

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 171

I took off as fast as I could. That tiny piece of fabric had been stained with dried blood. My wolf moved with urgency. He was struggling because he lied **the** idea of Grace riding us, but also, Leon was his best friend too. Our wolves had run together since the first time he shifted. We had hardly Brent apart **since** then, rarely shifting without the other. It felt weird to be on this mission without him. To need to rescue him. He shouldn't need to be rescued

We were all shifted now. Everyone except Heather who was carrying the phone, telling us how to reach his. It hadn't moved since we **had** started tracking it, which was not reassuring to me in the slightest. He had either dropped it, or was unconscious with it, and neither seemed to be good options at this point.

Het myself reach for my bond with Grace, grateful that she was here. I was calmer because she was with me. I would be losing my mind without her. However, when I reached for her, I was surprised to find her still fuming, and my wolf got a kick out of that.

“Why is she mad?” I asked him.

“She’s mad because you were surrounded by a lot of other women, and you were naked. Yet she has special clothes, so people don’t see her naked.” My wol! laughed at me.

I mentally sighed. We were in the middle of searching for my best friend who was missing, and she was fucking jealous? How and when did this become my life? And did I like it?

I tried to send soothing vibes down our bond, but I’m not sure it was doing anything for her. Her anger seemed impenetrable, but I wasn’t sure why. It’s not like any of the women around cared that I had been naked in front of them. I mean, it’s not like **it** was the first time any of them had seen anything, and they were always respectful about nudity, the way most werewolves were.

“You’re lagging behind,” Sawyer’s mindlink came through bringing my attention back to the situation at hand. “**Focus.**”

My wolf shot him a look, and I didn’t stop it. Leon **was** my best friend, but **Grace** came **first**. Always. **Just** her anger didn’t **actually** truly matter right now. She was okay. She was safe. She was here. And she was holding on to me tight. She might be mad, but she was still here. She was still mine.

“I don’t have a good feeling about this.” Grace whispered **as** we moved closer to where Heather had tracked the phone to.

I wanted to tell her I knew that. I wanted to tell her I understood. That I too felt uneasy. But the words wouldn't come. The **air** felt heavy. And my wolf was very on edge, something that rarely happened.

Grace gripped my fur tighter, but she didn't say anything. I moved faster toward the last known location of the phone. I **wasn't sure** how I hadn't noticed when looking at the screen, but we **were** getting close to our nearest border, the one that led to the Wild lands.

Caleb, who had been toward the front of our group in wolf form, slowed down, falling into step with me.

"What is it?" I mindlinked him.

"I just feel like you need me." He answered, but his tone was tight with anxiety which made mine worse.

Grace peeked her head up, but if she wasn't riding on my back, I'm not sure I would have noticed. I felt through our bond that she **was** focused on something now which confused me a bit.

I slowed down as Heather gestured that we were right on top of the area of the missing phone. I hoped that the GPS precision would be enough to help us

find it.

Grace jumped off my back, and I shifted to human form as Sawyer threw a pair of shorts at me. I **was** grateful he had read the situation earlier **so** well.

Everyone spread out to try and find a sort of needle in a haystack. We were in what appeared to be a **small** clearing, nothing much growing, **but** an abundance of sticky mud that my wolf hadn't minded, but now that I was barefoot, I did.

"Alpha King." Katie's voice called out **as** she knelt down to look at something.

My heart started to pound. I didn't see a body in the ground, and I didn't know if that was a good or a bad thing. And then **I saw it**. The **shattered screen** sticking out like a **sore** thumb, so much that I wondered how I had originally missed it.

"Where is he?" Heather asked desperately, her eyes scanning the woods.

Chapter 171

Rhys, Grace breathed as **she** came up behind me. "Don't make any sudden movements. Pretend I'm comforting **you**

I did as **she** said, leaning into her touch, but my anxiety **was** rising.

“We’re being followed. The trees.” I could barely hear her, but I trusted her.

It took everything in me to not make any sudden movements. I could hear a rustle in the distance, but where it was coming from, I didn’t know.

“Where?” I **asked** as Heather dropped to her knees, no longer holding back her tears. I knew it had had. But now we were here, and there was nowhere to go.

be so hard for her to be hanging on the way that she

“Act like you’re hugging me, over my left shoulder and up.”

I turned toward her, wrapped her in my arms, doing my best to actually look distressed, and discreetly looked in the direction she told me. I didn’t see anything conclusive, but there **was** movement in the distance.

“Are you sure?” I breathed back.

“Very.”

“What are you thinking?” I asked.

I could feel her trying to organize her thoughts. I knew what I wanted to do, but **I was** afraid I was being blinded by my fear for **my** Mate. My mate who I had brought into a dangerous situation, once again thinking that it **was the** only option.

“It could be two things,” She said finally. “It could be that they are just tailing **us to** make **sure** we aren’t **getting too close**. Or **they** could be leading us **into** a trap. I counted three different people from our **last** stop to now.”

I sucked in a breath. If she was right, we were vulnerable. **Just** sitting ducks with no protection anywhere near here.

“What do **you** think **we** need to do?” I asked her.

And with a confidence I didn’t know she had she stated, “We need to go to the border.”

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Everyone was shifted now except me. I rode on Rhys' back like he was my knight in freaking armor. I pretended not to notice the **movement** that followed us. Rhys had mindlinked everyone that we were being followed. I'm sure there was a legit plan now, but I was not privy to it, since I couldn't mindlink anyone. But the biggest thing how was to act like we didn't know and to be as inconspicuous as possible.

The border seemed like the obvious place that they would take Leon. But what exactly did they want with him? What was the point of drawing **as this** far out if it wasn't a trap? It was definitely a trap. But was the chance of getting Leon back worth walking right into it?

I sighed against Rhys' fur. Of course it was. We had to try. Leon had chosen to come after me several times. He had saved my life more times than I could count. But the thought of losing Rhys in this trap was terrifying to me, and I wished I could talk freely to him to settle my anxiety, but obviously that **wasn't** a choice.

The trees started to thin out and I knew we were getting close to the border. My bad feeling kept growing. If this was about to be a scrum, I was utterly defenseless. I still couldn't shift. I had weird powers that I had no idea how to use. And in a fight with Lycans and werewolves, my knives weren't going to do me too many favors.

I took a steadying breath. I could do this. I could do this for Leon and Rhys and Heather.

