

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 51

### Chapter 51

Amelie

“Mommy, wake up everyone is coming today.” A tiny hand caresses my face. As I open my eyes, I see Rose sitting on the bed next to me.

“Good morning, Rosie sweetheart.” I pull her into a hug. I look around to see where Daisy is, and to my amusement, I see her jump in the air and land square on Gideon’s chest. Not only waking him up but also knocking the wind out of him a little.

I hold back my laughter as Gideon turns and looks to me for help. “Daisy, honey, you can’t do that to daddy. You might hurt him.”

Daisy stands on the bed with her arms curled in the air like a bodybuilder and growls, “Nothing can hurt, daddy. He’s the toughest wolf in the world.”

Gideon grabs her and tickles her, and she squeals. “That’s right; your daddy’s the toughest daddy in the world. Don’t forget it.” He lets up only for a second before tickling her again.

“OK, girls, sit on the bed and be good while mommy and daddy get ready. Your grandparents and aunts and uncles are going to be here this afternoon!” I remind them.

“Mommy, how come we didn’t meet them before?” Daisy asks.

“Well, they are my family, and now they will be yours.” I have both girls in my lap. Gideon is rubbing my back as we all sit in our bed.

“Why do you have two mommies and two daddies?” Daisy is the most curious child.

“Well, you know how I became your mommy after you were born. I also got a second mommy and daddy after I was born too.” They look at me with mouths wide open.

“What are aunts and uncles?” Rose asks.

“They are my brothers and sister. You also have a great uncle and aunt coming too!”

“Wow!” they both say.

“What does that mean?” Gideon and I laugh at the quick turnaround from their Wow to not understanding.

“That is my mother’s brother and his mate. He is my uncle Lucas and my aunt Sarah. Which makes them your great aunt and uncle.” I know they don’t fully understand, but they will figure it out the more they are around my family.

“OK, girls, mommy and I are going to get ready. I’ll leave the bathroom door open, but you have to stay in our room till mommy is ready. Got it.” Gideon tells the girls as he gets up.

“Yes, daddy.” They both say.

I get up as well, heading to the bathroom. This was our regular morning routine. Gideon and I rush around the bathroom and closet, getting ready all the while with our ears wide open, making sure we can hear the girls talking and playing. They were great kids but still, kids, we didn’t get complacent just because they are well behaved. Today was a special day. It was the day before my Luna ceremony, and my whole family was going to be her.

We would be receiving other guests as well. Most would be coming in later today or early tomorrow. I was able to work out a big family dinner tonight. After we put the kids to bed, we will have a cocktail party with our VIP guests. This was the only way not to insult the incoming Alphas and Lunas and give the twins time to get to know their new family members. The next few days would be hectic, and I was so thankful that my family would be here. I honestly had a village, and I needed it. I was almost eight weeks pregnant, and I was already so tired. Thank the goddess. I didn’t really have bad morning sickness, but the heartburn and fatigue were a nightmare.

I grab an olive-green button-up shirt dress, it hit right at the knee, with a brown leather belt. It’s sleeveless so it will show my pack mark perfectly. It has an open collar, so my mate mark peaks out slightly. I pair it with a pair of brown leather pointed-toe pumps. I am going for a sophisticated professional look for the day, and I will change into a cocktail dress for dinner later. I braid my thick wavy hair loosely while letting a few strands fall around my face. Makeup is simple for now a little mascara and neutral pink lip gloss. Full glam will be later. I also add some copper and Fairburn Agate earrings and a matching necklace. I might as well advertise my craft while I am at it. Before I step out of the closet, Gideon walks in with a towel around his waist.

“Well, hello, my beautiful Luna. You have to do so little to look so polished.” He pulls me into him.

“Stop it.” I playfully slap his chest, blushing at his compliment. “Well, with a mate as handsome as you, I have to keep up.”

“You are truly amazing.” He leans down to kiss me, but before he can take my lips.

“Mommy, are you done yet!” Daisy howls from the bedroom.

We laugh together, and he rests his head on top of mine. “We are about to have 3 of them.”

“I know, we will have to wait till they are teenagers to get time together?” I tease.

“No. That’s what grandparents are for!” I know he’s not entirely joking.

“I need to get the girls ready, so we can get this day started.” I reach up and give him a quick kiss.

“OK, girls, mommy is ready,” I yell to them.

I take the girls to their room to get them ready for the day. As usual, they want to dress like me, as much as they can. I had already planned for this. I already ordered their outfits when I ordered mine two weeks ago. I have their outfits for the whole week planned out even backups if needed. I pull out the two dresses for today. They are button-up shirt dresses sleeveless as well. Daisy will wear yellow and Rose pink. They both have a tiffany blue ribbon that ties at the waist. They have white ruffle socks and shiny white flats. They have matching cardigan sweaters in Tiffany blue. I pull their hair back in a high ponytail and tie in the yellow and pink bows I made to match the dresses. They did look like modern-day princesses!

Gideon walked in looking yummy as always. He wore grey slacks, wine colored button-up, and true to form, his sleeves were rolled up to his elbows. “Well, look at me, beautiful girls!”

“Thank you, daddy,” the girls say in unison.

I take their hands, “OK, let’s go eat breakfast. In a few hours, your grandparents will be here.”

We walk down to the dining hall as usual. As we walk, I look around to make sure the decorations and last-minute details are finishing up. I am happy with the minor adjustments made to the Packhouse. It was well maintained so some paint, plants and rearranging furniture was all it took and it looked completely new. Thank goodness because I did not want to spend a ton of money on renovations. Paint and plants are relatively cheap in comparison. Other changes to the pack were working out nicely as well.

I put Becky in charge of the kitchen and staff of the Packhouse. She has improved the lives of the Omegas that work in the Packhouse tenfold. She found out they have not had a pay increase in five years. Gideon and the rest of the ranked males had no idea. She created fair and rotating schedules and upgraded facilities and overall working conditions. She has also created a new menu and style of dining for pack meals that I did not know was possible without a ton of waste. All leftover food gets portioned out, and the pack members can come and pick it up at any time. She gives Benjamin credit

for this idea. He's always hungry because he shifts daily and most of the pack does. This caused the warriors to spend tons on snacks. With these new meals to go anytime, we reduce our waste and keep our warriors fed. Gideon loves it. He could tell the difference in the pack member who are eating more balanced meals to those who just snack.

After this week and my ceremony are over, Jorden and Shay will start recruiting and training our workforce. We have identified the people we need to move around in the pack and what holes we need to be filled. Jorden has already started investigating who and from which packs we need to recruit. Shay and I will handle the recruitment together. We just needed to get through the pomp and circumstance of this week.

We finally enter the hall, and as usual, everyone stands and bows. It doesn't even phase me at this point. As we walk to our table, I hear awes and ohs over the twins looking so adorable. I look down, and they are waving at everyone. I giggle a little they had their own fan club. I knew everyone in the pack loved them, and their little wave was a thank you for their adoration—my sweet girls.

I could barely eat; I was too excited to see my family. I kept looking at my watch, hoping time would go faster. I am snapped out of my daze of time watching with a plate being pushed closer to me.

"Love, you have barely eaten. I know our son will be hungry later if you don't eat now. If you don't, I'll have Becky and Shay follow you around with food." Gideon says as he tries to feed me a bite of hash browns.

"Oh, I guess I wasn't paying attention to my plate." I take the bite of hash browns from the fork in front of me.

"Everyone will be here soon." Gideon leans over and kisses my forehead.

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### Chapter 52

Amelie

"I know. I am just excited. This will be the first time they will meet the girls, see the Packhouse and see me as a Luna." I squeeze his hand.

"You are a perfect Luna! It's like you were born to be one!" he winks at me. We both laugh together.

"Well, my lookouts tell me that the first of our guests are arriving soon." Gideon has strategically asked certain Alphas to come early today to discuss ongoing investigations

and other inter-pack business. Since my family will stay a few extra days, they didn't come early but will handle pack business in the next few days.

"OK, I'm going to take the girls and head over to the main packhouse first and check on the staff." I take a few more bites of food before grabbing the girls and heading to the main Packhouse. Shay and Easton join us as Jordan takes Ryan to check on the ceremony preparations outside. It's now early spring, so that the evening will be perfect for an outdoor event.

I have Shay pull the packhouse staff together for a quick meeting. They all lineup. I had them wearing forest green polo shirts and black slacks. This way, the guest would recognize who to ask for help with without disturbing the warriors and investigators. Not that they couldn't help. It was just more organized this way.

"Thank you all for the hard work over the past two weeks. I couldn't have done it without each and every one of you. The prep work is done, and now the real challenge has finally arrived handling fussy Alphas and Lunas." Some giggle, and a few are in shock. "It's OK. It was a joke." I see their faces release tension. "Kind of. I want you all to know that you are important to this pack. Everyone is important, and I want you to do a good job. I know from experience how some packs treat Omegas. Please do not let anyone treat you without respect. If, for any reason, you are uncomfortable, please contact Beta Shay. She will take care of the situation right away. I know I can count on you all."

"Yeah, good job, everyone," Daisy yells out and Rose just waves. Everyone chuckles.

"Our first guests are arriving," Shay informs me.

