

## Losing It Pt. 1

3 years later

Alpha Chase Daniels looked over his territory smiling. I was twenty-two years old and was one of the only Alpha's besides the Conner's brothers to take over their pack at eighteen. My brother Cameron Daniels had recently left to lead his own pack. I'd relied on my brother since I'd taken over as Alpha. I was happy my younger brother was spreading his wings; he was meant to be an Alpha. Cameron led my pack for seven months with our father while I was training in Europe. He'd done an amazing job. We were the Yellow Hills pack. Everyone here was proud when my Father's Beta's oldest daughter had discovered she was the mate of Alpha Jackson Conners. Molly Conner was now the Luna of his pack. Her younger brother Matthew was my Beta. Matt walked into my ope, "It's strange without Cameron and Reagan here." I sighed. Reagan was my brother's mate. I said, "I know. We need our Luna." Matt raised an eyebrow. I said, "What? We do. Especially now that Reagan is gone. The pack can feel her absence." Matt said, "Not to beat this dead horse, but you're still married." I sighed, "Sophia is just scared Matt. She worries those in her pack are waiting for weakness on her part. Somehow us getting an annulment is weakness." Matt snorted, "Then she needs to kick them out of her pack. If you are serious about ending your mate, we need to take care of that situation." I sighed, "I can't just leave her in a bind." Matt said, "You can. She consolidated her pack while you were here, and then she ran her pack without you here. She did an amazing job. What are you supposed to do? Let your mate run off because you are married?" I winced, "It was just supposed to be in name only. It WAS in name only while I was here. The plan was to have it annulled when I left for training in Europe. I just wanted to help her out." Matt said, "I know. I agreed with the plan ONLY because they said it would be annulled while you were gone. We sent the papers over multiple times. She's refusing to sign." I sighed, "I know. We've gone to some things together though now. Maybe now that I'm back, I can talk sense into her."

Matt frowned, "I don't know man. She seems to think the second she loses you, she loses her pack. I don't know if her dad told her she needed you or what, but I don't think she's going to go quietly into the night." I sighed, "Maybe I'll be like Alpha Lucas and Alpha Eric Conners. Their mates didn't show up until they were older." Matt laughed, "Well hopefully we'll have figured out your situation by then." I smiled, "You were always good at puzzles." Matt smiled and left. I sat at my ope. My Wolf Bolt started banging on our connection. "Bolt? What's wrong?" Bolt howled, "Mate is near!" I stiffened, "What? How do you know?" Bolt said, "Because you dummy! I have wolf senses. I know she is near." Fear paralyzed me. Bolt growled, "Get up! Let's go and mate!" I said, "Bolt...we are married. She... won't understand." Bolt growled, "NO! Mate has to understand." I sighed, "What if she rejects us?" Pain hit my heart. Bolt howled in pain, "No! NO I won't let that happen. YOU got married not me! I said not to marry her!" I sighed, "It wasn't supposed to be permanent."

Bolt howled in my head. I tried to close our connection, but he kept pulling it back open to howl. I was getting a headache. I called Cameron. I was older than him by one year. Cameron had found Reagan two weeks after he turned eighteen on her birthday. He'd been circling her for years. She was our father's Gamma's daughter, and my Gamma's sister. Everyone was thrilled when Cameron discovered he was her mate. She had snuck off for a midnight birthday run, but Cameron followed her. Once he caught her scent. His howl could've woken the dead.

Cameron answered on the second ring, "Hello Big Brother. Miss me already?" I smiled, "You have no idea." Cameron immediately asked, "What's wrong?" Bolt said in our connection, "Tell him your \*\*\*\*\* ass might cost me my mate." I sighed, "Just wanted to talk." Cameron laughed, "I know that tone, but if you aren't ready to tell me that's ne." I said, "Were you ready to end out Reagan was your mate?" Cameron said, "I'd been in love with her my entire life. I was going to be devastated if that pull. I felt to her wasn't as a mate. So yes, I was ready. Are you thinking of trying to look for your mate Chase?" I sighed, "The pack needs their Luna. Reagan's absence is felt across the whole pack." Cameron was quiet, "What about Sophia?" I sighed, "Isn't that the question. You know this wasn't supposed to be a long-term deal." Cameron laughed, "I know Reagan yelled at me from the moment you signed the paper to be her husband. Even when you left. The ENTIRE seven months you were gone. She yelled. When the annulment papers returned unsigned, she yelled. No man in the history of men has been yelled at more over someone else's marriage than I have. It's been almost four years of me being yelled at for you getting married. She HATED the entire thing." I sighed, "I was trying to help out a friend. Sophia deserved to lead her pack." Cameron said, "Hey man. I am on your side always. You're my big brother. I'll love you until I'm put in the ground Chase. If you want to end your mate though, you need to talk to Sophia. I can't see this going well."