We slowed to a walk. There were at least five things in trees that were all around us which I assumed were Lycan. I wasn't sure if the others noticed, but if they did, they pretended not to. We came out of the trees and stopped. I shifted to a sitting position on Rhys, as the sunlight flooded our senses. It had been so dark in the woods, especially with the early morning light, but now the sun was overpowering **my** senses, I had to blink several times to be sure of what I was seeing.

1

No... It wasn't an illusion. Leon's unconscious body laid out in the open. Heather's **gasp** made me realize it was real, but no one moved toward it, which made me think it was just across the border, but there was no one else around.

I jumped off of Rhys and he shifted into his human form, and Sawyer **tossed** him a pair of shorts again that he quickly threw on. The cold crisp air didn't seem to bother him in the same way it chilled me, but I was far less cold than I had thought I would be.

“What’s the plan?” Heather asked desperately as she stared at her husband, itching to run over to him. I think the only thing keeping her in place right **now was** her years of training.

Rhys shook his head no. He didn’t have a plan. This **was** clearly a trap, **yet** how didn’t make sense either. There **was** no one in sight. There **was** nothing **in** sight at all. But there was no reason they would have drug him all the **way** here and then **have** just left him. It didn’t make sense at all. We were obviously missing something.

“I’ll go,” Caleb offered.

“No.” Rhys said firmly.

“Well, it has to be me or Grace.” **He** responded, and I nodded, knowing exactly where he was going with this.

“No. I don’t like repeating myself.” Rhys said through gritted teeth.

“Well, I don’t like when you’re dumb, Caleb hissed back. “Grace and I are the only two people here who can **cross** pack lands without any consequences. She’s not technically a part of any pack and neither am I.”

“Well, we’re changing that,” Rhys snapped at him, his **eyes** never leaving his best friend.

“We are,” Caleb conceded, “But right now, it’s still true. And you need to let me go, so we don’t have **to** send Grace **over.**”

I swallowed hard, and if looks could kill, Caleb wouldn’t **be** standing here. The anger on Rhys’ **face** was palpable, but Caleb **just** squeezed his shoulder **and** moved slowly toward the invisible line that we all knew was there.

Caleb crossed the border and looked around cautiously. Nothing happened. He breathed **a small** sigh of relief and moved quickly toward Leon. He reached down and felt for a pulse.

“He’s alive,” He called back to us **as** he checked for further injuries.

Heather dropped to her knees, releasing a muffled sob, but **relief** didn’t last long. The ground seemed to just open up, swallowing both Leon and **Caleb** whole.

Chapter 172

NO! Rhys shouted.

I grabbed at his arm trying to keep him in place as Heather's scream echoed back to us. There was commotion in the trees behind us, and the grief to the we had just lost, would have to wait.

"We need to move, now." I stated as I looked around at all the shell-shocked faces that didn't seem to sense the danger.

Kate was the only one who seemed to hear me, and she nodded back taking control of her soldie friend and his brother, and Heather who was sobbing uncontrollably on the ground.

But Rhys was pulling against me, trying to get to his

I turned to look at the trees. They were closing in on us, and we were clearly outnumbered. Would they follow us back to the packhouse, putting everyone else in danger? Did they already have people there? Should we lead them away? Think, Grace, think.

"Come on, Rhys," I pleaded. "We have to go."

He looked at me, the shock still written all over his face, but I needed him to *pull* it together. We needed him to get us all out of this alive. I needed him to survive.

“Shift!” I demanded, my heart racing as I yelled the singular word in hopes **of** getting through to him.

And to my surprise, he did.

Chapter Comments

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 173

I ran my fingers through his black silky coat before I jumped on his back. I leaned down as low as I could, wrapping my arms around his neck, and locking **my** fingers into place. I locked **over** as Sawyer threw Heather on his back. I really felt for her. She had been so close to getting her husband back, but now we would need to rethink our approach. Tears streamed down her face, as she held onto Sawyer, but I was glad she was at least holding on.

We took off back into the woods, but we were immediately swarmed, I could nearly hear what Rhys was thinking: Fuck. We swerved in and out of trees, and

kept **my** head down and my body low. I didn't recognize the route. I had no idea where we were, but I knew we were still a ways away from the parkhomen

I turned **my**

head to the right and matching our stride, I saw a creature that resembled a tiger running equal to us, matching us stride for stride. I bit back scream, and mentally urged Rhys to move faster.

I could tell Rhys was mindlinking with some of the others as they moved into a sort of formation, creating chaos for the people giving chase. People... If you could even call them that.

I gasped as something jumped directly in front of our path. Rhys stood up on his hind legs and I held onto him for dear life. He pounced on the creature, but it swatted us down as though we were nothing more than a pesky fly.

I flew off Rhys my back slamming into a tree, and my head slamming into the ground. I groaned in pain and attempted to roll over. Ow Own Ow. Godába, everything hurt. Shit. I couldn't defend myself.

"Hello, Grace," A sinister voice said as he leaned over me.

“How do you know my name?” I asked, pain causing my vision to go in and out.

I didn’t know how I knew, but he was the tiger that had been running in stride with us. His red hair **was** slicked **back** with sweat as he reached **out** and touched my face.

“I know everything about you,” He replied. I felt sick. Oh goddess. **No**. I don’t want this. “Now, make this **easy**, and **come** with us.”

“I won’t go back.” I told him, trying to keep my voice from shaking. Rhys’ unconscious body laid **just feet** from me, and **everyone** else seemed to be engaged in a battle around us.

“You don’t have a choice.” He sneered.

I closed my eyes and focused on **the** power that was flooding through my **veins**.

“What are you doing?” The guy above me shouted, fear crossing **over** his features.

“USE IT!” A voice inside me screamed.

I threw my hands up, heat flooding through them. The man screamed when I made contact with his chest. My **eyes** widened as **his skin** started to steam under my hands and the skin started to redden. I removed them in surprise, but that was a mistake. It **gave** him the opportunity to strike.

His right fist made contact with my cheek before grabbing at my neck. Shoot. I **left** myself wide open and fatigue was clouding my mind.

“Your Beta got too close.” He hissed in my ear as I struggled to breathe.
“We **were** tipped off that you **were** missing. And **we** were going for you, but he caught on. He got too close.”

I bucked my hips up in an attempt to get him off of me, and it took him off guard enough, that I was able to flip us **over**, so I was on top.

“Don’t underestimate how much that I do not want to go back.” I told the guy, unsheathing the knife at my thigh, and holding it to his throat.