"OK, everyone is dismissed. Please double-check your schedules for the next few days to make sure no changes have been made. Thank you." I tell everyone, and everyone goes on to their respective places.

The first to show are the Alpha and Luna of White Planes along with their daughter. Shortly after, a few more pack Alpha's show. Some are young and haven't found their mate. Whenever there are gatherings like this, it's always seen as an opportunity for unmated wolves to find their mates. Alphas will bring their sons and daughters in hopes they are mated and can strengthen the pack. It is a tradition that if a Luna comes from a high-ranking Alpha family, she keeps her last name. It more of a political power move than anything. It shows the two packs are connected, signaling other packs they have an alliance. I don't feel that Druit Guard needs to flaunt a partnership since they are the biggest pack in the US and are the enforcers for the Alpha Council and Elder Council. I will follow suit for appearance's sake. Gideon and my father don't need unnecessary gossip.

Gideon bond links me, "My Luna, your family will be here in 10 minutes."

"We will be right there." I cut the link.

“OK, girls, time to go to our wing. Your grandparents are almost here.” They come running over and take my hand and start pulling me to leave.

“Come on, mommy, hurry.” They both say over and over.

“Sorry, Shay. Can you take it from here?” I smile, and the twins are dragging me.

Shay chuckles, “Yes Luna. Easton and I are all over it.”

“Bye, Rose. Bye Daisy. Let’s play later.” Easton waves, and the girls wave back as they keep pulling me.

We quickly make our way to our wing, and we make it right before my stepfather Logan bust through the door my mother and brother Riley close behind. “Where are my adorable granddaughters.” He bellows.

Rose hides behind me, and Daisy stands her ground to the giant Alpha. “Hey, I’m Daisy, and I’m right here.”

“Logan, Mom, Riley, this is Daisy and Rose.” I scoot Rose out from behind me.

“You are scaring her.” My mother slaps Logan’s arm.

“Hello, pretty girls. I am your Grandma Ann, and this is your Grandpa Logan. Over there is your uncle Riley.” My mother kneels down to be closer to the twin’s level.

Rose walks over to my mother and gives her a soft hug, then looks up at me and asks, “Is Grandma Ann a Wuna?”

“Yes, she is,” I answer

Her eyes get wide she looks at Logan. “Are you an Alpha too?” Logan nods his head. She looks over at Riley and points, “Is he an Alpha too?”

We all laugh. Riley walks over and kneels, “I am an Alpha Heir. One day I will take over for my father.”

“Wow!” Daisy says.

Everyone else shuffles in, and the girls are quickly intrigued with all the people and that they were their family. Daisy seemed to bond right away with my stepfather, and Rose quickly attached herself to Hope. It was cute. I could see right away that Phillip was watching Hope with Rose. He was thinking about having a pup of their own. I was so happy that they looked to be genuinely in love.

Gideon talked to my dad and James while I was talking to my Uncle Lucas and Aunt Sarah. The next thing I knew, Becky was pushing a cart of sandwiches, fruit, and veggies and dip into the living room. I whisper, "Thank you," as she slips out.

"If anyone is hungry, please have a snack. We will have dinner here in our Alpha wing, then head over to the main wing for cocktails with the visiting pack Alphas and Lunas." I announce.

Of course, James and Riley are the first to pick through the cart. They are not blood-related, but they spent a lot of time together due to me being their sister and Uncle Lucas and Mom. I was happy they go along so well.

"Gideon and I will show you all up to your rooms. You can unpack and freshen up before dinner. We don't normally have too much staff in this part of the house. I try to keep it more like our family home, just like you all do. If you need anything, let Gideon and I know we will make sure it happens."

Everyone grabs their bags and follows up the stairs. We show everyone to their rooms then head back downstairs. The food cart is still in the living room, and I nibble on a sandwich and give the girls some fruit. Slowly everyone trickles down to the living room again, and it feels so comfortable having everyone here. The afternoon quickly wended away, and soon everyone went to change into our cocktail attire. In other words, it was time to gear up and ready for battle!

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### Chapter 53

Amelie

Gideon and I brought the girls into our room while we got ready. I had decided on one shoulder fitted cocktail dress that hit mid-thigh in navy blue—paired with gold strappy sandal pumps, gold and lace agate earrings I made. I picked out a navy-blue button-up for Gideon and grey slacks and tan loafers. I top him off with a vest that matched his slacks, and of course, he rolled up his sleeves and left the top two buttons of his shirt undone. I knew the girls would want to match us even if they were not going to the cocktail party after dinner, so I already had a navy-blue dress ready for them. They were fluffy and frilly and also had a little glitter in the fabric. They looked like the night sky. Once they were in their fancy dress, they just kept twirling till they fell down. I put Celeste's training into action. These looked like ordinary evening clothes, but I knew better it was battle armor.

We were going to be starting a weeks' worth of political dealings. Yes, it was my Luna ceremony, but it was an excuse for Alpha's to come together and work out trade deals, build alliances, find mates for unmated ranking wolves, or force alliance through choice mates. I was just happy that all our ranking males had mates. It meant we would not

have to deal with a “Political Mating,” as we call it. I knew the political target that was on my back. I had direct family ties to two of the most influential packs in the US and was now going to lead the largest, most crucial pack, the Druit Guard. That is also why my Luna ceremony became a more significant event than Gideon, and I wanted it to be. We didn't have a choice, and if we snub any Alpha by not sending an invitation, we would be telling the world they were our enemy. If an Alpha didn't accept the invitation, it could be viewed as them saying they were our enemy. No one wanted to be an enemy of the Druit Guard.

At least we still had dinner to look forward to. I felt sorry for my two brothers. James was still only 17 and half a year from 18 when he could find his mate. On the other hand, Riley was 18, turning 19 right before the Ember Moon Festival in June. Both would have Alpha's throwing their daughters at them the whole week along with the other Alpha heirs, plus they would be getting used to the politics of Alphas. I knew the pressure for other Alphas for a “Political Mating” would be worse than expected for them both because of Hope and I.

Dad was right; the Hill Country Pack took over as the top pack in Texas with the imploding of the Golf Coast Pack. They were not just physically the strongest but also financially thriving. Philp's call on the winery was spot on, and after my father's investment, things took off. They supplied all the wine for this week. I was more than honored to accept their gift. I was happy Hope was thriving.

We entered the private dining room. I also invited our ranked members to join us as well. They were like family to Gideon, the twins, and me, so I wanted them to meet our family up close and personal as soon as we walked in to see Becky smothered by Celeste.

“Becky! I missed you so much!” Celeste hums while hugging Becky.

“Oh, thank you, Luna Celeste. I missed you as well! Did you see I am officially a Delta female now!” She proudly displays her marks in her sleeveless cream-colored dress. It made her fair skin and red hair stand out.

“That's wonderful, dear! Well, if your mean old Luna doesn't treat you right, you can always come back to the Ashwood pack.” Celeste winks at me.

Gideon interrupts the chatter, “Everyone, I would like to introduce our pack's ranked members to you all. This is the Beta family Tyson and Shay Marshall and their son and future Beta Easton.” Tyson and Shay bow, Easton, who's only four waves, then runs over to Rose and holds her hand. Everyone just awes at the sweet kids.

“Thank you all for inviting us to your family meal. I have a lot to learn from you all. I hope to spend time with you, Beta Lucas.” Tyson says.



“Well, I’m sure you can teach me a few things too!” Uncle Lucas laughs. He’s always been very humble.

“This is our Gamma family, Marcus and Jorden Rodriguez, and their son and future Gamma Ryan.” They all bow. Ryan is five, so he understands more and stands tall and proud next to his father.

“Thank you for the invite. Alpha Logan, if we get the opportunity while you are here, I would enjoy a sparing session with you.” Marcus says with a bow to my stepfather.

Logan, who loves a good fight, is all too eager. “Well, it can be arranged.”

“Most of you know them already, but this is our Delta couple Benjamin and Becky Sanders. Benjamin is our Delta Caption, and Becky is in charge of the packhouse staff.”

Becky is as bouncy as ever, “Hello everyone! I missed you all so much! The menu this week was put together by Luna Amelie and myself, so please let me know if it’s to your taste.”

We sat, and our dinner was served. It was so lively and casual. We swapped stories and laughed. I always loved my uncle Lucas’s stories the best. He grew up with my parents, and he was the oldest of the three. They had some pretty fun adventures. I look around at the little pups we have, and I rub my tummy. I hope they all have memories like this one day to share.

Before we knew it was time to put the kids to bed and head to the cocktail party. This was one of the few nights we had babysitters watching all the ranked children. Gideon set up a big A-frame tent in the playroom with pillows and blankets for the kids to have a sleepover. The sitters came and took the kids upstairs, and they were excited to start their sleepover adventure. Rose is so shy as they are walking away. Easton takes her hand so she is not nervous. It’s the sweetest thing how he always seems to be protecting her.

On the other hand, Daisy is trying to break Ryan’s stoic demeanor. At five, this little boy tried to act like an adult. It made Daisy want to tease him, and she was good at it. The kids head up the stairs, and I turn to look at my family.

“Well, are we ready for the battle ahead?” I say while cracking my neck.

