suffered a pretty significant injury, I feel the exhaustion setting in again. I haven't slept in days. My daughter seems to be upset that her father isn't around and has been moving on- stop inside my stomach, pushing on me uncomfortably as if she's searching for him.

I'd been riding the adrenaline high of killing Alaric but now that it's done, I feel as if my body is shutting down. However, I don't have that luxury. I'm an Alpha. My pack needs me and Alaric's pack members who chose to follow me need me. I didn't even realize that he's standing there until I hear his voice.

"Amelia, what the f\*\*\*k? You went to war and didn't tell me?" I look up into the angry and fearful eyes of my mate. He's looking me over, assessing my injuries.

"You were too far away, Calvin, and I didn't need you," I say, feeling much too tired to deal with his tirade.

"And neither of you thought to call me?" he snarls at Hunter and Dutton, making something snap inside me.

"Don't you dare!" I snarl, releasing Jasper and stepping up to my mate. He may be taller than I am, but I step right up into his face. He's basically challenging me in front of my pack, and I won't allow it. He put us in this position. He doesn't get to conveniently change his mind now that his bed is cold, and he realizes he made a mistake. This pack needs their Alpha. They need me. I won't allow him to come in here and make me look weak.

"Don't you dare blame them. As the Alpha of this pack, I did what was needed to kill the man who killed my parents. I requested assistance from those I'm in an alliance with, Alpha Calvin, so that MY pack could defeat their enemy. Do not come onto my pack lands and question me," I growl at him.

I watch the surprise overtake the anger for a moment before he takes in my frustration. I don't need him coming here and making more problems for me, I already have enough problems.

"If you had answered my calls, we could have talked about this," he says, more calmly, although I can still feel him seething through the bond.

"I was rather preoccupied planning my revenge," I say, not backing down.

He grabs my wrist, pulling up the head that I'm still holding to look at it. "And it appears that you and your allies, were victorious," he says, looking from Alaric's head, to Hunter and Dutton as he growls out the last part.

"You would be correct."

"Perhaps we could talk about this after we've showered and preferably after I've fed my mate," Hunter says diplomatically as he steps up.

turn away from Calvin, realizing he hasn't let go of my wrist. I don't try to pull away from him, his touch is going a long way to easing the ache inside me. I send a mind link to the omegas to begin making a large breakfast and letting them know we need showers for multiple warriors.

'In addition, we have some new members that may or may not be joining the pack. Until I know for sure, we need a place to house them,' I say in the mind link, including Betas Matthew and Caroline into the conversation.

'I'll take care of the new members and find showers for everyone. The pack hospital is filling up quickly, but we have showers there that can be used by multiple individuals at once,' Beta Caroline says.

"The pack hospital. We have a wall of showers there where you can shower off quickly. I'll have food coming out by the time you get back," I tell Hunter and Dutton, knowing they'll send their warriors over there to shower as well.

"How full is your hospital?" Hunter asks me.

"Filling up quickly. Some of my warriors have some nasty injuries, but nothing that will keep them overnight. At least not that I know of so far."

"I'm sending mine home, Amelia, but I'll stay to make sure everything is settled before I head back," Dutton says, and I feel Calvin's surprise at the familiarity that Dutton is speaking to me. I've grown accustomed to it in the last several days as we've planned our attack.

"Thank you, Dutton. I'd say you should head back to your mates, but there is that matter of signing our new alliance," I say, smiling at him.

He nods his head in acknowledgement, before turning to give

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orders to his warriors.

“I’ll be sending some of my injured warriors to Dutton’s pack, Amelia, but if you have room, it might be easier for both of you if I split my warriors between your hospitals,” Hunter says.

“Whatever you need, Hunter. And of course, I have our alliance agreement ready to sign as well,” I say, noticing that my warriors are paying attention. They saw me stand up to Calvin and now they’re seeing that I’m signing alliances with two strong Alphas. Alphas that my father was also in alliance with. Hunter was right, this will go a long way to making the pack feel settled. I can already feel it starting. Alaric’s death was huge, but now, the leading part of being an Alpha begins.

“Amelia, if you’re in agreement, I can help get Alaric’s pack members settled while you shower,” Sophie says. I appreciate my sister so much right now. Well, I appreciate everyone right now, except for Calvin. Everyone else seems to realize that the pack needs assistance, while he’s just waiting to talk to me.

“That would be great, Sophie, thank you. I need to get this armor off and wash away Alaric’s muck. Although you do as well,” I say, realizing that she’s also covered in his blood. “I have some clothes you can change into.”

“That would be great. But you fought, I didn’t. You go shower and change, and when you’re back, I’ll go,” she says.

“And when I’m back, you’ll eat something,” Hunter says, kissing her head and nodding to me before heading to the pack hospital to shower. Sophie takes his hand and looks at me.

“Is my room still available?”

“It is,” I tell her.

“Shower there, Hunter. You know which one?” she asks him.

“I do,” he says, smiling down at her and kissing her again. It makes my heart ache seeing how much he loves her, but I push those thoughts aside.

I turn to Beta Matthew. “We’ll need shorts...”

“I’m on it. What do you want me to do with this?” he asks, gesturing to Alaric’s head.

“Put it on a pike and set it at the borders facing Aiden’s pack. I want everyone to know what happens to Alphas that attack THIS pack,” I growl and the warriors around me cheer.

I look over my pack members, making sure that no one who is too severely injured is still out here, before turning to head inside. I need to get this armor off. I can feel it weighing down my already tired body.

I feel Calvin following behind me, but he doesn’t say anything. However, the moment we’re on the stairs and away from the rest of the pack, he scoops me into his arms.

“Calvin!”

“You’re dead on your feet, Amelia. Even if I couldn’t feel it through our bond, I can see it all over your face. How long has it been since you slept?” he asks me quietly.

“How many days since you left?” ask and feel him flinch.

“Too many,” he says. “Which room is yours?”

“I kept my old room,” I say, pointing to it.

He walks me into my bedroom, looking around at my space here. I had come in and removed every bit of the little girl I had once been, leaving the space stark and bare.

I don’t know what Calvin thinks of the space, but he stays quiet, walking into the bathroom and setting me on the counter before turning on the shower.

“How badly are you injured?” he asks, not looking at me.

“I’m not sure,” I say honestly.

“You could have gotten our pup killed,” he says, and I feel the flare of anger mixed with fear through the bond.

“This armor was my mother’s. I found it in her closet, tucked away. It was meant to protect a pregnant woman,” I say to him.

“You aren’t a pregnant woman, you’re my mate,” he growls, turning back to look at me.

“I’m also an Alpha now,” I say, pulling the armor off of my shoulders and breathing a sigh of relief as one weight is removed. Unfortunately, it’s the lightest of the weights that I’m currently carrying on my shoulders.

“We need to talk,” he says, his eyes blazing, still with anger, but now desire is flaring there too as he watches me get undressed.

“Yes, I guess we do. We need to figure out if and what kind of future we have together, Calvin. But right now, I need to take care of my pack,” I say, stepping around him and getting in the shower.

I close my eyes and let the hot water slide over my sore body. My daughter, who has acted like the energizer bunny since her father left, is suddenly quiet in my stomach. I reach my hand up to rub her, to make sure that she’s okay, when I feel strong, warm, familiar hands on my stomach.

I open my eyes and look at Calvin who is standing naked in the shower with me. “What are you doing?”

“You are taking care of the pack. could feel it the moment I arrived. But who is taking care of you, Amelia? Who is looking out for you?” he asks gently.

I feel hot tears prick my eyes. No one. That’s the answer. My mate left me, and I’ve had no one to help support me through the roughest days of my life. This time since my parents’ death has been even harder for me than the days after mating with Calvin. I’d felt alone then, but his pack had been so happy to have me that it had gone a long way to helping me not feel lonely.

Here, my pack may love me, but I’m their Alpha. I’ve realized that there’s a loneliness that comes with that level of responsibility. Beta Matthew and Beta Caroline are great, but at night when I get in bed, it’s just me and my thoughts.

He pulls me into his arms, and I lose the battle of my tears. “Oh Amelia, I’ve screwed up. I don’t know how to fix this, but I want to try. I’m so sorry I left you.”

Tnod, wrapping my arms around him and releasing the hurt and pain that I’ve been holding on to since the day he walked away from me.

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Calvin

I’ve been miserable ever since the day I mentioned taking over Amelia’s parents’ pack. Why had said it out loud? It had just occurred to me that she is the heir and that the pack shouldn’t go to someone else.

If I’d been smarter, I’d have paid more attention to Hunter’s response, but I hadn’t been thinking. I’m not even sure what happened. One moment I was saying that Amelia is the rightful heir to the pack and the next moment she’s renouncing me as her Alpha and taking over her pack.

If I’m being honest, I didn’t think she’d last a day.

But then, she'd refused to take my calls, refused to answer my texts. I knew she was alive because our mate bond was still intact and I'd felt her struggles, even from the long distance. After a week, I couldn't take it any longer.

I intended to walk into the pack, tell her I was sorry, that we'd figure it out, and I'd take her home. I drove all night, anxious to see her, to be with her, to feel my daughter moving inside her stomach. But instead, I'd arrived, just as they were returning from killing Alaric. My mate, my sweet, gentle mate, had been walking back with armor on, holding Alaric's head in one hand and helping one of her injured warriors with the other. She'd looked so much like a f\*\*ng Amazon returning from battle that I'd felt pride and lust flare inside me, followed very closely by terror that I could have lost her and my daughter, and I would have had no f\*\*\*g clue what happened.