I heard Reagan enter the room. I sighed, "Is there any chance my mate won't care?" Reagan snorted, "Ok, so if your mate's married." I couldn't stop my growl. I sighed, "Bolt... we can't be upset about that." Bolt growled, "I'll kill him with my bare paws!" I said, "Bolt WE are married. We are also not a virgin. We can't be mad about those things." Bolt huffed, "I can. I didn't agree to get married. It's not my fault my human half did. YOU can't get mad, but I can." Bolt started howling in our connection again. "So you're just going to give me a headache for the foreseeable future?" Bolt said, "Glad you've caught on." Reagan said, "How can you think your mate will be ne with you being married if you can't even let me finish my sentence about her being married? I TOLD you not to do this. Cameron... I swear I told you both." I heard Cameron groan. I sighed, "Sophia just..." Reagan said, "OHHHH Sophia just. I swear if I didn't love that girl to pieces, I would KICK IN HER IN THE TEETH! Sophia was raised to take over as Alpha. Just because some old fuddy duddies don't want her to; doesn't mean she should suffer. Or you. You both lost all your marbles with this plan. How am I younger than you Chase? I am so much smarter." I sighed, "I just... she deserved to take over." Reagan said, "I don't argue that point, Chase. She didn't need to marry you to do it. Now she's backed herself into a corner. Of her own making." I frowned, "She ran her pack just as well as any Alpha. She assisted Alpha Conners to bring his Luna home." Cameron said, "As did Dad and I. Dude, he was CRAZY. I mean he's always crazy, but this was... I know those closest to him knew his wolf was weak without her, but you could've fooled me. He was vicious. He TORE through a vampire club as if it was nothing. With no losses on our end. If that's his wolf being weak, can I just say how glad I am he's BOTH of our ally."

I said, "Do you blame him?" Cameron growled, "NO! Anyone who touched Reagan would die. I'd do just what Alpha Conners did to get his Luna back." I laughed, "I think the Princess would do the same if someone took Alpha Conners." Reagan snorted, "You mean after the c\*\*\*\*\*e we all saw that she caused here. Our pack is still terried of her. I think people may hide if we ever invite them over. I might just have to go there and see her for a few years." I laughed. Cameron said, "Why would you go there?" Reagan snorted, "Because once we are more settled here, it's my new personal mission to be her best friend. She's amazing." I shivered, "She chipped the strongest Alpha and the second strongest in the country with a GPS tracking device. She slaughtered anyone who got in her way. We only saw the very end of her ripping apart your current pack. She was..." Reagan said, "Awesome. The word you are looking for Chase is awesome. I'm going to end out her favorite things and become her best friend." Cameron laughed, "She doesn't stand a chance then. When is this happening?" Reagan sighed, "I think after the New Year we should be settled enough for me to start popping up in her life." I laughed, "You'd have to run Reagan. She can pop not you." Reagan smiled, "After the plan she and her cousin came up with... Don't you want to be their friend?" I said, "She hates me." Cameron sighed, "She doesn't know you, Chase. She doesn't hate you. You aren't a witch or a warlock."

I said, "Both of them hate me. Not just the princess, the duchess too." Reagan snorted, "They don't like what you are doing. There's a difference. It's not you. Cameron is right. They don't know you Chase. If they did, they'd know you are a good person. Besides, their mates are who matter. They are your allies. Once I become her new best friend, I'll tell her about how great you are. She'll come around." Cameron said, "You know Alpha Lyons' mate told the future Alpha and Beta of Red Run as well as Beta Dylan Frost who their mates were. Focus on getting her to like your rst big brother." Reagan said, "Or get your annulment rst, then end your mate. Don't f\*\*k up my relationship with my one day to be sister-in-law before I get to know her. You know, after you make my current sister-in-law, my ex-sister-in-law." I winced, "It's not like that. You know that Reagan." Reagan said, "Level with me Chase. I've never asked this, and I never will again. Do you actually like Sophia? Everyone thought you were mates until you both turned eighteen. Their pack was rumbling with how strong we would be once you two mated." I sighed, "Sophia and I have always known we weren't mates. We were always just friends. We knew everyone wanted us together. We kissed ONCE when we were seventeen to see if there was anything there because everyone said there was. It was like kissing my sister." Cameron said, "Ew. Don't make me think about kissing our little sister." I smiled, "She's only ve Cameron. She won't be kissing anyone for a VERY long time." Reagan sighed, "I miss Susie. Why can't I just get pregnant? We should have little ones Cameron." I said, "Is that why you want to be the Princess' best friend?" Reagan snorted, "No, I want to be her best friend because she's amazing. I have an appointment with a specialist next week. This pack OB has a werewolf friend who specializes in infertility." I smiled, "I know you guys will be great parents."

