

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 181[1,617 words]

Chapter 114: Christina

Christina

Finals week is as grueling as I expected. They don't make it easy, it shouldn't be. Alphas have the lives of every member of their pack in their hands. They need to take that seriously, to understand the responsibility that comes with being an Alpha, so they can effectively run and manage their packs.

On Monday, Ezra defeated me to get the ten points in Best in Sparring. It was a hard-won battle, but in the end, he was the winner. He was a good sport about it, and everyone else congratulated both of us on being such strong competitors.

Sebastian had come up and congratulated Ezra on the win, and as briefly as possible, told me that I did very well. I know I was the one who asked for space but shit it's so hard to see him when I still feel so raw.

I can feel his eyes on me at all hours of the day. I know he's desperate to talk to me and I know that time is coming quickly when I'll have to make a decision, but he's respecting my need to focus this week.

Not that it's easy to focus. I'm struggling to sleep every night, and everyone has seen the strain I'm under. On Tuesday, the Lunas corner me in the kitchen, wanting to know what happened. I tearfully tell them, getting hugs and support for all of them.

"For what it's worth, Christina, he looks as bad as you do," Sylvie

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says.

"I know you're in the middle of finals weeks, Christina, but don't make **any** decisions until you've had some space. Get away from all of this and think about what YOU want and what YOU can live with next week between semesters," Mia said.

"I imagine right now it feels hard to breathe. Go home. Talk to your brother. Get some clarity about what you want in life and how you can obtain that. There are a lot of doors that will be open for you now, even more than before," Luna Jo says.

By Wednesday, Tyler and Ezra corner me on our morning run, waiting until we're as far away from the dorms as possible. before forcing me to talk.

"I broke the first rule of being an assistant. I fell in love with the instructor," I say. I've cried more in the last few days than I have since I lost my parents. I'm not a crier by nature, but I just can't seem to stop.

"Did he tell you he doesn't love you? Because he acts like he does," Tyler says.

"We've never said it to each other. I don't know if he doesn't feel the same or if he was waiting, but now..." I look up at these two men who are as much brothers to me as Dane is.

"Now you don't want to go from one shadow to another," Ezra says.

"Exactly. Maybe I would feel differently if I hadn't gone through the classes this semester, if I hadn't realized what it meant to be in Dane's shadow. But I'm not the same person I was ten weeks ago, and I can't go back to being that person again."

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"What are you going to do?" Tyler asks.

"Luna Mia suggested taking this week away to decide what I want. I think I need to space to clear my head and figure out exactly what it is that I want to do," I say.

"You'll see us next week at Tyler's party. You can give us an update then and if you need to talk, we'll be there," Ezra says. "Well, I'll be there. Tyler will hopefully find his mate and be very busy," he says chuckling.

"I've already found my mate," he says quietly. "For me, my birthday will just confirm what I already know."

"I hope so. The two of you are really good together," I tell him.

By Friday, all of the tokens have been given out. Not surprisingly, Ezra won best for Finance, Managing the Pack, and overall Sensory, which left me the ten points for Best in Hearing. Tyler won for Best in Smell, and Liam won for Best in Sight. I got the points for the Communication class and Tyler got them for Dealing with Crisis.

By Saturday, there's a lot of excitement. As heartbroken as I still feel about everything going on with Sebastian, it's hard not to be excited about the fact that three of us made it to the leaderboard.

The assistants, under Haley's direction put together a feast and baked a cake for our graduation. The mood is festive and a bit sad. We've all grown really close this semester, even Logan became part of the group after he finally engaged in the program. We all know he didn't pass, but I know he will next semester.

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As dinner winds down, Alpha James stands. He and the other instructors sat together at one table and the rest of us spread out amongst the others. This is typical. At graduation, the instructors present a unified front to present the total points for the Alphas.

"First, I'd like to thank our instructors for joining the Academy this semester. I know it's hard to be away from your mates and families, but it's important for our future generation that we give our time to help them be successful. To our instructors," Alpha James says.

We all clap as they stand and then begin clapping for each. other. Once they sit, Alpha James begins again.

"Without further ado, let's talk points. I am humbled and privileged to announce that three of our Alphas made it to the leaderboard this semester. Sebastian and I looked it up and there is no recorded history of this ever happening at the Academy. Well done!"

Everyone begins clapping again, as Erza, Tyler, and I look at each other. Our numbers are very, very close.

"First, Alpha Logan. You already know that we'll be seeing you again next semester."

"Yes, Alpha," he says.

"I look forward to seeing what you accomplish now that you've put your mind to it," Alpha James says to him.

"Thank you, Alpha. I won't let you down."

“I know you won’t. So, coming in at one hundred and two points,

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congratulations Alpha Noah,” he says, holding out a certificate. Noah walks up and takes it, shaking the instructors’ hands before hugging Luna Jo, who smiles like a proud mom.

We all congratulate him as he returns to his seat, then Alpha James continues. “Coming in at one hundred and ten points, Alpha Liam, congratulations!”

Liam jogs up, pumping his fist in the air as we cheer and laugh. He shakes the instructors’ hands and hugs Mia before coming back to our table.

“Now for you three,” Alpha James says, looking over at me, Tyler, and Ezra. “Before this semester, there were twenty points separating first and fifth place on the leaderboard, three points between first and second place. Now, there are only six points separating first and fifth place,” he says, having to stop at the appreciative whistles that go up around the room, “and only three points separating first and third place. You assholes bumped my son off the leaderboard. I have to go home and tell him that,” he says, making us all laugh. Then he looks at Tyler. “But you also bumped your brother off the leaderboard, and nearly bumped your brother off the leaderboard,” he says, looking at me.

I glance at Tyler, knowing he feels the impact of that as strongly as I do.

“So, coming in at one hundred and fifty-one points and number three on the leaderboard, Alpha Ezra.

We all stand and cheer as he walks up. For the leaderboard, you not only get the certificate, but you also get a large gold number with your leaderboard rank on it. Ezra shakes everyone’s hand and hugs Charlotte before coming to sit down amongst our

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group.

“Coming in at one hundred and fifty-two points, second on the leaderboard and the first woman to ever get her name on the leaderboard, Alpha Christina.”

I stand, as the others cheer for me, walking up to Alpha James first. “Congratulations. I knew you could do it. Your brother will be very proud,” he says, handing me the certificate and my gold number two.

I thank the other instructors and the assistants, saving Sebastian for last.

“Thank you, Sebastian. I couldn’t have done this without you,” I say truthfully.

“Of course you could have. You did this, all I did was give you a little nudge to get you going,” he says. I debate for half a second, then open my arms to hug him. His response is instant, and he pulls me into his embrace, holding me tightly.

I simultaneously feel something tighten and relax in my body. Being in his arms feels so right, but it also hurts, knowing that I may never feel his arms around me again after tonight. I pull away long before I’m ready to, smiling before going to sit back down.

“And finally, with one hundred and fifty-three points, our new number one on the leaderboard, Alpha Tyler!”

He smiles, getting up and going to get his certificate and golden number, shaking hands with the instructors and then lifting Haley off the ground and spinning her around as she laughs and cries at the same time.

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apter 115: Sebastian

Sebastian

Goddess, it felt good to have Christina in my arms again. I have every intention of talking to her tonight. Tomorrow, we board the Train to head home. I don’t want to leave things unsaid. I need to finally tell her that I’m in love with her. I need her to understand that I want a life with her. I’m anxious to have my time with her, but I know we’re not yet done with the graduation ceremony. The graduation celebration usually goes on until early in the morning.

Once Tyler is seated again, James holds up his hands for silence.

“On this, our last night together, I like to give everyone an opportunity to say something. Over the course of our time together, we develop lasting bonds, friendships forged through the fires that you’ve faced and overcome. But we also become something of a pack together, friends and family. So, I like to give everyone a chance to say something, to thank each other, or just say what this semester has meant to you,” James says.