The moment she'd looked up at me, all that had wiped away. The hurt, the distrust, the anger was all right there in her eyes. The anger I expected. The distrust and hurt were painful to see. And if that wasn't enough, when I asked about her not contacting me, her mate, to help her, she said she didn't need me.

She didn't need me? Who the f\*\*\*\*k is this woman?

I'm furious with Hunter and Dutton. Either one of them could have given me a courtesy call to let me know they were going to war with my mate. But they hadn't and that, more than anything, gives me pause. They hadn't contacted me because they knew that they would win. They knew that in the battle with the three of them, one a pregnant she-wolf, they would win. She was right, she hadn't needed me, not for the battle at least. But when I carried her to the shower, I realized that she's wrong. She does need me.

She's exhausted, the heavy responsibility of being an Alpha weighing on her. She wasn't raised to carry this burden, but she's taken it on completely, even after renouncing me, even while carrying my pup, and the toll of that weight comes crashing down on her when I pull her into my arms, telling her how sorry I am.

I hold her as closely as our daughter will allow, rubbing her back in the way I know she likes and kissing the top of her head while she cries in the shower. Her stomach seems to have gotten larger in the short time that I've been gone. How could I have missed so much in such a short time?

'Maybe it's not the short-term that you've missed. Maybe you've missed how strong our mate was from the very beginning,' Novak, my wolf says, mournfully watching our mate cry. He begins purring at Amelia, soothing her and our daughter.

When she steps back, I feel her pulling herself together.

"You need sleep, Amelia," I say, as she steps back under the water.

"I'll sleep when the pack is settled. I still have a lot to do."

“Yes, feeding three armies and signing alliance agreements is important. But so is your health and the health of our pup,” I insist.

She opens her eyes and looks at me. “If you aren’t going to support me, then why are you here?”

“I am supporting you, Amelia. I’m trying to keep you strong and healthy.”

“I’m not your Luna any longer, Calvin. I’m an Alpha. I don’t have the luxury of taking a nap while others manage the pack. You’re an Alpha, you should understand that,” she says, her mouth pressing together in the tight lines.

I know that look. It’s Amelia at her most stubborn. In the past, I’ve loved that look, but it’s never been directed at me. Now, I find that I don’t like being on the receiving end of her stubbornness.

“How long?” I ask, gritting my teeth. She looks like she’s about to fall over, unconscious. I realize that she can’t keep her eyes closed because when she does, she begins swaying.

“Until it’s done. Until the pack is settled,” she says.

I swallow my frustration and my pride. This pack needs their Alpha, and if Amelia is determined to be as good an Alpha as she is a Luna, then the best thing I can do is support her so that she can finally lay down and get some sleep.

When she gets out of the shower, she dries off and gets dressed, looking every bit the powerful Alpha that I’m quickly learning that she is. She pulls her hair up and dabs some makeup under her eyes, hiding the dark circles.

She looks at me in the mirror. “Just say what’s on your mind, Calvin.”

“Were you always this strong, Amelia?” I ask her, in awe and also in shock at the completely different woman I see in front of me.

She stops, looking at me a moment, before diverting her gaze while putting the makeup away.

“I didn’t really have a choice. Losing or quitting wasn’t an option. I couldn’t do that to my parents, and I couldn’t do it to myself.”

“You’re more like Sophie than you realize,” I tell her, knowing that it bothered her that her sister was called the legend.

“No. Sophie made her choices. She’s always followed her own path. My choices were always forced upon me, but not anymore. Now I make my own decisions, and I’ll decide where my life takes me from here.”

“Do you intend for that life to include me?” I ask, terrified of her answer.

She looks at me in the mirror again before turning to look me in the eye. “I don’t know yet.”

One thing I do know, I have until the birth of our daughter before she makes her decision. If she decides to reject me as her mate, she won’t do it until she gives birth.

“Have you given any more thought to our daughter’s name?” I ask her.

“I have,” she says, as she begins walking to the door.

“Care to share?” I growl. I feel like she’s pushing me completely out of her life, and I don’t like it. I don’t like it at all.

She stops, turning to face me. “I thought you didn’t care what our daughter’s name was going to be. Isn’t that what you said? Didn’t you basically imply that she wasn’t important to you because she’s not an heir to your pack?”

I growl. “It’s OUR pack and she’s MY daughter too. Yes, I care, but I thought you might want to name her. If you don’t, I’ll be happy...”

“Athena or Hippolyta,” she says, practically daring me to argue.

“The Goddess of Wisdom or the Queen of the Amazor.

“Both are powerful women in mythology. My daughter will be a strong, powerful woman. I will make sure of it,” she insists, glaring at me.

“Of course she will. She’s the daughter of two Alphas. A true Alpha.”

She nods before turning and walking out. I follow her around like a damn puppy the rest of the day. First, I sit with her while she signs alliance agreements with Hunter and Dutton.

“Sophie, would you like to sign as well,” Amelia asks her sister. Sophie looks at Hunter who shrugs.

“It’s up to you. Your word is as binding as mine,” he says.

“Yes, I want to sign,” Sophie said, signing the documents.



“I’d like my mates to sign as well,” Dutton said, and Amelia told him she’d make a copy that he could have them sign and send back.

“What about me, Amelia? Would you like me to sign these documents as well?” I ask, feeling left out yet again.

“Would you like to sign on the Luna spot?” she asks, her displeasure with me obvious.

I growl at her, but she doesn’t back down.

“I didn’t think so,” she says, dismissing me and turning back to the others.

When she was done there, she checked with Sophie and Beta Caroline on the status of pack members that had followed them from Alaric’s pack. Some were injured and needed to go to the hospital.

Before heading to the hospital, we’d said goodbye to Hunter, Sophie, and Dutton, and then she’d spent hours talking to all of the warriors who had been injured, finding out about their injuries and when they could be expected to return. She sat with mates and pups who were crying, consoling them, and encouraging warriors who were badly injured and struggling to accept their slow healing process.

As the day went on, I was more and more impressed with my mate and by the time she finally called it a day, it was dark outside, and I was exhausted. I have no idea how she kept going so long.

I follow her to her bedroom. “I want to stay with you tonight, Amelia,” I say, not having had to ask in a very long time. I don’t like being back to this place with my mate. The place we were in after I marked her.

“I have no energy for sex, Calvin,” she said, standing at her door and not opening it.

“I just want to lay beside you.”

She nods and opens the door, letting me into her bedroom. I could muster the energy for sex, but I know that as tired as I am, Amelia must be feeling ten times worse, or more.

I strip off my clothes and wait for her to change into her nightgown. When she crawls into bed, I do as well, pulling her against me. She’s stiff in my arms, but very quickly, she relaxes and lays her head on my chest. In less than two minutes, she’s sound asleep.

I, however, don’t think I’ll be able to sleep for a long time. My brain is in overdrive.

“How am I going to fix this?” I quietly ask out loud.

The darkness has no response.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 143**

Chapter 143: Returning Home

Sophie

I was thrilled to sign the alliance agreement with my sister. I loved that Hunter acted as if it was no big deal, but in the history of alliances, in the history of werewolves, I'm confident that mine and my sister's signatures are the first female signatures to ever be part of an alliance agreement. It makes me feel special, important. The exact way that Hunter always makes me feel.

That's because you are special, and you are very, very important to me,' he says in the mind link as I ride Shaw back to our pack lands.

'What do you think will happen with Amelia and Calvin?' I ask. The tension between them had been palpable.

"Amelia and Calvin have a long way to go to repairing their bond, if that's even something that Amelia wants, which right now, it doesn't seem like she does."

I'd thought when Calvin had gone with her upstairs that some of that angry energy would have been burned off. But while she smelled of him when she came back down, it was obvious that they hadn't been together. Me? I was practically desperate for my mate, wanting to make sure that he was safe and mine.

'I'm always yours,' he purrs in my head. 'And you did come find me.'

'Yes. Caroline told me to go shower, so I did. Who am I to argue with my sister's Beta?' I say, remembering Hunter also being possessive when I'd stepped into the shower with him.

'It's not my fault. I was worried sick about you and then, I know how much you like being taken against the shower walls.'

'It always reminds me of our first night together,' I say, and I can feel the rumbling purr in Shaw's body as well as hear it at my words.

I know he's been through those moments in my head, but I begin sending them to him, pushing my feelings for him into them as well. I realize that my love for Hunter is so much stronger now. Then, it was driven by the mate bond. Now, the mate bond is there, but it's the man himself that I love. There is so much about Hunter that makes me proud and happy to be his mate.

One minute I'm riding on Shaw, and the next, Hunter is standing, grabbing my legs as I yip in surprise, holding on to his

shoulders. We're in between the pack lands, with no one around.

"You can't send those types of images to me, Sophie, and not expect me to respond," he growls, pulling me around to the front of his body, my legs still wrapped around his waist. I immediately feel how hard he is, and a moment later, his mouth is on mine as he begins flooding me with images and feelings that he's had of me, from the first night and so many nights since then.