To my surprise though, the guy laughed, a little manically if I might add.

“You think you’re so tough?” He taunted. “You think you’re little Alpha King won’t use you once he realizes what you are capable **of? He will use you** for his own gains, just the same as every other person who is **trying** to get their hands on you. You will be destroyed.”

I dug the knife into his throat **just** enough to draw blood.

1/2

Chapter 173

“You have no idea what I’m capable **of,**” I seethed. “Besides, **Rhys** loves me.”

“Does he?” **The guy** questioned. “Or does he love what you’re capable of?*

I **sucked** in a breath as what looked like another werewolf moved to attack Rhys. Everyone on our side was engaged with one or more creatures, Mid way le hell was I going to let them get to him.

I slammed my fist into the Tiger guy’s face and hopped off of him, racing toward Rhys. I slammed my body into the **werewolf’s**, knocking in both **off** balance, sending us rolling, and my knife flying out of my hand..

Oh goddess, my body was in some serious pain, but I could tell it was already healing. The werewolf snapped his jaws at **me** when we finally **stopped** rolling,

but I dodged it, at least for the moment. I got to my feet and tried to steady my breathing, which was labored, coming out in short, fast gasps.

“Hang in there, Grace!” Kate’s voice called out, but I couldn’t

see

“Help is

coming!”

I didn’t take my eyes off of my opponent who growled at Kate’s

“You won’t live to see help. I heard the voice in my head. Holy crap. I heard it in my head. This person must be from my old pack! I had never **thought** there was a pack link, but perhaps, I had been wrong this whole time! Plus, **it’s** not like I had had friends to talk to. They really were relentless.

The tiger guy was behind me, and the other shifter was pacing a **few feet away**, ready to **pounce**. Think, **Grace**, think! I demanded of **myself**. Then **it clicked**.

I stood there unmoving **as they** both gathered speed, both running straight at **me**. I forced myself. 10 **feet**. 5 **feet**. 1 foot. Now!

I dove forward, surprising them both. Neither one could stop, they **were both** moving at full **speed** even though one was shifted, **and** the other was human. They collided, and I took off back toward the battlefield to find Rhys.

He was shifted now. No longer unconscious. I could feel his utter relief when his **eyes** landed on me. He finished his fight in two moves and ran toward me. He was alright.

I hopped onto his back **as** soon as he was close enough. He let out a little whine when I landed on him, letting me know he was hurting, but at least he **was** alive.

Chapter Comments

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

This was a mess. Grace wrapped her arms around my neck and leaned into me as low as she could. My wolf was cussing me out **for** the dangat we had put **her** in, but I knew she would have never stayed at home. Not after the night of the pack run. Kate and Sawyer flanked **my** sides, as fleather took the lead with another solider who I didn't know the name of, and two more now took up the rest. There had been more when we had set out, but whether they were dead or alive, I wasn't sure. But we were lucky to get out of here alive.

I could hear pounding behind us. Fuck, they were right on our tails. I pushed harder. Normally, I was holding back in fear of dropping her. Especially with what I had done earlier.

was the fastest wolf, but with Grace on my back, my wolf

I didn't turn to look, but she did. They followed us well into our side of the border, but a little bit further and they would hit our full defenses. I should have known that anyone leading us to the Wild Lands wouldn't care about borders.

was,

Grace buried her head in my fur, but she felt like she was burning up. Even through my fur, I could feel her. Someone moved to our right, and whoever **it**

I knew my mate had seen it. She sat up, her one hand holding onto a fist full of fur to keep her balance, and the other was free as she tried balance. I could feel her focus through our bond when she threw her hand out, a ball of fire escaping it, hitting whoever had been nearing us on the right, knocking them backward, and I didn't stick around to see what happened after that.

Holly fuck. My mate was a bad ass. She leaned back down, and I made a noise of approval. I could see our soldiers coming into sight, but I couldn't breathe

a sigh of relief until we were past them. Many of the ones they had sent after us had dropped off at the sight, but a few dumb ones were still trying to fight.

Our soldiers made an opening in formation for us, and we bolted past them. Kate stopped, ready to give orders to protect our inner lands, but the rest of us kept going. We reached the next defense line, and I felt better about things. **Okay**, these guys weren't engaged in any fighting, so we were probably safe, but I wanted to be sure. We didn't stop until we made it back to the pack house. I trusted Kate to handle **things**, and she had the resources to be successful now.

Grace jumped off my back, and immediately bent over **trying** to catch her breath.

“Holy shit!” Heather exclaimed **as** she shifted back. “That was incredible! How did you do it?”

“I uh- I don't know.” **Grace** stuttered, her **face** flushed.

“You don't know?” Heather frowned.

“No... Kinda new to the whole powers thing...” She answered meekly.

I pulled her into me, giving her **as** much comfort as I could. Maybe I was **seeking** comfort myself.

“Well, that’s badass,” Heather gasped, still trying to catch her breath. “We’d all **be dead** without you.”

Grace gave her a small smile, but I could tell she didn’t feel the same.

“Grace!” Alana and Maizie shouted, running out of the packhouse with a speed even I envied.

They ripped my mate from my arms, wrapping her up in their own.

“Hey!” One of the soldiers shouted. “You were specifically instructed not to leave the packhouse!”

Maizie rolled her eyes, but Alana seemed to shrink at the scolding. I felt for her. I really did.

“They’re okay,” I stated, giving the soldier a look, who held his arms up in defense.

“I’m just trying to do my job, sir,” He mumbled.

I nodded for him to go back to his post and tuned my attention back to the girls.

“Is everything good here?” questioned.

“Yea,” Maizie answered with a nod. “I’ve noticed nothing abnormal. And nobody has gotten close. We were watching from the roof.”

Chapter 174

Of course, you were, I sighed, pulling my mate back into me.

“Where’s Alpha Prince Caleb? Alana asked, her eyes scanning over the small group of us that returned as Sawyer approached, looking exanted,

I swallowed. My best friend and my brother, swallowed by the land just past our borders, hist out of reach. Forever out of reach.

“And it looks like **you** didn’t find Leon...” Maizie concluded as she scanned us the same way Alana had.

“No.” Heather’s voice broke as she pulled on a shirt. “No. We lost them both.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry, Heather,” Alana cried, pulling the older lady into her.

My stomach churned. I had no plan to get them h **best** friend **was** missing?.

“Are any of you hurt?” Maizie asked.

