

The One He Claimed Chapter 131

Chapter 131: Zahn's Agreement

Sophie

When we hang up with Amelia, I sit back, resting against Hunter's chest. His hands are gently rubbing over my stomach, and I- can feel the little game that he and my son are playing, even if it's absent-mindedly on Hunter's side. Every time my stomach flutters, Hunter's hands move to touch his son. Then when it flutters in another spot, he moves them again to find his son. I can tell by his distracted mind that he's not doing it intentionally, but I love how connected he already is to our pup. He's going to make a fantastic father. And that thought makes me want to give him lots and lots of pups.

He leans down and nips at my ear. "I'll take as many as you'll give me. And thank you. I intend to be a very present, very good father to all of our pups," he says.

I turn and look at him, still in awe at his ability to track so many things at once. I've been practicing, but it's really hard.

His eyes focus on me, and he smiles. "You'll get there. You and your sister both are much stronger than you realize. I'm beginning to think that Nikki is right."

"About what, exactly?" I ask, snuggling against him again. I love having his warmth at my back, his lips caressing my neck and shoulder, while his hands play with our pup.

"About wanting to allow females to take over ranked positions. Which reminds me, I haven't offered the G**a position to Penny yet. I wonder if she'll accept it. She has a lot going on right now."

"She'll accept it, and Jaime will stay. I think he just needs time to see that we're the real deal. Penny will make sure that he knows that, and we'll look after his sisters, just like we always do," I say confidently, lifting my neck to give Hunter access. His kisses and soft growls are sending waves of pleasure through my body, my skin raising with goosebumps from the gentle caresses.

"We could call her in here now," I suggest.

"I'd rather call Zahn. I want to know what he has to say about another planned attack on our pack."

"Then let's call him," I say, snuggling into my mate's arms as he leans forward and dials Alpha Zahn's number, putting it on speaker phone.

"Alpha Hunter, have you made your decision?" he asks when he answers.

“Not quite yet, Alpha Zahn. I have question for you. What do you know about Aiden and Alaric working with Koden to attack me and my pack again?”

He sighs. “Give me a moment.”

We hear him moving around. “I need to take this.”

There’s no answer that we can hear.

“Will you be alright for a few moments?” he asks.

“Feel free to never come back,” an angry, hateful female voice says.

We hear rustling and I turn to look at Hunter. That had to be Jocelyn. He nods, agreeing with me.

“Alpha Hunter,” he says, coming back on the phone and sounding exhausted. “Yes, I was contacted by Alpha Aiden wanting to know if I would work with them to go against you.”

I’m surprised that he’s being this honest. I can feel Hunter’s surprise as well, but he still feels reserved.

“And what did you tell him?”

“I told him that I have my own problems, and I don’t need any more, especially from a man who seems to have gotten his life together better than any of us,” he says, irritation clear in his tone.

“You must understand my concern, Alpha. You ask to come to my pack and within a day I hear that several Alphas are planning to rise against me again. It’s very convenient, don’t you think?”

“I understand how it must look to you, Alpha Hunter. But believe me, there is nothing convenient about my relationship with my mate. THAT is my sole purpose for coming to your pack. If you want to lock me in a room and keep me under 24-hour guard, I won’t argue. But...” he sighs, his voice becoming sad. “You heard my mate. She hates me.”

“No offense, Alpha, but you’ve mistreated her badly. I can’t imagine how angry she must be, not just at you, but also at the Moon Goddess who didn’t accept her when she literally threw herself at her mercy. I will warn you, Alpha Zahn, you won’t like my ideas or my way of dealing with your mate. But if you come here, to my pack, seeking my help, you will a**e by my rules and you let me do what I think is best for your mate,” I say sternly. Hunter will make sure our pack stays safe, letting me focus on helping Jocelyn. I need Zahn to know that if his mate chooses to walk away from him, I won’t fight her on that.

“Luna Sophie, I didn’t realize you were on the phone,” he says, surprised.

“I keep no secrets from my mate,” Hunter says.

“Would you...would you be willing to speak to my mate, to let her know that I’m serious about bringing her to see you?” he asks.

“I can’t speak to your intentions, Alpha Zahn, but I will let her know that you have asked to bring her to our pack, and Hunter and I have agreed to allow it,” I say, quickly looking at Hunter for confirmation. He nods.

“Thank you, Luna. That’s all I ask.” We hear rustling again before he speaks, putting the phone on speaker.

“Jocelyn, I have Luna Sophie on the phone.”

It’s quiet a moment. “Luna Jocelyn?”

“I am no Luna,” she spits out.

“Whether it was by your choice or not, you are mated to an Alpha so therefore, you are a Luna,” I say gently.

“I rejected him. But he refuses to accept it,” she snarls. Well, it would be a snarl if she wasn’t so weak. However, as weak as her body may be, her mind is sharp, and she is furious.

“Luna Jocelyn, I wanted to let you know that Alpha Zahn has requested to bring you to my pack. My mate and I have agreed. I have also let Alpha Zahn know that he may not agree with my ways, but he will a**e by the rules of our pack while the two of you are here.”

She snorts. “It’s a little late for that. What do you think you can do for me, Luna Sophie?” she asks resentfully.

“I don’t know that I can do anything for you, Luna Jocelyn. But I know that here, in my pack, people find peace. They sleep for the first time in a long time. There is laughter, there is love, and there is space from things you don’t want to be close to,” I say. Better to let Zahn know now what he’s in for.

“He would never agree to that,” she begins.

“I have agreed to it, Jocelyn. I want to fix things between us. Please, let’s do this. Not for me, but for you,” Zahn says, his voice gentler than I expected.

“It’s your decision, Jocelyn. I won’t force you into anything,” I say.

“And your mate agrees with this?” she asks, surprised.

“I agree one hundred percent. I know it’s not the same in all packs, but here, Sophie leads with me, at my side,” Hunter says.

“You’re Sophie Meyers? The Legend? Now marked and mated?” she asks, and I can hear her interest, but also a bit of disappointment.

“I’m Sophie Reynolds now. Hunter marked and mated me in private. We’re fighting for a different way of life, for everyone, not just the ranked females. Come see what we’re creating here in our pack. Most don’t believe it’s real, even when they first arrive. It takes time to see that it’s not a façade. The entire pack has responded to my relationship with Hunter. Our love, our bond, has made our pack stronger.”

“When?” she asks.

I turn and look at Hunter who does some quick calculations in his head. “I need to take care of some things here first. How about two weeks? Does that work for both of you?”

“I’m not going anywhere, apparently,” Jocelyn says sarcastically.

“Yes, that works,” Zahn says, obviously saddened and frustrated with his mate. I don’t feel a bit sorry for him. He did this to himself.

“Okay, we’ll see you two weeks from tomorrow,” Hunter says.

“See you soon, Jocelyn,” I say.