It’s quiet a moment, then Will stands. “I’ll start. I knew, almost immediately, that this semester was going to be a good one. I had no idea just how good it was going to be. I’ve enjoyed every moment of being here with all of you this semester, to watch you grow and flourish into the young Alphas that you have become. I feel so proud to have been a part of your journey and I’m honored to have been here to see this momentous occasion of three of you making it to the leaderboard. Thank you for

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letting me be a part of this and I hope you’ll let me come back. again, at least once a year,” he says to James.

“If your mate will let you, we’ll be glad to have you.”

Benjamin and Daniel both stand, talking about how this experience has exceeded their initial expectations of being here. and how much being a part of this has changed them for the better.

I know others will talk, but as an instructor, we usually start out the night, so I stand.

“Not many of you know that I went through something of my own hell week at the same time all you did. This semester, unlike the others that I’ve participated in, has forced me to look at myself, and my life, just as you all have done. Being with all of you, watching you grow and push yourselves through the issues that were holding you back encouraged me to do the same. I’m so proud of all of you for what you have achieved and I’m proud to call all of you my fellow Alphas. I do hope to hear from you in the future, when you find your mates and have your pups.”

I try not to look at Christina when I sit, but I can’t help myself. My eyes are constantly drawn to her. She has a sad smile on her face that doesn’t bode well for our conversation later.

“Can I go next?” Noah asks, standing up, making all of us chuckle.

“Go for it, Alpha Noah,” James says.

“Well first, I want to thank all of the instructors. Without you, none of us would have been pushed to becoming the stronger individuals we are today. Second, I want to thank Christina. You

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helped me in so many ways this semester. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you. Obviously, the whole Emma thing was huge, but you also showed me how to believe **in** myself and overcome. obstacles. That's something that will stay with me forever. And finally, Luna Jo,” he says turning to her. She shakes her head at him.

“I know you don't want me to say it, but I'm going to anyway. You're an amazing woman and I wish you could have been my mate.”

“Call me when you meet her, Noah. I want to hear all about her,” she says.

“I will Luna.”

They go around the room, Liam thanking his fellow Alphas and Mia for getting him in line early on. Logan thanks everyone for helping him and believing in him even after he was an asshole. Tyler thanks everyone for supporting him and being there for him when he struggled with being here and taking over for his brother. Ezra thanks everyone for being part of his journey and helping him to realize that he doesn't have to be perfect or have all the answers.

Christina is the last to stand and my stomach clenches when she does. “First, I'd like to thank all of the assistants. You helped cover for me this semester so I could take the classes. You are all dear friends to me, and I thank you so much for all of your hard work.”

I watch her, not at all surprised that she remembered to thank the assistants.

“To all of my instructors, thank you for pushing me to be better.

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Thank you for encouraging me to take the classes and become the Alpha that everyone saw in me, but that I couldn't see in myself. And to my fellow classmates, what a fucking ride,” she says, making them all laugh. “I feel like we've all become. friends, but Tyler and

Ezra, you feel more like brothers to me. If you don't keep in touch with me, I swear I'll come kick your asses," she says, making everyone laugh again. Then she turns

to me.

"I know you said I did it, but I couldn't have done it without your undying support, Sebastian. You pushed me, challenged me, gave me a safe space to spread my wings and learn to fly. You, more than anyone, are the reason that I'll be walking into my brother's packhouse with this bright, shiny number two around my neck. You've taught me a lot about what I want in this life. Thank you."

I nod, but something in my gut twists. Her words feel like a goodbye.

Afterward, someone turns on music and the drinks start flowing. We all end up helping clean up and putting the dishes away for the week that the Academy will be empty.

It's early in the morning before I finally get a chance to pull Christina aside.

"Christina, can we please talk?"

She nods. "Why don't we go outside where we can have some privacy."

As soon as we step outside, I turn to her.

"Christina, I..." She stops, putting her fingers on my lips.

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Chapter 115 Sebastian

"I've done a lot of thinking this week. You taught me to get out of the shadows and now that I have, I can't go back. I can't live in the shadow of your dead mate, Sebastian. I love you. I fell in love with you. But I realized this week that that's not enough for me. I never found my fated mate, but that doesn't mean that I don't want someone to love me like that, someone to love me like I'm the only one in the world that matters, like I'm the other half of their soul. I don't want to be second best. I deserve more

than that. I WANT more than that. I understand that Suzanne was your fated mate, and I could never compete with that, nor would I want to. I'm happy that you had that in your life. But I want it in my life, too. I deserve that kind of happiness. I meant. every word I said in there tonight, Sebastian. If it weren't for you, I never would have grown as much

as I did this semester. But because I have grown, I can't accept less than everything from someone. I'm out of the shadows and I intend to stay there."

"I love you too, Christina," I say fiercely. She is ending things and it's breaking my heart.

"I know you do, Sebastian, as much as you can. But it's not enough for me. I need more, than the love you can give me. need it all, your whole heart, and it's not yours to give."

My throat feels so tight that I can't speak. I feel like I can barely breathe. She turns to leave.

"Christina ..."

"Goodbye, Sebastian,"

I stand, watching her walk away, feeling like my heart is shattering into a million tiny pieces.

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Chapter 116: Noah

Noah

I think we're all a little hungover on Sunday when it's time to board the Train to return home. I had no idea that I'd be sad to leave this place when I got here. I've grown so much over the last two and a half months.

There's no question that we're all washing our own sheets and blankets, getting them ready for the next group coming in. There's no question that we're cleaning up after breakfast and putting the last of the dishes away for the week the instructors are off. All of us have changed. None of us are the arrogant. Alphas that boarded the Train in what feels like a lifetime ago.

I'm not the only one who turns to look at the Academy that has become like a second home before finally boarding the Train.

"Am I the only one who feels sad?" I ask the others.

"No. It's a bit like leaving home, knowing you won't be returning for a long time, if ever," Tyler says.

"Was it like that for you, Alphas?" Ezra asks the instructors.

"It was and is again," Alpha Benjamin says, looking out the window. "I'm happy to be returning to my mate, but there is something about this place that makes it feel like home."

"I know I'll be talking to my mate about coming back. I'd forgotten how much I love this place and what it's like to build something so strong, so quickly," Alpha Daniel says.

"I already said I'd be coming back soon," Alpha Will says.

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Unlike when we first got on the Train, all of us help ourselves to food and drink. The assistants still cook, but everyone still carries food out to the main area, and we sit together to eat.

"Am I the only one who is going to miss Haley's cooking?" Liam asks.

Tyler grins at her while she blushes. She's really cute. I hope they're mates. Tyler invited me to his birthday party, but with everything going on and knowing that I want my father to come here next semester, I told him I'm needed in my pack.

"Alpha Noah, Sylvie and I are planning to spend one, maybe two nights in your pack. After that, we'll need to visit our families to give them the good news before we return to the Train in a week."

"I understand," I tell them.

The stark contrast between Alpha James and Luna Sylvie versus Alpha Sebastian and Alpha Christina is night and day. If you had asked me to bet on which of the two would be happy at the end of the semester, I'd have laid all my money down on Sebastian and Christina. Now, both of them look miserable, although they are both trying to hide it.

Liam and I only get one night on the Train before we're at our stop. Much like when we arrived, everyone gathers around to say goodbye.

Liam and I say our goodbyes, while Alpha James and Luna

Sylvie thank the instructors for their participation this semester and then wish the other Alphas well.

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Chapter 116 Noah

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“Keep in touch. Let us know how you’re doing. If you never need any help or someone to talk to, we’re only a phone call away,” Alpha James says to all of us.

When I hug Christina, I take the moment to offer any assistance

I can.

“Thank you for everything. Call if you ever need to talk or just come see me. My pack is always open to you. I have a Lead Warrior position available if you’re ever interested,” I say, making her laugh.

“I hope I hear from you in a couple of weeks, telling me your found your mate,” she says.

I save Luna Jo for last. When I hug her, I hold her tightly.

