

SECOND CHANCE LUNA

Chapter 6

Jason escaped the party and Kristie's amorous overtures as soon as he could, retreating to his room. Double locking his door, he hopped in

the shower to try to cool his eagerness to see his mate. His arms itched to hold her, caress her. He was dying to bury his nose in her neck

and breathe her scent.

"Mate!" Lobo growled, pacing in the back of his mind like a caged animal.

"Tknow pal," Jason sighed. 'I want to be with her just as much as you do, but we have to be cautious. There's something wrong with this

pack."

If that Luna touches us again we rip her throat out!" Lobo snarled.

"Strange Alpha Graham didn't react at all," Jason suddenly realized something that had been bothering him the whole night.

A chosen bond wasn't as strong as a fated one, but it still connected one's wolf spirit to another, allowing them to communicate and sense

each other. If one member of the pair betrayed the bond, the other would certainly feel it. Though Kristie had only been flirting, her mate

should still have felt her intentions and yet Graham hadn't flinched despite the fact she was sitting next to him. Then again, he had been

drinking quite heavily, so perhaps he couldn't sense his wolf through the haze. Or was he drinking to deliberately suppress his wolf and dull

the ache of his mate's betrayal?

Jason couldn't decide which scenario was more disturbing. In either case, his instinct told him it wasn't safe to announce his fated mate had

been found, at least not until he had a chance to speak with her. The sooner they could get his mate back to the safety of his own pack the better.

“Yes! Take Mate home!”

“We will. We are not leaving without her.”

Lobo growled assent. No matter what, he had to convince Phoebe to leave with him. Nobody could stop him from claiming what was his.

Stepping out of the shower, Jason felt more exhausted than when he entered. Quickly drying himself, he laid out in the large bed. Sleep

didn't come easily.

His mate was etched in his mind and he saw her as soon as he closed his eyes. He wanted nothing more than to curl up with her in his arms,

her warm scent wafting around him and filling his nose. Only with that image firmly in place did he finally manage to fall asleep.

The buzzing of his phone woke him the next morning. With a groan, he reached for it, setting it against his ear without looking at the screen

before answering, “Yeah?”

“Oh, Pm sorry, dear. Did I wake you?”

“Mom?” Jason was instantly awake. “Is everything all right?”

“Of course. Ben has the pack running like clockwork,” his mother assured him. “But we did have a pretty serious breach.”

“What do you mean?”

“Rogues breached our southern border. Ben and the warriors drove them out.”

“Causalities?”

“None on our end. It's just...”

“Just what?”

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“You know how packs are. They get anxious when their Alpha is away.”

“Yeah. Got it loud and clear,” Jason sighed.

since he had no Luna tying the pack together, they relied on him to maintain the pack bonds. While loyalty and trust were powerful, they

didn't quite make up for the natural strength of a Lunas care and love.

“I'm sorry, dear. I know you were counting on this trip.”

“It's all right, mom...I found her.”

“...You did? Is she there with you? Can I talk to her? What's her name? What's she like?” the questions spilled out of his eager mother like a

river.

“No, she's not with me at the moment. I just scented her last night. Her name is Phoebe. Mom, she's...she's gorgeous. You should have

seen how she interacts with her pack's pups.”

Just the mention of it had Lobo wagging his tail.

“Oh, sweetie. She sounds wonderful. 'm so happy for you,” his mother gushed. “But you haven't spoken to her yet?”

“No, not yet. This pack...the Alpha and Luna are...strange.”

“What do you mean?”

“I'm pretty sure they are chosen mates but their bond...it almost seems, well, repressed,” Jason sighed. He couldn't think of a better word

to describe it. "It's not like your bond with dad and how strained it became. Its like they are doing everything they can to deliberately weaken it."

"If that's true, it means the alpha most likely met his fated mate and rejected her before taking his chosen mate."

"You think so? He had to know it would be risky."

Aside from the advantages of a fated mate, there was another danger when it came to rejecting them and that was the possibility of losing

one's wolf entirely. Their wolf spirits hungered for their fated mates. If their human counterpart rejected that mate, it could drive their wolf

insane. Their spirits became unpredictable or depressed, refusing to even communicate with their human half. Sometimes they completely

lost the ability to shift. Other times they went feral and became a crazed rogue.

For an alpha, the risks were far too great. Why take such a gamble? Just what was the Rimrock Alpha thinking when he rejected his mate for

another?

"You're right to be cautious," his mother intoned. "If he finds out your fated mate is a member of his pack, it could send his wolf over the

edge. There's no telling how it will react."

"Must protect Mate!" Lobo growled.

"Cam guarded her place last night," Jason said. "I'll talk to her today and wrap up my visit as soon as I can."

"Take your time and don't rush the bond. Your mate deserves some romance before you sweep her away. Once I tell the pack you've found

your Luna, they'll settle down and prepare to welcome her."

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Jason grimaced. His pack had been waiting over thirty years for their Luna. Though his parents were fated mates, their pairing had been

strained by his father's previous indiscretions and his mother was never able to properly bond with the pack. Perhaps that was why it was so

easy for Jason to assume control even though his father was still in his prime.

Jason had taken over his pack when he was twenty-one. He had been through warrior training and alpha training since he was twelve, but

he was hardly ready for such responsibility. His father tried to deny it, but there was no hiding how even his wolf bowed to his son. Once

Jason turned eighteen, his father finally accepted the truth and started preparing to officially hand over control of the pack.