“I guess so,” she says before the line goes dead.

I stare at the phone for a moment, feeling emotionally exhausted and saddened after that call.

“Do you want to talk to Penny now?” I ask Hunter.

He scoops me into his arms and stands. “No. Right now, I want to make love to my mate. I want to remind both of us of what we have. I think we both need it after that call,” he says.

I wrap my arms around him, kissing his neck as he carries me to our bedroom. We spend hours loving each other, touching each other, and laying together. We reinforce our bond once again, both of us thankful that we have the other in our lives, thankful that we fought so that we could have this life together, and vowing to continue to fight so that others can have it as well

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Chapter 1** Offer

Penny

I never realized how strong the mate bond would be. I had been terrified about being claimed in public, but it had never occurred to me that the draw to my mate might overshadow that fear. I may never know, because in this pack, I don't have to worry about that. Here, I'm free to love my mate privately.

And we did. Jaime knew he couldn't mark me yet, and he asked me if I wanted to wait, but I didn't and I'm glad I made the decision I did.

After his shower, I'd asked him if he wanted a haircut. I wasn't sure if his s**y hair was a choice or a result of being a lone wolf for so long. He'd chosen a haircut, and he'd taken

advantage of the time to talk to me and run his hands up and down my sides. By the time I had finished cutting his hair into a more manageable curly mop, I was practically desperate for him.

Jaime is a kind and gentle lover and even though I expected my first time to be painful, and it was, he took his time, kissing me through the pain and then showing me the pleasure that comes from being with your mate. According to Jaime, our bond and this feeling between us will only intensify once I turn 18.

'He's right,' Sable told me, purring at our mate's touch. We made love several times, wanting to stay connected, holding each other in between and talking about everything. I learned about his life, even more than what I'd learned from Beth, and I told him about mine. I talked to him about Alpha Hunter and Luna Sophie, telling him that they really are good people who want to help others.

He'd listened to me go on and on about this pack, my role in the war, how Luna Sophie and Beta Kinsley had fought so others could be in the safe rooms, how Brooklyn is thriving here in our pack, even after finding her fated mate.

He was quiet, listening to me.

"That's so different than what I grew up with," he'd finally said.

"Me too. But it's real. Once you're here for a couple of days, you'll see it, not just with Alpha and Luna, or our Betas, but also, it's that way with everyone in the pack. Everyone here touches, kisses, and loves on their mates and pups. It's really beautiful Jaime. I hope....I hope that you'll give it a chance," I'd said quietly, worried that he'd decide that he'd rather be a lone wolf than remain here.

He'd kissed the side of my head, his fingers stroking through my hair. "What I want is in this pack. What I want, is you. I have no intention of leaving here without you and if you're happy here, then I'm willing to give it a chance. You're my mate and I trust you."

We'd made love again, this time with me initiating because of how happy his words had made me. We'd finally fallen asleep after that and I'd woken in his arms, excited to take him to warrior training.

"Your sister said your father was the Lead Warrior of your pack and you were following in his footsteps," I tell him.

"Let me guess, the G**a in your wants a challenge," he says, smiling at me.

"I want to know how strong my mate is," I say, nipping at his lip before leaping out of bed, barely escaping his arms as he tried to catch me.

I giggle and get some clothes, having also gotten some for him.

"I imagine your Alpha is going to want to test me first," he says, looking nervous.

"Probably, but he's a good Alpha. He's nothing like Alpha Leo based on what you've told me."

He looked nervous as we'd walked outside hand-in-hand. But he did the warmup beside me and when Alpha Hunter called him over, I joined him.

"Penny, I'm not going to hurt your mate," Alpha Hunter said.

"I know. He may not, but I do. But that's not why I'm here. Beth said she thought Jaime was a good enough warrior to defeat his Alpha. I want to see if she was exaggerating."

Alpha Hunter raises his eyebrow. "Well, not every Alpha trains like I do, but I'm intrigued. Are you that good?" he asks Jaime.

"I guess we'll find out," Jaime says.

Alpha Hunter takes a defensive stance and gestures for Jaime to attack. Jaime is tentative at first, pulling punches and not putting himself out there. I can see that he's a bit out of

practice, but he's got good instincts and when Alpha Hunter starts pushing him, he finally begins to show his knowledge and strength.

"Nice, but you're still pulling your punches, Jaime. I'm an Alpha, hit me. I want to know how strong you really are," Alpha Hunter says.

Jaime steps back and Alpha Hunter looks at him. "I don't know what your experience has been in the past, but I'm guessing you weren't on the run because things were good in your pack. Since you didn't take your sisters with you, I'm guessing whatever the problem, it was directed at you. I'm not the kind of Alpha who takes offense when someone shows their strength. On the contrary, if I feel like they are good enough to take me on and they aren't an Alpha, then I need to get better, stronger. Now, if your sister thinks you're strong enough to defeat an Alpha, any Alpha, then you're either holding back or you've gotten weak while you've been on the run."

Alpha Hunter makes a point of looking over Jaime's body. "You don't look weak to me, so stop holding back. Give me what you've got," he says, getting into a defensive position again.

"Come on, Jaime. Alpha likes a tough challenge. Show him what you've got," Beta Lucas says, clapping his hands to encourage Jaime as he walks over to watch. I see the other warriors stop and begin to watch and cheer Jaime on. He turns looking at them with a frown, then turns to me.

I just smile at him. "I want to see what you've got too," I tell him.

Jaime turns and looks at Alpha Hunter before finally getting into an attack stance. I can feel the difference in him immediately. This time when he goes at Alpha, he goes hard, and I can see Alpha's surprise before he begins sparring back just as hard. Jaime takes hits, but he gives almost as many as he gets. The warriors are all cheering him on, as am I, proud that my mate is such an accomplished, powerful fighter.

When Alpha Hunter finally calls it, the crowd cheers and I rush into Jaime's arms. He wraps his sweaty arms around me, but I don't care. I'm so proud of him.

"Now that was a good fight," Alpha Hunter says, slapping Jaime on the shoulder as he makes his way inside. "Well done. If you stay, we'll get you back to fighting strength and you'll be even better."

"Alpha Hunter," Jaime calls, still holding on to me tightly. "For the record, I don't think I could defeat you."

"Something to strive for, Jaime," he says and continues inside.

Jaime turns back, kissing me deeply, making heat spread through my body and heating my core which is still sore from last night.

When he pulls back, he tucks me under his arm and as we walk inside, the warriors begin chatting with him, talking about his technique, asking if he can teach them some of his moves.

We get our breakfast and sit down to eat with several warriors.

"I can't wait to see the two of you face off," one of my warrior friends says.

"Why is that?" Jaime asks, smiling at me.

"Penny's d**n good," a warrior says.

"Yeah, you two might be evenly matched," another warrior says, and Jaime raises an eyebrow at me.