Gideon puts his arm around my waist. “I can’t wait to see you in action.” He smirks at me.

“James, Riley, stick close to someone in this group at all times. Do not let yourself get cornered by a greedy Alpha throwing his daughter at you or a snot nose heir trying to start a fight. You two will be targets. Becky and Benjamin, you both will be targeted as well. Stay close to Gideon and me.”

Riley was the first to respond, "Ugh, I hate these things. I just want to find my mate and not have to dodge these trashy wolves." James gives Riley a bro pound.

"Alright, everyone, we are a family. We watch out for each other. Let's go." Dad said, taking the lead with Celeste. Gideon and I were behind them, Logan and Mom behind us. The ranked couples followed behind Uncle Lucas and Aunt Mary. Dad was the chairman of the Alpha Council, and Gideon was vice-chairman. They were the highest-ranking Alphas in the US. Logan and Phillip had large territories. We should be able to relax, but someone was always gunning for more than they were given.

"Inari, I need all our senses on high alert." I was feeling more uneasy than I have ever before in these situations. I didn't know why. I was on high guard.

"I feel it too. So does Ulv. I know the other Alpha's feel it as well. Their wolves are all on the surface." Someone is up to something, but who and what.

We get to the ballroom doors, and each couple is announced. Gideon and I wait till the end since I am the guest of honor for the event. We enter, and everyone claps. I nod and wave in thanks. I am also scanning the room. I need to figure out what has me on edge.

I bond-link Gideon. "Stay close. Something feels off."

"I agree." We are both smiling and greeting guests as we make our way through the crowd.

As I am looking around, sure enough, Riley and James have been cornered by a group of thirsty she-wolves. I can see a few other Alpha heirs staring, pissed off. It's like a scene from a stupid teen drama, honestly. I start to head over to save them, but Hope beats me to it, thank the goddess.

The night rolls on, and we make small talk, and we are introduced to many Alpha's sons and daughters. I also met a few other pregnant Luna's. We chatted about our pregnancies and how our mates were overprotective. One Luna said her mate covered the packhouse in bubble wrap and foam when he found out she was pregnant. A few ladies, it was their first like me for others their second. It was the most comfortable I felt during the whole event so far. Gideon was behind me, talking to the soon-to-be fathers. I wished I could say and chat with them all night, but I had to break away.

"I will be right back. I have to use the restroom." I bond-link Gideon. He nods.

I make my way to the restroom, and I can't help but feel eyes on me. I was the guest of honor and a new Luna, so many were watching me, but these eyes felt different. They had hatred and anger and wanted to harm me. I quickly look up and take in the faces around me. I don't notice anyone. I continued to the restroom.

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 54

### Chapter 54

Amelie

When I came back, the servers passed out champion and sparkling cider, prepping for Gideon's toast. I make my way to Gideon's side. A server came past and brought me some sparkling cider and Gideon champion. The room dimes a bit more, and there is a spotlight on Gideon and me.

"I would like to thank you all for coming and helping us celebrate this momentous occasion. I was lucky enough to be blessed by the goddess in many ways, but the biggest blessing has come in the form of my second-chance-mate, Amelie Ashwood. As all of you know, she is the eldest daughter of the Ashwood Pack and the Black Hills Pack and sister of the Hill Country Pack. The greatest blessing of all is our soon-to-be explaining family. Please raise your glasses in a toast to my Luna, mate, and mother of my children." Everyone claps and cheers while toasting.

Gideon and I raise our glasses to each other and take a drink. As soon as I smell the cider, I pull the fluted glass away. Something is off. I scented Blue Cohosh in my glass. It's concentrated and singing through since I had been on high alert all night. Blue Cohosh was used to induce labor when at full term. If the dose was this high, it could cause a miscarriage. I quickly put my glass down and rushed over to the group of pregnant wolves I was speaking to earlier. I grab a tray and promptly gather their glasses.

"Ladies, let me get those out of the way." As I take them, I smell for the foul-smelling herb. I am surprised and happy that I don't smell it.

"We need to leave and gather the family." I bond-link Gideon, who was standing watching me on high alert. I know Inari link Ulv right away, and Gideon fought him for control. He knew someone tried to harm his mate and son. He would kill all none-family in this room in a heartbeat if it meant to keep the baby and me safe.

I pass the tray to a server and grab Gideon. I snag Shay as we are heading for the door. "Gather the family and come back to the family wing. Don't be abrupt or call attrition."

"Yes, Luna." Shay knew well enough discretion was needed. She was a Druid Guard.

Once we are out of the ballroom and in our wing, Gideon turns to me, "who tried to poison you!"

"I don't know, but thankfully I didn't drink it, and none of the other pregnant Luna's drinks were spiked." At least we avoided that conflict.

“What did they give you?”

“It’s called Blue Cohosh. It’s a native herb that grows wild. The flowers can induce labor if brewed into tea. I was dosed with a high concentration of it. I would have miscarried a few hours from now if I had drunk it.” Gideon pulls me close to him.

“We need to look into herbalist. Which packs have them, and who would want to kill our child.” Gideon was going to investigate this to the fullest.

As we are talking, our family comes into view. Hope rushes over to me. “Am, what happened? Why did you leave so suddenly? What’s going on.” There was so much panic and worry in her voice.

“Everyone. Someone tried to poison me and force a miscarriage.” Celeste quickly stands up.

“What did you say?” I see the fear and disbelief run across her face.

“Celeste, what’s wrong,” I ask as she sinks into my father’s arms.

“Was is Blue Cohosh?” I see tears fill her eyes.

“It was, but I smelt it before I drank any.” Celeste is sobbing at my comment.

“Am, honey, that’s why I lost all those pups. I was being drugged. You caught it before it happened to your brother. Remember you were 12 at the time.” I gasp.

“I don’t remember the herb; I remember the incident. Do you think it’s the same pack targeting me now?” I look to dad.

“This heir is going to be extremely influential. Look at all its relatives in this room right now. Then think about the extended family we are connected to. This child is more like royalty than just an Alpha. I think I have a theory. It seems the perpetrator is only after killing off the male heir, meaning he was trying to use his heir to mate an Alpha female and take over that pack as well. We all know that if an Alpha doesn’t have an heir that either the next in bloodline takes over or the Alpha’s daughter’s mate takes over.” It was a sneaky way to take over a pack, but it would be the least conspicuous.

“But dad, who has two sons that are either close in age to Hope and me but also the twins? The age gap is too wide.” I think it’s a little shaky.

“What if it’s a son and grandson?” Ok, now I was back on board.

“Alpha John, I will need all the details of Luna’s Celeste case.” Dad nods to Gideon.

“It was 18 years ago, but I know Lucas, and I remember all the details.” He looks over and Uncle Lucas, and they nod in agreement.

“Whoever it must be did not do much research. If they did, they would know we trust in the mate bond from the goddess.” I interject.

“Please do not take this the wrong way, but I think it may also have something to do with Tate and Karen.” Gideon’s words floor me and everyone else. They are all leaning in to hear what comes next.

“I don’t know how but I think Tate somehow tricked you into thinking he was your mate. I think whoever did this was testing to see if a mate bond could be faked. If they could fake a mate bond with an Alpha daughter, then another pack heir could do the same to your sister and our twins.” My jaw was on the floor.

“That still doesn’t get us closer to who or how they did it. This is a long-drawn-out plan. Who would be working in the shadows all this time.” Dad said.

“It’s late. I think we need to talk about this more tomorrow. I am fine. The baby is fine. We should all get some rest.” I wanted to solve this riddle, but I was so tired. Pregnancy drained my energy, and it had been a very long day.

“I think that’s a good idea, dear.” Mom said, tugging on Logan and Riley to go upstairs. We all soon follow. They were all on our floor, so we said our goodnights at their doors. We went into the playroom and picked up the girls, the Betas and Gammas doing the same. We carried the girls to their bed, putting them in Daisy’s bed together.

We quickly make our way to our room, and as soon as the door closes, Gideon pulls me into him. I am smothered in his chest. I can feel he is shaking, and I can feel panic and fear coming from him.

“Hey, I’m fine. The baby’s fine too.” He’s still shaking, but it’s starting to calm.

“I felt so helpless. If you had drunk the cider, you would have lost our pup. You would have been devastated, and there would be nothing I could do about it. I couldn’t do anything to stop it or help you. I don’t think I could handle losing you or the baby.” Gideon is holding me so tight it’s starting to hurt.

“You need to calm down. Look at me.” I look up into his eyes, and I see them flashing back and forth from green to red. I speak to his wolf. “Ulv, Inari, and I are stronger than you think. Please calm down and give Gideon control right now. You are too upset.” His eyes are red. He nods his head, and his eyes turn green again.

“Am, I’ll find out who did this, and I will make them pay for everything they did to you and your family.” I can feel his rage building again.

"I know you will. You are the best investigator there is. Now tonight, that brilliant brain and sexy body need to rest. This mama wolf can barely stand." With that, Gideon picks me up and carries me to the bathroom. He lets me down, and we get ready for bed. Once we are done, he picks me up and takes me out of the bathroom and to our bed. I let him have his protective moments. It helps him calm down.

