

The One He Claimed Chapter 2

Chapter 2: Mate

Hunter

“Hey, what time are we leaving to head to the Alpha’s daughter’s party?” Lucas, my Beta, asks.

“Do you mean what time are we heading over to Alpha Carter’s party? Or do you mean what time are we heading over to Alpha Amelia’s party?” I ask my Beta, my tone sharp. “They have names. You should know them and use them.”

It’s an uncalled for response and I know it, but I hate these parties. How any Alpha can find his mate and then share their first encounter with everyone in the room is beyond me. If anyone were to see my mate like that, I’d kill them. I don’t care if that meant I had to decimate every pack in this world. I don’t share. Never have, never will.

“Come on, Alpha. You know I didn’t mean it like that. It’s the way it is,” Lucas says.

“Maybe it shouldn’t be the way it is. We consider ourselves an advanced species from the humans and yet they ended this ridiculous practice centuries ago.”

I turn, looking at my Beta. “Do you really not care that every man in the room will watch you have sex with your mate on her first night? You don’t care that they’ll see her in some stage of undress? You’re willing to share the woman the Moon Goddess chose only for you with every lecherous man in the room?”

“Geez, Alpha, when you say it like that, it sounds creepy. There are ways to make sure she’s covered. I’m not like some of those a**holes who strip their mate down and bend her over so the men get a front row view of him taking her as she s**bs her heart out. I wouldn’t do that.”

“Yeah? So, it’s better that you’re covering her body, but she can still see the room full of men behind you watching her as you pump into her?” I growl.

“What has gotten into you?” he asks me.

“I refuse to do that to my mate. The bond is supposed to be sacrosanct, and this forced act of a public mating does not fall in line with that. There is nothing about it that is sacred and don’t tell me that those males don’t get off watching that poor woman get claimed in front of them.” By the time I finish speaking, I’m snarling.

“I don’t know what to tell you, Alpha. You know that our pack, no pack, will accept your Luna if you don’t claim her publicly.”

I do know. It's why I'm glad that I haven't found my mate yet.

My sister was older than I am. After her public claiming, she told me how horrible it was for her, how she could never trust her mate to care for her after that. She practically begged me to never mistreat my mate like that. I loved my sister, and I was devastated when she jumped off a cliff high enough to ensure she wouldn't survive. When the packhouse doctor examined her to find out if she was pushed, he confirmed that she was pregnant with a female pup, and knew exactly why she did it. She refused to allow her daughter to go through what she went through.

I have no intention of ever putting my mate through that. My sister was a strong woman, an Alpha female, and it was more than she could bear. If I ever do find my mate, and goddess, willing I won't, but if I do, I won't mate her in front of a room full of onlookers. I won't be the reason that my mate can't ever trust me or worse, would prefer to end her life than live with me.

So, unlike my Beta, I have no desire to go to this party. If for some reason this girl is my mate, I will refuse to mate her in front of everyone. If she's not, I have no desire to watch her public claiming.

However, I am an Alpha. An Alpha who was invited to this Alpha female's birthday party and on the off chance that she is my mate, I'm going. I refuse to allow anyone else to try and claim my mate.

So, once we're ready, Lucas and I get in the car and head to Alpha Carter's pack lands. I drive because I need something to occupy my mind, something other than the possibility of what will happen tonight. When we arrive, I park in the already packed parking area and Lucas and I begin making our way to the packhouse.

When we get closer, I see Alpha Carter, his mate, Luna Amy, and a young she-wolf. I lift my nose in the air and realize that this female is a juvenile, not Alpha Amelia. However, she has the scent of the family so she must be a younger sister.

When we step up, I greet Alpha Carter and Luna Amy before. turning to the young wolf. I feel a strange pull to her.

"What is your name, pup?" I ask her.

Her chin juts up and I smile at her defiance. "You're not that much older than I am, Alpha. And my name is Sophie."

"My apologies, Alpha Sophie," I say, taking her hand, then leaning over and kissing it. "I meant no offense."

Alpha Carter growls at me. "Sophie, as you stated, is underage Alpha."

I turn and look at him. "I meant no harm, Alpha."

I hold his gaze until he nods, recognizing that I wasn't trying to be inappropriate with this young female. It makes me wonder who may have tried something with her already tonight. It's not wise of Alpha Carter to let her stick around if her sister finds her mate. The males become randy and depending on how the male claims his mate, the process can put the ranked males into rut. Based on the look he's giving me, he's dreading tonight more than I am.

I step inside and see that the festivities are already going. There are several she-wolves in attendance who will provide an outlet to the randy males if the need arises. I don't participate in those activities either. The entire process pisses me off. As I look around, I realize that every male here is hoping to get laid tonight, one way or another. It angers me. This innocent girl is celebrating her 18th birthday and instead of being the sweet party it was meant to be, it's already feeling more about the ranked males in attendance than it is about the birthday girl.