"Is that so?"

I shrug. "I'm a Ga**a. I was trained to fight my entire life."

"Tomorrow should be fun then," he says.

'Penny, when you finish breakfast, can you meet me in my office?' Alpha Hunter's voice flits into my mind.

'I'm just finishing, Alpha. I'll be right there,' I tell him.

'No rush,' he says, before closing the mind link.

"Alpha Hunter wants to see me. Why don't you get a shower and then we can go check on your sisters," I tell Jaime.

"Why does he want to see you?" Jaime asks, instantly concerned.

"I'm not sure. Don't worry, Jaime. I told you; Alpha Hunter isn't like Alpha Leo. Ask anyone here, they'll tell you that he's the real deal," I say, leaning over to kiss him before heading to Alpha Hunter's office.

"She's right. He and our Luna are the real deal," I hear one of the warriors saying as I walk away.

When I get to the office, I knock, and when Alpha Hunter tells me to come in, I'm surprised to see Luna Sophie on his lap, and Betas Lucas and Kinsley, with Beta Kinsley in Beta Lucas' lap.

"Come in, close the door, and have a seat," Alpha Hunter says.

"Have I done something wrong?" I ask, now a bit nervous to be in a room with all my ranked members.

"Not at all," Luna Sophie says, smiling at me.

I take a seat beside Beta Lucas, looking at him and then turning to Alpha Hunter.

"We're all here so you know that this is a unanimous decision. We all agree, and while you are still underage, we, your ranked members, wanted to ask you if you'd be willing to become the pack's Ga**a."

I'm pretty sure my heart just stopped.

"What?" I gasp, looking from my Betas to my Alpha and Luna.

"You've worked really hard, Penny. You're already a leader in the eyes of the pack," Luna Sophie says.

"But...but I'm a woman," I say, not sure what else to say.

"And that will most likely be a non-issue in the future. I'm pretty sure Luna Nikki is drafting documents to change the law that says the oldest male will inherit the position. And even if she didn't, this is OUR pack. We make the decisions here," Beta Kinsley says.

"You don't have to decide right now, Penny. We know you have a lot going on," Beta Lucas says.

"Exactly, finding your mate, who happens to be a lone wolf, is something to take into consideration. But I'm very comfortable after our sparring match today, having him as our G**a male."

"Is that why you pushed him?" I ask.

"Partially, but also because I wanted him to start feeling comfortable here. Even if you decide you don't want the

position, I'd like for you and him to stay here. Of course, that's your choice and for the two of you to decide. So, think about it, talk to your mate about it and let us know."

I nod, standing up. "I...thank you! Thank you so much!"

"You've earned it, Penny. Thank you for being such a valuable member of our pack," Luna Sophie says.

I'm so excited, I can't wait to tell Jaime. I yank the office door open, and I'm surprised when I see him standing right there, looking worried.

"What happened? What did he say?" he asks me.

I throw my arms around him, hugging him tightly. "They want me to be their Ga**a!"

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Chapter133: Next Steps

Hunter

We watch as Penny leaves, hearing her tell Jaime about being asked to be our Gamma.

“That went well,” Lucas says as the door closes.

“It did. I hope that means that we’ll soon have a Gamma couple.”

“Do you intend to open it for a challenge?” Lucas asks.

“Yes, we’ll have to, but I don’t think any of our warriors can defeat her, do you?” I ask.

“No. She’s tough, nearly as strong as I am in a fight.”

“And she’s a smart fighter. I’ve been watching her since Lucas said you were both interested in her as our Gamma. She’s small, but she uses that to her advantage in her sparring,” Kinsley says.

“Did you notice the hickey on her marking spot?” Sophie asks Kinsley, smiling.

“And Jaime’s scent all over her,” Kinsley says, smiling back.

“Yeah, that’s why I said she needed to think about it. He’s new here, his sisters are here, and she’ll want to stay with him if he decides to leave. They have a lot to talk about. Hopefully, he’ll see that this is a pack worth staying in and it will be a non- issue,” Lucas says.

“Hopefully,” I agree.

“What do you have going on today?” Lucas asks me as our mates snuggle against us.

“I need to contact Dutton, make sure he’s willing to join our fight against Alaric and then we need to include Amelia and come up with a plan. Alaric needs to die, and it needs to happen before Zahn gets here, just in case he’s planning to go against us.”

“Do you think he is?” Kinsley asks.

I look at Sophie. “It’s hard to know for sure. He seemed like he legitimately wanted to bring Jocelyn here to help her, but you never know. It could all be a ruse,” she says.

“What’s your plan when he’s here?” Lucas asks.

“He agreed to have 24–hour surveillance on him, so that’s what I m going to do. He goes nowhere that one of us hasn’t approved.”

“How long are they staying?” Kinsley asks.

“According to Alpha Zahn, as long as it takes,” Sophie says.

“Takes for what?” Kinsley asks, frowning.

“For his mate to accept him, I guess,” Sophie says.

“So, he’s moving in permanently then?” Lucas asks sarcastically. “Fuck no. I’ll kick him out eventually, with or without his mate.”

“How is she?” Kinsley asks, directing her question to Sophie.

“Not good. I’ll probably have you spend a lot of time with her when she’s here. You understand what she’s going through more than I do,” Sophie says, and I see Lucas’ lips press tightly together, before Kinsley tightens her arms around him.

She nuzzles him as he pulls her closer. “It’s not the same, Lucas. Zahn was violent with Jocelyn, but it was still public, so from that perspective, I understand. Honestly, Brooklyn might be better to have her spend time with,” Kinsley says, rubbing her face over Lucas’ and helping to calm him. He still carries a lot of guilt for publicly claiming Kinsley.

“I was thinking that too. I have no idea what state she’s in, but a medical work-up seems appropriate.”

There’s a knock at the door.

“Come in,” I say, smelling Ezra before he opens the door. He takes a step in and stops.

“Am I interrupting something?” he asks, and I see the flash of envy on his face that our mates are sitting in our laps.

“No, come in. We were just going over next steps in planning for our attack on Alaric and for Zahn’s visit,” I tell him.

“So, Zahn is coming?” he asks, sitting down.

“Yes.”

He nods. “Then I’m glad Margot has agreed to leave with me. I don’t want him anywhere near her, triggering her again.”

“She agreed?” Sophie asks, sitting forward.

Ezra smiles, one of his rare smiles that I’ve started to see more often on his face.

“Yes. She and her mother will be returning with me. I can offer you warriors to assist with the battle if you need them,” he says looking at me. “But I’ve been away too long from my pack, and I need to return.”

“Thank you for the offer, but hopefully we’ll have Dutton and won’t need any additional warriors. Perhaps between taking out Alaric and having Zahn arrive, we can have an Alpha meeting about what to do with these pack lands,” I say.