Reagan snorted, "Of course we will be. Aside from this one snafu with you marrying Sophia. We did an excellent job with you." I laughed, "I'm older than you." Reagan said, "And yet somehow you are our child. Cameron, can't I sneak away to see how the fairy princesses' event is going?" Cameron laughed, "No. I'd miss you too much." Bolt and I perked up. Alpha Conners territory was on our border. My mate could be there. I tried to sound disinterested, "Fairy event?" Reagan said, "Yes, one of her partial fairy events. Seriously, do you two EVER pay attention to the chatter? Everyone is losing their minds over this. She's reaching out to a group of people who have been ignored. She's their champion. They are allied with the werewolves because SHE is married to ALPHA ERIC CONNERS! Seriously you two. I don't know what to do with you sometimes. She is amazing. I will be her best friend, and NEITHER of you will mess that up for me. So Chase get Sophia to agree to your annulment. In all seriousness though...I want you to be happy Chase. Are you happy?" I was getting a headache from Bolt. "Not really, no." Reagan said, "Well there's your answer." Susie stumbled into my ope. I smiled, "Our little sister just came in." Reagan said, "Hi Susie! Susie squealed, "Hi Reagan! Daddy said I can come see you tomorrow." Reagan said, "I have your room all set up for our rst sleepover." My dad came in behind Susie. "I'll let you go guys go. I'll call you later Cameron." My dad smiled and spoke "Goodbye Cameron." Cameron said, "Hey dad! Are you bringing Susie?" My dad said, "Who else would I trust with your little sister?" I smiled. That was predictable.

Susie was technically Cameron and I's half-sister, but none of us cared about that. My mom died in a rogue attack when Cameron and I were teenagers. A few years later my dad's second chance mate crossed paths with him. I had actually missed Susie more than anyone else when I was in Europe. My dad had kept her a bit of secret from everyone else. Most of our allies didn't know Cameron and I had a little sister. He barely lets her out of the main house. My stepmom tries to convince him to let her out, but I think after what happened to my mom he's scared. As an Alpha being scared is not an emotion we are used to. So Susie isn't exactly a secret, but not many people know about her. I wouldn't be surprised if Alpha Conners knew, but I doubt anyone outside of him did. If Susie was going to start visiting Cameron though, dad might want to prepare for people to end out. I hoped that happened. My sister was the brightest little star. Susie smiled, "Beta Alfred asked me to give you these." I frowned. Beta Alfred Thomas was Sophia's Beta. She of course knew about Susie, but Alfred shouldn't have given her papers for me. My dad frowned as I asked, "Did he leave a message with you Susie?" Susie said, "Oh ummm he seemed nervous. Said to tell you he's sorry, and he's trying." I opened the envelope and frowned. My stepmom came to the door. "Susie! Are you trying to avoid your bath time? You know it's bath time, then bed." Susie shot me a pleading look. My stepmom stepped inside my ope, "Don't you shoot them those puppy dog eyes. You know they melt for you every time. Up, to, bed. Little girl." Susie gave me a hug then my dad. "Goodnight." She turned to her mom, Mommy, daddy is taking me for a sleepover with Cam and Reagan tomorrow." My stepmom laughed, "I know. I gave him the idea because Reagan is missing you." Their voices faded.

"She's great, dad. I'm so glad you found Nadine." My dad smiled, "I am too. I just know your mom would've loved her." I laughed, "Not for you, but I understand your point." My dad nodded towards the papers, "I'm guessing unsigned annulment papers." I said, "Probably." I opened them. My signature was there, but Sophia's wasn't." My dad sighed, "You know son, you could divorce her." I said, "I don't want to take that route. For god's sake. We didn't even have a wedding. We led for a license, signed it then led it. It's not like she's holding onto some deep love we have for each other." My dad sighed, "No, not some deep love for you. It's the older members of her pack. She's scared of losing her father's legacy. They are pressuring her to mate with you and have a pup to secure the alliance." I said, "She would never do that nor would I. She hasn't met her mate; she can't even go into heat." My dad sighed, "They refuse to believe the facts. Claudia Harden circulated that rumor she used a witch to send her into heat. They want Sophia to do that." I growled, "Claudia MET her mate. That's how she went into heat. I wasn't even here, and I heard that." My dad held up his hand, "I know that, and you know that. They are arguing she wasn't marked so it had to be some type of magic." I frowned, "Maybe, but the magic could only work because she'd met her mate. Or her wolf was trying to push her to Tucker. We will never know, but I won't mate with Sophia. She's like family." My dad laughed, "She's your wife, son. She is family."