We get under the covers, and I sink into his arms. This is still the safest I have ever felt in my life. I push my feelings of safety and love to Gideon. I hear his breathing and heartbeat slow, and I know he's asleep. I soon follow. Tomorrow would be a big day.

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 55

### Chapter 55

#### Gideon

"We still don't have any suspects. Does anyone come to mind?" I ask Alpha John and Logan as we sit in my office. Amelie's Luna ceremony is tonight under the crescent moon. We have over 350 guests, and almost all are Alphas and Lunas from all over the US. One of these so-called guests tried to harm my mate and my heir.

"It's hard to say, but I don't feel it's one of the bigger packs as most are related to Amelie. They also wouldn't try to grab power like this. I do think whichever pack targeted Celeste 18 years ago is the same pack who tried to harm Amelie and my grandson." John is standing and pacing the length of my office.

"I think Tate and that witch of a she-wolf have something to do with this. At least they are part of the plot." Alpha Logan growls as he sits with his arms folded on the sofa.

"Logan's right. It only makes sense they are somehow involved. I think Tate tried to get Amelie pregnant, but since they didn't know our family background, it failed." John looked at me with rage in his eyes. Just thinking about what happened to his daughter set him off. I hated the fact that someone else touched her under false pretenses. Truthfully, I hated that someone else had what was mine. I know it's wrong to think that way since I had a mate before. It's the mate bond making me possessive.

"Right, you told me before. No Ashwood is a mistake, they are born by the divine grace of the moon goddess herself. John, you are the only Ashwood Alpha in 150 years to have two daughters, and you had no siblings. You have one Aunt who was mated to the Koray Pack. So, in line of succession, if you didn't have an heir and your daughters didn't have mates, your pack would be taken over by the Koray. You don't think it's them?" I still had my doubts about it not being family.

"My cousin Flynn Kory and Uncle Robert have only ever protected our family and my Aunt Marilyn. Plus, they have the largest pack in New York. Without them, we would not be half as wealthy as we are. Their investment firm is used by all our family and many

other packs. If anything, I would think they would also be a target. Flynn's son Harlow is 18 and has yet to find his mate. There is no motive." I couldn't refute his assessment.

I sit back in my chair, throw my head back, and pinch the bridge of my nose. "So, we are looking for a none related small, power-hungry pack. You realize that's hundreds of Alphas, right." I groan in frustration, "What was the name of the maid that got caught poisoning Celeste?" It was our only lead.

John stiffens. "Jema Green. She refused to talk and ended up killing herself in the cell. We couldn't trace her background because she gave us a false name. All of her identification was also fake. We think she was in her mid-50's when she died. We believe she was an herbalist, and she was working for someone. We just didn't know who?" I could hear the frustration in John's voice.

"Whoever she was covering for, she was willing to die to protect them. That's not blind loyalty to an Alpha. I think she did it to protect her family." Logan leans back on the sofa and crosses his arms as he thinks back.

I run my hands down my face in frustration. "We are missing so many pieces to figure this out!" I slam my fist on my desk. "We had a dead maid from 18 years ago who we have no solid background on. We have Tate and Karen, who we believe somehow tricked Amelie into thinking Tate was her mate. We have no idea how that could even be done. They have somehow disappeared without a trace after escaping from Alpha Mason and the Timber Wolf Pack. We have the same herb, Blue Cohosh, showing up at the cocktail party that was used on Celeste. The herb grows wild and is a native plant, so we cannot even track it. We have a shaky theory that whichever pack is trying to do this is trying to covertly take over by forcing a chosen mate bond with either Amelie, Hope, or my daughters." I stand up. I feel like I am going to explode. "This has to be an Alpha family for it to be going on for this long, and they are not related to the Ashwoods. Again, this leaves hundreds of smaller pack Alphas. We need more!"

John comes over and puts his hand on my shoulder. "We have more now than we did before. We know that you and your pack are also a target."

I look at him, and I'm shocked I didn't think about my pack being a target. I have been so focused on my family, "what are you thinking?" I ask.

Logan chimes in, "after your mate Mandy died and before you met Amelie did you have anyone trying to," He pauses. "Climb into your bed?"

I plop down on the sofa across from Logan. For a hothead, he was surprisingly insightful. "There have been dozens who have tried, and many of them Alphas' daughter. The same treatment James and Riley get, honestly."

John sits across from me next to Logan. “Logan is right. I think you were a target a long time ago, but you wouldn’t have noticed. It became apparent after Amelie was targeted last night. Who are the first women who come to mind?”

I sit back and think. Honestly, I ignored all their advances and focused on my daughters. I sit and think, desperate to remember anyone that stands out. It hits me: “Von Jericho and her group of Alpha and Beta daughters that have joined my pack. Von, in particular, challenged Amelie’s Luna authority. I dismissed it as a girl with a hopeless crush and let Amelie handle it. There are about ten of them in the group. We will investigate each one and their birth packs.”

“Jericho from Blue Crescent Pack,” John snarls. “This may be bigger than we thought. I will need to contact my Aunt Marilyn. Brian Jericho almost went to war with the Koray pack after my aunt found her mate. Brian Jericho was in love with Marilyn, or at least said he was. More like he was in love with the benefits of being mated to her. I know he wasn’t the only one hoping to be her mate. I tried to protect Amelie and Hope from that, but I guess I failed.” John’s head is in his hands.

“It’s our first real lead.” I sit back on the sofa. “This whole conspiracy feels straight out of a soap opera rather than real life. That is saying a lot coming from me.” This was so unreal and complicated. We still didn’t have the complete picture. Yes, Blue Crescent was a smaller pack, and the Alpha Family has a horrible reputation, but are they smart enough and patient enough to play the long game like this?

Logan leans over and slaps my knee to get my attention, “Gideon, don’t overthink it. You have been an investigator and fighter all your life. What is your gut telling you?”

“My gut says that they will strike again. I just don’t know how. It also says to investigate all my pack members from the last 40 years that have ties to Blue Crescent Pack. I also want to rip Alpha Nox Jericho and his father apart. I know they are involved somehow. I also want to kick Von Jericho out of my pack along with all her friends.”

“I agree they will strike again soon, but if we act too rashly, they will know we are on to them, and we could be blindsided. Keep your enemies close don’t make any moves against Von. We need a spy in her group. You say the women in her group want power, that’s the carrot if someone will take it. If they don’t turn on her, there is always the stick.” I was shocked to hear this coming from John. “As far as Alpha Nox goes, he’s a young and cocky Alpha. Let Logan get in his head.” John nudges Logan.

Logan has a devilish grin on his face. “He’s only been an Alpha for three years. He fits the age range to target both Amelie and Hope. He was properly aiming for Hope, but she found her mate before he could make a move. Does he have an heir yet? Is his mated fated or chosen?”

I stand up and walk back over to my desk and open my laptop. We keep basic birth, death, and mate records on all packs. It’s part of my Alpha Council duties. But we only



have newer records, nothing before 1990, as we are still working on adding those records. My father didn't see the need to do it; he liked the feel of paper. When I took over, I started changing that, but it's a large project. I type in Nox Jericho and pull up his file. "OK, Nox Jericho, 28, has a chosen mate named Lacy Newman. They only mated five months ago she has not conceived a child yet. Her fated mate was killed in a Rogue attack nine months ago. He died a few days after James' ceremony." I look up from my laptop at John and Logan, and both are staring at me, waiting for more.

"Newman, that last name sounds familiar. What about her?" John asks.

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 56

### Chapter 56

#### Gideon

"Let me see, she is 26 and looks like she is a Beta's daughter. Her birth pack was Koray." We all look at each other there's no way that is a coincidence. Kory is Alpha Flynn's pack and John's cousin. Not to mention the financial powerhouse to all packs through Flynn's investment firm. To be the Beta's daughter of a powerful pack came with privileges and gave Nox prestige. This smelled fishy.

"Did they fake a Rogue attack too! Look at the dates. It's right after Hope found her mate the same week Amelie almost died in that fight with Tate. If she hadn't gotten away, what were they going to try and do with her!" I slam my fist on my desk, and I hear a cracking noise.

"Gideon, calm down. We need to make a clear plan. It's the only way to take them down without repercussions from the Alpha and Elder Council. If we act prematurely, we will be the ones paying the price." John is yelling. I have never heard him yell before. I slump back in my chair. I usually am calm and collected, but I had already lost a mate I couldn't lose another one along with my child.

"What do you suggest?" I needed their help. This was too big to do on my own, and I couldn't trust anyone else with the task. Also, this was dealing with Alphas. We were the only ones who could do this.

"Let's call the boys as well. We are going to need them to gather information." John said, and I could tell he mind-linked James right away. Logan also mind-linked Riley. Both boys were in my office in five minutes.

We all migrate to the sofas in my office. Riley and James were each sitting next to their fathers, and I was sitting next to John.