Somehow, he lays me in a soft grassy place, sliding inside me as both of us become desperate to physically connect with each other. He takes his time, as we both send images and emotions to the other of our love, respect, admiration, and adoration. Every possible emotion that the other feels is shared while he brings me up and over, up and over, until I'm clinging to him and he's growling softly as tears of utter euphoria leak from my eyes.

When he finally releases inside me, he lays his forehead against mine, both of us panting, having shared the feeling of our o\*\*ms with the other. Our connection feels even stronger now, somehow bringing us even closer together.

"I thank the goddess for you every single day, Sophie. I truly didn't know that happiness like this existed," he says, kissing my tears before burying his face in my neck. I realize that his face is damp too, the power of our love impacting him as much as it impacted me.

"I love you so much Hunter. Words don't even come close to expressing that."

He gently kisses my neck. "Your emotions do though. I love that we can share them, and that yours are becoming stronger towards me as mine are towards you. I really never understood how powerful love could be."

"Well, we are the trendsetters. Showing the world how amazing love can be should be our next trend," I say, making him chuckle before gently kissing my neck.

"I love you, Sophie Reynolds."

"And I love you, Hunter Reynolds."

He takes a deep breath, breathing in my scent. "Come on, we need to get back. We need to check on our wounded," he says, sliding out of me and standing. He reaches his hands out to me and helps me up, pulling me against him again, wrapping his strong around me and leaning his head against mine.

“I won’t be able to do this much longer. I had to shift my position while I was inside you. Our son is growing big and strong inside his mother’s belly.”

“Yes, he’s very much like his father,” I say.

He kisses my head. “And very much like his mother. He’s stolen my heart already.”

I smile as he pulls back and crouches in front of me. “Right, Huntington? Your daddy’s little man already, aren’t you?”

I run my fingers through his hair as he kisse’s my stomach, our son reacting to Hunter’s touch as he always does, pressing tight against my stomach right where Hunter’s face is. Shaw begins to purr softly, sending little vibrations into my stomach as I smile down at the most incredible man that has even lived.

Hunter looks up at me and grins. “Keep it up and we’ll never get home.”

I laugh as he stands. “We’re close to the borders, but I want to get back, so I’m going to have Shaw carry you again.”

“I love Shaw, and Hedda misses her mate,” I say as she pushes forward. Shaw does as well, and Hunter must let him push the shift. He carefully lifts onto his back paws, putting his front paws on my shoulders as begins to rub his scent all over my face, neck, and chest. I let Hedda stay forward, let her push against him, wanting to scent him the way he’s scenting us.

When he finishes, he jumps down, then lays down so I can get on his back. Before I do, I reach my arms around his neck, hugging him tightly. “I love you too, Shaw. You’re so brave and strong. Thank you for always protecting me and our pup.”

Shaw begins purring again, turning to lick my face. ‘I will always protect you and our pups,’ he says in the mind link.

“I know you will. You’re a good wolf and you’ll be just as good of a father as Hunter.”

I get on his back, and we begin to make our way to the pack. When we arrive at the border, Shaw lifts his head and

announces our return. All around the pack, wolves answer the call of their Alpha, and I feel peace fall over the pack.

Their Alpha and Luna have returned, and the pack is feeling settled again now that we’re back safely.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 144**

## Chapter 144: Planning a Visit

Hunter

After getting home and greeting the pack, a pack that feels so different, so much stronger now that Sophie is here, I head to my office. I need to let Robin and Nikki know that her brother is dead.

“Alpha Hunter, to what do I owe the pleasure?” The way he purrs pleasure lets me know that Nikki is either in his lap or right there.

“Is your mate there? I need to speak to both of you,” I say, my tone remaining serious.

It’s quiet a moment and I hear the phone shift to speaker. “We’ re both here, Alpha Hunter. What’s happened? Is Sophie okay?” Nikki asks.

“Yes, she’s fine. I...I apologize in advance, Luna Nikki. I should have warned you before, but with everything going on...it’s too late now, but I apologize. I’ve just returned from Amelia’s pack. We attacked your brother’s pack. He’s dead.”

There’s a moment of silence.

“Good,” she growls. “He was a worthless Alpha. He was still my brother, but, after what he did to Sophie and Alpha Amelia’s parents, he got what he deserved” she says.

“We knew you were going to attack, Hunter. Sophie proclaimed it loudly when we were there for the funeral,” Robin says.

“I know. I just should have let you know it was coming. For that I am sorry.”

“Don’t be. Tell me you got Camden too,” Nikki says and Robin growls.

“No, he got away. There aren’t many places for him to go now, so I assume he’s making his way to Aiden’s pack, which is where I’m assuming Koden is as well.”

“Why not Zahn’s pack?” Robin asks and I tell them about his plans to bring his mate to our pack.

Robin whistles. “That’s why you wanted Alaric out of the way so quickly.”

“Exactly,” I say, thankful that he understands without me having to explain.

“Rob,” I hear Nikki say with lilting purr in her voice. This is obviously how Nikki gets her way with her mate when she thinks he won’t agree with her. I smile, wanting to see how this plays out.

"I'm desperately feeling the need to go visit my good friend, Sophie. Maybe in a week or so we could go visit her?" Nikki asks sweetly. I snort. I didn't have Nikki in my pack long, but I know that this sugary sweetness isn't her normal. Or perhaps it's a side of her that she reserves solely for Robin. The thought makes me miss Sophie and remember our intense love making earlier today.

'Soph, do you want to come to my office and say hello to Nikki?' I ask in the mind link, using the excuse to have her close to me again.

'On my way,' she says excitedly.

"Nikki," Robin growls in warning. It doesn't sound very convincing, even to me.

"Oh please, Rob. I miss my friend," she says as Sophie walks in. I smile so big it makes my mouth hurt when I see my mate, and I tap my leg for her to come sit. I put the phone on speaker.

"Say that again, Nikki," I say as Sophie walks over to me, her eyes twinkling with happiness. Goddess, I love this woman.

"I said I miss my friend," she says, now pouting.

"I miss you too, Nikki," Sophie says, sitting on my lap. I pull her against me and Shaw immediately begins purring against her neck, sending shivers over her body.

"I was just telling Rob that we need to come visit you, Sophie. Maybe in a week or so," she says as if this is a random timeframe. Sophie turns to me and frowns.

"I told them about Zahn and Jocelyn."

"Her name is Jocelyn?" Nikki asks.

"Yes, and honestly Nikki, it might help if you do come. Besides wanting nothing more than to see you again, Jocelyn seemed... disappointed that, as the legend, I'm mated. Obviously, my experience isn't like hers, but you were on the run as well, injured protecting Allison and Letti..."

"Oh my goddess, Sophie! That's a great idea. Rob, we should see if Allison and Kayce will join us. We could all get together, like a reunion of sorts, and it sounds like Jocelyn could use the

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support," Nikki says to Robin.

Sophie turns and frowns at me again, obviously confused by Nikki's sweet, manipulative manner with Robin. I shake my head and chuckle. I already know that Robin has lost this battle, if it even was one. Although, I'm pretty sure that the two of them enjoy their little verbal sparring matches.

"Why do you say she seemed disappointed in you, Sophie?" Robin asks, catching onto the part that was most important to Sophie.

"It was her tone. It was like I'd disappointed her because I'm mated."

It's quiet a moment.

"How bad is she?" Nikki asks, all teasing and playfulness gone from her voice.

"Bad," I say.

"Is she mobile?" Robin asks.

"We're not sure, but I intend to have Dr. Caspian and Brooklyn look her over."

"How is Brooklyn?" Nikki asks.

I look at Sophie, who smiles. "I was just over at the hospital and she's wearing a brand-new mate mark."

"AHH! I'm so happy for her!" Nikki says and I can almost see her bouncing in Robin's lap excitedly. "Seriously, Rob. We have to go!"

He sighs exaggeratedly, as if pleasing his mate is such a difficult task. "Fine, we'll go."

She squeals and it sounds like she throws her arms around him, making him chuckle.

"Do you want to call Kayce, or..." he begins.

"Oh, I'll call Allison," Nikki says. "What day do you want us there, Sophie?"

"Well, if you come the day before, the three of us could catch up together. Then, after Jocelyn gets here and gets settled, we could tag-team her, make sure she's never alone, that she feels safe."

"What about Zahn?" Robin asks.

Sophie tells them her plan and that Zahn, not necessarily fully informed, has agreed to whatever Sophie thinks is necessary.

"Do you think he's serious?" Nikki asks.

"I'm not sure, but it doesn't matter if he is. She needs our help," Sophie says, vehemently.

"I agree. We'll support you, no matter what. I don't know how long we can stay," she says, breaking off and obviously looking at Robin for an answer.

"I'll have to see what's going on in the pack and what I can put off while were away. Are we having the Alpha meeting before then?"

"I'd like to. I don't intend to include Zahn in that discussion."

"Oh, Nikki, wait until I tell you about Calvin showing up as we were coming back from killing...oh...oh sorry," she says, and I feel her concern and shame for not recognizing that Alaric was Nikki's brother.

"That's okay. My piece of shit brother needed to die. And Calvin showed up? He didn't know about the war either?" she asks excitedly, and I can tell this is about to devolve into a gossip conversation. I'd care more if my mate wasn't comfortably seated in my lap.