“Don’t say it,” she says but she knows me better than that now. A part of me fell in love with Luna Jo. She was very clear that she was too old for me and that I needed to find my mate, have pups, and live my life.

“I love you,” I say.

She shakes her head, then pulls out of the hug and cups my face in her hands. “I’m serious about you calling me when you meet your mate. I want to hear all about her.”

“I will Luna, I promise.”

She presses a soft kiss to my lips before I step away, looking around at this amazing group of people again before exiting the Train.

I wave goodbye to Liam before leading Alpha James and Luna

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Sylvie over to the car that is waiting to take me home.

“Welcome home, Alpha,” the warrior says.

“Thank you, Jason. This is Alpha James and Luna Sylvie. They’re going to be spending a couple of days with us,” I tell him as we get into the car.

“How’s Dad?” I ask him as he pulls out of the parking lot.

He looks at me where I’m sitting in the passenger seat. “The same. It’s been hard with you gone, Alpha Noah. The pack is... well, it feels even more desolate now than it did before you left. Everyone is very thankful that you’re returning home and have passed the Academy.”

Alpha James sits forward to join the conversation.

“Has Alpha Finn told the pack the reason for my visit?” he asks.

“No Alpha.” I’m not surprised. Dad doesn’t intend to work at the Academy.

The trip home only takes an hour, and I spend most of that thinking through my plan to encourage my father to go to the Academy. He has to do something with his life, or he’ll wither away and die. Now that I’m taking over as Alpha, he’ll have no reason to go on.

When we arrive at the packhouse and I step out of the car, the overwhelming sense of sadness and depression lays over me like a heavy blanket, I’d forgotten over the past couple of months just how stifling my father’s grief is.

“Wow,” Luna Sylvie says quietly from behind me. Even without a

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pack connection, she can feel the depression of the pack.

My father is waiting for us on the steps of the front porch.

“Welcome home, son. Congratulations on passing the Academy. Your mother would be proud.”

“Thank you, Dad. Let me introduce you to Alpha James and Luna Sylvie.”

My father’s eyes track to Alpha James. “You could have saved yourself the trip. I already told you no.”

Before Alpha James can respond, I step forward. “I would like for you to listen to what he has to say, Dad. I want you to really think about what he offers you. You need purpose in your life again. This pack needs to feel joy again. You may never get to the place where you are happy like you were with mom, but you need something that will help you feel connected, something that will give you and your Alpha wolf a reason to go on. Please do this for me, if not for yourself.”

He stares at me for a long moment, looking at me as if he’s never seen me before, before finally nodding his head in agreement.

“Okay, son. I’ll hear what he has to say,” he says quietly.

That night, Alpha James and Luna Sylvie lay **it** out for him, explaining what they need from him, the commitment that would be required, and the expectation that he not only teach his classes, but help the young Alphas outside of class when needed.

“Give me one semester, Finn. One semester. Twelve weeks.

Chapter **116**: Noah

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That’s all I’m asking. If the job is not for you, then you’ve only lost three months? But if it is, then you, like me, Sylvie, Sebastian, Mia, and Jo, can find a new purpose in life. It’s important, the work that we do. I take our role very seriously. We build these young Alphas into the young men that they are. It’s not always easy, but it’s very, very rewarding.”

My father looks at me. “You’re a very different man than you were when you left here a few months ago.”

“Yes, I am. I have more confidence, more strength, a better understanding of how to run a pack, and most important, I made life-long friendships. I found myself, Dad, and you can be a part of helping other young Alphas find themselves too.”

He swallows hard, then turns to Alpha James. “I’ll try it for one semester.”

“Good!” Alpha James says.

He and Luna Sylvie left the next day. My father and I moved up my Alpha ceremony to Thursday and over the weekend he and I went over everything in the pack.

The following Monday, I drove him to the Train station, a different one for instructors and assistants to use since they board the Train earlier than the young Alphas.

When he steps out of the car, I can feel his trepidation at going to the Academy.

“I’m proud of you, Dad. I know this isn’t easy, but I truly believe that it will be good for you.”

He turns and for the first time in a very long time, he pulls me

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into a hug.

“Thank you, son. I’m so proud of you. I know I don’t say it enough, or even at all anymore. But I’m so very proud of you.”

I wait until he boards the Train, then head home, ready to help my pack begin to find their happiness again.

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Chapter 117: Liam

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Chapter 117: Liam

Liam

I had a few hours after I left the train station before I pulled into my father’s pack lands. Scratch that, these are my pack lands now. My father is a piss poor father and a miserable Alpha. I’m ready to take my place as this pack’s Alpha and make the changes necessary to ensure that this pack is as mentally, physically, and financially healthy as possible. I know I have an uphill battle. Learning that my father is as much of a shit Alpha as he is a father, I’ve been preparing for the uphill climb.

While I drive, I make some phone calls. In Dealing with Crisis, I was able to work through a lot of what will have to happen when I return home. The entire leadership team in the

pack has to go. Before going to the Academy, I might have considered putting some of my lazy-ass friends into the positions of Beta and Gamma, but not now. I need a strong pack, and I need strong leadership beside me to rebuild this pack into what I intend for them to be.

The first call I make is to my father's Gamma's second son, Arthur.

"Alpha Liam, we're expecting you home today," he says when he answers. His tone is clipped and cold. He's a very serious man, dedicated, and he's never cared for my foolishness. It's why I'm calling him.

"Gamma Arthur, I'm on my way right now. But before I arrived, I wanted to speak with you. Can you move someplace private

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where prying ears can't overhear this conversation?"

It's quiet on the other end. I imagine him frowning at the phone.. He and I aren't exactly friends. We're not even what you'd call friendly. When I don't say any more, he finally speaks. "Give me a moment."

I hear the sounds of the pack quiet and a door close.

"I'm alone."

"I am planning what will undoubtedly be a hostile takeover when I arrive home."

I hear him try to cover his laugh with a cough. "Is that so?"

"Yes, it is. I don't expect you to believe me, but I am a very different person than I was when I left nearly three months. ago."

"I see. So, what can I do for you? I'm assuming I have some role in this hostile takeover?" he asks, his tone mocking. I ignore that. If the roles were reversed, I wouldn't believe me either.

"You do, if you accept my offer. I want you to be my Beta."

He laughs, the sound sharp and angry. "Is this a fucking joke? I don't have time for your bullshit, Alpha. No offense," he growls.

“No offense taken,” I say and that, more than anything, stops him. It’s not what the old me would have said. I would have pulled rank and told him to show respect, even though I didn’t deserve it.

“I didn’t expect you to believe me right away. You wouldn’t be the man I want as my Beta if you had. As I said, I’m a very

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different man than I was when I left. You don’t know that yet, but you’ll see it the moment I get home. My father’s time is done. You, more than anyone, have never tolerated my shit and that is the reason I want you as my Beta. One thing I learned at the Academy is that I don’t have to be a perfect Alpha as long as I have the perfect leadership team around me. I want you on that team.”

“Okay,” he says slowly. “Let’s say I believe you. What about my brother, the future Gamma?”

“Gone. He’s too much like your father and mine. I was thinking about Daniel, but I wanted your thoughts.”

“Warrior Daniel?” he asks.

“Is there another Daniel?” I ask drolly.

He snorts, then becomes thoughtful. “Are you really serious, Alpha?”

“Absolutely. It’s time this pack was run like it was supposed to be run all along. My father has put me down my entire life and I didn’t realize why that was until I was at the Academy. He’s not going to step down, so I’m going to challenge him the moment I arrive, and I will win. When that happens, I need my new Beta and Gamma ready to step in. There will be chaos while we make these leadership changes, and I need strong people by my side who will be dedicated to me and this pack. So, I’ll ask you again. Are you willing to be my Beta?”

“You’ve thought this through,” he says quietly.

“I’ve spent the last month preparing for it and deciding that I wanted you and Daniel on my leadership team. My instructors

Chapter 117, Liam

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helped me work through it, talk through each of your strengths as I see them and how they compare to mine. I've made my decision, and I want the two of you. Now, I just need your agreement."