How the fuck had this happened? How had I been so distracted that I didn’t **even** truly notice that my

I looked to Grace who shook her head, and I did the same. I actually think Grace had unintentionally healed me while she had been on my back.

“Okay, well, I’ll grab some plates for us and take it up to the Alpha **suite**. You all **must** be starving.”

“I’m just going to go to bed...” Heather said numbly. “Um

Would you mind watching the girls upstairs with your lot today?”

“Of course,” Maizie answered, looking uncomfortable with the idea of feelings that Heather **seemed** to have.

We all started to move inside at a snail’s pace. Exhaustion **was** evident with every **step**.

“Maizie...” Sawyer’s voice broke a little, stopping just outside the door.

She gave him a curious look before whispering something to Alana and letting the door close. Shutting them **out**, and we continued on like it **wasn’t** weird at all. But Grace took my hand, and off we went to eat, and get some well-earned **rest** before facing whatever **was** going to come **next**.

Chapter Comments

The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 175

Rhys moved slowly up the stairs toward our room. I knew he was exhausted. I was exhausted. But not only was he exhausted, he was grief-stricken. He **had** lost his brother and his best friend today. He didn't know if they were alive or if the earth had put them in an early grave. There was nothing I could say to make it better. He was the Alpha King. He would pretend to be fine, but I knew he was hurting.

The chaos on the Alpha floor was worse than usual. With the pack on lock down, it wasn't really any different since these kids stayed on the Alpha floor at all times, but they seemed to sense that something outside these walls was amidst.

I sat down at the counter, and Rhys took the seat next to me. Neither of us said anything as we awaited some promised food, but I honestly wasn't hungry. I was craving sleep more than I craved any food. The idea of eating was actually nauseating. But sleep didn't seem to be an option yet. I wasn't sure I would be able to sleep without seeing the earth open up and swallow Caleb and Leon... Or the tiger man stalking us. Or any of the battle we had been a part of.

I tapped my fingers anxiously against the counter. I had rarely ever felt anxious like this. Most of the time I was able to turn off my feelings. I had gone **so** far into the nothing that I had terrified my mate. But this feeling? The racing thoughts, the surging energy, the clarity of everything around me, this was new, and I did not like it one bit.

“Grace” Rhys drew out my name, his hand covering mine, forcing me to sit still.

I looked at him, studying every line on his **face**. His dark eyes were clearly tired. There were bags under them, and lines on his face that hadn't existed when **we** first met. The stress of everything I had brought to him was clearly taking its toll on him. I wished I could take it all away. I wished that I could heal the broken inside of him.

While I was studying him, he was studying me. Our eyes locked, and there was no need to **say** anything else. We **were** both keenly **aware** of how the other was feeling. I could feel his gentle tug on the bond. I often felt him pulling on it trying to figure out where **I was** at mentally. I didn't use the bond that often, but there was something about just simply knowing it was there.

The door to the Alpha cabin opened, and in came Alana, Maize and Sawyer, with all three of Leon's kids. The oldest one seemed to know that something was up, since they never came up here, but I knew that look on her face. She was trying to be brave for her siblings. She scanned the room, her eyes growing wide with horror. She was appalled by the way the kids were behaving. A football was being thrown **across** the family room, nearly missing the small group of kids doing yoga, and another playing cards. Behind the couch, there was a training session happening that Michael seemed to be running with some of the older kids. And the littles were running around playing some imaginary game that no one else seemed to be able to follow.

Maizie called over a couple of kids near their ages and introduced them as Alana and Sawyer made their way over to us with two trays full of mini sandwiches and fruit. I stood up immediately and went to grab some plates from the cabinet. I sighed when I saw there were none and grabbed the roll of paper towels instead; they would have to do. I giggled to myself. The idea of the Alpha King eating off of a paper towel was hilarious to me. **And** then add in that it was because his house,

his Alpha unit was overflowing with kids not even from his pack, it was really funny.

“Grace?” Rhys called out, bringing me back to reality. “Are you okay?”

“Yea,” I answered, trying to keep the laughter out of voice. “I was just in my own head.”

Ah. That little familiar tug on the bond made me roll my eyes as I passed out the paper towels. But I couldn’t help the slight smirk that made its way to my

face.

“What’s next?” Sawyer asked in a low tone, but honestly, there were too many ears around to talk freely.

“Next,” Rhys sighed, “Next, I’m going to bed. Then maybe with some sleep, maybe we’ll come up with a new plan that might actually work, and hope that our defenses will actually hold until we have one.”

“That’s it? That’s all you have to say right now?”

Rhys closed his **eyes** for a moment before looking at his brother. “Sawyer, **I** am exhausted. I **can’t** think straight right now. And as much as I want my brother and best friend back, I am no good to them like this.”

The weariness that Rhys felt was impossible to deny, but Sawyer was grieving. Just like Rhys, he had just gotten his brother back. And unlike Rhys, **he** been close to Caleb before having to say goodbye the first time. He had just started to forgive him, and now he was gone again.

I stared at the food in front of me. I had forged myself to take **a** couple bites, but the thought of eating anymore made my stomach churn. I knew **my** body needed sustenance, but I couldn’t make myself eat it.

“Are you ready for bed?” Rhys asked, his paper towel completely empty, not a crumb in sight.

I nodded and stood up, but the second I did, I was met with the full force of a little body, making me stumble back a step

“Aunt Grace, Uncle Rhys!” Sammy cried out.

“Hi **Sammy,**” Rhys said, his voice tight with emotion.

“Have you seen my daddy? I can’t find him anywhere!”

Oh goddess. I hadn’t **even** factored Sammy into the equation of losing Caleb. I stole a glance at Rhys, whose horror-stricken face told me he hadn’t either.

I knelt down next to the little girl. There was no easy way to tell her, but she had the right to know.

“Your daddy was very brave. He was trying to save someone, and it went bad. He didn’t come home with us. I’m so sorry, Sammy.”

Sammy’s eyes welled up with tears as she processed what I told her.

“**Is-** Is he dead?” She asked.

“I **don’t** know.” I whispered **back**.

That was all it took. She threw her little body at me, and I wrapped her up as tight as I could. I looked up at Rhys who was frozen with emotion.

“Go.” I mouthed to him.

“Are you sure?” He mouthed back.

I nodded, holding the little girl close.

“I’ve got her.” I told him.

He nodded, and the crowd around us dispersed, leaving Sammy to grieve with me. Her sobs wracking through her tiny body. And in that moment, nothing else mattered, but me and her.