"He didn't. I'll tell you and Allison all about it when you're here. You can tell me what you think and maybe by then, we'll know more about how all of that is going to play out."

"Interesting!" Nikki says.

"I don't imagine that he was happy to find out that his pregnant mate was in a war he didn't even know about," Robin says astutely.

"No, he was not. Amelia, however, is much like Sophie. She's a strong woman, a good Alpha from what I can see. Dutton and I signed alliances with her while we were there."

"Good. That's good. It should go a long way to letting the pack know that we, the other Alphas, truly support her."

"UH! We have so much to catch up on, Sophie! I can't wait to see you!"

"I can't wait to see you either. It feels like forever, even though I know it's only been a couple of months."

"I know. I'm looking forward to it and once I confirm with Allison that she and Kayce are coming, I'll let you know."

"Sounds good. Oh and, Nikki, just so you know, we've made Penny our Ga\*\*a. She found her mate, but SHE'S our Ga\*\*a," Sophie says, turning and smiling at me. We both know this will make Nikki happy.



“See Rob!” she says instead with a note of anger in her tone. “I told you we should offer our Ga\*\*a position to Letti! One day, you and I will become the trendsetters and it’ll be Hunter and Sophie following in OUR footsteps.”

“Yes, dear,” he says contritely, making me bark out a laugh.

Nikki growls at him and I reach out to the phone.

“Talk to you soon. Let me know if you need anything,” I say, quickly hanging up. I’m guessing they’ll argue and then make up before they ever leave Robin’s office.

Then I focus on my mate, and my pretty mark on her neck.

“Now, what’s this about Brooklyn having her mate mark?” I ask, kissing my mate’s neck and sucking on her mate mark, making her moan softly as she tells me yet more good news about our pack.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 145**

Chapter 145: Hide and Seek

Sophie

I’m so excited that my friends are coming to visit. I was fine spending time with Jocelyn, even if she’s angry and feels betrayed by me for finding my mate, but it will be easier with my friends and fellow Lunas here. It will also take some of the pressure off of Kinsley, who I think felt badly that Lucas was upset about her being the only one who knows something of what Jocelyn is going through.

The Alpha call is later today, but this morning, Hunter and I are going to see Dr. Felicity to check on Huntington, my little Hunt, as I’ve started calling him. I haven’t said it out loud but since my mate is always listening in to my thoughts, I’m pretty sure he’s heard me calling our son Hunt. And since he hasn’t complained, I guess he doesn’t mind.

“Why do you always wake up with so many thoughts in your head,” Hunter grumbles as he rolls on his side and pulls me against him.

“If you don’t want me to wake up thinking about life, you should make sure that I wake up thinking about you,” I say, sending him an image of him between my thighs, looking up at me with eyes that are nearly black with desire.

“Mmmm, what a great idea, but instead of you being on the bottom, let’s shift that. Little Hunt is getting a bit too big for that position,” he says, rolling onto his back and pulling me over his body to straddle him.

“So, you do like the name?” I ask as he maneuvers me to straddle his face.

“Is that really what you want to talk about right now?” he asks me before latching onto my clit.

I’ll admit that I forgot all about my son, his name, and everything else that is pressing on my mind for at least an hour while Hunter made sure that I focused solely on him and us. Then, just as my brain was kicking back in, he took me in the shower, distracting me yet again.

When we finally get out of the shower, Hunter drops to his knees in front of me.

“Sorry little man, daddy will always make sure he comes first in my mother’s mind, but you can be a close second,” he says, kissing my stomach and standing before kissing me too. When I catch the tenor of his thoughts, a third, a fourth, and a fifth, Hedda begins purring loudly, loving the idea of giving our mate so many pups.

“Let’s get dressed and go see our pup,” Hunter says excitedly.

We walk downstairs, hand in hand, just as the warriors are walking in from training.

“How’d it go?” Hunter asks Lucas, looking at Jaime. I notice several of the warriors are limping slightly and grumbling more loudly than usual.

‘Jaime’s a natural. He pushed our warriors hard today,’ Lucas says proudly.

“Penny did too. It wasn’t just me,” he says, smiling over at his mate.

“Penny is tough, but she’s no drill sergeant like you are. Seriously, Hunter, you have to come to training tomorrow,” Lucas says.

“I will, but this morning we’re going to see our pup,” he says, smiling down at me.

“Oh that’s exciting! Kinsley and I have our appointment next week since we’re a bit behind you two in the baby department.”

“Not by much,” I say, watching as Leah walks to Brutus, smiling up at him.

“Where does my big warrior hurt?” she asks him.

“Right here,” he says, pointing to his bicep muscle. Her smile widens as she kisses his muscle.

“And right here,” he says, pointing to his chest. She watches him as she reaches up to kiss his chest.

“But it mostly it hurts right here,” he says, pointing to his lips.

I chuckle as she leans up to give him a peck, but Brutus pulls her to him, kissing her deeply.

“I hurt too,” Lucas says as Kinsley walks up, making her laugh. Lucas’ smile is huge at seeing his mate happy and he pulls her in for a hug.

“Let’s get you some food, Sophie, and then we can go.”

“What time is the Alpha meeting?” Lucas asks as we get our food and sit down.

“Two o’clock. I’m going to bring Sophie in with me, in case my mate has any more genius ideas that I didn’t think of,” he says, leaning over to kiss me.

“I’m not sure I’ve ever had a ‘genius’ idea in my life,” I say, rolling my eyes.

“Hey, my mate is brilliant. Never underestimate her,” he says seriously, before kissing me to take the severity out of his tone. I know he means it. I know he thinks I’m intelligent and intuitive. I try to be. I try harder because I know that he loves and respects that part of me.

“Besides, I’m planning to play hide and seek with my son. He’s getting bigger, so hiding is getting harder for him,” he says, smiling as his eyes go unfocused. I get the flash of joyful emotions as he thinks about playing with our son later.

Goddess, I love this man.

He, of course, catches my thought and leans over to kiss me again. ‘He loves you too,’ he says in the mind link as he kisses me.

When we’re done, we walk hand in hand to the pack hospital. Pack members consistently stop us to say hello to us, let their pups say hello, or wave at us from farther distances. Everyone, the entire pack, feels settled and happy, with the possible exception of the survivor’s center. There is a constant state of sadness from that part of the pack.

When we get inside, I see Brooklyn, talking to a couple of the nurses.

“Brooklyn,” Hunter calls out. She turns, smiling and after saying goodbye to the nurses, she comes over.

Hunter smiles at her. “What’s this I hear about a new mate mark?”

Her smile only gets wider as she pulls the nursing scrubs away from her neck.

“It’s beautiful. Dr. Caspian’s mark looks very good on you,” Hunter tells her, making her beam with happiness.

“Hers looks good on me too,” Dr. Caspian says, walking up and showing off his mark.

“Very nice,” I say to him.

“Alpha, when you have time, I’d like to talk to you about Brooklyn and I travelling around to the other packs. Luna Allison, Luna Nikki, and Lunas Tiffany and Tammi are all pregnant. I’d like to go check them out.”

“Allison and Nikki will be here in a week, Dr. Caspian. We can make sure that they get time to see you. But I’m sure we can do without your services for a short while if you go to Alpha Dutton’ pack,” Hunter says.

“Maybe you could stop in and see Amelia as well?” I ask him.

“If she’s willing, I’d like that. I don’t need to be the premiere doctor for the Lunas, or in your sister’s case, Alphas. Obviously, you’re seeing Dr. Felicity today, but I know not every doctor has the obstetrical background that I do.”

“I’ll talk to Amelia today and see if she’s willing,” I say, making a note to ask Amelia before the Alpha call starts today.

When I get to our room and settled on the bed, Dr. Felicity comes in, smiling broadly. “I can’t wait to see our Alpha heir. Benefits of being a doctor, I get to see all the pack’s babies first,” she says.

This time when she runs the ultrasound over my stomach, the outline of our son is clear. We don’t need her to tell us where his body parts are, they’re all very obvious. I squeeze Hunter’s hand as I feel his strong emotions blending with mine.

“Doctor, can I try something?” he asks.

“Of course,” she says, starting to pull away.

“No, no, leave that there,” he says, watching the monitor intently as he reaches out and puts his hand on my stomach. Instantly, our son responds, moving closer to his father’s hand. Hunter smiles widely as he moves his hand and little Hunt follows him.

“It really is hide and seek,” he says, turning to smile at me, before turning back. I reach out and rub my mate’s back, feeling the surge of emotions inside him. He leans down, putting his mouth to my stomach.

“I love you, Huntington. We can’t wait to meet you,” he says, and we all watch as our son moves, pressing himself closer to where Hunter is talking to him. Shaw begins to purr loudly, the sound reverberating through the room and my body. My little Hunt presses himself against his father’s mouth, as if he’s curling up against him to fall asleep. It’s the sweetest thing I’ve ever seen in my life.

“Soon, little man. Very soon I’ll be holding you in my arms and purring you to sleep,” Hunter whispers.

When he pulls back, I realize that I’m crying and I’m not the only one. Dr. Felicity is also crying, and Hunter has tears in his eyes.

“That’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen,” she says, wiping her eyes. We all watch as Hunt settles back into my stomach and Dr. Felicity gets tissues for me and her.

“I’ll get the pictures printed before you leave,” she says, quickly exiting the room as if embarrassed that she’s crying in front of us.

