

# The One He Claimed Chapter 4

## Chapter 4: Shock

Sophie

“What?” I ask, shocked. “Mother, the party is just getting going!! want to dance more and there’s going to be cake.”

“I’ve already sent some cake to your room, Sophie. Warrior Julianne is going to escort you to your room. Do not go anywhere else other than your room,” she says as Julianne steps up beside her. Her eyes are tracking all around the room.

“Let’s go, Alpha,” she says.

“But mother...”

“Sophie!” my father barks roughly. He’s never used that tone of voice with me before. He sees my shock and moderates his tone. “Do as your mother says.”

“Yes father,” I say, lowering my head and following Julianne out of the room. I turn and look one more time at the party-goers. Most of them are watching Alpha Calvin and Amelia, but my eyes lock on grey ones and Alpha Hunter winks at me as I step out of the ballroom.

Hedda begins purring in my head. I ignore her, still irritated that I have to leave the party.

Even though I’m annoyed with my mother, there’s no reason that Julianne should miss the fun.

“I know where my room is, Julianne. I can get there by myself,” I say, just as one of the ranked males steps into Julianne’s path.

“Hello pretty, are you coming back?” he asks her, glancing at me over her shoulder.

“I’m afraid it’s my job to make sure Alpha Sophie makes it to her room. Move out of my way or I’ll move you,” she says, taking a defensive stance.

“Feisty, I like that. If you get bored, come find me,” he says. I’ve never seen a man speak to a woman that way. It’s...

‘Covetous,’ Hedda says. And she’s right. I realize the hairs on my arms have gone up during the exchange, leaving me feeling uncomfortable.-

“Let them pass, Owen,” I hear Alpha Hunter’s voice behind me.

I turn, seeing that his face is much more serious than it was a moment ago. His hard gaze never leaves Alpha Owen's.

"You ruin all my fun, Hunter, especially after you and your friends kept Alpha Sophie to yourselves all night," he says, but he moves out of the way.

I see Julianne's shoulders relax and we move past Alpha Owen.

When we're far enough away and walking up the stairs, I look back almost expecting to see Alpha Hunter watching to make sure I go upstairs.

"What was that about?" I ask Julianne.

She turns and looks at me, then looks around.

"Your parents haven't told you?"

"Told me what?" I ask as we get to the Alpha floor.

She looks around. "I probably shouldn't say."

"Julianne, everyone has been acting so weird today. Just tell me. I won't say anything. I swear!"

We get to my room, and I can smell the scent of cake. My mom said she sent a piece up for me and it's here, waiting. Instead of going to get my cake, I turn to Julianne.

"Please, Julianne!"

She looks behind her, as if my parents are going to catch her saying something.

"Okay, fine. But you can't tell anyone that I told you."

"Okay," I say, pulling her into my room, and closing the door.

"Do you know anything about ranked members getting claimed?" she asks.

"No. Isn't it the same as everyone else?" I ask.

"No. Listen to me. You need to stay up here. Promise me you won't go back downstairs. Promise me!"

"Okay, I promise. What? What is it?"

She sighs, rubbing her hands over her face. "Claimings for ranked members are public."

I frown. Public?

“What does that mean?”

She takes my shoulders, leaning down slightly to make sure we're eye to eye. “It means that Alpha Calvin will have to mark and mate your sister front of that room full of men.”

“What? No way! My parents would never allow that.”

“Your parents have no choice. Once a ranked male finds his mate, he is in charge of when and how the public marking and mating occurs.”

I begin shaking my head just as I hear cheers begin downstairs. Julianne stands, looking at my door. “When I leave, lock your door. You had a couple of Alphas looking out for you tonight, but that doesn't mean that one or two won't get past them.”

Looking out for me? Does she mean Alpha Hunter?

She walks to the door, opening it slightly. “I need to get to my room before it's done. Stay up here and keep your door locked. You're safest here,” she says, turning to look back at me.

“Sophie! Are you listening to me?” she asks urgently. I nod, walking to the door.

The chants of 'Mark' and 'Mate' have gotten louder.

“I'll wait until I hear your door lock but do it quickly. I need to get to my room. I've heard that some matings can send ranked members into rut and they'll take anyone around. That's why there are she-wolves here that you didn't recognize.”

Everything Julianne is saying makes sense with everything I've seen today, but I just can't believe that my mother and father would allow that to happen to my sister.

I close the door and lock it, hearing Julianne rushing down the hall. Once I'm sure she's gone, I unlock my door and peek into the hallway. The chants are getting louder, and I carefully step out of my room and slowly make my way to the stairway banister.

I slide down the wall and carefully turn my head so I can see four floors down into the main living area of the packhouse where the chants are happening.

I watch as Alpha Calvin brings my sister to the front of the room. He snarls at the men in the room, quieting them. Then he turns to my sister. She looks like she's about to throw up. This is what my mother told her this morning. This is why she looked so scared when she smelled her mate earlier.

I watch as Alpha Calvin gently pushes her against the wall, into the darkest part of the room. It's not dark enough, not when you're in a room full of ranked shifters, but it's the best he can do.

I search, finding my parents standing on the side of the room, just watching. Why aren't they doing anything?

I turn back to my sister. 'Please.' I see her mouth to her mate, tears streaking down her face.

I'm not sure what he says to her, but he kisses her tears before kissing her. I watch Alpha Calvin slide his hand up my sister's leg, pulling up her pretty dress and exposing her bare leg to everyone. I watch, horrified as my sister begins to s\*\*b, but Alpha Calvin doesn't stop.

I look at the men in the room, all staring, watching as my sister is claimed in front of them. As I search, I don't see the dark hair of Alpha Hunter anywhere.

I look back toward my sister and see Alpha Calvin undoing his pants. His hips thrust forward and my sister jerks. I slap my hand over my mouth to keep from screaming. As I look away in horror, my eyes connect with the grey eyes of Alpha Hunter. He's standing outside the room, on the other side of a wall, watching me, not what's happening to my sister.

Is this why he was being so nice to me tonight? Knowing that one day this might be me and him? Hedda whines in my head at that. While she isn't as appalled at what's happening as I am, she does recognize that I wouldn't want it and because of that, she's against it.

Everything I ate tonight threatens to come back up and as I run to my room, I hear the cheers of the ranked members behind me. When I get to my room, I lock the door and look around.

I won't ever be put in that position. Ever.

The only way for me to escape it is to leave. I need to run away, to get away from this place.

I push away from the door and quickly strip out of my party dress. I pull my hair down and quickly brush it out, pulling it into a simple ponytail. Then I grab a bag and throw some casual, comfortable clothes into it.

I find the money I've been saving and put it into my bag. It won't last me long. I'll need to figure out a way to get a job somewhere far from here.

As I look around my room, I realize that I can't leave without saying goodbye to my parents.

I quickly grab a pen and paper, and scribble a note to them, letting them know that I love them, but I can never go through what Amelia went through tonight. I doubt they'll get it before tomorrow morning. My mother looked as nauseous as I felt. That's good because it means I have more time to escape from here.

I grab my bag and take one more look around my room. I realize I've led a charmed, protected life up until now. But all of that is about to change.