Ezra raises his eyebrow at me. “Squeezing a lot in at one time, aren’t you?”

Sophie snorts. “It’s always like this around here, Alpha Ezra.”

“So, I’ve noticed, Luna. I did want to thank you, all of you, for allowing me to stay so long.”

“We appreciate your assistance in the war against Joshua,” I say.

“He needed to die,” Ezra growls.

“Agreed. When are you leaving?” ask.

“Later today. Margot wants to say goodbye to the friends she’s made here. I hope that you and Sophie will come visit some time and that we can come visit again so she can see her friends.”

“Any time,” Sophie says. “And I would love to come see your pack, Alpha Ezra. Perhaps after our pup is born.”

Ezra looks thoughtful for a moment. “Are you planning to include Calvin in that Alpha meeting?”

Sophie turns and looks at me. “He’s still an Alpha and so far, he’s still on our side,” I say, looking at Sophie. “What happened between him and your sister doesn’t change that, it just means that she’ll also be on the call representing her own pack.”

I stroke my hand over her side, easing the words because I know they are worrying her.

“If he becomes inappropriate, we’ll disconnect the call and exclude him,” Ezra says to Sophie.

She looks at me and I nod in agreement. I won’t let Calvin use those calls to harass his mate. She relaxes and leans back against me.

“That was all. I just wanted to let you know that I’m leaving with Margot and Luna June,” Ezra says standing.

“Have lunch with us. I know Sophie and Margot have grown close, and Kinsley too. That still gives you plenty of time to get home before sundown,” I say, knowing that Sophie wants to say goodbye to her friend.

“I’ll let Margot know. I think that will make her happy. And please, if you would...” he stops, looking uncomfortable. “Margot is stubborn, she’s not the type of woman to reach out if she’s feeling uncomfortable or lonely. She’ll have her mother, but I know being in my pack is going to make her uneasy...”

“I’ll call her. We’ll keep in touch,” Sophie says, smiling.

“We both will,” Kinsley says.

“Thank you. And thank you, all of you, for showing me what my pack should be like and how it should feel. Hopefully, someday, Margot will agree to being my Luna and she and I can build something similar to what you’re creating here, because this is amazing. It says a lot about all of you as leaders that your pack is this strong, this cohesive.”

“Thank you, Alpha,” Sophie says, and I can feel how pleased she is at his words.

“Yes, thank you, Ezra. Do you need any help getting packed up?” I ask.

“No, we’re good, thank you. I’ll see you at lunch,” he says before leaving the office.

“We should get going to,” Lucas says, standing and putting Kinsley on her feet.

I look at Sophie. “Want to call Dutton with me?”

She smiles and nods. “Maybe I can say hi to the twins.”

I kiss her before calling Dutton and putting it on speaker.

“Alpha Dutton,” he answers, his voice a deep purr.

“Really Alpha, I know you like me, but you’re embarrassing me with this level of lust,” I say, smiling as Sophie chuckles on my lap.

“Alpha Hunter. My mates just gave me some good news. I’m a happy man. It’s hard to hold that in.”

“I know exactly what you mean. Perhaps this conversation can wait,” I say, knowing that I hate when something distracts me from being with Sophie.

“No, it’s fine. This celebration won’t be ending any time soon, since it appears I’m going to be a father.”

“Congratulations! Which mate is pregnant?” Sophie asks.

“Both of us,” the twins respond.

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Chapter 134: Saying Goodbye

Sophie

After hearing about the twins being pregnant, their excitement, not yet knowing what they're having, and hearing Dutton's constant purring in the background, the conversation finally shifted to the attack on Alpha Alaric.

“Alpha Alaric is a risk to my pack, my mates, and my pups. I definitely want in on the attack. When are you thinking?” he asks, making something inside me relax. I had been worried that it would be us and Amelia's pack which is also still recovering from their attack. Having Dutton and his pack involved will not only assure that we take out Alaric, but it will also show Amelia's pack that the other Alphas continue to support her as an Alpha.

Hunter kisses the side of my head, no doubt feeling the tension in me relaxing.

“I want to talk to Amelia, see when she feels that her pack will be ready for battle, but I have Alpha Zahn coming to visit me and I want it done before then. There are rumors of the Alphas rising against me again,” Hunter says.

Dutton growls. “Which Alphas?”

“Aiden and Alaric, but I'm also hearing that Koden has joined forces with them, and Camden is a loose cannon. Amelia thinks he'll run and join the others when we attack Alaric. I'm not **id enough to ignore the timing of Zahn's request to visit my pack.”

“Why the f**k are you allowing Zahn on your pack lands if you think he's part of this?” he asks.

“Because of his mate,” I say, jumping in.

“What do you mean?” I hear one of the twins ask. I'm pretty sure it's Tiffany.

I explain our conversation with Zahn and Jocelyn. “What does he think you're going to be able to do?” the other twin asks, definitely Tammi this time, given the hesitation in her question and tone. I hear Dutton tucking her closer to him.

I turn and look at Hunter. There is no way in f**g hell that I would share this man with another woman, twin or no. I watch the smile spread across his face as he feels and probably hears my possessive thought. He reaches out and strokes my cheek.

'I love how possessive you are of me. No woman could ever hold the appeal for me that you do, my love. There is only one woman for me in this world and that is you,' he says in the mind link, making me smile and snuggle back against him. His hand comes to my stomach again, his new spot to touch me as he and our pup begin their little game of hide and seek in my belly.

"Can we help in any way?" Tiffany asks this time.

"I'm not sure. I have Kinsley and Brooklyn here and I intend to have Jocelyn looked over by our doctors. I have no idea what condition she'll be in when she arrives, but..." I stop, I'm not sure why I got the impression that Jocelyn was bedridden.

"But?" Dutton asks.

"I don't think she's mobile," I say, frowning and looking at Hunter for confirmation. He tilts his head in thought.

"You're right, Soph. I hadn't really paid attention, but you know how you can hear us shifting around? I didn't hear any of that from her. From Zahn, yes, but not from Jocelyn. You could very well be right, Sophie. She could be bedridden."

"She jumped off a cliff. How did she even survive?" Tammi asks. I hear Orion, Dutton's wolf, begin purring softly to Tammi, and maybe Tiffany, soothing them.

"She seems pretty angry that she did. I'm hoping that she'll find some peace here in our pack."

"You're intending to let her stay if she chooses to, aren't you?" Dutton asks.

I turn and look at Hunter. We haven't discussed it, but that is my plan. We offer protection, even if it's from someone's mate.

"That will be her choice, but if she chooses to stay, I will fight to keep her here," Hunter says. My heart feels ready to burst with love for this man and his willingness to always support me.

"Well, let's start with Alaric. Aiden has to die for coming after my mates. I'm assuming I can count on you for support with that, Hunter?"