“That was incredible,” Hunter says, helping me off the table.

“It really was,” I say as he pulls me into a hug. We stand there a moment, just enjoying this moment of silence and peace, just the three of us.

When we step out of the room, Dr. Felicity hands us our pictures. Hunter takes them excitedly and begins to look through them. I watch from beside him and gasp when he gets to the one where he stops.

Dr. Felicity took a picture of Huntington leaning against my stomach, trying to get to his father as he purred at him.

“I want this one,” he says softly.

“You can have them all,” Dr. Felicity says.

“He was talking to me,” I say, smiling at Dr. Felicity. “He wants this one in his office.”

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 146**

Chapter 146: Alpha Meeting

Hunter

I’m still riding the high of seeing my son and actually watching him react to me this morning. His picture is already framed and on my desk when Sophie walks in for the Alpha meeting. I immediately pull her into my lap and begin playing with my son, knowing that he’s enjoying himself as much as I am.

Sophie leans back against me as I dial into the video meeting. We’re the first ones on, which is fine. It gives me a moment to enjoy my mate, kissing her neck while I play with my son. I realize that before long, I won’t be able to do both at the same time, at least not like this.

Amelia joins the call next, and I'm surprised to see that Calvin is still in her pack. It's been several days since he arrived. She looks more rested, but no less stressed.

"Hey, Sophie. Hello Hunter."

"Hello Amelia, Alpha Calvin," I say, using his title since he and I don't have the same relaxed relationship that Amelia and I have. I see him frown at that, but he's never acted like he wanted a less formal, more relaxed relationship with me. Ever.

"Hey, Amelia, I have a question for you before the others join. Dr. Caspian is going to go to Dutton's pack to check on Tiffany and Tammi. I asked if he'd be willing to come check on you as well, and he's happy to do it. I don't remember Dad's, or your pack now, having an obstetrician "We don't and I'd be grateful to have Dr. Caspian come check my daughter."

"I'm far enough behind you, Amelia, that maybe when you get closer to your due date, he and Brooklyn can come stay there so he's there for your delivery."

I see relief wash over her face. "That would be fantastic, Soapy. Thank you."

I'm not sure that Amelia realizes that she slipped back into her kid name for my mate, but it seems to make both of them happy.

"Allison and Nikki are coming next weekend. He's going to check them over and then he'll head to your packs," Sophie tells them.

"Oh, thank the goddess! If Kayce hounds me one more time about needing to see a doctor, I'm going to put him in the doghouse," Allison says as she and Kayce join the call.

"I will not apologize for caring about you and our pup," he says sternly. I watch as Allison turns away from her mate, rolling her eyes at the camera.

"Hey, you want to see something incredible?" I ask, excited to share my news.

"Yeah!" Kayce says.

"Don't we always," Robin says as he and Nikki join the call.

"Don't we always what?" Dutton asks, as he, Tiffany, and Tammi join as well.

I grab the picture of my son, seeing Sophie smiling at me as I turn it and find the camera.

"Ohhhh!" all the Lunas on the call say, possibly Amelia too, but I'm not paying attention. I'm too excited to tell them what happened.

Sophie's arm comes around my neck.

"So, my son and I play this game..."

"Hide and seek," Kayce says.

"YES!" I exclaim.

"Move that game," he murmurs against Allison's hair. I can tell he's playing with his pup now.

"So, look at this," I say, making sure they can see the image of our son. "That's Huntington. He moved to where I was talking to him and Shaw began purring at him."

"What?" I hear from multiple people as several Alpha faces push closer to their video screens.

"It was really amazing. He even had Dr. Felicity hold the wand while he played hide and seek, and we could see Hunt moving to Hunter's hands."

"Oh, we're so doing that when we're there," Kayce says excitedly.

"Us too?" Robin asks.

"Yep, you too!" Sophie says.

Dutton growls as Ezra and Margot join the call. "My pups aren't big enough yet."

"What are we looking at?" Ezra frowns, looking at my screen.

"A baby," Margot says. "I'm guessing that's your pup, Sophie?"

I explain again about the picture, before pulling it back, looking at my son once more before setting the frame down and focusing on the meeting. My hands automatically go to Sophie's stomach and my game with my son begins again.

"So, who wants to begin?" Robin asks.

"We have four vacant packs. One is close to me, that's Owen's old pack. Two are closer to you, Ezra, Joshua and Elias' old packs, and one borders Alpha Amelia, that's Alaric's old pack."

"How are his surviving pack members, Alpha Amelia?" Ezra asks her.

Calvin opens his mouth to answer, but she jumps in. "We're still assessing which ones need sanctuary and which ones might be trying to undermine me for taking revenge on their Alpha," she says.

"Smart," Robin says.

"And what about Owen's old pack members?" Dutton asks.

"I still have the majority of them," I say.

"Yeah, the others are spread between mine and Robin's packs. I don't know about you, Hunter, but my group wants to go home," Kayce says.

I look at Sophie who nods. "Yeah, they miss their home. They don't miss Owen, but they miss the livelihood that they left behind," she says.

"Same here," Nikki agrees.

"Do we know what's going on with Joshua's and Elias' packs?" Dutton asks.

"No, and that's a good question. We took out his warriors and his Beta when he attacked," I say.

"Margot and I have talked about it and we're going to go to both packs. We'll be taking Luna June as well, since they were the Lunas of those packs," Ezra says.

"When are you planning to do that?" I ask.

"Actually, I heard Zahn set a date to come to your pack, so I figured that would be the safest time to bring my mate and her mother to the other packs. Less chance for a surprise attack."

"If you want to wait until we're back, I can send some warriors to go with you," Robin says.

"No, Margot thinks the pack, or most of them, will rally around her and her mother," he says, looking at Margot.

"Not everyone liked having Joshua as their Alpha. Those people will be looking for a new leader. The same is true for my parents' pack. Having my mother there, letting them see that she's still alive, will go a long way to getting them to agree to either come with us, or allow us to have a competition for the pack's Alpha."

"Are you planning to compete, Margot?" I ask her.



She looks at Ezra, before looking away. "I haven't decided yet. But apparently the precedence has been set. Isn't that right, Alpha Amelia."

"Yes, it has," Amelia says.

"Which reminds me, did everyone read my proposal?" Nikki asks, jumping in.

"Yes," I say, smiling.

"All in favor," she says, making me laugh.

"Wait, wait, wait! What proposal?" Calvin asks.

"That she-wolves be allowed to take leadership positions in the pack," Amelia says. "Since you started this, I'm sure you're in agreement." Her tone is still icy with her mate. I'm guessing they haven't come to any agreements between them.

I watch Calvin press his lips tightly together, not willing to fight with his mate in front of us.

"So, all in favor?" Nikki asks again.

"I already made a she-wolf my Gamma, so I'd be a hypocrite to say no," I say raising my hand.

"My mate would kick my ass to the moon and back if I said no," Robin says, smiling at his mate.

"You'd love every minute of it," she grumbles softly, making him chuckle.

I watch as Allison looks at Kayce, who smiles as he pretends to think about it. "What do you think my love?" he finally asks her.

"I think you know the right answer, Kayce. You don't need me to tell you," she says, her eyebrow going up in challenge.

He doesn't look away from her as he raises his hand in agreement.

"I agree, of course," Amelia says.

Ezra looks at Margot. "I hope I don't regret this, but I agree as well." When Margot smiles at him, I watch his body relax.

"Well, we don't need your agreement, Alpha Calvin, but what is your response?"

"I say no. I see what it's doing to my mate. I don't like the toll it's taking on her," he says, and I sigh. He still doesn't get it.

"Okay, well, I'm disappointed that it's not unanimous, but it's still approved to take effect. Therefore, if we open these

competitions for these packs, she-wolves should also be eligible to participate."

"I suggest that we start with Owen's pack. Yes, it's closest to me, but it also impacts Robin and Kayce's packs. We need to send these wolves home. I have no problem keeping them if that's the long-term plan, I can build new housing, but if they are only going to be temporarily in my pack, then I'd prefer to get them home more quickly."

"Agreed," Kayce and Robin say.

"What about Alaric's pack?" Amelia asks.

"Since we don't know what Joshua and Elias' packs are like, I say we put Alaric's pack up second. Both Dutton and Amelia are at risk while that pack remains vacant," I say.

"Agreed," everyone, including Calvin says.

"We'll get the information on the other packs in time for our next Alpha meeting," Ezra says.

"In the meantime, what's the plan for creating a competition for these packs?" Robin asks.

We decide to have a gathering at Owen's pack, announcing to everyone in our packs that a competition will be held for those pack lands.

"It'll have to be a sudden death competition," Kayce says.

"Yes, you lose, you're out. Then go in a round robin format with the winners until only one is left standing," Dutton says.

"Let's meet in two weeks. Spread the word to your pack members and when we reconvene, we should have an idea of how many people want to compete."

"Oh, this is so exciting!" Nikki says.

"Why is that, my little Luna? You're not leaving me to take over another pack," Robin growls and while I know he didn't mean it as a direct jab at Calvin, I'm sure that arrow hit home.

“Are you kidding? This competition will be fierce! I just know most of our Betas will compete. What a great opportunity for them. And I can’t wait to tell our she–wolves that they are eligible as well. What a fantastic time in our history!” she says excitedly.

