

The One He Claimed Chapter 8

Chapter 8: Promise Me

Hunter

I'm not surprised that Kinsley had some great ideas about how we could help these she-wolves. While we know we can't take them in, she did have a great idea to find ways to make sure that they had food and water. Many of these girls are young, still underage pups, who may have little to no way of feeding themselves.

I put Kinsley in charge of finding a place where we could leave food and water for the females on the run who might be travelling through the area, a place that would be safe from scavengers and the animals of the forest. We all agreed that the she-wolves who are running won't come too close to the pack, but there are areas where they could skirt around the local packs, including ours, if they were passing through.

The first time she left food and water, she went back the next day and was disappointed to find that no one had come through. She left a note letting them know that if they were passing through, that the food and water was for them, that they could take it, and to be safe,

It was two more days before she finally found the food and water missing with a simple note saying thank you.

Now she goes nearly every day to check to see if she needs to put more food and water out and to continue to leave notes about anything that we know, any warnings that we can give to the she-wolves who are on the run.

I'm at my desk going through the latest list of casualties within the packs. More and more, the ranked she-wolves are putting themselves at risk in order to get away, sometimes resulting in their death. Because of this, the Alphas and ranked members are putting restrictions on the ranked she-wolves, locking them into the pack houses, refusing to let them leave or not allowing them to go anywhere alone.

There are some she-wolves who have accepted their fate, some who are not fighting the system, but they're becoming more and more rare. It won't be too long before we're going to have a real problem on our hands, and I won't be the only Alpha unable to find a Luna or to provide an heir for my pack.

As I'm reading through the list, becoming more and more agitated, the door to my office swings open and Lucas comes in looking distraught. He closes the door and throws himself in a chair in front of me.

"What is it?" I asked without preamble.

“Alpha Zahn caught his mate. He hunted her down, found her, claimed her in front of the warriors that he had taken with him. Then as he was bringing her home, she jumped off the mountain pass they were on.” He puts his face in his hands, his fingers sliding into his hair and grabbing hold..

“Is she dead?”

He laughs, mirthlessly. “No, she survived. She’s in critical condition, from what I can gather nearly every bone in her body is broken. But she’s alive. I doubt that she’ll be happy about it when she finally wakes up.

He looks up at me with haunted eyes. “That could have so easily been Kinsley. What if she had tried to kill herself like that, Hunter. What if she...”

He covers his face with his hands as his body wracks with the s**bs over the fear for his mate. I’ve just stood up to walk around my desk and console him when there’s a quick knock at my door and it opens before I can tell them to come in.

Kinsley steps in, looking at me, then at her mate. “Alpha I.... What’s happened?”

When Lucas realizes that his mate is there, he stands and in two steps, he has pulled her into his arms and buried his face in her neck. Kinsley stiffens in his arms, and turns to look at me, not sure what she’s supposed to do.

“Lucas was just telling me that Alpha Zahn hunted for and caught his mate. He marked and mated her, and then on the way home, she tried to kill herself.”

I watch as realization dawns on her and she slowly wraps her arms around her mate, who is quietly sobbing against her neck. I turn around, giving them a little bit of privacy, as much as I can in my office.

When he calms down, Lucas steps back, taking Kinsley’s face in his hands.

“If you ever think about taking your life, if you ever would rather die than be with me, then you reject me, Kinsley. I will accept it. I would rather be a broken man than to have you not in this life. This world is a better place with you in it, and it would be worth it to me to live like that, as long as I know that you’re alive. I know you don’t love me as much as I love you. I know that you may never love me as much as I love you, and I’m okay with that. But the thought of not being able to see you, of you not being here. It just....”

His voice breaks and he takes a moment to collect himself. “Please Kinsley, promise me. Promise me that you won’t do that,” he begs her.

“I won’t do that Lucas. I’ve never tried to kill myself.”

“You practically starved yourself to death, Kins,” he says.

She sighs. “I’ll admit after everything happened, I felt nauseous all the time and it was hard for me to eat. And sometimes, when I remember that night.... Sometimes it’s hard for me to eat even now. But I’m not trying to kill myself, Lucas. It wouldn’t do that. Not to you, not to Alpha Hunter, and not to this pack. I swear.

He pulls her to him, holding her tightly. Her arms go around him, and even for me, I can see that it’s uncomfortable for her, something she’s not used to. But whether it’s the mate bond or it’s just the kind of person that Kinsley is, she feels the need to console him.

“Thank you, Kinsley,” he says softly into her hair before stepping back.

She heads to the door. As she reaches for the doorknob, she turns and looks back. “If you’re not too busy, I could have lunch with you today,” she says to Lucas.

“I’m not too busy, Kins. And even if I was, I would make time.” He looks at me out of the corner of his eye and then back at her.

“Would you be more comfortable having lunch with me and Alpha Hunter, or would you prefer it just be the two of us?” he asks.

I’m proud of Lucas for giving her the option. It’s what I suggested and he’s taking my suggestion to heart.

I watch as Kinsley looks at me and then back at Lucas. “I would be more comfortable if it was the three of us having lunch,” she says honestly.

He looks at me and I nod. “Maybe we can talk about what’s going on with the she-wolves that you’ve been contacting Kinsley. You can give us an update over lunch,” I say to her.

“I’ll get the trays and I’ll be back,” she says, smiling at Lucas before heading out.

When she leaves, he goes into the bathroom and washes his face, blowing his nose and pulling himself together. I sit back down behind my desk, waiting for him.

“That seemed promising,” I say to him as he sits down in front of me.

“I’ve thought a lot about what you said, about Kinsley not having choices and how I need to give her options. I would have preferred to have had lunch, just the two of us. But this way, maybe she’ll be open to eating with me again. I think you’re right, that the way to gaining her trust is by allowing her to make decisions that are best for her.”

Lucas and I work together for the next hour, and when there's a knock at the door, he jumps up to open it. He takes the cart from Kinsley and helps her to set the trays on the table. I notice as she passes him, she reaches out and lets her hand graze across his back.

I feel the sharp sting of jealousy that Lucas has someone in his life while I'm still alone. He and Kinsley seem to finally be finding their way together, and I'm still without a mate or a Luna.