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 176

I **tossed and** turned for hours. Every time I closed my eyes, I saw my best friend and brother get swallowed up by the Earth. I hadn't had a night of sleep this bad, since my dad had died. Those months after his death had been terrible. I had barely slept, and it had felt a lot like it did now,

I reached to the other side of the bed, feeling for Grace. I needed her. I needed her to tell me it was going to be okay even if she didn't believe it would be. However, my hand just grasped at air. My eyes popped open. Grace's side of the bed was utterly untouched. I looked around the room, and she was nowhere to be seen.

"Grace?" I called out with sleepiness still in my voice.

There was no response. Where was she? I knew she hadn't been with me when I went to bed, but surely, she should have been back by now right?

The image of her holding Sammy flashed before my eyes. Sammy's sobs wracking through her small body when Grace told her her dad wasn't coming home. I had been more than a little grateful for Grace in that moment. I'm not sure I could

have told that poor, sweet girl who had already lost so much that she had lost the only parent she had left. Grace had done it with no hesitation. She knew that the girl needed the truth, and I was grateful that she was able to handle the aftermath of it. But now, where was she?

I stood up and stretched my body out. I was sore from the fight, even if I did think Grace had unintentionally healed me when she had ridden on my back. God, I had loved the way she had ridden on me. There was something special about going into a battle together like that. But I had nearly gotten her killed. What if she had been more hurt than I thought?

I threw my shirt over my head and rushed out of my room. The halls were quiet, and the lights were out, telling me it was still early. I smiled slightly as I walked into the living room. Small cots and sleeping bags were spread out all around the small room. The kids seemed to be completely unbothered by the fact that they didn't have their own spaces, but at the same time, from what I had learned, it hadn't sounded like they had come from a space with that

anyways.

“Alpha King Rhys,” Alana’s small voice drew me to the kitchen, where a single light was on, barely lighting up the room.

“Alana, Maizie,” I said in surprise. “What are you two doing up?”

Both of them shrugged.

“Can’t sleep.” Maizie said finally. “You?”

“Same.” I answered. “Have either of you seen my mate? She never came to bed.”

Maizie frowned.

“Last I saw her, she said she was putting Sammy to bed.” Alana said nervously. “I haven’t seen her since then.”

I nodded my thanks to them and then headed off in the direction of Caleb’s room. She might not be there still, but at least it **was** a starting point.

I couldn’t remember the last time I had willingly went to my brother’s room. We had never been very close, despite being twins. Our rooms had been on opposite sides of the floor since a very young age. I think our parents were afraid that we were going to kill each other if I’m being completely honest.

I took a deep breath and opened the door slowly. I couldn’t help but smile when I saw them. The lights **were** still on, but Grace and Sammy **were** curled up together both sound asleep, a book still in Grace’s hand. I quietly moved into the room and took the book carefully from Grace’s hand. I felt bad that I had just left her to handle this, but she was who Sammy needed right then. And she was the most sane of all of us at least at the time. I knew her heart hurt for everyone right now,

but she wouldn't lie to any of us and say it'll get better. She would just let **us** sit with our feelings.

My mate would be an amazing mom one day. She had proven herself to be good with children time and time again. I remembered the first time she really went outside. Her first instinct had been to play with the kids. But to be fair, she had hardly gotten to be a kid herself, which in my opinion would make her

an **even** better mother.

I closed the door quietly and backed into the hallway. Sammy would need extra love right now, and so would Leon's kids. Fuck. I hated this.

I walked past the kitchen, past Maizie and Alana who were in a whispered conversation, and right out the door. My own exhaustion didn't seem to ease **with** sleep. I'm not sure it would ever ease again

I walked into the hallway that had my office, but I paused when I heard a noise coming from Leon's. My heart began to race. He hadn't been in good shape when **we saw** him. There **was no way** he had made it back... Had he?

Chapter 176

opened his office door slowly, but my heart sunk immediately. Heather was sitting **in the middle of the** flour **with** a whiskey **bottle**, denied Leones sweatpants **and his hoodie**.

Heather... I breathed, unsure of what to say.

She looked up, noticing me for the first time. Her mascara had long ago smeared, and her eyes were red from tears. In a lot of ways, she looked **crazy**.

“It took you long enough.” **She** slurred, shoving the bottle of whiskey at me.

“I’m sorry.” I said sympathetically. “I didn’t know.”

“**He’s** alive, Rhys, **I** still feel our bond. We have to save him.”

I took the bottle from her and took a swig before handing it back.

“We will.” I promised. “We will.”

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 177

“**Do** you remember that one time in high school when Leon’s dad was soooo mad at him for something I did, and he hid in your room **for** a week?”

I laughed before taking another swig from the bottle.

“I remember. I was in so much trouble when mom finally realized that I had been lying to them. Though I have no idea how they didn’t catch on sooner because I literally was stealing food from the dinner table to give to him.”

Heather laughed, taking the bottle back. “They had so much trust in you until that point. Your mom never believed anything we ever said again.”

“Why did he need to hide in my room again?” I asked, my memory was fuzzy, but then again, everything was fuzzy at the moment.

“Because I egged Bella Throth’s house, remember? She had the nerve to ask Leon out on a date, and so I challenged her on the mat, but I had been so angry, I made myself look stupid. Leon took the heat for me when I took things even lower by egging her house. I mean, technically you both were with me... So technically it was all of us.”

“Oh that’s right!” I exclaimed. It felt so good to be lost on this reminiscent journey with Heather. I couldn’t remember the last time we had just hang **out**. like this. I had been so busy in meetings and in requisitions, and just being Alpha King, I had neglected my oldest friend. I honestly couldn’t even tell you the last time I had even had fun with Leon. My life had become all work, and I couldn’t even remember when that happened... “But you can’t actually pull us into that. We didn’t know what you were doing until you pulled the **eggs** out of your backpack and started throwing them.”

“I wouldn’t have gotten caught if you two had been quieter about it.” She shot **back** with another swig.

“You’re lucky Leon took the fall for you.” I laughed. “Your dad would have killed you.”

“Oh for sure. He was great back, even back then. He has always been perfect, Leon. Sometimes **so** much so it was infuriating.”

I smiled at the thought. Yea. He was perfect. He always tried **to** be anyways. My pack wouldn't have grown the way it had under **my** rule, **if** it wasn't for Leon.