"Let me get Daniel and we'll call you back. You can lay out the plan for us," he says.

We spend the next two hours working through the details and somewhere in that time, both men finally realize that I fully intend to do what I say I'm going to do.

So, I feel prepared when I drive up the packhouse and see my father standing and waiting for me with a sneer on his face.

I'm not completely out of the car before he starts. "So, I guess you passed or you wouldn't be here, since I told you not to come home if you didn't."

I ignore his taunt, walking to stand in front of him. "Alpha Felix, I challenge you for the right of Alpha of this pack. You are a disgrace to Alphas. You are not now, nor have you ever been, worthy of running this pack."

"YOU SNIVELING LITTLE SHIT! WHO THE FUCK DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?"

His Beta and Gamma come rushing out the front of the packhouse, not doubt called by my father. The pack begins to assemble as I knew they would.

"Throw him in the cells! You will not be taking this pack from me," he snarls. The moment his Gamma steps forward, Arthur stops him.

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"What are you doing, Arthur? Get out of my way," his father growls.

"A challenge has been issued. Alpha Felix, you must fight or submit. Those are the laws of our kind," he says.

"You do not get to rewrite our laws when and how you choose, Alpha," Daniel says, and I hear the pack murmuring in agreement around us.

My father looks at the pack, seeing that they are waiting for him to make a decision.

"Are you ready to die today, Liam?" he snarls.

"If anyone is going to die today, father, it's you. The days of me cowering under your emotional abuse are gone. I'm a different man, a different Alpha now. You will submit to me as your Alpha, or you will die," I say calmly.

This was something else that I had to work through in Dealing with Crisis, the possibility of having to kill my own father. If he refuses to submit, even if we battle and I'm clearly the winner, there is no choice but to kill him.

In the end, he refused to submit. Thankfully, I had already planned for this inevitability. The battle was short, given that my father is lazy and hasn't stayed in shape and I'm in the best shape of my life. After tearing my father's throat out, I stand, facing the pack.

"Beta Nelson, Gamma Mathias, you are relieved of your duties effective immediately. Tonight, I will have an Alpha ceremony where you will swear your allegiance to me as your Alpha, to Arthur as your Beta, and to Daniel as your Gamma. If you are

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Chapter

unwilling to swear your loyalty to us as your new leadership team, leave now. Disrespect and disloyalty will no longer be allowed in this pack. Things are going to change. This pack will be run like a true, honest, and successful pack. If you are unwilling to make these changes, to become the type of pack that I can be proud to lead, then leave. Go rogue. But if you decide to stay, if you want a better life for yourself and your pups, then stay and build that life with me."

That night, most of my new pack members swore their loyalty to me, Beta Arthur, and Gamma Daniel. The only members who left the pack were my father's friends, people I never would have trusted anyway.

The following day, we began rebuilding the pack into something stronger and better than it has ever been before.

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 185[1,370 words]

Chapter 118 Logan

Chapter 118: Logan

Logan

We said goodbye to Liam and Noah two days ago. We said goodbye to Tyler yesterday and today it's time for Ezra and I to leave the Train. Part of me is glad that I'll be coming back in a week. There's a lot that I need to get done at home in the upcoming week, but this

time, I know I'll be ready to take on the Academy. The next time I walk off this Train, it will be as the Alpha of my pack.

Our Dealing with Crisis class had become intense over the past month. All of us had things we had to prepare for when we returned home, mine was facing my parents, but specifically, my mother.

I'm not surprised when the warrior who picks me up looks uncomfortable around me. I failed the Academy. They would have gotten the news by now. Everyone thinks that means that my mother is right about me and that I'm not going to take my place as Alpha of my pack. That means they would be stuck with my mother and father for two more years until my brother could go to the Academy and pass.

They're mistaken and they're all going to realize it very quickly.

No one is waiting outside for me when I arrive home, not that I'm surprised. However, when I walk in, she's standing there with a sneer on her face, my father standing beside her looking defeated. Has he always looked like this? I guess I'd become so used to it that I didn't notice anymore. My brother is also there,

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Chap 116 Logan.

and I'm not quite sure what I see on his face. Pity? Victory? Maybe a bit of both.

"Well, I'm surprised you were willing to show your face here after failing the Academy. Not that I'm surprised you failed, you understand. You are your father's son after all. You'll never amount to anything more than a womanizing, beer-guzzling, loser. It's a good thing we have your brother here to take over as Alpha," she says.

I stare at her for a long moment, truly wondering where all of this hatred has come from. I did a lot of soul searching at the end of my time at the Academy and I can't ever remember a time when my mother acted like she loved me. When I go back next week, I intend to work on my issues of not wanting to find my mate. I need to get past the feelings that my mother has created inside me so that I can value and appreciate the gift the Moon Goddess gives me when she chooses to bestow my mate upon me.

"You have three months mother," I say quietly.

"Three months for what?" she scoffs.

"Three months to find a new place to live," I say and the entire packhouse goes deathly quiet. My father's head snaps up, but still, he says nothing.

“Excuse me?”

“I’m returning to the Academy in one week and when I do, there’s no question that I’ll pass. I will return to this pack as it’s Alpha and when that happens, you will no longer be welcome here. Unlike my father, I do not intend to let **you** spew your anger and hatred over me and this pack,” I say, and she gasps and stares

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at me like I’ve grown a second head.

“How DARE you speak to me this way? I am the Luna of this pack! And you are nothing but a failure, just like your father. What makes you think you can pass if you go back?”

“Well, my father DID pass the Academy, so yes, in that, I am like him. I will pass as well. How do I know?” I ask taking a step toward her. I’m not sure what she sees on my face, but she takes a step back.

“I know because I finally realized that the only reason I thought I couldn’t succeed is because that’s what you’ve always told me. But now, I’m no longer listening to you, mother. I’m listening to me. I’m writing my own narrative. I have no idea why my father let’s you speak and act the way you do, but I will not allow it in my pack. So, I will say it again. You have three months to find someplace else to live. If you are here when I return, I will forcibly throw you out of this pack.”

“Logan...” my brother begins, and I turn to him.

“You have a choice, Lawrence. You can go with her, or you can stay. But I will not tolerate you undermining me as the Alpha of this pack. I know you expected to take over, but that right is mine by birth, and I intend to take my birthright. You also have three months to decide.”

“Your birthright?” my mother spits out. Then she begins laughing, an awful, horrible, angry sound. “You have NO right!”

I frown. What is she talking about? I have every right. I’m the oldest son.

“Alexis, no! You promised!” my father says to her.

Phapter 1th Legan

She turns an angry, bitter look on my father. “He’s threatening to throw me out, Leo. I will not tolerate that. I’ve tolerated enough. from you and your son,” she snarls, then turns back to me, her eyes brimming with hatred.

“You are no son of mine,” she growls. I watch my father’s shoulders slump and my brother’s eyes go wide. My mother’s lips curl as she glares at me like I’m something disgusting on the bottom of her shoe.

“Before your father and I marked and mated, we made our intention to become a mated pair public. We had a ceremony and invited anyone who was anyone to our announcement party. And there, at that party, your father met his fated mate. In the middle of the party that was meant to showcase me as the future Luna of this pack, your father fucked your mother and created you. I figured out what happened when your father tried to break our intended bond. I refused to let him back out, my father threatened war, but it wasn’t until she died giving birth to you, that he finally relented, on one condition. That I raise his bastard as my own. And this is how you repay me?”

It’s like the world tilts on its axis. Everything that never made sense, makes perfect sense now. It’s not just that I look like my father, it’s that I’ve been a constant reminder of what my father did to my ... no, she’s not my mother. She never was. Something deep inside me settles. This was never about me. I know I’ll have to make this whole revelation a priority when I go back to the Academy, but at least I know there, I can work through this safely and with people who really do care about me.