John leans in over the coffee table in the middle of the sofas. "After careful review of the facts and circumstantial evidence, we believe the Blue Crescent pack is targeting the

Ashwood Pack and the Druit Guard. The Jericho family looks to be trying to take over one of our packs. They are trying to do this by forcing a mate to bond with one of your sisters, and now they look to be targeting the twins. They don't have an heir yet to mate with the twins, but that doesn't mean they won't soon. They will try to force Amelie to miscarry as Celeste did. They may also just try and kill her outright. We believe they have also faked a Rouge attack to cover up a murder. They have already poisoned my Luna and attempted to poison my daughter. We believe Tate and his mother are in on the plot as well; that is why they kidnapped Amelie. They have also tried to seduce Gideon. We don't know if the Jerichos are working alone or if they have accomplices. Logan is going to work on gaining Alpha Nox's trust. Gideon is going to investigate a group of women who have tried to win his attention. I'm going to look into possible attacks that our extended family might have overlooked. You guys have a role to play as well." John gives the boys a serious look and pauses. "People talk especially young girls trying to impress the next Alpha. This is part of your training. Find out what information you can about the Blue Crescent Pack and if anyone is working with them. I'll talk to Flynn and Sandie and have your cousin Harlow join you in the hunt. I think between 3 Alpha heirs, and you should be able to get something."

"So like undercover? But everyone already knows who we are?" James says, raising an eyebrow. It's honestly a family trait.

"No, what I'm asking you to do is make friends and flirt. To the boys, you are cool, and they want to be your friend to help out their own packs one day. The girls are going to flirt and try to get you to pick them as a chosen mate. A powerful Alpha will win out over an unknown mate. You three need to work on your pack politics anyway."

"Dad, tell mom, or she's going to get mad if she catches me flirting." Anne was a stickler for Riley, not leading a girl on and pushing him to find his mate. I know she wants to make sure her kids don't have complicated lives.

Logan sighs, "Son, don't worry about your mother. She will be so busy doating after your sister and the twins you are not even a worry to her right now."

"Boy, also keep an eye open for anyone who may try and start something with you. They may be emboldened thinking they have enough back-up to take you three on." I tell them, thinking friend or foe, we need to investigate. I rest my head on top of my hands. Finger locked together in a fist, elbows resting on my knees. "We are missing so many pieces, and we need to strike before they do. I don't want to put my family at risk again."

James leans over and grabs my shoulder, "We are family. I won't let anything happen to my sister or my nephew and nieces."

Riley chimes in. "Yeah, bro. No one messes with our sister and gets away with it. Honestly, if she catches them, they might pry for death. Amelie is pretty chill until you mess with her family or her. Remember what she did to Tate and Karen. She messed

them up!" He wasn't wrong. She wasn't a trained fighter, but she was intelligent and resourceful and had flipped a switch when she was enraged.

"If they are as smart as we think they are, the Jericho's will not try to make a move today. They will bide their time and attack when we have our guard down. We don't want to let on that we are on to them. We need them to think we are scared but don't know who. After Amelie's Luna ceremony, the next event with an even bigger convergence will be the Ember Moon Festival. That will be our hunting ground." They all nod in agreement with me. We were not going to let this go, and I was not on my own. To have Alpha John and Logan helping me made me miss my father. I was happy to have my mate's family now. I needed a family to lean on.

"The ladies should all be getting ready by now," John stood up from the sofa. "Celeste brought along her 'glam squad' as she calls them. We should get ready and check the outdoor theater, ballroom, and kitchen. Even if we don't think they will make a move doesn't mean they won't."

"I'll have my Beta, Gamma, and Delta caption check ahead of us as well. John, can you send Beta Lucas to hang around the guest wing of the Packhouse casually?" I want as many eyes and ears that I trust as looking for anything.

John nods, "of course."

"OK, everyone has their assignments. Let's see what we can dig up." I stand and walk to the door opening it for everyone. As all the Alpha's leave, I pull my mate-bong looking for Amelie. She's in our room.

"Hey, beautiful." I link with her.

"Hey, handsome." She giggles. "Getting ready right now, the twins are with me."

"OK. I'm coming up to change. Do you want me to take the twins when I'm done?"

"No. I want them to stay with me. I want them to walk in with me."

"No problem, I'll be up shortly." I cut the link. I let out the biggest sigh; just knowing those three were safe put me at ease. I head up to our room with a newfound determination. I didn't care what it took; I was going to keep my family safe.

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 57

Chapter 57

Amelie

"OK, do your worst!" I jokingly say to Celeste's "Glam Squad."

“Oh, honey! Stop it. You are going to scare the twins!” Celeste retorts.

I look over at my daughters, and they are enjoying a bubble bath. “They look fine to me.”

“Relax, you are going to crack your mud mask.” Sam, the glam squad leader, says.

“Yes, ma’am!” I give her a salute.

I lean back and try to relax, but I have so much on my mind. Someone tried to harm my baby. Would they try and hurt the twins? Tate and Karen still haven’t been found, and I had a group of she-wolves that didn’t respect me as their Luna. Along with all my pack duties and changes, I was implementing. Honestly, I don’t know if I will ever be able to relax again.

I feel two sets of tiny hands grabbing my arms. I look down, and the girls are out of their bath. “Mommy, why do you have green stuff on your face?” Rose asks.

“It’s called a mud mask. It helps make your skin beautiful.” I make a silly face at them.

Daisy looks shocked, “there is green mud!”

“This mud is, I guess!” I laugh.

“Can I put green mud on my face too?” Daisy stands on her tiptoes to get a closer look.

“How about before your grandmas and aunt leave, we do a girls’ day, and you can put green mud on your face then?” I want the girls to have time to bond with my family. Plus, their dad has been raised, so giving them a hefty dose of girl fun.

Daisy starts jumping up and down, squealing, “Yes!” Over and over. Rose stands next to her and nods excitedly.

“OK, Luna Amelie, let’s get that mask washed off and start your hair.” Sam is personally taking charge of my overall look today. She owns a very popular salon in the Ashwood Pack territory, and other ranked she-wolves drive hours from different packs to get a simple haircut from her. She is personal friends with Celeste, so I always got in no problem. It was an honor to have her close her shop for the day and bring her staff. I hope to get one of her apprentices to open a shop here in the Druid Guard territory.

As soon as I wash off the mask, I am amazed at the look of my skin. I don’t have time to admire the glow I have acquired as I am pulled into a chair, and Sam starts to work on my hair. I look around and see the girls are sitting on the bed getting their hair done too. I can’t help the smile that comes across my face. Maybe I can relax in these small moments.

Gideon bond-links me and says he's coming up to change. I can hear and feel the worry in his voice. I know he just finished a meeting with my father and stepfather. I know he does not like not being in control, and the fact someone tried to harm our child makes him unnerved. Before long, I hear a knock at the door. It's Gideon.

The twins, who are still in the middle of getting their hair done, can't wait to tell their dad all the fun 'girl' things they did. Everyone laughs. Gideon disappears into the closet and, before long, comes out looking dashing as always. He has on a deep plum-colored button-up that matches my gown: black slacks and a black vest. His sleeves are rolled up as the usual Gideon style, and the top two buttons are undone. His chin-length sandy blond hair is half pulled back in a ponytail.

He sees me eyeing him up and down and gives me a wink. Then he bond-links me, "Like what you see?"

"I guess it will do." I give him a smirk.

He comes over and kisses my forehead, then kisses the twins on the cheek.

"Ladies, take care of my girls." With that, he leaves us to finish our prep work.

Hair is done makeup is complete. I put my dress on, and it's a little tighter than I remember around my tummy. It's only been two weeks since I bought it. I could have grown that much. It's bearable, but I could already tell I could not wait to take it off. Mom was finishing her makeup. Celeste was almost done with her hair, her makeup was finished, and Hope was putting on her dress. It was time to finish getting the twins ready.

"Rose, Daisy! I have a few surprises for you!" I pull the two dress bags and the three boxes out of my closet.

"What is it, mommy." They both come running over with wide eyes.

I unzip the bags and show them the dresses. "They are real princess dresses. What do you think?"

"We are real princesses?" Rose asks, her eyes wide with wonder.

"Yes, you are. Look, it matches mommy's dress too." I pull both dresses out and help the girls put them on. They are twirling and dancing together. It's so cute.

"I have one more surprise for you girls." I give them each a box. The one with the yellow bow is for Daisy, and the pink bow is for Rose.

They pull the ribbon off and open the tops. They lean down to look inside, and they both start squealing with excitement. I didn't know Rose could get that loud.

“Mommy, are these for us!” Rose asks with sparkles in her eyes.

“Yes, they are. You want me to help you put them on?” The twins nodded their heads.

I go to Rose’s box first, and I pull out the tiara I made for her. It’s covered in gold, platinum, and copper roses. It looks like someone gilded a flower crown made of roses. To keep the weight down, I didn’t add stones, but it didn’t need it. They were the gems. I pull Daisy’s out next and place it on her head. It’s a crown of gilded daisies. They look so adorable.

“Mommy, what’s in the other box with the purple ribbon?” Daisy points.

“That is for mommy, your grandmas, and aunty.” I pull the ribbon off the box and pull out a Laurel wreath-type crown. Instead of laurel leaves, it has oak leaves and a few roses and daisies but gilded in precious metals. I turn to the hairdresser who just finished my hair “would you mind adding this.” She smiled and nodded. My hair was in a low loose bun. She did it exactly how I wanted it, and the wreath crown will be perfect since it only went around the back of my head. Tonight, my marks would be on full display as I received my Luna mark and my connecting markings. I turn to my family and pull out three sets of hair combs. Each set has an oak leaf, a rose, and a daisy. They were connected with three chains between the two combs. Since all of our hair would be up, I thought it would be nice to coordinate our hairpieces as well.