“Why did you sleep with Caleb?” I asked, hesitantly. I knew it technically wasn't my business, but I had been dying to know since it came **out**.

Heather swallowed hard, her eyes filling with tears again. “I honestly don't really know.” She answered, meeting my **gaze**. “Leon has done so much good for this pack. For everyone around. Like I said, he's perfect. But he wasn't always perfect to me. While he was off securing business deals, making this pack richer, training warriors, and being your right-hand man, I was lonely... **I** was used to having him whenever I wanted. I was used to us all doing everything together. And Caleb was going through the same thing, shortly after your dad died. You guys had trained to be dual Alphas, and then it was taken from him... I was lonely, and he was lonely, and we were drinking and it just kinda happened. I never met for it to. I tried to tell Leon several times before he had found out, but the right moment never came.”

“How did he find out?” I asked, taking the bottle from her.

“We were in a fight, and I mentioned that I was feeling inferior, and like I could never be good enough, and it came up. I sort of yelled it at him. **I never** wanted him to find out like that, but I was never on his level of good. I have never **seen** him so mad before. I know I hurt him. And I made it worse by waiting so long to tell him. We were just starting to work past it when this happened. I

thought maybe you had sent him on a secret mission or something. But he always told me about those. When he didn't come back, my first thought **was** that he actually left me."

"What made you realize that he didn't leave you?" I asked.

"He had had every chance to leave me before. In fact, I, many times, told him to just go, and he had refused. Nothing new had happened, and he has always been good. Better than the two of us in nearly **every** way. I realized he would never leave like that. He might want to leave me someday, but he would never leave the kids like that. He would never leave me like that."

I nodded. I knew exactly what she meant. The three of us had always been a trio. Leon had always been the best of us. He was the **better communicator. The** better warrior. The better friend. He always listened to us and our dumbass hair-brained schemes and then would find a way to gent' knew if I ever fell as Alpha, he could take over and would probably be better at it. I sometimes wondered if I should just hand it to overwhelmed. I just didn't think that would be fair to him. He never wanted to be Alpha. Hell, he didn't even want to be Beta, but he was **damn good at it.**

us out of it. I en I felt

"He loves you." I told her.

"**Yea,**" A small, sad smile crossed her face. "Yea. He does."

Chapter 177

A knock at **the** door startled us both.

“Shhh, pretend we’re not here. Heather whispered.

“Rhys?” A voice called out as the knocking began to get a little bit more incessant.

“Oh!” I called out when I finally recognized the voice. “That’s my mate!”

I stumbled to my feet and pushed at the door. I laughed when I realized I had to turn the knob and pull it instead.

“Mate!” I called out happily when my eyes landed on Grace. Goddess, how much did I drink? There were two of her!

“Rhys, what are you doing?” She startled, looking at me, then past me to Heather before finally landing on the bottle. “Are you drunk?”

“Well, there are two of you standing in front of me, so I’m going to say, yes,” I told her.

I reached out to touch the face of the Grace on my right, but she slapped my hand away.

“**We** have a meeting with our warrior team right now, and you’re wasted?” She hissed angrily. I had rarely seen Grace mad, but she was cute when **she** was mad.

“Sorry, Heather, guess our fun is over.” I sighed. “**Mate here says there are t**

Heather smiled. “Aren’t there always?”

things to do.”

“Yes.” Grace snapped. “Now, when we go in there, shut up, and let me do the talking. You **are** to be quiet, **am I** understood?”

“Yes, Grace,” I leaned in to kiss her cute little nose.

“You can kiss me when you’re sober,” She snapped. “Now. Let’s Gooo.

Her rejection only turned me on more. Angry Grace **was** hot. She grabbed my hand and pulled **me** along the hallway, and **angry or happy**, drunk or **sober**, knew I would follow her anywhere.

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

I leaned up against the wall in the hallway as Grace inspected me. She had left me at the bottom of the stain to go grab something and kao lavo

a black button up that she made me put on. She had hardly said a word, at least that wasn’t an insult. I was a little distracted **by** the way he mouth moving and all the things I wanted her to do with that mouth.

“Focus, Rhys!” She hissed.

“I am focused.” I responded.

“Yea, I need you to not be focused on me.” She responded bitterly,

“No can do. My mate is hot. Especially, when she’s angry.” I teased, bopping her nose.

“You can touch me when you’re sober.” She snapped, and the glare she shot me told me that she really wasn’t playing, and she took a step back. **Angry** Grace was hot, but I was quickly realizing that I didn’t like that she was angry at me.

“Grace...” I pleaded. “Just one kiss?”

“No.” She answered definitively. “Come on, **we’re** late.”

“Late for what?” I asked. I couldn’t remember setting up any meeting for today. In fact, I specifically hadn’t wanted to do anything today. I mean, I had lost my brother and my best friend. No. I didn’t want to do anything.

“A meeting.” She said shortly.

“What meeting?”

“With Kate and a few others.”

“I don’t want to.” I whined.

“I don’t care. You are going. And you’re going to be quiet and let Sawyer and I take the lead.”

“But-”

“No buts, you shouldn’t have gone off drinking.”

“I was going to say, you don’t like talking.”

“Well, you didn’t leave me a choice.” She retaliated. “Now, let’s go.”

I followed her down the hall like a sad lost puppy. She wouldn't even give **me** her hand to hold. Damn. I would have to remember to stay on my sweet Gracie's good side.

Gracie opened the door to the conference room like she wanted to be anywhere **else**. Like she was trying to be a fly on the wall. But **she** was a Luna Queen. She should walk into every room with confidence, damn it! I would have to make **a** call when I was sober. Grace would need help to fully acclimate to **this** role, and I would give her all the help I could. She would get the chance to learn from the best. At least that was my opinion.

Everyone **was** staring at us. I felt much more free than I usually did in these situations, but that was the alcohol clouding my judgement at the moment. Grace held her head up high, but I could see her hands were shaking **as we** walked to our seats. I reached for her hand, but she moved it just out of my reach. I pouted a little. Message received little mate. No touchy till sober. But then if that was the **case**, she couldn't look so hot.

"Is everything okay, Alpha King?" Someone asked as we approached the desk.

"Yes," I replied. "Everything is fine."