“It honestly makes me feel better knowing that I’m not your son. It explains a lot,” I say to her before turning to my father. “You’ve let her make you feel guilty for loving and wanting your fated

mate for eighteen years, father. When are you going to stop letting her punish you? When are YOU going to stop punishing yourself?”

He looks at me with years of grief and torment in his eyes.

“I want to meet with you this week while I’m home. I want to learn everything there is to learn about the pack and how you’ve been running it. When I return, I’m taking over,” I tell him before turning back to my mother.

“Three months, and I want you gone.”

I turn and begin walking upstairs to my room. The woman I thought was my mother my entire life begins screaming obscenities at me and my father, but I ignore her.

When I get to the Alpha floor, I turn and see my father watching me. I’m pretty sure that’s pride that I see shining in his eyes.

Chapter 110. Sebastian

288 Vouchers

Chapter 119: Sebastian

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 186[1,168 words]

Chapter 119: Sebastian

Sebastian

It's practically impossible to avoid someone in the small confines of the Train, but somehow, Christina manages it for the first few days.

However, after saying goodbye to Benjamin, Daniel, and Mia, there are only five of us left. It doesn't take a lot of effort on my part to find Christina alone. Without a word, I take her hand and pull her to my room.

"Sebastian..." she sighs, but I ignore her until the door is closed.

Then I turn and press her against the wall, caging her with my hands on either side of her face.

"You don't get to tell me how I feel, Christina. You don't get to decide who I love or how much I love them," I growl.

I was never forceful with Suzanne. I never pushed myself on her. I was always gentle, letting her know that she didn't have to accept whatever I was asking of or giving to her. But Christina isn't Suzanne, and I've never treated her like she was. So, I take what I want. If she doesn't want it, she's strong enough to push me off her.

I grab her hair and slam my lips against hers. I'm not gentle. The kiss is dominant and forceful. I put every bit of torment I've been feeling for the past week and a half into the kiss, devouring her mouth and reclaiming it as mine.

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Chapter 119 Sebastian

258 Mouchers

I feel her resistance at first and then the dam breaks. Tears begin streaking down her cheeks as her arms come around me before she greedily begins kissing me in return. I swallow her sobs as she gives herself to me.

I rip her clothes off and turn, pushing her backward toward my bed. She rakes her claws down my shirt, shredding it and pushing it off me, her hands groping me as greedily as mine are with her. She undoes my belt and pushes my pants down. I've barely kicked

them aside before I lift her. Her legs wrap around me as I change directions and slam her against the wall, bottoming out inside her in one thrust.

“You are mine,” I growl, brutally thrusting into her. She clings to me, still sobbing as her inner walls begin to flutter around me.

“MINE!” I say, finally letting go of the words that I’ve been holding back for weeks.

She throws her head back against the wall as her first orgasm hits her hard. Her fucking body is so tight, her muscles contracting so hard around my cock that it feels like her body is begging me to empty inside her. So I do. But I don’t slow my thrusts, and I stay hard, pushing her to continue her orgasm.

“Sebastian,” she cries, half sob, half cry of pleasure.

I force her to stay on this high until I decide she can come down. I feel desperate to remind her who can bring her this kind of pleasure. Only one person. Only me.

I’ve just let her start to come down when I slide out, push her legs to the ground and spin her around. Kicking her legs apart, I pull her hips to me and slam into her. Almost instantly, I have her coming again.

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Chapter 119: Sebastian

“Mine! Do you hear me, Christina? You. Are. Mine!”

When she doesn’t answer, I grab her by the hair and pull her body up to mine.

“Do. You. Hear. Me?” I growl in her ear, accentuating each word with a hard thrust into her warm, soaked pussy.

“Yes,” she says.

“Good. Then let me show you what I do with what’s mine,” I growl.

I spend the rest of the night making her come, forcing her to stay on her high long after she begs me to let her down, forcing her body up and over again even when she says she can’t take any more. I know I’m punishing her for hurting me, but before I leave this train, I need her to know that she’s mine. It’s like I’m branding myself on her body, so she won’t forget in the week we’re apart.

When I finally let her come down, the sun is rising, and I know I don’t have long before I have to leave the Train. I need to talk to Ryan. I need to let him know my plan and hope that he understands that I need to do this for me.

I hold her quivering body in my arms. Her tears have long since dried up, but the streaks are still clear on her face.

“I love you. Don’t ever question that. Did it ever occur to you that I said Suzanne’s name in my sleep because I love you as much as I loved her? Because I do. You’re not her, but I’m also not the man I was when I met her. I’m different. I need a different kind of woman in my life, Christina. I know you and I have things we need to take care of at home this week. You need to talk to

Chapter 119 Sebastian

188 Vouchers

Dane, and I need to talk to Ryan. But when we get back on this Train in a week, we’re going to sit down and talk about

everything. We’re going to clear the air you are damn well going. to let me have my say,” I growl.

I know she’s exhausted. I made sure of it, so when she only nods, I leave it at that.

I hold her for a while, then I carry her into the shower, bathing her and washing her hair while she holds on to me to keep from swaying. Neither of us says anything, and when I’m done, I put one of my shirts on her and tuck her into my bed.

I kiss her forehead and sit beside her, stroking her hair until she falls into a deep sleep. When I feel the train slowing, I gather my bags, kiss her one more time, and head out. Jo is getting off at this stop with me and as we say goodbye to Haley and Will, I let them know that Christina is sleeping.

“Let her sleep,” I tell them. Will watches me but doesn’t say anything.

“I’ll see you soon,” I tell him.

“I hope so,” he says.

“Good luck at Tyler’s birthday party,” I tell Haley.

“Thank you, Alpha.”

When I get off the Train, I go to the car that Ryan sent for me, nodding to his warrior.

“Welcome back, Alpha.” He’s an older warrior, someone who was a strong warrior when I was Alpha.

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“**Thank** you.” For once I don’t say it’s good to be home. Home is now where Christina is and as we pull away from the train station, my eyes **stay** glued **to** the train as it pulls away.

One week. One week before I see her again.

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 187[1,607 words]

Chapter 120: Sebastian

Sebastian

My mind is all over the place when I arrive at Ryan’s pack. But, as always, he’s there waiting for me on the front steps of the packhouse. I feel the familiar wave of pride in my son. He’s such an incredible Alpha. He’s going to be pissed that he not only got knocked out of first place, but down to fourth.

If I wasn’t so torn apart about Christina, I’d be itching to tease him about it.

When I get out of the car; I grab my bag and walk up to my son. His eyes narrow. He obviously doesn’t like whatever he sees on my face.

“Walk with me?” he asks.

I feel my throat tighten and I drop my bag on the porch before. falling into step with my son.

He waits until we’re far enough away from the packhouse to have some privacy before speaking.

“Want to talk about it? Or should I say, do you want to talk about her?”

“How did you get to be so smart?”

“I had the best fucking role model in the world. So, who is she?”

I look at him. “Christina Kneeland.”

He whistles, looking over at me. “You never did do anything by halves, do you? Tell me about her.”

I sigh and look out over the familiar forest surrounding the pack. lands that I once led.

“I fell in love, Ryan.”

“I take it she’s the one you were pining over before you left last time.”

“I wasn’t pining,” I say but he just raises an eyebrow at me.

“I’ve been developing feelings for her for a while. I asked James to make her my assistant and then I pushed her to take the classes this semester.”

“I imagine as Alpha Dane’s little sister, she did a damn good job.”

“She’s number two on the leaderboard now,” I say proudly.

“Of course she is. She had you coaching her.”

“Nah. It wasn’t me. It was all her.”

“Then why hasn’t she taken the classes before?” he asks.

“She needed to realize that her success didn’t make her brother less. She adores him and I understand why, but she needed to get out of his shadow.”

“And you helped her do that.” It’s a statement, not a question.

“I did. I also asked her to be my assistant in the sex class.”

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Chapter 120: Sebastan

288 Vouchers

He stops and turns to face me. “And how did that work out for you?”