Everyone in the family would be wearing a similar shade of plum. We would look like a cohesive unit. I needed that. I would be lying if I said I wasn’t scared. Not of the Luna Ceremony, I have come to understand I was more than ready to embrace my role. I was scared for my child. Someone tried to harm my baby. I was putting on a brave face, but Inari and I were on high alert. These moments with my family gave me peace. The hairdressers skillfully add the hair accessories and crowns into our up-does. Finally, we are all ready.

I take the twins’ hands, and we make our way down to the outdoor theater. Mom, Celeste, and Hope go to their spots on stage first. Tyson announces the twins and me. I step out of the doorway, and everyone stands and bows. The girls are waving and smiling at everyone, and the pack members and some of the Lunas are waving back. They giggle, and I can’t help but smile. They did capture hearts. I walk to the front row where James and Riley are and pass the twins to them. The boys pick up the twins, who are still waving at the crowd. I walk up the stairs to the stage. Once I am on stage, Gideon steps forward to start the Ceremony.

“Please be seated.” He pauses, allowing everyone to sit. “Thank you all for coming to witness my mate Amelie Ashwood’s Luna Ceremony. She is my fated second-chance mate blessed to me by the moon goddess. Now she will become the blessing to the Druid Guard Pack and the mother of our next Alpha. We will start the Ceremony.”

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 58

## Chapter 58

Amelie

“Please be seated.” He pauses, allowing everyone to sit. “Thank you all for coming to witness my mate Amelie Ashwood’s Luna Ceremony. She is my fated second-chance mate blessed to me by the moon goddess. Now she will become the blessing to the Druit Guard Pack and the mother of our next Alpha. We will start the Ceremony.”

I step to the left of my mother, Celeste, and Hope. I pick up an oak chalice. There is a basin of rainwater in front of them, and they are each holding a flower. Mom steps forward first.

“I Anna Bye, Luna of the Black Hills Pack, give the blessing of the Mother Luna. You are a mother to all in your pack.” She drops a pink carnation into the basin of rainwater. Then she extends a claw and cuts the palm of her hand. I raise the cup to catch the blood.

“I accept the blessing of Mother Luna.” I bow to my mother, and she smiles as she steps back.

Hope steps forward. “I Hope Ashwood, Luna of the Hill Country Pack, gives the blessing of the Teacher Luna. You are a teacher to all in your pack.” She drops a Black-Eyed Susan into the basin of rainwater. Then she extends a claw and cuts the palm of her hand. I extend the cup to catch the blood.

“I accept the blessing of the Teacher Luna.” I bow to my sister, and she steps back.

Celeste steps forward. “I Celeste Ashwood, Luna of the Ashwood Pack, give the blessing of the Protector Luna. You are a protector to all in your pack.” She drops in White Heather to the basin of rainwater. Then she extends a claw and cuts the palm of her hand. I extend the cup to catch the blood.

“I accept the blessing of the Protector Luna.” I bow to Celeste, and she steps back.

I step to the basin, dip in my cupped hand, and fill the oak chalice with my water. “Goddess Selene, I accept the blessings of the Luna. Please guide me in leading the Druit Guard Pack.” I turn and stand to the right of my father, stepfather, and mate. I bow my head.

Dad steps forward. “I, John Ashwood, Alpha of the Ashwood Pack, ask if you are prepared to support your Alpha and mate with full devotion.”

I answer. “I promise to always devote myself to my pack, my Alpha, and children.”

Dad cuts his palm with an extended claw, and I extend the oak chalice to catch the drops of blood. Dad steps back, and Logan steps forward.

“I Logan Bye, Alpha of the Black Hills Pack, ask if you are prepared to support your Alpha and mate with full encouragement.”

I answer. “I promise to always encourage my pack, my Alpha, and children.”

Logan cuts his palm with an extended claw, and I extend the oak chalice to catch the drops of blood. Logan steps back, and Gideon steps forward.

I know my face lights up when he steps forward because he does too. He smiles and winks. “I, Gideon Alois, Alpha of the Druit Guard Pack and your fated mate, ask if you are prepared to support me with all your love as I will support you. I will give you all that I am. All my love is for you.”

I can’t help the happy tears that roll down my cheeks. “I, Amelie Ashwood, promise always to love you and support you and our pack as we work together as our pack’s mother and father.”

Gideon cuts his palm with an extended claw, and I extend the oak chalice to catch the drops of blood. Gideon steps forward to address the pack. “Druit Guard, Selene has blessed us with a strong, dedicated, and wise Luna. You will now witness the goddess’ blessing.” As Gideon steps back, I step forward and turn my back to the crowd.

I raise the oak chalice, “Goddess bless me as your chosen Luna.” I take a deep breath and drink the whole cup.

As soon as I finish, I can feel an overwhelming power pulsate in me. It’s even more potent than what I felt when we did the family bond. I can feel my mark forming on my back. I also feel the connecting marks forming. Something feels different than what I expected or experienced before. The marks feel deep in my skin and burn slightly as they develop. I feel like I am not in control of my body. Everything is hazy then goes dark.

Gideon

“Amelie?” I was looking at my mate in complete shock. She was about two feet off the ground levitating in the air—her eyes were glowing silver, and her hair became black as the New Moon. I could not even take a step near her as the Luna aura was too strong and pushing me back.

Then Amelie’s head turned toward me. “Alpha Gideon. I have answered your prayer and gifted you the perfect Luna and mate. My messenger will come soon. Heed her words. Protect my heirs. The world will need them one day.” That was not Amelie. That was Selene talking through my mate to me. What did she mean by her heirs? And who



is her messenger? The strong aura faded, and Amelie started to drop. I rushed to catch her. I looked down at her, she groaned, and her eyes fluttered open.

“Gideon, what happened.” She asked, and I can see her typically grey eyes are more silver and glowing.

“Am, I don’t know if you are going to believe this, but Selene just spoke through you.” Her eyes are enormous, and the whole theater is silent and in complete shock.

“She’s OK, everyone. Selene has blessed us with a visit through our Luna. Tonight, we rejoice.” I pick up Amelie, and she wraps her arms around my neck. We need to be alone for a bit. I rush to my office and sit Amelie on my desk.

“What happened?” She asks.

“I don’t know. You had this powerful aura pushing us all back then you started to levitate. Your hair turned black, and your eyes glowed silver like two moons. I think it was Selene.” Amelie gasps. I continue. “She gave me a message. She said her messenger would come and to protect her heirs that the world would need them. Do you know what she means?”

“I don’t know. I am a direct descendant of the first mated wolves. So maybe our baby, but are you sure she said heirs with an s?” She asked.

“Yes, I am sure.” Just then, I start looking at Amelie’s new marks. Everything happened so fast I didn’t have a chance to examine them. That was when I saw them.

“Am, are you sure we only have one baby?” My eyes lock in on her family marks.

“I mean, I don’t know for sure, but twin males have only happened once in our family, and that’s why our pack is here in the US. Why?” She looks confused.

I take a mirror off the wall. “Look at your marks. You have two new family marks.”

She looks, and her eyes tear, “It’s a Birch and an Aspen tree. How did this happen? You don’t get the family mark until after the birth. I’m only seven weeks along. We are having twin Alphas. Druit Guard is going to split.” Her eyes are wide, and her hand is over her mouth. We are both in shock. She keeps looking at her marks. “The connecting marks are not clouds like yours. They came from my mate mark and its honeysuckle vines.” She turns around to try and see her Luna mark. I see it first.

“Am, have you ever seen a Luna mark with the goddess sitting on the crescent moon holding up a torch?” I couldn’t believe my eyes. It was an unmistakable silhouette of the goddess in her robes with her feet dangling off the crescent moon, holding her torch in her hand. Also, the color, its silver, like it has been glided to her skin.

"I can't see." She says. I pull my phone out and take a picture to show her. I hand her my phone. "Oh my..." Her hand goes to her mouth again. "I don't know what all this means. I just want my babies to be safe."

I put the mirror on the sofa and pull her into me. "We are going to be fine. I will protect you, and Selene's words were not a warning but just a message." I hugged her tight she was shaking. She's usually so strong and put together. Very little rattles her. I feel her take a few deep breaths and calmly take over again.

"Why do you think that happened?" Amelie looks up at me.

"Well, there was a lot of power in that cup and you. You, your dad, sister, and the twins in your belly are all pure wolves. Add in Logan, your mother, stepmother, and me that was so much power that I think it gave the goddess the opening." I hold Amelie tight.

"I'm just scared for the babies. Now everyone will know we are having twin Alphas. Plus, that message from the goddess. Who knows what will happen? We already have someone lurking in the shadows. Will this bring more?" I can hear her fear with every word.