"Anyways," Grace started before I was **even** done talking as she shot me a sideways look to be quiet. "Let's begin. **Kate, report please.**"

“The attack in the woods appears to be an isolated attack. They followed us to our first barricade, but **they** didn’t engage once we **got** past **the** line. **They**

Chapter 178

just turned around. **We** had that group of warriors follow them, **however they** just receded into the Wild **Lands, and after** what kipranes

we made **the** decision not to cross the border, but set up surveillance in the area, Observations from the skirmish we encounter

waiting there for us. It appears that they knew we would come for Leon **and set** themselves **up** accordingly. We have hidden tampras now out along the **border as** well **as** a surveillance team which has to specific tasks – watch the cameras as well as in person surveillance.

“Anything else?” Grace asked at Sawyer grimaced from his spot at the table.

I was surprised to see him at this meeting, honestly. I thought he would be off grieving our brother.

“**Yes.**” Kate nodded. “There were creatures in the skirmish that did not appear to be Lycan or Werewolf

“And your thoughts on the matter?” Grace prodded, but I knew she already knew this piece of information and had already reached the same conclusions as

Kate.

“This leads me to believe that there are more supernatural shifters out there than we were previously made aware of. We didn’t know about Lycans **until** they attacked us, I’m afraid there are more things out there that we don’t know of than we do.”

Grace contemplated something. I could tell she had her own thoughts on the matter, but she just nodded.

“What is the next move you’d like to make Alpha King?” Ryan, a guy from Kate’s team, asked.

I gestured to Grace, swaying slightly with the movement, **gripping** the table to steady myself, hopefully without drawing any attention to it.

“We need to start training everyone to defend themselves. **We are a** strong pack. We have the most elite warriors in the country. But we are only as strong as our weakest links. We are not asking children to go to war. We are **simply** asking that they be **able to** defend themselves to some degree. The children we have recovered

from the cruelty of the Red Blood pack, have been training, and they may be able to help in this critical time. It might **be too** late to get very far with it, but **we** have to start somewhere, and this will set us up for the future **as well**. But pack training is now mandatory.”

“I will work on scheduling this and finding a space for us to hold different meetings.” Someone from **the** other end of the table called out. Fuck, I couldn’t remember his name, but we had gone to school together way back when.

“Thank you. We will continue to research the different supernatural species, and we will loop you guys in as we learn more. **For now, even** alliances **hold a** threat to us. Be careful out there. You are all dismissed.”

Everyone looked to me for an official dismissal which irritated me. Grace’s word was **as** good as mine, but no one would take it **as** that **until** I made it official with the Luna Ceremony, despite that ring on her finger. But I guess **I** had had others before her, and none of them had ever **held any power**.

I nodded to confirm that they were dismissed and looked at my soon-to-be wife **as** she stood there **as** still as a statue.

Sawyer slowly made his way around the table to us.

“Well done, Grace,” He said as he looked around the room, making sure we were alone before looking me dead in the **eye** and demanding, “What **the hell** is wrong with you?”

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 179

I could feel surprise flood the bond, and I looked at Rhys in confusion. He looked aghast at Sawyer's question, but I coulda's quite figure not why: It **was** fair question, and all things considered, I wanted to know too.

"He's drunk." I told Sawyer.

"You're drunk?" He hissed angrily.

"Yep." I popped the p because I could.

“What the hell Rhys?! Our brother is missing!”

“And probably dead.” Rhys replied bitterly, his tone taking me by surprise. “I woke up, and Grace was asleep with Sammy, so i came to do weet, best Heather was in Leon’s office, drinking and I joined her.”

“Heather is drunk and alone?” Sawyer shouted.

“I told Alana to go to her.” I butted in softly. “She told me she would handle it.”

“You haven’t done something this stupid since you were a kid.” Sawyer stated with a look that could kill, and I was glad it was not directed at me, but I also was tired of their fighting already.

“I’m allowed to grieve in whatever way I want.”

“Not when there is work to do!”

“Knock it off, both of you,” I intervened before it could get worse. “Rhys, come on. You’re no use to us like this. I wouldn’t have brought you to the meeting. if it

hadn't been necessary. They won't listen to me without your word. We have things to do today, so go sleep this thing off, and meet us **in** your office when you're ready."

He grabbed at my hand, but I didn't like drunk Rhys. I didn't like drunk anyone. It made me feel icky inside, and made my skin crawl in ways I couldn't explain.

"Please, don't touch me," I begged him to hear me. I hated that I was afraid of him. I hated that I felt this way.

"Grace?" Sawyer asked with concern in his voice. "Is something wrong?"

The night came in flashes. I could smell the alcohol on the guy. It had probably been the only reason I got away because he had been so persistent but also unsteady. I had run... I had run when he had tried to... No. Don't go there, Grace. That person had taken enough from me... I wouldn't give him more.

"No. Everything's fine." I said shortly. "I'm going to get- um

-

air. Yea, air. I'll be back."

didn't wait for a response. I didn't look back. I didn't stop. I didn't so much as pause to even think about what I was doing. I just knew I couldn't be in that room anymore as I rushed down the stairs out the back door.

The cold air hit me at full force, and I gulped in the fresh air. You are safe here, Grace. I told myself. Rhys would never hurt you. He's your mate, and he loves you. You are just overreacting to nothing.

I placed my hands on my knees and tried to control my breathing, which was coming out in short gasps. I hadn't had a panic attack like this in a while. My heart felt like it was pounding out of my chest.

"Gracie?" Rhys's gentle voice called out from somewhere behind me.

"I'm fine!" I called out. "I just need a minute."

"You aren't fine." He answered, sounding a lot more sober than he had just minutes ago.

"Please," I pleaded. "Please don't come any closer. I love you, but I can't right now. I can't."

He walked in wide berth with his hands up till he was about 5 feet directly in front of me. A part of me craved my mother's comfort, but the other part of me knew I wouldn't calm if he came any closer. Flight or fight would kick in, and I would run

"I'm sorry." I told him as tears streamed down my face. I could still feel whoever touched my hands running up and down my body before I could get the hadn't felt nice like it does when Rhys does it. I hadn't wanted it. I hadn't wanted

"I'm the one who should be apologizing. I'm so sorry, Grace. I didn't think... I wasn't thinking clearly. I wasn't trying to trigger you. I just wasn't thinking I'm so sorry."

"I know. I know this is a me problem." I told him as I dropped to my knees, my body feeling weak now.

"This is an us problem," He stated firmly. "Your problems are my problems, my love. No matter what they are. And I know you can battle your own demons, but I'll be here cheering you on. You're the fucking Luna Queen. I have no doubt that you can handle yourself. But I'll be here. Even when you don't need or want me. I'll be here to fight with you whenever you need it."