I scrub my hands over my face. “I loved your mother, Ryan. I loved her with everything in me. But what I’ve experienced in the last two and a half months... it was never like that with your mother. I need you to understand that I loved your mother with my whole heart and soul, and if she were still alive, that would never have changed. But she’s not here and losing her changed me. I have chance to start a new life, Ryan. A life with Christina. I didn’t just fall in love with her. I love her as much as I loved your mother. I didn’t think that would ever be possible, but here I am. I need for you to understand that this isn’t a betrayal of your mother. I’m just a different man now. I need a different kind of woman in my life.”

“Why would I think of it as a betrayal, Dad?”

“She was your mother. She was my soulmate. And now, I’m telling you that I love another woman the same way that I loved her.”

“I can’t imagine ever loving another woman the way I love. Caroline. But I can also never imagine surviving if I lost her.” He looks thoughtful as I wait for his judgement. “Did it ever occur to you that maybe mom sent her to you?” he asks, finally looking at me.

“What do you mean?”

“We all believe in the Moon Goddess’ realm, Dad. We don’t have this kind of love and magic in our lives without believing in a higher power. Don’t you think that mom has been watching over you, wanting you to find happiness again? She loved you just as much as you loved her. If the roles were reversed, if you had

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died **and** she had survived, would you want **her** to live the rest **of** her life alone? Or would you have wanted her to find happiness again? I think mom would want you to be happy. I **think** she would understand that you’re a different person now. She’s gone. She’s not coming back. But that doesn’t mean that you have to live the rest of your days as half a man, Dad. If Christina makes you happy, then take her as a mate.”

I hadn’t considered that my mate might be watching over me. But now that Ryan has said it, I know he’s right. I would never have wanted Suzanne to live a life of loneliness. I loved her enough that I would have wanted her to find happiness, even if it wasn’t with me.

“You know, Christina is closer to your age than mine,” I say.

“Age is just a number, Dad.”

“She wants pups,” I say.

“Is that a problem?” he asks.

“I don’t know, is it?”

“Not for me. My half siblings will be the same age as my pups, but so what? You always wanted a daughter. So, I’ll ask again. Is that a problem?”

“At first, I thought I was too old to do it all over again. But now, with her, I can’t get the image of a little girl with long blond hair running around these pack lands out of my head. I want it so much it hurts.”

“So, make that dream a reality. You deserve to be happy again, Dad. If she makes **you** happy, then I’m all for it. I still expect to

Chapter 120 Sebastian

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see you and I want to finally meet the woman that not only put the fear of the goddess into every Alpha on the planet but is also the woman who stole my father’s heart.”

“I’m pretty sure it was Alpha Dane who put the fear of the goddess into every Alpha on the planet,” I say.

“Either way, she must be very special. Do I need to worry that Alpha Dane is going to kick your ass for touching his sister?”

I smile. “I think Christina might have something to say about. that.”

“Where is she with all of this?” he asks as we turn to head back

to the packhouse.

“Feeling like she’s second best and always will be with me. She told me that she fell in love with me but that she deserves to be number one in someone’s life.”

“You didn’t set her straight on that?”

I think about last night and how I dominated every minute of our time, pushing my love and frustration into her, forcing her to accept every bit of it.

“I’ve given her a lot to think about over the next week,” I say.

He snorts. “I bet you have.” He turns and looks at me. “I’m surprised you’re waiting a week. That’s not like you.”

“I’m waiting for two reasons, well three really. I needed to talk to you, make sure that you and I were good on my decision,” I say honestly.

“I will always be in agreement with whatever is good for you,

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Chapter 120 Səbarlian

Dad. I hope you know that. What are the other two reasons?"

"She needs to talk to Dane, and I'm hoping that he can help her work through some of the mess in her head. I wasn't kidding. when I said she adores him. Her adoration borders on hero worship."

"From everything I've heard of the man, it's warranted."

"It is. I'm hoping I'll finally get a chance to meet him. The other. reason I'm not pushing to see her this week is she's going to one of the young Alphas birthday parties."

That makes him stop. "She thinks he's her mate?"

"No, but he and one of the other assistants fell in love and he wanted her there. Christina is going for moral support."

He smiles. "Like a true Alpha."

"Exactly. It's Tyler Cunningham's birthday."

"Aw, shit. Tanner's little brother. How did he do this semester?"

Now that I've talked to Ryan about Suzanne, I feel more like teasing my son. So, I smile broadly as I drop the bomb on him.

"He's number one on the leaderboard."

He spins to look at me. "Wait, what?"

Then the wheels start turning. "You said Christina is number two. I fell to number three?"

I shake my head slowly, watching as he frowns.

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"We had three Alphas make it onto the leaderboard thist semester. You, my son, are now number four on the leaderboard."

"Son of a bitch! Who's the other one?"

I laugh, wrapping my arm around my son's shoulders as we walk into his packhouse. I feel lighter now as I tell Ryan about the semester and the three amazing Alphas that bumped three people off the leaderboard.

That night, I find a spot outside to sit by myself as I sip my whiskey. I look up at the moon shining down on our pack lands. decided that Ryan was right. The only way a woman as perfect for me as Christina is could have shown up in my life is if Suzanne sent her to me.

“Thank you, Suzanne,” I whisper. I’m prett

The Alpha Train - Oh Good 188[1,245 words]

Chapter 121: Christina

Christina

When I wake up in Sebastian’s bed on the Train, it’s mid- afternoon. My body is still humming and feels worn out after the

marathon sex fest we had last night. Note to me, never tell

Sebastian how he feels again unless I’m ready to pay the

consequences.

I climb out of bed, wincing a little at the pain between my thighs. He was not gentle with me, well, not until the end. He used everything he’s learned about my body to make me come sol many times and for so long each time that I know I’ll ever enjoy being with another man again. I’m pretty sure that was his point.

I sigh, taking a deep breath of his scent on the shirt he must have dressed me in. I remember him bathing me, but I was pretty out of it by then, barely able to stand.

He did everything but mark me last night. He called me his over and over throughout the night and I can still feel him, his hands, his mouth, his skin, his hard cock, all over and inside me. It’s like he branded himself on me to make sure I can’t forget him, as if I ever could.

I’ve never been in love before. But I know that’s what this is. I’ve never wanted someone so much in my entire life. Even now, I miss his presence. It feels like there’s a gaping hole in my life not having him here.

Since there are only three of us on the Train now, I quickly make

my way to my room and change before going in search of the others and food. I haven’t been able to eat much in the last couple of weeks and after last night and not eating today, I’m

ravenous.

“Hey, I was starting to get worried about you. Alpha Sebastian said to let you sleep, but I didn’t expect you to sleep so long,” Haley says as I walk in.

“I’m good. Just really hungry. Is there anything left over from lunch?”

“Yeah, I’ll make you something,” she says.

“You don’t have to,” I tell her.

“I want to. You sit,” she says.

“Thanks, Haley.”

When she walks out, I look at Alpha Will. His eyes are intense, searching. Alpha Will is one of those Alphas who doesn’t speak a lot, but he’s always watching and paying attention. When he does speak, it’s usually after he’s thoroughly thought through what he wants to say and how he wants to say it. So, when he speaks, it’s important to listen.

“You know, Christina, you took top in class for Communication, because you are great at communicating clearly and getting to the root of the problem. But you didn’t take top in class for Dealing with Crisis. That’s more about listening. If I’m not mistaken, you’ve said what you needed to say to Alpha Sebastian. Just make sure that you’re listening to what he has to say to you as well,” he says.

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Mouchers

It’s similar enough to what Sebastian said to me that I can only **nod**.

That night is relaxed and easy with just the three of us. Haley and I make plans to get together in a couple of days and fly to Tyler’s pack for his birthday. We make our flight arrangements, making sure we’re seated together since I know she’ll be a nervous wreck. We make return flights home, but I make sure that Haley’s is refundable, just in case the best happens.