For years, Jason managed his pack on his own, building their confidence and loyalty in stages until they were united under his leadership.

Their bonds were strong but still lacking. The final piece was finally within his grasp: his Luna.

"Good luck, sweetheart," his mother's voice broke through his thoughts.

"Thanks. Ill call you later."

"You do that but don't interrupt your time with your Luna. Use this time to establish and strengthen your bond. When you come back it is

certain to be hectic and it will be more difficult to spend time together."

"Right."

"See you soon. And I can't wait to meet her!"

"Bye mom."

Jason hung up the phone. Running a hand through his hair, he headed to the bathroom. His mother said to use this time to establish his

bond, but how? He had only given this pack a total of three days for a security assessment, so his schedule was tight, and it would look

suspicious if he extended it without reason. After breakfast, he was supposed to evaluate their warriors and observe their training methods.

The full schedule hadn't bothered him at the other packs, but now he realized how little time he had to simply mingle with the rest of the

pack. He had to find time to meet his mate and speak with her. Lobo prowled the back of his mind, growling softly. They were both anxious

to see their mate again. Which reminded him...

"Cam."

"I'm here, Alpha."

"How was last night?"

"Uneventful. Luna was up early though. Shes been awake for an hour already."

"Is she...And what is she doing now?"

"Right now she's sitting on her porch swing with a cup of herbal tea reading. I can't see the book title from here though. Should I get

closer?"

"No. Don't disturb her. I suppose she'll head to breakfast soon."

"I don't think so, Alpha. I smelled eggs and bacon earlier, so 'm pretty sure she made her own."

Jason frowned. Made her own? It certainly wasn't out of the ordinary for wolves to enjoy a private meal from time to time, especially if they

lived away from the packhouse. However, wolves were social by nature. So far, the only ones his Luna spent time with were the pack's pups.

He wondered why.

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Not to mention her scent in the packhouse was virtually non-existent. It seemed she avoided it as much as possible, but why would she do

that? Wolves were not solitary by nature. Lobo whimpered at the thought of their mate being lonely. They should be with her.

"All right, Cam. Keep watch. I'll send Luke to relieve you so you can eat."

"Actually, if you just send him out with food I'll be fine."

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"Are you sure?"

"Yeah, I already know my mate isn't here and after last night's party I got a sense my kind wasn't appreciated."

Jason grimaced. Wolves generally didn't hold the same prejudices as humans when it came to sl orientation. Wolves judged others by

their aura and ability rather than their bed partners, but some younger packs did harbor such views, especially if they associated closely with

human settlements.

Such prejudice made it difficult for wolves like Cam, though he was more than capable of putting others in their place. For those who lacked

pack status or physical strength to defend themselves, staying with their pack could be impossible, and sometimes they were even driven

out, forced to become rogues, which was truly cruel.

Packs like Blue Moon worked to help such wolves transfer to other packs. In the day and age of computers and the internet, helping wolves

forced out by such circumstances was even easier. In fact, the Strawberry Moon Pack in California made helping such wolves its mission,

establishing a network of safe havens ensuring they could find a permanent home and their mates. Though Cam probably never thought

about it, visiting the Rimrock Pack was a stark reminder he was lucky to be born in a pack like Blue Moon.

“Very well, I'll let Luke know. Keep an eye on her.”

“Of course, Alpha. No one will harm our Luna.”

Jason's lips twitched with a smile. It warmed him to know his pack members were already showing loyalty to their Luna when he hadn't

even spoken to her yet. As his mother said, she would be welcomed with open arms once he took her home. Lobo bristled with pride. Jason

dressed and was ready by the time Luke knocked on his door.

“How'd you sleep?” Luke asked with a smirk.

Jason growled warning. His Beta was trying to lighten the mood, but it wasn't helping. Questions had run through his mind all night and the

urge to hold his mate wracked his every thought. He didn't like she was so far away from the safety of the packhouse. One thing he knew

for certain: he could not spend another night without her.

“Okay, bad joke,” Luke held up his hands in surrender.

He was; in fact, impressed by Jason's self-control. When Luke first scented his mate he couldn't keep his hands to himself. All night long he

held his mate close, nuzzling her, kissing her and rubbing his scent over her before they mated and marked each other that very night,

leaving the party early.

“My mother called,” Jason said.

“What happened?” Luke asked, immediately on edge.

“There was a breach. No casualties, but the pack is getting anxious.”

“Without their Alpha present I can understand why,” Luke nodded. Even with Ben, Jason's sister and mother present, the pack would still be

anxious without their Alpha, especially with no Luna to keep them calm.

“So...what do you want to do?”

“I'm canceling the rest of the tour,” Jason said. “The one I've been looking for is here, so there is no need to continue with the charade. And

the pack needs me home. Mom said not to rush, but plan to head back as soon as possible.”

Luke nodded. Jason took the safety of his pack very seriously. It didn't surprise him they would drop the rest of their schedule. But he also

knew Jason was anxious since he hadn't even had a conversation with his Luna yet. Somehow he had to introduce himself and convince her

to leave her home to go with him. An Alpha could not live without his mate.

Normally, if a newly mated pair came from different packs, they would discuss which pack they wanted to join. But in this case there could

be no discussion. Jason couldn't simply stop being Alpha. It shouldn't be too difficult with the bond pulling her to stay with her mate, but it

was clear she was very attached to her pack, or at least the pups. Luke wasn't certain how this would fall out.