I look at Sophie and I can’t help but think that all of this is possible because one little Alpha she–wolf ran off and became the legend that everyone else tried to follow. My sweet little Luna, my mate, is responsible for all this change.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 147**

Chapter 147: An Early Goodbye

Sophie

I’m so excited to see my friends. I honestly don’t remember a time that I had friendships like I have now. Maybe it’s because I was an Alpha female and there was always a power differential in our pack. Now that I’m a Luna, I have friends who are also Lunas. Not all of them, Kinsley is also a good friend, and Penny was a friend before she even got here, but my friendships now are so much stronger than they were when I was younger.

My friends are set to arrive tomorrow and while I’m making plans to spend the day with them, the day after that, Zahn and Jocelyn arrive. I need to make sure I’m ready for that as well.

I look up as someone knocks on my door.

“Hey, can I come in?” Kinsley asks.

“Of course,” I say, setting aside my work. She and Lucas had their appointment with Dr. Felicity yesterday and they both happily showed us the pictures of their son. Much like our son, they are naming theirs after Lucas. Lucian and Hunt will be nearly the same age. It will be good for them to grow up together. Now that Lucas is going to compete to win a pack, they will be both be Alphas and strong alliances in the next generation will be important.

“I wanted to um...” Kinsley begins, looking down at her hands, sighing. “I know that Lucas spoke to Alpha Hunter, but I wanted to know what you think about Lucas competing for his own pack,” she says, finally looking up at me.

I’m not sure if she’s asking because she thinks it’s a bad idea, or if she’s worried that my feelings are hurt.

I walk around my desk and come to sit beside her. “I think you and Lucas would make an amazing Alpha and Luna. I think some of these packs will have a difficult beginning,

but I think both of you are strong enough to get past that, especially now that the two of you seem to be in sync and working together.”

She nods, looking down and I wait her out. “Are you angry that he’s considering it?” she asks quietly.

I reach out and cover her hands with mine. “Will I be sad when he claims his pack? Yes. And I say when, not if, because I know he’s strong enough to do it. But I would never be angry that you are giving yourselves and your pups the possibility of a better life, better position in the pack. There’s no one who could even begin to fill your shoes, but I would never be so selfish to put my wants ahead of yours.”

I watch as the tension she’s been holding releases and her body slumps. “I’m so glad. I was so nervous about what would happen if he says he wants to compete but then doesn’t win a pack and how that might impact our relationship.”

I tilt my head at her. “Do you honestly believe that Lucas won’t win a pack?”

She shrugs. “I know he’s strong. I know he’s a good fighter, but I don’t know the others that will be competing. Alpha Ezra’s Beta was already in Owen’s pack, he’s already got a feel for the people there. To me, it makes more sense that he would win that pack.”

“Yes, it does make sense that Beta Jake takes over that pack and I know he’s interested in competing for it. Owen’s old pack members know him, they feel comfortable with him. But there are three other packs, Kinsley.”

She nods again.

I wasn’t going to say anything, but I want Kinsley to know how serious I am that nothing changes between us if they win a pack.

“Actually, I was hoping that it would be Alaric’s pack that Lucas would win.”

Her head snaps up to me. “Why?”

“Amelia, obviously. I know we can trust Dutton and I know we can trust you and Lucas. Amelia going to have a hard road, especially if she decides to reject Calvin. Who knows how he’ll take that. It would be good for her to have true allies that are closer than me and Hunter.”

“And I’d still get to see you when you visited your sister,” she says, a smile starting to spread across her face.

“You’re going to get to see me anyway, my friend. Our sons will be raised together. They’ll be friends whether they like it or not!” I insist.

She laughs at that, then throws her arms around me. "Thank you, Sophie. As much as I want this for Lucas and myself, I've been terrified of what it would mean for our friendship."

"I wouldn't be much of a friend if I kept you from trying to achieve your dreams, would I?"

When she pulls back, both of us need tissues to wipe our tears. "So, do you know if Lucas has to compete to win Owen's pack in order to compete for Alaric's?"

I knew the moment Hunter felt my tears as his presence in my mind became stronger. When he realized that Kinsley and I were talking, he backed out, but stayed more present than normal, helping to keep me calm.

'The answer to her question is no, my love,' Hunter says, having heard Kinsley's question in my mind.

"Hunter says no," I say, making her smile.

"Lucas felt my tears too."

"Damn pregnancy hormones," I say, making both of us laugh.

"They are something, aren't they?" Kinsley asks.

"Are you...are you more possessive of Lucas now?"

"Oh my goddess, yes! I thought it was just me," she says.

I shake my head. "I almost snapped at one of our pack members the other day for walking up to Hunter to ask him something. I had to bite my tongue."

"Same! I'm so glad it's not just me."

I smile at her a moment and then feel the tears prick again. "I'm really going to miss you, Kinsley."

"He hasn't even won a pack yet," she says as we hug again.

"Yeah, but he will, especially when you tell him I want it to be the one, but I'm always here for you K"

She sits back and we both wipe our eyes again. "Okay, I need to get back to work. That was my only reason for coming by, well, that and Jocelyn. I've asked the women in the survivor center if they'd be willing to take her in while she's here. They've all agreed."

"I don't know what she'll want, but I want her to have options. If it were me, I think I'd want to be away from the packhouse and from Zahn."

I agree, and so did they. It's quiet and peaceful over there, even if there is an underlying sadness about the area."

"Maybe we can think about a garden where they can place memorials for their mates, or something like that," I say.

"I love that idea. And who knows, maybe Jocelyn is a gardener. Maybe getting her hands dirty planting things will help her to heal"

"I like that idea. I like it a lot."

"I'll ask the women if they want a garden like that, and if so, we'll find a spot where we can begin to set it up."

"Perfect, thanks Kinsley."

"Thank you, Sophie. Really, for everything."

We hug again and after she leaves, it's only a few moments before my mate walks in, giving me a knowing look before opening his arms.

I don't hesitate. I walk right into them, letting him comfort me.

"We'll still see them," he says, pressing his lips to the top of my head.

"I know. It just won't be the same."

"I know. But I love your idea. Having them beside Amelia is an excellent plan."

I hug Hunter as tightly as little Hunt will allow, feeling him moving to press himself against Hunter too.

"I'm pretty sure once I birth this baby, that I'll barely get to hold him. He's already such a daddy's boy," I say, making Hunter chuckle.

"We'll just have to have another one that's a momma's boy."

Hedda begins purring loudly at that idea, making my mate chuckle again.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 148**

Chapter 148: Friends

Hunter

My announcement that the Alphas are opening up the four available packs for competition has spread like wildflower through the pack. I can barely go three steps now without someone asking me questions about it. I'm glad they're excited and I hope they won't be disappointed if they don't win. It's good to be excited in the competition itself.

"So, what about Beta and Gamma positions?" one of the warriors asks me after training. Lucas was right about Jaime. He's a powerhouse when it comes to training and pushing our pack members to fight hard. With the upcoming competitions, everyone has shut their mouth about how hard training is and they're all pushing themselves and each other harder.

"That will be up to the new Alphas, but it makes sense to me that they'd want to open those positions as well," I say.

Even Lucas has been sparring with me every day. It's fine because Sophie agreed that she's too far along to spar, thankfully, so I can spend my time with Lucas and anyone else that wants to try and go against an Alpha. Of course, if they can't defeat Penny or Jaime, they usually don't try to spar against Lucas or I. He and I spend an extra 30 minutes every day focusing solely on his training with Jaime watching and directing him, and sometimes me as well. Most of the warriors stay to watch and everyone can see that Lucas is getting stronger and faster. Each day it becomes harder and harder for me to defeat my Beta, which only solidifies to me that he'll win his pack. I don't know what the other Alphas are doing to strengthen their pack members for the competition, but here, all of my warriors are getting stronger, and Lucas is fighting at Alpha strength now.

Today, as we walk inside, everyone congratulates Lucas on getting a draw. Neither of us could pin the other.

"Nice job, Lucas," I say as we walk inside. "I do want to talk to you about something after breakfast, though."

"Aren't the other Alphas and Lunas coming today?" he asks.

"They are and once Zahn and Jocelyn arrive tomorrow, I doubt I'll have much time to discuss things like I want to discuss today."

We find our mates, and both pull them into our laps, one hand resting on our mates' stomachs and the other eating while they chatter happily about seeing Allison and Nikki again.

"What time are they arriving again, Hunter?" Sophie asks me. She's asked me several times and I'm not sure if it's her

excitement, her focus and nervousness because of Jocelyn coming, or possibly her pregnancy that's keeping her from being able to focus.

"Lunchtime. So eat up, in case they're running late," I tell her.

"No way they'll be running late. Both of those Alphas will want their mates to eat too," Kinsley says knowingly.

"Very true. Kayce seems exceptionally overbearing, at least by Allison's response to him," Sophie says.

"You don't think I'm overbearing? I ask her.

"You, my love, find ways to be overbearing that don't FEEL overbearing. It's not that I don't know what you're doing but you do it in a way to make it easier for me to deal with."

I smile at that. It's true that I'm constantly in her head now, more present than I was before. The closer she gets to her delivery, the more I'll do that, but I'm glad that she doesn't find it suffocating. Much like Kayce, I'm not sure I could stop.