Bolt howled in pain. I clutched my head. My dad frowned, "Son... What's going on?" I sighed, "Bolt's testy about it. He wants our mate." My dad said, "Don't you?" I answered honestly, "Yes. I want her dad. I just don't know what to do." My dad said, "You are a good man Chase. I know EVERYONE has an opinion about what you did. You didn't marry Sophia with the intent to stay married to her or even to reject your mate." Bolt howled in pain. My dad continued, "You married her so she could take her title that she deserved. Your mother would've been proud of the man you've become, and I am proud of you. The moon goddess will give you a worthy mate son. I'd give her one of his rallying speeches." I smiled, "Want to try to give her that speech dad?" My dad smiled, "For you, I'll give her one the next time I see her." I tossed and turned all night long. Bolt wouldn't let me go to sleep. He desperately wanted to go to Alpha Conners territory. At three in the morning I gave up. I went outside and shifted. I went to my border with Alpha Conners. The pull to run to his home was so strong; I'd almost done it. An alarm went off in our link within our pack. Rogues. Bolt ran to the other side of our territory in a rage. There was a group of ten rogues attacking. Our border patrol was light this early, but with me there. We'd contained the threat in under ten minutes." Bolt had never been so angry. Matt came running up to me. He shifted, "How the hell did you get here so fast? What the hell did they do to you in Europe man? You're making me feel like I'm out of shape." I laughed, "So many things." We spent the morning dealing with this problem.

When I got back to my ope my phone rang. Matt answered then grimaced, "It's your wife." I growled, "Sophia." Sophia said, "I heard there were rouges. We had two ourselves, but I wanted to make sure you guys were ne." I said, "We are ne. Why won't you sign the annulment papers?" Sophia sighed, "I didn't call you to talk about that." My voice softened, "Sophia, you knew this was the plan." Sophia said, "I'll lose everything Chase. I have to do this for my dad." I said, "Sophia, I'm not your mate. You don't even like me that way." Sophia sighed, "I know. I know you don't like me in a romantic way either. I... there's so much pressure. Would you consider picking a surrogate and having a child?" Matt dropped his coffee. I stared at the phone in shock. Sophia sighed, "Well, it's just we could get the annulment then. No one could argue the alliance between us even if we got divorced because I'd have an heir. We would be tied together by blood. No one could argue that." I said, "No Sophia. Even you know that's... What the hell is going on? Where did you even come up with that?" Sophia sighed, "I know. I know it's crazy. I don't want a child with someone who's not my mate. I don't know how to prove if we aren't married, we are still a strong pack. Everyone's just been on my case about us having a pup. It's the only way I could think about it working, because I don't like you that way." I said, "The entire time we've been married you've run your pack. I wasn't even here the last seven months." Sophia's voice went angry, "I know! I thought that would prove it to them. My dad was so beloved here. He NAMED me his successor but does that appease them. NO! I'm good at this Chase. I was BORN to be their Alpha, but without your name tied to mine... they don't want me. I don't know what to do anymore."

I said, "Then kick those that feel that way out, Sophia. Tell them that's their choice. They won't be welcome in my pack, and I'm pretty sure Alpha Conners mate would use some fairy magic to kick them out of their territory. They actually might have to go to Nashville, but Soph... We can't stay married. We just can't." Sophia sighed, "Just give me some more time." I was still howling in my head trying to pull me to Alpha Conners border again. "I don't have much time left to give you Sophia. It's been almost four years. This was supposed to be handled before I came home." Sophia startled, "Why don't you have the time to give me anymore?" I said, "I just don't. This was supposed to be resolved seven months ago. It's just getting worse the longer it drags on. For god's sake you just asked me to father a pup with you. This isn't like you. Stand up to them. Put them in their place. You are the strongest wolf in the pack. You could take them down." Sophia said, "I just want them to accept me as I am."

I said, "The ones that matter do. Alfred REFUSED to take over as Alpha. One because the name Alpha Alfred is ridiculous." Sophia laughed as I continued, "And two, he knows the title is yours." Sophia sighed, "Just give me a little more time Chase. I'll gure something out." I said, "We need to end this Sophia. I can't sign that paper for the long haul. You deserve better than some piece of paper and so do I. Your mate is out there, and he will give you the wedding of your dreams. You just can't already be married or her can't give it to you. I don't even wear a ring. I didn't even get you a ring because this was supposed to be nothing. I felt like the biggest jerk alive because I saw people look at your hand for a ring before I left for Europe. I didn't even put on your nger. You bought one while I was gone." Sophia said, "I know you are right Chase. I really do. I just have a panic attack every time I try to sign the papers. I just feel like I'm losing everything for my dad. My pack didn't feel like our alliance was real since I didn't have a ring." I sighed, "I felt shady when Cameron told me you'd bought the ring. It was three years of no ring, then I left, and you bought it." Sophia was silent.

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