"Of course. Whatever you need, just let me know."

“Find out when Amelia is free to talk, and we’ll come up with a plan. Sometime later today, right now I want to go celebrate with my mates.”

“We’ll talk soon,” Hunter says, before disconnecting.

As soon as the phone clicks off, I turn in Hunter’s lap, straddling him, needing him. Everything that has happened, our conversations this morning, have made me desperate for him.

“Something on your mind, Little Sophie.”

“You haven’t called me that in a while,” I say, unbuttoning his shirt and pushing it off his shoulders, looking down at his strong, muscular body that makes my mouth water.

“Mine!” I growl.

“Yes, I am,” he says, watching me with dark eyes. I lean forward and run my tongue over his chest to his throat, loving his moan and the way his lifts his neck for me. His hand slides between my thighs, feeling the wet spot on my pants.

“Little Sophie Reynolds, you seem very turned on,” he says, still growling softly as I nip at his neck.

“That’s because my mate is so f**k**g hot, so incredible, that I need him inside me, right now!”

“Then get those pants off,” he says, and I hop off his lap, removing my pants quickly while he pulls his down. Then I straddle him and slide him inside, letting my head fall back as he fills me.

“So f**g gorgeous,” he purrs, nipping my throat.

My mate doesn’t let me get away with one o**m, he never does. So, after finding my release multiple times and finally feeling him find his inside me, this time as I arch back from my position over his desk, I finally feel able to focus again.

“Let me get something to wash us off, then we need to go have lunch with our friends before they leave,” he says in my ear, putting his hand around my throat and pulling my head up to kiss me before finally pulling out of me and going to the bathroom to get a washcloth.

When he returns, he kneels down, wiping between my thighs as he leans into my stomach.

“Sorry, not sorry, if I bumped you a bit, Little Man,” he says, making me laugh. He looks up at me smiling and once again takes my breath away with how gorgeous he is. I stroke his cheek, and he growls, standing and pulling me into another kiss.

“Mine,” I growl again when he releases me.

“Are you becoming more possessive, my little mate?” he asks me, nipping at my jawline.

“I guess I am. Maybe it’s the Alpha hormones in my system.” “We should ask Dr. Felicity; in case we need to be prepared.”

“Prepared meaning that I don’t rip one of our pack member’s heads off for looking at you too long,” I ask.

He smiles, trying not to laugh. “Something like that. But, if it means I have to have you by my side every moment that you’re pregnant, so you know that I’m yours, then I’ll do what I have to do,” he says dramatically, as if he’s being put upon.

“I could make it worth your while,” I purr.

“Oh, my Little Sophie, you do. Every minute of every day,” he says seriously.

Well, d**n.

“Come on, before you distract me and I bend you over my desk again,” he says, taking my hand and leading me out of the room.

When we get downstairs, I see the bags by the front door. I didn’t expect to feel sadness at Margot leaving, but I feel like we’ve become close since she arrived here several weeks ago.

When we walk into the dining hall, I see her sitting between her mother and Ezra, looking nervous. When she sees me, she smiles. I walk over to her, and she stands as I pull her into a hug.

“I’m really going to miss you,” I say, feeling tears prick at my eyes.

“I’m going to miss you too. I can never repay your kindness for giving me a safe place to live when I had nowhere to go.”

“You’re welcome here, anytime.”

We sit down, Kinsley and Lucas joining us. Kinsley and I talk to Margot and Luna June, while Ezra talks to Hunter and Lucas.

Much, much too soon, it's time for them to leave. We walk them outside, Hunter and Lucas helping to grab the last of the bags.

I hug Margot again. "If you ever need to return, for any reason, you are always welcome," I whisper to her.

"I may take you up on that," she says hug Luna June, who holds me tightly for a moment. "Your parents were very proud of you and what you've accomplished, Sophie. You're doing wonderful things here in your pack. I know they are smiling down on you from the Moon Goddess' realm."

I had done a good job of holding back my tears until now. Now, they began to streak down my cheeks.

"Thank you, Luna," I say, hugging her tighter before letting her go.

Hunter comes to stand beside me, wrapping his arms around me as they get in their car and we wave goodbye.

As they drive away, he leans in, kissing the side of my head. "Are you okay?"

I nod, feeling so thankful for the friends and loved ones that I have in my life.

The One He Claimed Chapter 135

Chapter 135: Helping Amelia

Hunter

I guess I shouldn't be too surprised with Sophie's sadness about Margot leaving. My mate has the ability to develop strong bonds and friendships with others quickly. It's one of the reasons that I hope that Jaime will decide to stay in our pack, so that Penny will as well. I know that Sophie already has strong ties to her, and she'd be as sad or more so if Penny and Jaime left the pack.

"I'm going to call Amelia and set up a call for this afternoon. What are you going to do?" I ask my mate.

"I'm going to go check on the mates that are still in the hospital and see how Leah and Brooklyn are doing with moving out of their house."

"Let me know what you need. And let me know if I can do anything to take that sadness away, I don't like my mate to be sad. Margot will be fine, and we'll see her again."

She merely nods and I pull her into a hug, holding her tightly. My strong, powerful mate, who is also so sweet and gentle.

"I love you, Little Sophie Reynolds."

She chuckles, as I hoped she would.

"And I love you, Big Hunter Reynolds," she says, making me smile.

I crouch down in front of her, placing my lips near her stomach. "Take care of your mother while she's away from me," I say, then stand and kiss my mate before turning to go back inside.

I make the call to Amelia first.

"Alpha Hunter? Or is it Sophie again?" she asks.

"It's me this time, Alpha," I answer.

"Have you spoken to Alpha Dutton, Alpha Hunter?"

"First things first, Alpha Amelia. Do you feel the need to continue with our titles when we speak to each other?" I'm asking her because she's the newest Alpha and because she's the only female Alpha. Her position isn't exactly confirmed in her pack.

"What do you call the other Alphas?"

"The ones I'm friendly with, I call by their first names."

"Then, I'd like to be treated the same. It would be strange for you to be in my pack calling Alpha Dutton, Dutton, but me Alpha Amelia, wouldn't you agree?"

"I would. Also, the casualness of using first names lets the pack know that there is a friendliness between us, that our alliance is strong."

"Thank you, Alpha. I mean, thank you, Hunter. I'm still trying to figure out the nuances of my new position."

"How's it going?" I ask. If she's willing to accept my assistance or my guidance, I'm happy to provide it. Not only because she's Sophie's sister, but I think that much like Sophie, Amelia has a strength that she's never tapped into before.

"You want the truth?"

"I can't help you if you aren't honest with me," I tell her.

I hear rustling and then a door quietly closing before I hear more rustling.

"I'm exhausted. I feel like I'm playing pretend, acting like an Alpha rather than truly being one.