When we finish breakfast, I meet with Lucas in my office. "What do you think of me promoting Penny and Jaime to Betas when you win your pack?" I ask him with no preamble.

He stops, staring at me. "You think I'm going to win a pack?"

"I know you are and if you don't, then I'm doing something wrong."

"It's just..." he frowns, sitting down. "It feels so final when you start talking about my replacement."

I smile and go to sit next to my Beta. "I do hope you'll choose a pack closer to us. I'd like our sons to grow up together and be friends," I tell him. "Did you and Kinsley talk about Sophie's idea?"

"Yeah. Honestly, I like the idea of Alaric's pack. I like knowing that I'll be close to this pack, but also close to Amelia and Dutton, two people I feel strongly that I can trust."

"Good, so Jaime and Penny?"

He scrubs his hands over his face. "Is Jaime not competing for a pack? He'd be great. He's a natural leader."



“He hasn’t expressed any interest. I’m not sure if that’s coming from him or from Penny. But if they decide not to compete, I want to make them my Beta couple. What do you think?”

“I think I hate the idea of anyone taking my place as your Beta, but if it has to be someone other than me, then yeah, those two,” he says.

“You’ll still be at my side, Lucas, just as my ally, not my Beta.”

“Yours will be the very first alliance agreement I’ll sign,” he says vehemently.

“Well, we don’t have to worry about it for a while. Owen’s pack is going up first, but Alaric’s will probably be second. Watch Penny and Jaime over the next few weeks and let me know your thoughts.”

“I already know. If you don’t promote them, I will once I’m Alpha,” he says, smirking at me.

I get some work done before I get the announcement that our guests have arrived. I go to Sophie’s office to get her and together we walk outside to greet our guests.

I can feel my mate’s excited energy pinging through the bond.

“You’re going to explode, Soph,” I say, chuckling.

“I can’t help it, I’m so excited to see them.”

The moment Robin’s car comes to a stop, Nikki’s door flies open.

“Nicole!” he barks in warning. Nikki ignores him and Sophie. rushes down the stairs to hug her friend.

“Oh my goddess, Sophie. Look at your cute little baby bump!” Nikki says, as they hug tightly.

“I want in!” Allison says, rushing up to them. Her baby bump isn’t as pronounced as Sophie’s but it’s there, making their group hug interesting.

“Did your little boy just kick my little girl?” Allison asks, stepping back and looking down.

“Maybe?” Sophie says as I go to say hello to Robin and Kayce. “Maybe he was just saying hello.”

“So, you’re having a girl?” I ask Kayce.

“Yeah. Pretty excited about it too. Other than dealing with all the boys when she gets older. I’m already pretty sure I’ll be threatening every male who looks at her longer than a second. Especially if she ends up being as beautiful as her mother.”

Allison catches his words and smiles lovingly at her mate. He purrs at her as we watch the three of them go inside.

“Do we have times set up to see your doctor today?” Robin asks.

“Yes, after lunch,” I tell them.

By the time we get inside, Kinsley has joined the group of females who are saying hello to all the pack members, talking about their pregnancies and catching up with everyone around them.

“It’s so good to come back. It’s like a second home,” Nikki says, smiling back at us.

“If possible, your pack feels even stronger than it did when I was here before,” Kayce says.

“It probably is. Not only does Sophie continue to make huge impacts to the overall pack, but we brought on Penny as our Ga\*\*\*a and her mate Jaime who helped Sophie while she was on the run. Penny isn’t yet 18, she’s got a couple more weeks to go, but she and Jaime have already taken over as G\*\*\*as and they’re great at it.”

“Do you anticipate losing Lucas and Kinsley?” Robin asks.

“Yeah. It’ll be a hard loss, but Sophie wants them to go for Alaric’s pack, so I think that will be the first one he competes for. How about you two?”

“My Beta is going to compete,” Kayce says.

“Mine as well. And according to Nikki, Letti is going to compete too,” Robin says.

“How is Letti? I haven’t seen her since she left the pack.”

“She’s good. She’s still looking for her mate. She’s been to Robin’s pack and yours but didn’t find them in either place. I know she was hoping, like we all do, to find her mate right away, but who knows, maybe being part of this competition will help her find her mate,” Kayce says.

“I think we need to get our mates together more often,” I say, watching how they keep hugging, wiping their eyes, and smiling so broadly. I can feel Sophie’s happiness glowing through the bond. I love her feeling like this.

"I think you're right. Maybe when everything is settled with Camden and Aiden, we can have them set up play dates or something. It would be good for our pups to grow up together," Robin says

"Yeah, we're all close enough to stay in touch. And whoever takes over Owen's pack, if they're decent, can be included in that," Kayce says.

"We should make a common area on the mountain. Open it up to Dutton and Amelia's packs as well and whoever takes over Alaric's pack," I suggest.

"I like that idea. I know our mates will too. So, do we get to test your Beta while we're here?" Robin asks excitedly.

"Hell yeah, he'll take any test he can get. And you two need to see Jaime in action. His father was a Lead Warrior, and I understand why his Alpha was intimidated by him. He's one hell of a fighter but an even better instructor."

"He's not competing for a pack?" Kayce asks as we follow our mates to the dining room, stopping once again for them to say hello to old friends.

I look around, finding Jaime talking to several warriors.

"Ga\*\*a Jaime," I say, using his title. He's new to it and I think it's good for the pack to get used to using his title.

He looks up and comes jogging over. "Hey, Alpha."

"Jaime, this is Alpha Robin and Alpha Kayce."

"Nice to meet you, Alphas. It looks like your mates are already enjoying themselves," he says, and I realize that Penny has also joined the group surrounding our mates and saying hello to Allison and Nikki.

"Your Alpha was telling us what a great fighter and instructor you are, Jaime," Kayce begins.

"Thank you, Alpha," Jaime says to me.

"Don't thank me yet, these two will probably want to test you in the morning," I tell him.

"I'm always happy to have my skills tested," he says, making both Alphas raise an eyebrow.

"Alpha Hunter says you haven't made any plans to compete for a pack. Is that true?" Robin asks him.

“Penny and I are happy here. She’s been given the Ga\*\*a position. I don’t want to take that away from her. But more than that, I never thought I’d be a ranked member, never really thought I’d be in a pack again. My sisters are here and they’re happy. My mate is here, and she’s happy. All of that makes me happy,” he says.

“D\*\*n. With an attitude like that, you’d make a good Alpha,” Kayce says.

He shrugs. “No offense, but it seems like a lot of work. Penny and I are busy, but we still have time for each other and for the pack. We both get to do what we love, which is training warriors to be better warriors.”

“Thanks, Jaime,” I say to him, and he jogs off to get his mate before grabbing some food.

“An excellent choice for Ga\*\*\*a. I might steal him for my Beta if I lose mine,” Kayce says.

“Good luck with that. I already plan to offer my Beta position to them when Lucas wins his pack,” I tell them.

“Damn. I don’t have anyone that strong to take over as my Beta,” Kayce says as we begin to pile food on plates for ourselves and our mates.

By the time we get to the table, our mates are just getting settled. I kiss the top of Sophie’s head, putting a plate in front of her. She looks up at me and smiles happily and I can’t resist leaning in to kiss her. I love feeling her happiness, love seeing it on her face, and love that I have a part in that.

‘A large part,’ she says in our mind link.

Since our mates all sat together, my friends and I take up seats at the other end of the table. As I sit, I hear Nikki. “So, what’s the plan with Jocelyn.”

Robin and Kayce look up at me. “Yeah, what’s the plan with Zahn?”

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 149**

Chapter 149: Hunter’s Intervention

Sophie

Time with my friends has been amazing. Both of them went to see Dr. Felicity and came back excited over their pups. Allison is farthest along after me and Kinsley, so she was able to get pictures of her baby. Nikki isn’t far enough along to have pictures, but she and Robin got to hear their baby’s heartbeat and that seemed to be exciting enough for them, for now.

We talked about my plans for Jocelyn and my worry that she would be too angry to allow me to help her.

“You can only help someone if they want it, Sophie,” Nikki said.

“Yeah, and anyone in this pack could tell her how many people you and Hunter have helped. I mean, look at us. Nikki would have been lucky to not have been captured after the injury she sustained.”

“I’m not sure Jocelyn will see it that way. But that’s just the feeling I got when we were on the phone together. I could be way off base,” I tell them.

“What time will they be here tomorrow?” Nikki asks.

“Late morning. I plan to take her to see Dr. Caspian and Brooklyn first thing.”

“If she says one snide word to that sweet girl...” Nikki growls.

“Then she’ll be escorted from my pack. I won’t allow her to mistreat anyone on my pack lands,” I growl.

“Except yourself?” Allison asks.

“What do you mean?” I ask her.

“You’re already planning that she’ll be mean and snide to you, aren’t you? So, that’s allowed, but her treating anyone else that way isn’t?”

I open my mouth to answer, but Nikki jumps in.

“If it’s not acceptable for your pack members, Sophie, it’s not acceptable for you as their Luna.

We’d spent the rest of the evening talking about babies, names, our mates acting protective and sweet now that we’re pregnant. But, I’d thought about what they said. I know they’re right. It’s my job as a Luna to set the standard for how our pack members will be treated, but something about Jocelyn’s tone made it seem like I had let her down, and that’s ultimately what bothers me.