I gave him a small smile as he dropped to his knees in front of me, still 5 feet away, but he felt like less of a threat now. I sat back and just stared at the world around us. The moment felt in some ways similar to when I had realized I had been unbounded but couldn't shift. I wasn't going to let myself lose it like I had

then. I wasn't going to break like I did when my Lycan was refusing to show herself again.

"I'm right here, love," A voice in my head called out. "I have always been right here with you."

I felt my eyes widen. What the hell? Now I was sure I was losing it because I was going to talk back to the voice.

"Why didn't we shift then?" I asked out loud, causing Rhys to look at me curiously. He seemed to know I wasn't talking to him.

"It wasn't time yet," The voice answered. "But don't worry, you won't have to wait long, we will soon. Our path is set. You must just trust the process."

"What do you mean?" I asked desperately. "What do you know that I don't?!"

However, the voice chose not to answer, and as much as I begged, she was not coming back. At least not for now, we were still on our own. But my Lycan seemed to know things that I did not. And I hoped we would not have to wait long to find out exactly what.

Chapter Comments

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The Unwanted Daughter's Alpha King

Chapter 180

We sat in the office with the usual crew, plus Alana who had decided she would start joining, going over all of the new sim had taken a cold shower, and then a small nap, and drank some coffee, I didn't know which thing belged him these, s back to normal and no longer smelled like liquer.

“So, you're saying your Lycan spoke to you?” Maizie asked with a frown.

“Yea.” I answered uncomfortably, I hated when all their attention was on me.

“And said what again?” She asked.

“She said ‘it wasn't time yet, but don't worry, you won't have to wait long, we will soon. Our path is set. You must just trust the pincess

“That’s unsettling. Alana muttered, making me smile slightly as I paced the small space in front of the desk.

“Considering she’s never really said more than a word or two to me, yea, it’s very creepy.”

“What else has she told you?” Rhys asked, sitting up in his seat. I was grateful that he was being patient with me, actually last.

I wasn’t sure how long it would

“Well, I didn’t realize it was her who spoke before, not until she spoke today... But the night on the roof,” I swallowed hard before continuing before I partially shifted and killed Ethan, she yelled for me to attack. And then yesterday, when I was trapped, she yelled at me **to** Use it?“, which was in regard to the power that I accidentally used on Maizie the other day.” I confided. “But I think that’s the only time I had really heard from her.”

Rhys’ brows furrowed in thought. I was curious about what he was thinking. If he thought it was weird.

“Wait,” Alana said, holding her hand up to stop anybody else’s thoughts before her own. “That first one, weren’t you bound?”

“I was,” I answered, “Yea. But I was also in such a shock that I never really processed that moment. When I killed him, I thought I was a monster, which didn’t help anything. I couldn’t believe what I had done. I kinda blocked the whole thing from my head until she spoke again. And this time, she had more to say.”

“That shouldn’t have been possible.” Michael said in horror, looking at me like I was the monster I spoke about.

“I agree.” Rhys said. “But theoretically, Grace was bound though because she was thought to be powerful. At least, if we are to believe anything the witch told us. I wouldn’t be surprised that her Lycan tried to break out a few times and partially did.”

Michael had a look on his face that I couldn’t place. It was almost like he was afraid, but what he was afraid of, I wasn’t sure.

“How come you couldn’t shift after being unbound then?” He asked.

“I don’t know, but my Lycan said it wasn’t time yet, so I guess take that however you want to,” I shrugged.

“Okay, well that worries me a bit, Sawyer stated, but didn’t bother looking up from his computer. “Like we should be expecting something big soon.”

“Me too.” I admitted quietly.

Rhys reached for my hand, pulling me onto his lap.

“I won’t let anything happen to you.” He promised./

“You can’t promise that.” I whispered back. “But I know you’ll try.”

He kissed my cheek, and I breathed him in. I still felt a little uncomfortable with being touched, but I also knew that **Rhys** would never do anything to hurt me. In our short time together, I was well aware of that.

“Alright,” I said as I pulled away from him, “What’s the plan now?”

“I think we need have a list of about 5 things, we need to do in the intermediate future. 1. We need to place the kids in the foster homes who agree. As of

tomorrow, every child will go to school. They now have free rein over the house. And any problems that arise, yra are to come staigh in . ?

Maizie and Michael both shared a look before nodding and mumbling, “Yes,”

There was something about the order that they didn’t like, but Rhys didn’t pause to ask them what exactly it

“Good. 2. We need to plan our wedding, and the Luna ceremony as soon as possible.” Rhys

continued

“What’s the rush?” I asked in surprise, my heart racing at the idea of marrying him.

“So, you don’t have the feeling that you need a drunk me to sit in on a meeting to just nod my head at everything you say.” He answered with a little more bite than I was expecting.

“Oh.”

“Anyways,” Rhys said, turning his attention back to the group. “3. I have also called in someone to help prepare Grace for her role, since Arlo is no longer an option, and now she needs more real-life help than hypothetical. However, Maizie and Alana, if you wish to attend these lessons with her, you’re welcome to.”

“Who’s coming?” I asked, but he didn’t answer, so I tried again as Maizie and Alana whispered amongst themselves. “Rhys, seriously, who did you call?”

My trust for anyone was thin, but this seemed to be completely uncalled for to me.

“And 4, I have also decided we will band a small group together to go visit our allies. I have not decided on who will go yet, officially, but I will keep you posted. We will not only visit with our allies, but also the other supernaturals, including but not limited to the witches and the vampires. I will keep everyone updated on the exact plan as I come up with it.”

“And 5?” Maizie asked when a silence fell over us after everyone had acknowledged they heard him.

“What?”

“You said there were 5 things.” She said, “What’s the 5th?”

“Oh, I uh, guess I don’t have a 5th,” Rhys replied looking taken aback. “The only other thing, I would maybe add in as a 5th, is that we are not leaving anyone behind. We will rescue our people back and the kids in those bad conditions you have told us about, even *if* they are separate battles. It’s just going to take patience

and time, even though our hearts are heavy. We will handle it as the team we've become. Got it?"

I looked at Rhys, who had his eyes locked on Sawyer's before the younger brother nodded. For a split second, I had thought maybe it would come to blows, but Sawyer bared his necked in submission, and I breathed a sigh of relief. We would be okay as long as we fought together. And that was something I could truly get behind.

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