"The exhaustion I understand although I'd guess that yours is more extreme than the usual Alpha exhaustion due to being pregnant and not having your mate around. Those two things would only add to your fatigue. And add to that, you're still processing your grief over the loss of your parents, and you've now taken on the grief of the entire pack as their Alpha. I'm guessing you're not sleeping well either?"

"You'd be correct."

"I'm not surprised. You have a lot going on, Amelia. But I will tell you that it doesn't feel like you're playing pretend Alpha. It feels very much like you are taking on your role, jumping in with both feet, and running with it. I think that taking out Alpha Alaric will go a long way to helping the pack find peace."

"Does that mean that Dutton agreed to fight with us?"

"He did, but even if he hadn't, our packs would take out Alaric. It will just be easier and will go a long way to showing your pack that you are continuing the strong alliances that your father started."

"Regarding that, how do I go about sealing or confirming an alliance with each of the packs?"

I lean forward and open my computer. "Give me your email address and I'll send you the template for the documents that need to be signed. The paperwork isn't as important as the bond between the packs, but it does signify that both sides have agreed to be in an alliance. You'll want to get one with Dutton as well. We can sign them when we come to attack Alaric. And then, you can reach out to Kayce, Robin, and Ezra too, if you'd like to create and confirm alliances with them. That's up to you. You can have positive relationships with other packs without an alliance, but it seals the bond and gives you the right to go to war if they ever go against you. The alliance paperwork is good until one party terminates it, or the Alpha position changes hands," I tell her.

"I think I've had enough war to last me a lifetime," she says.

"We all have, but the wars aren't over yet."

"I know. Is it wrong that I wish all of this was behind me?"

"Nope, you'd be right there with the rest of us."

She sighs. "Okay, so what's next?"

“Let’s schedule a call with Dutton this afternoon. We’ll need a strategy. Have you thought of how you want to proceed with the attack?” I ask.

“That’s not really my strong suit,” she huffs.

“That’s okay. Why don’t you and I talk it out a little. Dutton may have other ideas, and that’s okay, too. Taking his ideas doesn’t make you weak, it makes you a good Alpha who looks at all sides of the problem and comes to a good solution.”

She laughs softly. “I can see why Sophie is so in love with you. You’re very supportive without needing to exert your dominance or prove your strength. It’s refreshing.”

“I’ll tell you what I told Sophie, Amelia. Both of you are stronger than you know. You may feel like the world is coming at you from all sides right now, but I guarantee that when the dust settles and all is said and done, you’ll still be standing on your feet.”

“Thank you, Hunter. I think I needed to know that someone believes in me.”

“Make sure you believe in yourself, Amelia. The pack will feel it if you don’t.”

“That’s good advice, and once I figure out how to do that, I will. Now, about this battle. What are your thoughts?”

We go through my ideas, which end up being pretty similar to what Amelia had already been thinking. Knowing that her thoughts aligned with mine seemed to make her feel a bit more confident about our next steps. We decide on a time to have a call with Dutton, and I send out the meeting invite.

“I’ll talk to you soon, Amelia,” I say.

“Thank you again, Hunter. I really appreciate all of your help.”

“Any time.”

The One He Claimed Chapter 136

Chapter 1*3*6: Brooklyn’s Decision

Brooklyn

I wake up this morning the same way I have every morning since the war, in Caspian’s arms. When Luna Sophie had asked me about wanting to stay in the house that my mother and I had been in, I knew that I didn’t want or need to any longer. My mother has already moved in with Brutus, and I had been waiting for Cas to have a more permanent space. Rather than move to the packhouse, he’d talked to Alpha Hunter

about moving to a house near the pack hospital. It's small, but it's perfect and it's just the two of us

In the hospital, I don't mind the noises, and the active nature of the work. But being in the packhouse still makes me feel anxious with so many boisterous people around. At least here, I have a job to do and even if there is noise, it's related to something that's going on in the hospital.

Cas has opened up a new world to me, and possibly, the mate bond has allowed me to begin to relax and enjoy it. It's the world of intimacy. According to Cas, it isn't just about having sex. It's about touching, nuzzling, curling up on the couch at night and watching tv together, kissing, and yes, being in bed together. He's been taking that very slow, making sure that I'm comfortable with everything we do before he does it. In some ways, he's very medical about it, explaining to me what I'm feeling and why I'm feeling it, wanting to know if I'm feeling something different and if so, he wants me to explain it to him.

"I want to know everything about you. What makes you happy, what makes you sad, what makes you feel good and what doesn't. I only want you happy and feeling good around me, but I know that won't always be possible. Still, it's something to strive for," he had said.

I've also learned that I enjoy making Cas feel good. Pretty much everything I do makes him feel good. I had been terrified of his erection at first, but like the good doctor he is, he had explained in medical terms why he was erect and that his arousal towards me caused the blood to flow straight to his penis making it hard and ready for me. Then, he'd offered to let me touch him, and I had. I'd been surprised that something that had hurt me so much, felt so velvety soft on the outside. He was very, very hard and seemed to grow in my hand as I touched him, making my eyes widen in fear. But Cas had assured me, through gritted teeth, that this was a normal response to being aroused by someone.

I had touched him more than once, becoming accustomed to his erection and its response to me. I'd actually been enjoying myself so much, stroking him up and down, feeling the hard strength under the soft skin, that I'd been shocked when he'd put his hands over mine, telling me stop or he was going to or**m.

"Can I see?" I had asked, intrigued.

"You want to watch me come?" he asked, his breath ragged.

"Yes. Is that okay?"

"Yes, just, don't put your face too close. I'm likely to explode and I don't want you getting it all over yourself."

“Would that be bad?” I asked, unsure why that was a problem.

He had growled possessively.

“No, it would not. It would make you smell like me, and I would love that, but I’m not sure if you are ready for that yet.”

I bit my lip, looking down at him and began stroking him again. He’d shown me what it was like to have an o**m, something that had been completely and totally unexpected. I’d never felt anything like it in my life and had quickly become addicted to the feeling. Cas was more than happy to make me come every morning and every night, and now, I was going to have my chance to do the same for him.

“You’re only making it harder for me to control myself when you bite your lip like that, Brooklyn,” he growled.

I’d kept my lip between my teeth, his eyes glued to my mouth as I used both hands to stroke him. I’d felt his body twitch and watched as he’s closed his eyes and moaned my name as thick, white liquid began squirting from his penis. He’d been right, it shot up onto my chest and neck, decreasing in distance the longer his o**m lasted.

I went with instinct and my mate’s reaction as I continued to stroke him until his body finally stopped jerking, and he relaxed panting. He had a bit of c**m on the head of his penis, and at the encouragement of my wolf, Ermeline, I leaned forward and sucked the tip into my mouth, licking the fluid off of him.