The next morning, I wake up before Hunter, nervous for the meeting today. I get up, letting him sleep and get in the shower. I’m only there a few moments when I feel his warm body come up behind me.

“Why are you denying me one of my favorite parts of the day?” he asks, his voice still gravelly from sleep as his arms go around me.

“What part is that?” I ask, distractedly.

“The part where I get to wake up slowly with my mate and then slide inside her,” he says, moving his fingers to my entrance and sliding two fingers inside me.

“The part where I get to hear her moaning and whimpering in my arms while I give her pleasure,” he says before biting down on the part of my neck where my neck and shoulder meet, before removing his fingers and replacing them with his hard length.

My back arches and I press back against him, needing my brain to turn off, even for just a few moments.

“No one takes my time away from my mate in the morning, so whoever is taking up residence in that overactive brain of yours can take a hike,” he growls before pressing one hand against the shower wall while the other holds my hips against him.

He keeps up a punishing pace, pushing all thoughts of today and Jocelyn out of my head until there’s only me and Hunter. He pushes me up and over twice, my legs becoming jelly from holding myself up through the o\*\*\*sms.

“Again,” he commands, moving his teeth to the back of my neck, the sting of their puncture sending waves of pleasure through my body at his dominance. My body responds to his command and another o\*\*\*sm rips through me.

“Again,” he growls, the vibrations running through my spine, and again my body follows his command. His motions become jerky as I scream my release, then he presses tight against me, and I feel the warm jets of his\*\*m shooting inside me and coating my insides as our bodies jerk together with aftershocks.

He pulls his teeth from my neck and kisses me, causing goosebumps to rise all over my body. Then he runs his nose over the back of my neck. “I don’t like how much worry she’s causing you, Sophie. I thought having your friends here to support you would help, but you’re a nervous wreck. I don’t like it.”

He kisses my neck and down to my shoulder. “No one should upset you like this, Sophie. No one. I’m half inclined to tell them to stay home.”

“No! No, Hunter, please. I need to try and help her,” I tell him, pressing back against him, and letting his love and warmth soothe me

“I won’t allow her to cause you distress, Sophie. I would. understand if you were just worried about her, but this goes beyond that. You’re feeling guilty and you have nothing to feel guilty about.”

“You couldn’t have saved her, Sophie. You and I went through your memory. She was already being claimed. You couldn’t have stopped that.”

And there it is, the crux of why I'm so worried and upset and yes, guilty. I feel like I let her down and I don't want to do it again.

"You won't. You're not the same person you were before, Sophie, but you were never the type of person who would let someone else suffer. Look at Penny and how you carried her after she was injured. She's a testament to that. You and Hedda both knew you couldn't help Jocelyn. Stop beating yourself up over it.\*

I relax as Hunter begins to move much more slowly in and out of me. It almost feels like his mind is massaging mine, taking away the aching memories that I've been holding on to. This time, our love-making is slow and deep, connecting us in the way that I love. I turn my head and kiss my mate, holding on to him as he swallows my moans and whimpers and finally my gasp of pleasure as we both find our release together.

I feel better, stronger as we leave the shower. "I think I prefer you waking me up in bed," I say, as my leg muscles twinge from the effort of remaining upright through multiple or\*\*s.

"Let that be a lesson to you, my love. Never deny me my mate in the morning," he says, kissing me deeply again. I feel his mind filtering through mine. I know he's worried about me and wanting to make sure that I'm okay. It doesn't feel like an invasion of my privacy. With Hunter, I share everything, and he likes making sure that I'm always okay. I relax and open my mind, knowing that Hunter also needs to be focused when Zahn and Jocelyn arrive today.

"Much better," he says when he pulls away.

"Thank you," I say, caressing his cheek.

"Anytime," he says, kissing my nose before we get ready and head downstairs.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 150**

### **Chapter 150: Jocelyn's Arrival**

Sophie

Several hours later, we get the announcement that Alpha Zahn and Luna Jocelyn have arrived on our pack lands.

"They're here," I say to Nikki and Allison. We head to the front door to greet them, meeting up with our mates, Kinsley, and Lucas as we go.

Hunter and I stand up front. He takes my hand as I feel the nerves starting again. The others stand behind us, providing a unified front. I'm not sure who the unified front is for, Zahn or Jocelyn.

When they pull up, I see Jocelyn in the front seat. Her eyes assess the group of us that have come out to welcome them.

Alpha Zahn gets out of the car first. "Alpha Hunter, Luna Sophie," he greets before walking around the car.

"Alpha Zahn, welcome to our pack," Hunter says as Jocelyn opens the door on her side. When Zahn extends a hand to help her, she snarls at him. His teeth snap shut, and his lips press tightly together as he steps back lowering his hand.

I was right about Jocelyn. I'm not sure why she felt the need to stand up out of the car, especially without assistance, but she's very unsteady on her feet, her body obviously misshapen even under the blousy dress she's wearing.

"Luna Jocelyn, welcome to our pack," I say, hoping to start things on a positive note.

Instead of responding, she looks me over, her eyes lingering on my protruding stomach, her lip curling in disgust.

"Some legend you are," she finally growls, disappointment and disgust obvious in her tone.

Hunter snarls at her, stepping in front of me. "Listen up, Jocelyn," he growls, intentionally being disrespectful by not using her title. I grab his arm to keep him from going to get in her face. I can feel the heat of his anger flowing through our bond:

"You are ONLY here because my mate wants you here. I would have told both of you to shove it and figure out your mate bond on your own. You're not my problem and you obviously don't want my help. But I will not allow you to come into my pack and disrespect my mate. You know nothing about her. Whatever anger you have towards your mate, or the Moon Goddess, or anyone else, will NOT be directed at my mate. If you cannot abide by that rule, you can leave now."

"Hunter, no!" I plead, looking at him.

"I will not allow anyone to disrespect you in our pack, Sophie. This is your home, and she will respect that and you, or I will personally escort you off my pack lands, and leave you in the forest for the predators," he says, turning back to Jocelyn.

"You dare stand there and pass judgement on my mate, at woman who is the most kind, generous, and loving woman I've ever met? How dare you? Who the fuck do you think you are? There is not one person in this pack who wouldn't lay down their life for their Luna. They love and respect her that much. I very much doubt that you can say the same," he snarls at her.



“And they aren’t the only ones,” Nikki says behind me. “We, her friends, would lay down our lives for her too. And we know that she would do the same for us. Whatever you have been through, you have no right to put that on Sophie. You don’t know her at all. Save your judgement until you do. And know that her only goal is to help you. Whether or not you accept that help is up to you.”

We all stand quietly, waiting to see what Jocelyn will decide. She stares at me, taking in what Hunter and Nikki said. I’m not sure which surprised her more, Hunter’s protectiveness towards me, or Nikki’s support of me.

“You can’t help me,” she says quietly.

“I can’t if you won’t at least let me try.”

“Alpha Hunter, my apologies for offending your mate,” she says, turning to Hunter. His posture relaxes as he stands, moving out from the protective crouch he was in.

“Don’t apologize to me, apologize to my mate,” he snaps.

I watch the surprise flash across her face before she turns to me. “My apologies, Luna Sophie. I will reserve my judgement of you until I get to know you,” she says, nodding to Nikki in acknowledgement of her request.

“Thank you. Now, I thought we could start at our pack hospital. I don’t know what kind of doctors you have in your pack, but we have Dr. Caspian here. He’s excellent and I’ve asked him to run a full work up on you to see if there is anything that can be done for your injuries,” I tell her.

“I’m....I’m not sure I can walk that far.”

“I’ll carry you,” Zahn says, making her snarl and snap at him. I guess her change of attitude doesn’t include him.

“If you would allow it, I could have a warrior carry you, or I can get a wheelchair for you, your choice,” I say to her.

“Wheelchair, please.”

“I’ll get it,” Kinsley says. “I’m Beta Kinsley, by the way. It’s nice to meet you, Luna. If you need anything at all while you’re here, please don’t hesitate to ask me.”

“Thank you, Beta.”

We do introductions and by the time we’re done, Kinsley has returned with the wheelchair. We get Jocelyn in the chair, and I take the handles.

"I'm coming with you," Zahn insists, and I see Jocelyn's lips press tightly together.

"That is up to Luna Jocelyn, Alpha Zahn," I say to him.

"You're joking, right? You're taking my mate for medical treatment and not allowing me to come?" he asks.

"It's not my choice, it's hers," I say again. Jocelyn looks at me and then at Zahn.

"No," she says.

He snarls.

"Alpha Zahn!" Hunter snaps. "You agreed to this before you arrived. My mate was very clear that you may not like her ways, but that you would follow them while you were here. That has not changed. Her pack, her rules.

I watch Zahn clench his fists before turning and stomping away. As I begin to push Jocelyn toward the pack hospital, Nikki, Allison, and Kinsley all fall into step around us.

"You're seriously going to let me decide how much time I want to spend with him?"  
Jocelyn asks

"Yes. We have multiple options for sleeping arrangements. The choice will be yours. I can go over them once you've seen Dr. Caspian," Kinsley says.

Jocelyn turns and looks up at me, frowning. "I don't want to spend any time with him."

"We didn't think you would," I say, her frown deepening as she turns back, staying silent the rest of the way to the hospital.