There are a couple of Alphas here who aren't falling into the craze of excitement and those are the ones I migrate to. I get a drink and go stand beside the four Alphas who are watching as the excitement in the room increases.

In some instances, even after the male identifies the female as his mate, they wait to complete their claiming until after dinner. I see that this girl's parents, her name is Amelia, are hoping that if she finds her mate, that he'll at least give her the time through dinner to get to know him.

"I can't decide if I want her to be my mate or not," Alpha Calvin says.

"I hope she's mine. There aren't a lot of pure Alphas left in our area. Amelia and her sister are the last two local Alpha females in this generation," Alpha Dutton says.

"The energy in this room is getting so thick you could cut it with a knife," Alpha Robin says.

"They make me forget that we've supposedly evolved from the wolves that give us our strength," Alpha Kayce says.

As I sip my drink, Alpha Carter comes back inside and announces that everyone should move to the back room. We all move as instructed. I notice the younger sister, Sophie, standing off to the side, practically bouncing on her toes.

My wolf, Shaw, nudges me to go stand beside her.

'Shaw, what's up?'

'I want to protect that girl. I like her.'

That's unusual. He usually doesn't pay a lot of attention at these things. For him, there's nothing wrong with mating in front of everyone. In fact, he thinks it ensures that everyone knows that she is yours. However, he recognizes that the human side of our psyche doesn't agree with this. He doesn't fight me in my argument for claiming our mate publicly. At least, he hasn't so far, but we haven't found her yet either.

I move closer to where Sophie is watching the stairwell, waiting for her sister. The room has gone quiet. I step behind her, blocking the other males from getting too close to her. Her mother, Luna Amy, is standing beside her and she turns, glaring at me until she sees who it is. I realize that Shaw must have felt the inappropriate excitement of the other males in the room. If Amelia isn't their mate, Sophie is the next best choice.

I nod at Luna Amy, letting her know that I mean no harm to her daughter. She seems to understand, turning back to watch her oldest daughter walk down the stairs.

I know immediately that her mate is here. The question is, which one of these males is it. I follow her gaze as Calvin pushes forward in front of the others.

"Mate," he says quietly, and I realize earlier that he had already

smelled her. He knew Amelia was his mate and he had been watching the other males in the room get excited about watching him claim her tonight.

"Mate," Amelia says, a tentative smile on her face. Because I'm standing so close to Sophie and her mother, I see the fearful look Amelia gives her mother. At her mother's subtle nod, Amelia finishes walking down the stairs to Calvin.

Of all the Alphas here, Amelia could do much worse than Calvin. Of course, that may not matter. If my sister is any indication, the night of the marking and mating could set a bad tone for the rest of their lives.

We all watch as Calvin gently leans in and kisses his mate. Her cheeks turn a delicate shade of pink. She waits, obviously knowing that Calvin will decide the pace for the rest of the evening.

"Alpha Carter," he says, turning to Amelia's father. "Let's have dinner."

I see the tension drop off of Luna Amy's shoulders. Sophie seems oblivious to what will happen later tonight, but Calvin is doing the best he can with the laws of our kind. He's giving Amelia time to get to know him.

He escorts her to the dining room and the rest of us file in. I reach out my arm to Sophie. "May I escort you to your table, Alpha Sophie?" I ask her as Alpha Carter comes up to escort his mate into the dining hall. The two of them seem to be having a private conversation and aren't paying attention to me and Sophie.

“Thank you, Alpha Hunter. You’re very kind,” she says, taking my arm. Shaw seems pleased that she knows my name.

“How old are you, Alpha Sophie?” I ask her.

“I’m sixteen, Alpha. I still have a couple of years before it’s my turn to find my mate. I’m so happy for Amelia. Do you know Alpha Calvin?”

“I do. He’s a good man, a good Alpha.”

“Amelia is the sweetest, kindest woman I’ve ever met. I hope he appreciates what a wonderful Luna and mate she will be for him,” she says, making my heart hurt even more.

As we walk into the dining hall, the other ranked members in the room become bold and begin chanting, “Mark, Mark, Mark!”

I see Amelia go pale and Calvin turns and snarls at the others in the room. “If you don’t like the pace of the evening, feel free to leave.”

That shuts everyone up quickly. I can see Sophie’s confusion at what is going on. I know that for my sister, she was protected from all of this until she was nearly of age. Apparently, Sophie is the same. I’m thankful that Amelia, at least, seems to understand what will happen this evening.

I walk Sophie to the table with her parents, Amelia, and Calvin, tucking her into her chair and nodding at Calvin, before going to find my seat.