“F**K BROOKLYN!” Cas yelled and before I knew what was happening, his penis was squirting into my mouth. Rather than feeling disgusted, I reveled in the taste of him, enjoying the power to make this intelligent, caring man o**m because of how much he loves me.

When he’d relaxed again, panting and this time, watching me intently, I had pulled off his penis and smiled smugly.

“What..What made you do that?” he panted.

“Ermeline said I should. You lick me between our thighs, so...it seemed right.”

His head fell back to the bed, and he’d reached his arm out to me, a silent request for me to come lay with him. I laid on his chest, my head over his heart, my favorite place to be. He kissed the top of my head and pulled me against him.

“That was...unexpected and amazing!”

I smiled, looking up at him. “Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

“You taste good,” I say, feeling shy, but also excited at how he responded to me.

“You taste good too,” he says, and then his eyes move to my chest. He reached up, rubbing his sperm into my skin and even I could tell that I smelled strongly of him.

“It won’t last, but I’ll love every minute of you smelling like me today,” he says.

That was this morning, and I was still riding the high of our morning when Luna Sophie arrived at the pack hospital to ask me about moving out of the house in the survivor center.

I knew I was ready to take the next step with Cas. He’s a good man and he’s been very patient with me. As terrified as I am about having sex with him, I know that it won’t be anything close to what happened to me before. He and Alpha Owen are nothing alike, and I want to be with Cas, as much as my wolf wants to be with him. I want to make him as happy as he makes me. And now that I’ve found my passion, working in the hospital, we can always be together. Cas even helped me sign up for nursing classes so I can learn more and help him with more severe cases.

We’ve also talked about him joining this pack, even though he still wants to travel around and help the other packs. I was thrilled when he told me he wanted me by his side when he did. I know he’s going to talk to Alpha Hunter soon about what that would mean and when he does, I don’t want there to be any question as to whether or not I’m going with him.

“Hey baby, I saw Luna Sophie here. Is everything alright?” he asks, walking over to me and pulling me into a hug. His wolf, Flint, begins purring loudly, probably because I smell like them.

“Yes, she was asking me about moving out of the survivor center,” I say.

“Oh, I hope she’s not rushing you out,” he says, sounding concerned. He’s always worried about me.

“No, actually, I told her I was ready to move in with you permanently.”

He steps back and looks at me, a smile spreading across his face. “Really?”

I bite my lip, and his eyes darken as they track to my mouth.

“I’m ready, Cas.”

“Good! I’m thrilled to have you move in permanently, Brooklyn. I hope you know that.”

I put my hands on his cheeks, and he goes still, focusing on me.

“I mean, I’m ready for you to mark me, Cas. Ready for you to make me yours.”

I see his eyes go nearly black with desire before he pulls me into his arms, swinging me around and howling in happiness. Then he sets me down, his face serious.

“Let’s do an exam on you, make sure you don’t have any scar tissue that will make this harder than it will already be for you. Then, once I’m sure that I won’t hurt you, or at least, not too much, then I’ll make you mine forever, Brooklyn. You’ve made me a very, very happy man,” he says, scooping me up and swinging me around again as I wrap my arms around him, laughing happily, feeling settled, and knowing that I’ll finally be able to leave that horrible day behind me.

The One He Claimed Chapter 137

Chapter 137: Names

Hunter

The conversation with Dutton and Amelia went well. She included her Beta in the conversation, and he provided

additional insights into Alaric’s pack and where he thinks they have weaknesses.

We agreed to surround the pack prior to the attack. Sophie is going to go to Amelia’s pack and wait there while our pack takes the east side of Alaric’s pack. Amelia and her pack, already being on the west side, will attack from that direction, and Dutton and his pack will attack from the south. That only leaves the north, but it pushes them toward my pack and our warriors will be ready and waiting.

After the call with Amelia, I call Lucas into my office.

“I’m leaving you here to run the pack while I’m gone. We’re still at risk of another attack and it’s possible that those fleeing from Alaric’s pack will come this way and may need to be taken out.”

“Are we taking out everyone?” he asks, and I sigh. This is the problem. I’m not sure how many will run because they want to escape, and how many will run because they are going to lose.

“You’ll have to use your best judgement. I trust you to make that decision.”

I watch as the weight of my words settles on his shoulders.

“Have you given any more consideration to taking over a pack?”

I ask him.

He sighs and scrubs his face. "I'd be a fool not to, right? I mean, I love it here. I love being your Beta and I love this pack. But, as Kinsley said, you don't turn away from opportunities like this. If I don't get it, I'll be perfectly fine remaining your Beta, but...I think I have to try."

"I'd be disappointed in you if you didn't," I tell him.

"You make it sound like I'm going to get a pack."

"There will be four available once we take out Alaric. I haven't met all the other Betas, but Ezra mentioned that his Beta would make a good Alpha and leader for a pack. I know you will. With four, there's a lot of opportunity for people to move up. And it's not just for you, Lucas. Think of what that means for your pup."

"Yeah, I know. I have and that's why I know I'll go for it. I may love being your Beta, but my pup may not like yours," he says, smiling.

"Our pups will be best friend regardless of if they are Alpha and Beta or two Alphas," I say.

"Yeah, they will," he says, getting serious again. "Thank you for believing in me."

"This is all you, Lucas. But I know you can do it. However, if you win a pack and Penny doesn't agree to be my Ga**a, I'm not going to be happy," I say seriously.

"Then let's hope she says yes," he says.

That night, I spend time making love to my mate, then I curl up next to her stomach and talk to my son. These moments are so special to me, where things are quiet, and I can open myself to feeling Sophie's love and adoration for me as she watches me talk to our son.

"What are we going to name him?" I ask, looking up at her.

"I don't know. I haven't given it much thought. Although, both of our fathers are gone now. That would be a nice way to

remember them," she says.

"My father's name was Huntington. Obviously, I was named after him."

"Your parents had a thing for giving names that meant hunter. Yours is obvious, but your father's means something like a hunter's settlement and, of course, Diana is the goddess of the hunt. What was your mother's name?" she asks.

I smile up at her. "Rachel."

She snorts. "So, a family of hunters then."

"Yes, it's sort of a thing."

"Should we continue that trend?"

"Well, Sophie means wisdom. So, perhaps we could name our children after wise hunters," I say, loving that we're talking about naming our pups, plural.

"Well, my family didn't do the whole naming thing. But I would like to give my father's name to our pup. What about Huntington Carter?" she asks, rubbing her stomach.

"I think it's perfect," I say, kissing her stomach. "What do you think Huntington? Do you like your name?" I ask Sophie's stomach. I turn so my ear is pressed against her stomach, then look back up at Sophie.

"He says he likes it," I say, smiling and making my mate chuckle.

I crawl up her body, needing to be inside her again, before pulling her against me and falling asleep curled up with my mate.

The next morning after warrior training, Penny approaches me.