"Let's call your family here. We still have to put on a brave face and go to the banquet. Let's walk in as a fully united Alpha family. I think it may help scare off whoever is trying to harm you and the babies. Plus, we should show your dad these marks." I feel Amelie nod her head in my chest. I knew how she felt. It was like we had the weight of the world on our shoulders. Hell, I needed her family's support.

I mind-linked our ranked members, "Betas, Gammas, and Deltas, please round up Amelie's family and ask them to come to my office. Please bring the twins."

"Yes, Alpha." They all chimed back.

Within minutes everyone was in my office. I had wrapped Amelie in a throw blanket I had on one of the sofas I had her in my lap as we sat behind my desk. As everyone filed in, they were all quiet. Almost too quiet, waiting with bated breath to see if Amelie was OK.

"Please, everyone, sit down." I gestured to everyone to sit. Rose and Daisy each climb onto a grandma's lap. They have taken to Amelie's family quickly. I pat Amelie on the back, signaling her to stand, and we walk around to the front of the desk. She still has the blanket wrapped around her. "I know you all saw the goddess manifest through Am and give us a message. We don't know who her messenger is or when they will come, but the part about the heirs has been reviled a bit."

Amelie dropped the blanket from around her shoulders. "We are having twin Alphas. Druit Guard will split into two packs one day."

John stands and approaches Amelie. He quickly pulls her into a hug. "You have always been special, kiddo. Now I know why." He pulls back and looks at her marks. "A Birch tree and an Aspen tree. It looks like I will have two strong grandsons. I have never seen family marks manifest before birth." Amelie smiles lovingly at her father.

I hated to interrupt, but I needed to ask John a question. "Alpha John, have you ever seen a Luna mark like this or the connecting marks coming from the mate mark?" Amelie turns around to show her Luna mark, and everyone gasps. They all stand up to get a closer look.

"Sis, is that the goddess sitting on the moon?" James asks in complete bewilderment.

"It seems so, a torch and all," Amelie sighs. I know how she feels. Marks are a sign of blessings and divine approval, but something like this could also make her a target. No matter how strong I was or my pack was, if someone wanted to, they could find a way. I have seen it all too often in my work.

Anne was the next to speak up. "What do you need from us. We are here and will protect you both and the kids." Anne wasn't a fighter, but she was a mother, and no one messed with her babies. I could see where Amelie got that protective and kind nature from.

"We are going to break tradition and walk-in as one family instead of three Alpha families. I feel it's our best tactic for tonight's events. We need to intimidate. It's our best play for tonight."

"If it's intimidation, I got you covered." Logan roared and slapped Riley on the back. He was physically imposing, that was for sure. I was only slightly bigger than him, and at first glance, we looked the same size. You could see Riley was going to be just as intimidating as his father. Honestly, his dark auburn hair and dark brown almost black eyes, both he inherited from his mother oddly enough, made me think he would look more imposing than his father one day. I believe Logan loved that. It made me think about what our boys would look like. Would they take more after me like the girls or after their mother like Riley?

I was snapped out of my trailing thoughts by Amelie nudging me. "Earth to Gideon? Are you talking to the mood goddess?" She said sarcastically. I knew she was OK if her sass was in full force.

I couldn't help but lean down and kissed the top of her head. I was still happy that we had a second set of twins on the way. I barely had the chance to process and be happy about it. I was. I would allow myself to be satisfied even if it was going to be complicated.

She smiled up at me, and I down at her. "OK, everyone, let's go. I'll inform my team that we will enter as a family."

With that, we all left my office and headed to the ballroom.

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 59

### Chapter 59

#### Gideon

“Please welcome Alpha Gideon Alois and Luna Amelie Ashwood.” Everyone turns toward the door. I stand as tall as my 6-foot 5-inch frame will allow and pushing my Alpha aura out. My aura is different. Since I am the Alpha of the Druit Guard, I hold more authority. Only Alpha John has more.

Tyson takes a deep breath before announcing. “Also welcome the Alpha and Lunas of the Ashwood Pack, Black Hills Pack, and the Hill Country Pack along with their heirs.” We all enter the ballroom. I look over at Amelie, and her eyes are still glowing silver. I wonder if this will subside. It doesn’t bother me, but it might scare some. I can feel her tension as she holds my arm. I’m glad we have her family behind us. It might make my plan for information gathering slightly more challenging but not impossible.

I wanted to pretend we were a family divided or at least at odds, but after the display, the goddess put on that idea went out the window, and we would need to get creative. I really didn’t want to come here after what happened, but I knew we had to. Werewolf etiquette was nothing to ignore with other Alphas. I was dependent on my relationships to gather information on investigations, so insulting Alphas, who are my guest, was out of the question.

We walk to the front table together. The crowd parted as we walked. What I wasn’t expecting was the bows from the other Alphas and Lunas. I didn’t know if it was because we were all walking in as a powerful group or the fact the moon goddess had just possessed my mate. I also noticed all the lustful eyes on her. Alphas want power, and a strong Luna with an Alpha bloodline like Amile was already desirable. Now add in the fact that the goddess openly used her; they wanted what was mine. They just saw her as a way to gain more power. They had no idea what she had been through or anything about her. I wanted to rip their heads off for even glancing at her.

“Calm yourself and Ulv.” Amelie mate-linked me.

“I don’t like the way some are eyeing you,” I growled.

“They are eyes, not hands, and we still don’t know for sure who is trying to harm our sons. You need to be calm and investigate. Inari and I are not weak.” She squeezed my arm as we reached our table.

“I know. It’s just hard not to be overprotective.” I sighed.

"I know you have a plan. What can I do to help?" She was smiling at everyone while we both tried to play off we were not talking through our mate-link.

"Our plan is still in play. We will need to take a different approach. Just keep your guard up and make sure Inari is on high alert." I nod, and Amelie nodded back.

I look down the table at John and Logan, and they both grinned back at me. We all knew the plan. Without missing a beat, I see James and Riley get up and head over to meet Harlow with a few other teenagers. Both Harlow and Riley are 18. So many of the girls are crowding around trying to see if they were mates with the next Alpha. James wasn't left alone just because he wasn't 18 yet. There was a group of girls hoping James would choose them over his destined mate. Poor girls had no idea how much their efforts are in vain. I watched as the three teens worked the crowd of eager she-wolves. I looked around the room and saw a group of other teens, primarily males, glaring at the three heirs getting all the attention. This was what I was waiting for.

"Tyson." I mind-linked.

"Yes, Alpha."

"Look to your 3 o'clock. There is a group of teens find out which packs they belong to."

"Got it. On it now." I cut the link.

The teens glaring would typically not catch my attention, but I knew they had a false sense of superiority if they were not trying to gain favor from the three heirs. They would have that if they felt they had the upper hand. I continue to look around the room, and I spot him. Alpha Nox Jericho.

Nox is staring at Amelie with a disgusting look of desire and lust. A low growl rolled up from my chest. Ulv wanted out, and I wanted nothing more than to let him and rip Nox apart. I knew I couldn't, the Elder, and Alpha Council wouldn't let any sanctioned killing of another Alpha go. I had to stay calm. He noticed me staring back at him. He raised his glass in the air with a sickening grin on his face and winked. He was trying to provoke me. I knew it, and I couldn't let myself lose control.

"Ulv, stay calm."

"He's dead. I will tare his head off like a paper doll." Ulv snarles.

"When that day comes, I will not protest."

I felt tingles on my cheek, and Ulv and I both started to calm. "Gideon, I'm right next to you. I'm safe. It's OK." Amelie whispered in my ear.

I took her hand from my cheek and kissed the back of it. "You are mine. I won't let anyone harm you."

"Gideon, you're grip is a little tight on my hand, and your eyes are flashing red." She sighed. "Let's dance."

I look up at her as she stands, holding out her hand. I let out a breath and stood up. I took her hand and walked her out to the dance floor. As we walked out to the floor, everyone parted as we went to the center of the floor. It was a formal event, so the music and dancing are ballroom style. As odd and old-fashioned as it seems, all Alphas learn to dance. It was no surprise to me the few times that Amelie and I danced that she also knew. Tonight was going to be different. I was going to swing her around that dance floor in a way that everyone knew she was mine forever.

The music started, and I puller her close to me. We moved around the dance floor like we were in a competition. I was watching every corner of the room to see who was watching back. Snarls and growls are leaving my chest when I felt eyes lingering too long.

"Why don't you just get it over with and pee on me," Amelie says, dripping with sarcasm.

"I don't need to. I already marked you." I smile down at her.

She rolls her eyes at me. "Then why are you acting like you haven't? I know better than anyone the danger I am facing, we are facing. I get it. After what just happened and the failed attempt yesterday, do you really think anyone would be dumb enough to try something tonight?"

I looked down at my mate. I saw for the first time tonight how gorgeous she looked. I had been so focused on all the threats and the crazy possession of the goddess I didn't truly look at her. She was stunning. The crown weaved into her hair and the flow of her dress; she looked like she could be the goddess herself. I could feel my mood lessen as I looked at her, and Ulv looks at our mate with adoration. "You're the most beautiful thing I had ever seen."

"There is my mate, my Alpha." She whispers in a low, seductive tone.

We continue to dance, but now my focus is on her, my love, and my whole life, my blessing, my mate. "You know, I always thought it odd that the Alpha female was called Luna while the other ranked females were called the same as their mate."