The next morning as I get ready to leave the Train, I put on my Alpha necklace with my number two displayed proudly. It took a long time for me to realize that it was okay to take my brother’s spot on the leaderboard, and I want him to see the moment I step out of the car that I’ve made him proud.

When we get off the Train, I say goodbye to Haley and Alpha Will, then turn to the car that is waiting for me. The warrior smiles, about to greet me. Then, seeing my necklace, the smile broadens across his face.

“Alpha Christina. Your brother is going to be very proud to see that.”

“I know he is, Henry. I can’t wait to show him. Thanks for coming to get me.”

The drive home feels longer than normal as I’m stuck with my thoughts about Sebastian. I talk to Henry about what I’ve missed in the pack while I was away, but since nothing much happens in Dane’s pack, it was more about who had their pups, which pups gained their wolves, and things like that. Then, it was back to silence and my thoughts.

When we pull up to the packhouse several hours later, I’m not

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Chapter 131: Chisina

surprised to see Dane waiting for me. He’s always here to welcome me home.

I grin at Henry before stepping out of the car and facing my brother. He smiles, and then his eyes flash to my necklace and the smile widens.

He steps down the stairs, walking toward me with pride shining in his eyes. “You took the classes.”

“I took the classes.”

He pulls me into a hug. “Damn, I’m so proud of you! I guess | should be thankful you didn’t take the classes when you were younger, or it would have been you knocking me out of first place. How many points did you get?”

“One hundred and fifty-two.”

He frowns. “Wait, wasn’t Ryan at one hundred and fifty? Why are you number two?”

“Tyler is number one.”

“So, I’m number four now?”

I shake my head, no.

“No?”

“Alpha Ezra came in at number three. You and Alpha Ryan have been pushed to four and five.”

“Geez! That must have been one hell of a semester,” he says. The images of my time with Sebastian flash through my mind making my stomach clench. My brother, who never misses a

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Chapter 121 China

thing, narrows his eyes at me.

“Come talk with me,” he says gently, wrapping his arm around my shoulders and walking me inside the packhouse. He stops in the main living area.

“Attention everyone!” he booms, and the room goes silent.

Everyone turns and begins waving at me, realizing that I’ve just returned home.

“My sister has now officially taken my previous position on the Alpha Academy’s leaderboard!”

The entire pack begins to cheer. He holds up a hand and they quiet down again.

“We’re all very proud of her and tonight, I want to have a celebration in her honor. You can all congratulate her then, but right now, I want some time with my sister.”

The pack begins bustling around and I know that in a matter of a few hours, they will have a huge party planned in my honor.

I follow Dane to his office and as soon as he closes the door, I wrap my arms around him.

I feel his arms come around me and he holds me without saying a word. I feel the tears that I thought were long gone coming back to the surface.

“Come sit with me,” he says gently. He sits me in one of the chairs in his office then goes to the bar in his office and pours us both a drink. Then, he comes and hands me my drink before sitting across from me.

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 189[1,283 words]

Chapter 122: Christina

Christina

I start with the easier of the two things that I want to talk to him about, him. I tell him everything that I worked through this semester, about how I had to get out of his shadow and how I learned that defeating him made him look stronger, not weaker.

“Is that why you never took the classes, Chrissy?” he asks.

“You’ve always been my hero, Dane,” I say softly.

“I’m glad you finally figured that out. I can’t believe you defeated every instructor on the Beast in both forms. Holy shit! You know I’m going to have to test your strength now, right?” he asks.

“You know I’m not going to hold back on you now, right?” I say, grinning at my brother. Goddess, I’ve missed him.

“My Lead Warrior position is still available,” he says, grinning at

1. me.

“About that, I think I might take you up on that offer.”

His grin fades and the intense gaze returns.

“Why don’t you tell me the real reason for those tears earlier,” he says, his voice gentle again causing the tears to return.

“Sebastian Webb.”

He frowns, thinking. “Alpha Ryan’s father?”

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“That’s the one.”

He leans back in his chair. “And here I was thinking I’d finally gotten you to agree to take the classes. But if Alpha Sebastian was involved, I’m not sure I can take the credit.”

I smile. “We’ll say I had an equal amount of encouragement from both of you.”

“Mmm,” he grunts, not fully believing me. “I have a question. If you’re on the leaderboard, you had to take the sex class, but Alpha Sebastian is an instructor. How did that work?”

“He was the instructor for the class. I agreed to be his assistant. Which, by the way, reminds me that I am a little torqued with you. I had no idea what I was missing out on not dating Alphas until this semester,” I say. Dane bursts out laughing.

“But I was right, wasn’t I? You fell in love with him, didn’t you?” he asks, getting serious again.

“There was always something about Sebastian,” I begin.

“Sebastian, is it?” he asks, his eyebrow rises almost to his hairline.

“I was his assistant in the sex class Dane. He didn’t want there to be any semblance of a power differential.”

“Mmhmm. Go on.”

I roll my eyes but continue.

“We started on the Train getting to know each other. We’d talk, sip whiskey, and then he started massaging me, getting me used to his touch while he got used to my body. Then things

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progressed, but at that point, I hadn’t decided to take all the classes. It was Sebastian who encouraged me to try and get on the leaderboard. That was when we agreed that he and I would use some of our evenings together for me to act as Alpha and him as my assistant. He’s the one who broke me during hell. week. He knew from the beginning that you were the reason I was holding back. When I finally let loose in sparring class, I defeated him.” I smile remembering that moment. “He told me he wouldn’t accept anything less than my best ever again. So that’s what I gave him. I gave him everything. I gave him the best that I am.”

I realize my eyes have gone unfocused as I’ve remembered the semester with Sebastian. When I refocus on Dane, he’s watching me with that intense look that I understand so much better now.

“Nothing that you’re telling me is helping me understand what’s causing the tears.”

“He’s a widow, Dane. I don’t want to always be someone’s second best. They were fated mates. He could never love me like that.”

“Did he tell you that?” he asks.

“No. I pushed him away, used finals as my excuse. He gave me the space I needed and then after graduation, I told him that I couldn’t do it, that I needed to be first for someone.”

“And he let you go?” he asks, surprised.

I shrug. “I avoided him, until two nights ago. The night before he got off the Train.”

Propler 122; Chish’a

“What happened?” he asks softly.

I huff out a laugh. “Boy did he unleash on me.”

Dane raises an eyebrow, silently asking me to expand on that.

“We spent the night together. He told me I don’t get to tell him how he feels. I’m not sure how many times he called me his, but enough that it feels like he’s branded himself into my soul. He made sure to ruin me for any other man, but how can I ever know that I’m number one in his heart? Is that even fair for me

to ask of him?”

Dane looks thoughtful, thinking through what I’ve said to him.

“I don’t know what it’s like to lose your fated mate and I pray to

I the goddess that I never have to find out. But what I will say to you, is everything that you just said to me is what I would and have said and done to Harper. I want her to know in no uncertain terms that she is mine, from the moment I met her until the day we die. I make sure that every time we’re together, she knows that there is no other man out there who can make her feel the way that I do. You may not be fated mates, Christina, but he is definitely treating you like you are.”

“But could you ever love another woman the way you love Harper, Dane?”

He slowly shakes his head as he thinks through his answer. “That’s not a fair question, Chrissy. I haven’t had to go through what Alpha Sebastian has gone through. You don’t lose your fated mate and not have it change you. I don’t know who I would be without Harper by my side, but I wouldn’t be the man I am today. To survive her death and then to have to go on, to stay alive for Devin until he could take over the pack? It would

change me. So, I can’t answer that. But more importantly, neither can you. If Alpha Sebastian says that he loves you like **that**, and you feel that love within him, then I think he’s right. You need to stop telling him what he feels and start listening to what he’s telling you.”

He tilts his head and looks at me. “You have a week. Think about what I said. If, after this next semester at the Academy you still want to be my Lead Warrior, I will be ecstatic to have you. But don’t shove aside your chance at happiness because YOU don’t believe that Alpha Sebastian is able to give you what you want. It seems to me that he’s telling you he can and wants to. Take time to see if he can. Talk to him about what he wants and see if he’s willing to give you everything that you want in life. And if so, don’t be a chicken shit. I didn’t raise you like that,” he says, smiling to take the edge off his words.