"I guess I never put much thought to it. There has always been an Alpha and a Luna." Amelie smiled at me.

"I think I understand why the Alpha female is called Luna." I say as I smile down at her.

“Oh, what is your theory mister investigator?” He teased, and I twirled her.

I pulled her back into me and held her tight to my chest. “Luna is Latin, and it means moon. We pray to the goddess Selene, and she is the embodiment of the moon. So to the Alpha, his mate is like the embodiment of the goddess in his life. She is his moon. The Alpha doesn’t submit to anyone but the goddess. His mate is the only one his equal, the only one he will worship.” I lean down to steal a kiss.

“Oh, so is my mate and Alpha saying that he worships me.” Amelie giggles. My heart can’t take it. I steal another kiss. I linger in that kiss a little longer this time.

“I’ve been at your feet before either of us even truly knew we were mates.” I let my hand on her back drop a little lower.

“Gideon, if you are trying to get some, I have a little secret for you.” She stands on her tiptoes and whispers in my ear. “You already knocked me up with twins.”

I laugh loud and hard. It felt good to just be, even with everyone else around; I didn’t care. This is how I wanted our life to be. Lively filled with laughter and love. “You are my Luna, my mate, my goddess.” I lean down to take her lips. I didn’t care who saw; let them look. There was nothing between us. We were one, and I wanted everyone to know. The moment was short-lived.

## Scars by Jessica Bailey Chapter 60

### Chapter 60

#### Gideon

“Fight!” A young lady came running into the ballroom screaming. Amelie and I both rushed out to the back garden where the young she-wolf directed the fight was happening.

As I rushed outside, I found an interesting sight. James, Riley, and Harlow are fighting off seven other Alpha and Beta Heirs. Three of them were already on the ground reeling in pain. It’s a three-on-four-fight when I see the glint of metal in one of their hands as he charges for James. Ulv took over before I could react and leaped from the stairs and tackled the kid to the ground.

“That’s enough!” Amelie screamed and pushed all her new Luna aura out. All the teens stopped and submitted on the spot. I had to fight, not bowing in submission.

By now, all the parents were outside. “Take your children to bed. We will discuss this with each of you in the morning.” I commanded. No one questioned me. The teens and their parents quickly left for their rooms. “Excitement is over go back inside.” I hollered over the chattering crowd.

Everyone went back inside except Amelie's family. Amelie pulled all three boys into a hug all at once. Which I could tell threw them off a bit. They didn't fight it; they just let their sister and cousin embrace them. Then she pulled back and punched each one in the arm.

"Mom, tell Amelie not to hit me!" James whined.

"Well, when she's done, I'm going to start. What the hell is going on?" Celest folds her arms over her chest and is not amused with her son.

Riley is the first to speak up. "It's not our fault we got jumped!"

"Yeah, a few girls asked us to come outside, then bam, these guys were all over us. It was seven to three! They didn't stand a chance even with the numbers." Harlow chuckles and nods.

I walk over to the ground, where I tackled the one kid and picked up the knife by the hilt. I touched the blade, and sure enough, it burned my skin. It's a silver switchblade. A weapon banned by both Councils. I turn around and look at John. I fold the blade back in and toss it to him. "We have a problem. Illegal weapons."

John unfolds the knife and touches the blade. "This can't just be some simple fight among ragging hormonal boys. It doesn't make sense. Why be so brazen and stupid!" John pinches the bridge of his nose.

"I agree it's not a simple fight. They were lured out here and ambushed. I don't think, however, they are the masterminds behind everything, just dumb kids thinking they are better than the boys." Logan scoffs.

"You are right but, that switchblade says we have a problem. Similar weapons have been used in numerous Rouge attacks over the past eight years. These attacks have a unique signature to them, all done by the same group. They attack small packs and only outlying homes not close to the Packhouse. There are never survivors, and the houses are always burned to the ground. Every time we find small handheld silver weapons and nothing else. To see the same type weapon in the hands of an Alpha Heir is unsettling." My gut is telling me something more is going on, but I don't know what.

"Rouge attacks, poisonings, and kidnapping of an Alpha's daughter. Is it all related, or can we not trust our kind?" Hope huffs in frustration.

"I don't know. There's no actual evidence proving they are or are not connected, just theories and speculation." I sigh and rub my hand down my face.

"Which packs were those boys from? Does anyone know?" Flynn Harlow's Father and John's cousin ask.



"I only knew one of them that I knocked out when the fight first started, Halston Payne of the Dark Wood Pack. I think he's 19 because he used to try and talk to me and ask me questions about Hope. I blew him off because he's a creep." Harlow said.

"Son, did you say Dark Wood?" Flynn furrowed his brow.

"Yeah, dad. We hung out a few times, but he would always ask creepy questions about Hope since he knew we were cousins and she's the same age as him. I stopped talking to him because it was just weird." Harlow shook his head.

We heard a deep growl and a yip and looked over the see Philp's eyes glowing and arms wrapped around Hope. "Mine!"

"Philp! Control your wolf! You and your Luna are safe. You are with the family!" Amelie demanded while pushing her aura out. Her eyes glowed brighter silver. Philp visibly relaxed and loosed his grip on Hope.

"I think I might know who the Dark Wood Pack is allied with." Flynn gets us back on track.

We all turn and wait for Flynn to keep going. "As you all know, I run an investment firm in New York. Most of our pack is white-collar and works for our firm. We handle most investments for the packs throughout the country. About ten years ago, one of my pack members came to me with a combined portfolio from 4 packs looking to create an investment club. They were small packs, and it made financial sense, but what I found odd was some of the stocks they had. Silver mining, logging, pharmaceutical, urban constriction firms, hunting, and sporting goods there was more none-wolf friendly business than I had ever really seen in one portfolio. It always felt off to me, but I didn't know why. It's pretty common for wolves to invest in a human business that we normally wouldn't be interested in but not on this scale."

"Do you remember any other Packs listed?" I ask maybe it could be a lead.

"Blue Crescent, Dark Wood, and Silver Dawn are the ones I remember. I will need to contact my firm in the morning to see who else is part of the investment club." Flynn pulls out his phone and looks like he's about to send a text or email.

"Wait, stop." I grab Flynn's wrist. "We don't know if they have planted spies. It might be best to hold off till you can check it yourself. If they can plant a maid to poison Celeste, they could have one in your firm watching the investment club's portfolio."

"He's right, Flynn. We can only trust family and our ranked members right now." John pats his cousin on the shoulder. John turns to look at me. "Gideon, I think this is bigger than we thought. I don't know how big or how long this plan has been going on, but we need to play this tight to the vest."

“Your right.” I close my eyes and let out a breath. “We can’t say anything about the knife and only scold the kids who started the fight. If we let on that we are on to them, they could try to strike with deadly force before we know what we are truly dealing with.”

“We will need to be cautious and ready all our evidence for both Councils. We don’t have enough right now.” John said with annoyance dripping from his tone.

“John, we are going to need to pull in the rest of the family,” Flynn said.

“Already on it. Most are here, so it shouldn’t be too hard to have a small family reunion. Also, we are going to set a trap for the Ember Moon Festival. Gideon, can we use the Alpha Wing tomorrow for a family gathering?” John asks with a devious look in his eye.

“We can gather after Lunch before our Alpha meeting that evening,” I said while nodding in agreement with John.

“I think we have gathered long enough. Let’s head back in. Gideon and I will be heading to our wing to relieve the sitter.” Amelie says as she grabs my hand and ushers everyone back into the main Packhouse.

We say our goodbyes to the family and make our way to our wing of the Packhouse. As we are walking, I can’t help going over the few details I do know. Yet, I don’t know for sure if everything is related or not. Now throw in years of Rouge attacks, and everything is even more complicated. The biggest question is why? And who? What is the motivation behind everything? I know Alpha John and Logan feel this is all a long play for power, but the details and everything is hidden in the shadows for years. There is something we are missing. I can’t even say the Rouge attacks are related, but the silver knife tells me this is bigger. Hopefully, tomorrow after the family meeting, we might have more to work with.

We go to check on the twins first. After the dinner portion of the ball, we had two Omegas take the ranked couples’ kids to the playroom to have a sleepover. We peek in and see all the kids sleeping in the middle of the floor in sleeping bags. They loved having sleepovers, and I know everything is changing quickly for them, so to have their friends helps keep things regular. Both the Omegas are sleeping on the sofas. Amelie puts a blanket on each of them. We let them sleep and head to our room.

As soon as I close the door, I pull Amelie to my chest and kiss her with all my love. She stands on her tiptoes and wraps her arms around my neck as our kiss deepens. I pull away and rest my forehead on hers. “I love you, my Luna. You are my life.”

“I love you, my Alpha. You have given me life.” Amelie’s words strike me for a moment. In this short time of a month and a half, our whole world has turned upside down. We said we would take things slowly and crawl into love, but we sprinted instead.

“You are my goddess.” I run one hand up her neck into her hair and kiss her again. My other hand has found the slit of my mates’ dress that has been mocking me all night. It’s a good thing the night is still young. I’ll have to let her sleep at some point.