“I’m not a chicken shit.”

“No, you’re not. So, maybe, give him a chance. See what happens and go from there.”

I smile at my brother. “Thanks, Dane.”

“You’re welcome,” he says looking at his watch.

“We have an hour before your party. Come spar with me. I want to see if I can still kick your ass.”

“You can’t,” I say, making him grin widely.

“Prove it.”

I did..

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The Alpha Train - Oh Good 190[1,630 words]

Chapter 123: Haley

Haley

I’m so nervous I couldn’t eat this morning. My mother scolded me, telling me I shouldn’t get on a plane without something in my stomach, but it feels like someone tied a huge knot in it and nothing is getting past that.

I sent Tyler a text this morning wishing him a happy birthday. I decided that **if** he didn’t respond, or if he responded letting me know that he found his mate, that I wasn’t going to

go today. I would cry my eyes out for the man I love, but I would do it in the privacy of my own bedroom.

He had responded immediately. ‘Can’t wait to see you tonight, beautiful. Have a safe flight.’

Christina and I decided to take a flight this morning. I couldn’t stand the thought of being so close to Tyler and being afraid to see him. Now, I’m rethinking this plan. Maybe I should have gone yesterday. Then I could have seen him this morning and if I’m not his mate, I could have left before the party. But it’s too late now.

My parents were completely against me going. First, they don’t know Tyler or his family and second, my family didn’t believe that I could be mated to an Alpha.

“The odds of you being mated to an Alpha are slim sweetheart. Especially one who is now number one on the leaderboard. I know that sounds harsh, but you need to be prepared to guard

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your heart. Alphas like that are mated to other powerful, ranked members. You come from warrior blood, Haley, but you aren’t a strong and powerful fighter. This is why I wish you hadn’t. started working on that train. Now, you’re most likely going to end up broken hearted while he moves on with his life,” my father had said.

In truth, even if Tyler isn’t my mate, I wouldn’t give up the ten weeks that I had with him. He is the most incredible man I’ve ever met in my life. According to him, having me there with him. this semester made it easier for him to work through his grief and to become the incredible Alpha he is. I’m not sure how much I did. I was just there for him when he needed me.

Now, I’m in the airport, waiting on Christina. Her pack and mine are on opposite sides of the airport, so we agreed to meet here. I’ve never flown before, and the hustle and bustle of the airport is making me very nervous. There are a lot of wolves here, some with very strong auras that they aren’t keeping in check very well and it’s making me even more nervous.

When I see her striding toward me with her usual casual confidence, I relax. I’m so glad that she agreed to come with me. Not only will she help me remain calm, but she’s promised to get me out of there if Tyler meets his mate. I trust her not to let me break down in the middle of his party, ruining it for him.

Christina walks right up to me and wraps her arms around me. The moment she does, I feel her aura wrap protectively around me, blocking out the others. For the first time since I arrived at the airport, I feel like I can breathe easily.

I hug her back, letting her calming nature soothe me.

“How are you doing?” she asks me.

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Chapter 121 HIN

“I’m nervous,” I say honestly.

“We’ll get through today, no matter what, okay?” she asks.

I nod and while we’re both adults, I’m thankful that she takes my hand and begins leading me through the airport. It helps to keep her aura wrapped around me and feeling her confidence makes me feel safe again. Such is the power of good Alphas.

“How was your return home?” I ask her when we get to the gate.

“It was good. I always miss my brother. How was yours?”

“Good. Well, my parents aren’t happy with me going on this trip. I’m glad we made the plans ahead of time or they might have tried to keep me from going.”

“I wouldn’t have let them. They weren’t there. They didn’t see the two of you together.”

I want to ask her to tell me that I’m doing the right thing, that she knows he’ll be my mate, but I know she doesn’t know that any more than I do.

When we get to our seats, Christina puts me by the window and sits beside me, continuing to block me from the other auras on the plane.

“How do warriors fly with all this pressure around them?” | whisper to her.

“I’m not sure. This is my first flight too,” she says.

“It is?” I ask her. “You look so natural, like you know what you’re doing.”

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She just shrugs.

My phone pings and I pull it out of my purse.

Tyler: You should be at the airport by now.

Me: We just boarded the plane. Christina is here with me.

Tyler: Good. You're okay?

Me: It was a bit overwhelming until she arrived, but I'm good now.

Tyler: I can't wait to see you. Text me when you land, please, so I know you arrived safely.

Me: I will.

Tyler: Tell Christina I said hi. And Haley, I love you. I can't wait to see you in just a few short hours.

Me: I love you too, Tyler.

It might be my last chance to tell him, so I want to say it, in case I don't get another chance.

Christina convinces me to eat a little bit on the plane and with her help and aura, I'm able to get some food into my stomach. She suggested some ginger ale which also helped my stomach to settle a bit.

During the flight, she looked at magazines and then handed them to me to look at. I glanced through them, but I wasn't able to focus on anything. I finally set them aside and stare out the window, my mind in chaos about what may or may not happen tonight.

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Chapter 123 Haley

When we finally land, my stomach is in knots again. I've got a dress to change into for tonight. I wanted to look extra pretty, just in case. While Christina goes to get a car for us, I go to the bathroom and change, putting on light makeup and finally pulling out my phone.

Me: We landed. Christina is getting a car right now.

Tyler: I'm so glad you're safe. The party has started, Haley, and no one here is my mate. I still think it's you, beautiful. I can't wait to see you.

Me: I'll be there soon.

I take a deep breath and give myself one more look in the mirror.

“You can do this,” I tell myself.

When I step out of the bathroom, Christina is waiting for me.

“Ready?”

“Ready.”

She drives us out of the airport, and we follow an interstate up into the mountains.

“Wow, it’s gorgeous here,” she says as we drive. The sun is setting and it’s creating a splash of color on the snow-peaked mountains around us.

The sudden urge to call this beautiful place home nearly overwhelms me.

When we get to the guard gate of Tyler’s pack, Christina lets

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Chapter 129

188 Mouchers

them know who we are and we’re let through. She cracks the windows as we drive.

“It smells good here,” I say, closing my eyes and taking a deep breath.

“Does it?” she asks, looking at me.

When we get to the packhouse, we’re directed where to park. It looks like half the country is here for Tyler’s birthday. I take in a deep breath, smelling Tyler’s calming scent of apple cider and cinnamon.

“I’d forgotten how good he smells,” I whisper.

“You can smell Tyler?” Christina asks.

“Yeah,” I breathe, my wolf sitting up in my head. She’s missed his scent too.

Almost as if his scent is calling to me, I follow it up the stairs of the packhouse. I hear Christina talking but I don’t hear what she’s saying or see who she’s talking to. I feel caught in the trance. of Tyler’s scent.

The moment I step inside the packhouse, I hear a snarling, possessive growl. I open my eyes and the people in the room part. Then I see him, across the room. He's panting and there's a possessiveness in his eyes I've never seen before.

Tears well in my eyes and my lips quiver as he says the word I was so hoping to hear.

"Mate!"

I nod. "Mate."

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288 Vouchers

"I fucking knew it was you," he says and the next thing I know, I'm in his arms, his mouth devouring mine in a kiss much more possessive than anything we've ever shared before.

The rest of the night goes by in a haze of introductions and kisses. I don't remember a single person's name, other than Ezra and Christina's. Tyler doesn't let me leave his side and that night, in his warm, soft bed, Tyler makes me his, finally leaving his mark on me as I leave my mark on him.

The love I feel from him the instant our minds connect is so strong that tears began streaming down my cheeks again. He kisses them all away, telling me and showing me all night long. Just how much he loves me and how happy he is that I'm his.

I can't wait to spend the rest of my life telling him and showing him just how much I love him too.