"Alpha, I'd like to speak to you and Beta Lucas, if you have a few moments."

I look at Lucas who nods. We wait until the field of warriors empties, leaving the four of us, including Jaime.

"I'd like to thank you both for offering me the position of Ga**a. I've spoken to Jaime and thought a lot about your offer and...I accept."

The smile spreads across my face before I can stop it. I pull my face back and look at Jaime. "Does this mean you intend to join my pack?"

"Yes, Alpha, if you'll have me."

"Happy to," I say, turning back to Penny. "You know this means I have to open your position up for challenge, right?"

"Yes, Alpha."

"I'd like to announce your agreement and the opportunity for anyone to challenge you tomorrow during warrior training. Do you have any problems with that?"

“No.” she says, taking a deep breath and letting it out.

“If you’re having any second thoughts, now’s the time...” Lucas begins.

“I’m not. It’s just, well, I never thought I’d have this opportunity and now, it’s becoming a reality very quickly.”

“Once you’re secured in the Ga**a position, we’ll bring Jaime into the pack officially, and then we can have your Ga**a ceremony. I’d like to have all that done in the next two days because in three days we’re attacking Alpha Alaric’s pack and I want you both there with me,” I tell them, watching Penny’s eyes go wide.

Yes, Alpha.”

“May I ask why we’re attacking Alpha Alaric’s pack?” Jaime asks.

“He attacked and killed Sophie’s father, causing the death of her mother as well. It was an unsolicited attack and retribution is warranted.”

“Understood.”

“You realize that she’ll be my Ga**a, Jaime, and you’ll be a G**a by becoming her mate?”

“I understand. Penny’s pretty tough. She deserves this,” he says proudly, pulling her in for a hug.

“Okay, let’s go make the announcement.”

The One He Claimed Chapter 138

Chapter 138: Challenge

Hunter

We walk into the back of the packhouse and into the dining hall. Sophie’s head pops up and she sees me with Penny, I nod, letting her know that Penny agreed, and her smile is as fast as mine.

“Attention everyone! I have an announcement to make. We’ve been without a Ga**a for a long time now and your Beta and I have been in discussions as to who we think can fill those shoes. Just like everything else in our pack, we are setting a new trend, and I give you our nomination for G***a, Penny.”

There’s a moment of silence before the warriors begin to cheer, making her smile.

"Tomorrow morning during warrior training, anyone who wants to challenge Penny for the Gamma position is welcome to do so. If she goes undefeated, we will be having a Gamma

ceremony tomorrow night, and we will be bringing her mate, Jaime, into our pack as well."

The warriors cheer again, recognizing Jaime's strength and how that will strengthen our pack.

"We have a lot to be thankful for in this pack and having Penny and Jaime as our Ga**a pair will only make us stronger. If you have any questions or concerns, please see me or Beta Lucas today. Otherwise, we'll see you on the sparring field tomorrow morning."

With that, I head over to Sophie, pulling her into a hug before putting my hand on her stomach and feeling my pup. I love holding Sophie and feeling my pup at the same time.

"Do you think anyone will challenge her?" she asks.

"I'm not sure, but even if they do, I don't think anyone can defeat her."

All that day, we plan for battle. I spend the morning on the phone with Dutton and Amelia, all of us pulling in our Betas and Ga***as. For me, that includes Penny and Jaime. I can sense the dissatisfaction from Amelia's Ga**a, but he's smart enough to not directly confront her on this call. We confirm our plan of attack, time when we plan to attack, which will be early in the morning, and that we'll all be in place early so that when Amelia howls the attack, we'll all be ready.

In the afternoon, I spend the time with my warriors, making sure everyone is aware of the coming attack, selecting the group that will join me and Penny, and then running drills with those warriors. Lucas spends time with the warriors that will remain in the pack, making sure they understand the possibility that some members of Alaric's pack may cross into our pack and how that should be handled.

The next morning, when we meet for warrior training, I make sure to be on time. It's the first time that I've been on time since Sophie came to the pack, since I much prefer to wake my mate up properly in the mornings.

"Before we begin sparring, I'm opening up the field for challenges to our nominated Gamma," I announce.

It's quiet for a moment, then Brutus walks up. "I challenge you, Penny."

She frowns at him. "You want the Ga**a position?" It's a good question. He's a bit old for the G**a position, but honestly, he would be my next choice.

"Nah, I just haven't had a chance to spar with you and I wanted to make sure I got my chance," he says, wagging his eyebrows at her.

"Really, Brutus?" she asks him.

"Really, Penny," he says, and gets into a fighting stance.

"Alright, old man, don't say I didn't warn you."

"Show me what you've got, pup," he says.

The two begin fighting and I can see almost immediately that Penny will win. She's much faster than the older and larger Brutus. What I wasn't expecting was Jaime to coach her through it. He's a natural.

"Keep your elbows tucked, Penny. That's right, use your speed to take him off balance."

He continues giving her pointers and there so spot on, that I look at Lucas. "Looks like you have a new sparring leader," I say.

"Good, maybe this one will show up on time," he says, making me snort.

"Sorry, my mate's too delicious to leave in the morning."

"And mine isn't? Try getting up a few minutes earlier," he quips, both of us watching the battle.

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to have a modified Ga**a ceremony and celebra tonight, but those of you coming with me will need to get to bed early Battle time is kami tell them

sparring ends, I call Sophie and Kinsley out to the sparring

Such can you bring the ceremonial knife and cup, please? I ask

“dready have she says out loud, smiling as she walks up. 1

ched to us what would happen. Brutus is still grumbling, but I think he’s just hoping that Lah will kiss him and make it better,” he say lahing

“Want! Beth ads, waking up with Chee

“You want to pin the pack as we ask them.

*ove ideje, we’re staying” Beth says, and Chloe nods.

“Then step up. You’ll accept them as your Ga**as tonight during the ceremony. Right now, you’re just accepting me as your Alpha, Sophie as your Luna and Lucas and Kinsley as your Betas,” I tell them.

“We understand,” Beth says, as Chloe moves to stand beside Kinsley. Kinsley immediately puts an arm around her, comforting her, as we begin.

Penny stands proudly while Jaime accepts us as his ranked members, then Beth, and finally Chloe. I can tell that she’s a gentle soul, someone like Brooklyn. We’ll need to find a good position for her in the pack, something where she can thrive.

‘I already have an idea about that,’ Sophie says in the mind link, making me smile. She’s getting better at m**y multi-tasking. ‘What idea is that, my love?’

‘We’re going to need assistance in the nursery very soon. I think she’d be perfect.’

‘Yes, I think you’re right.’

The One He Claimed Chapter 139

Chapter 139: Checking In

Sophie

We had an early G**a ceremony, earlier than usual as something like that would usually have a celebration that would extend well into the night and early morning. However, since we all have to leave around 2am, Penny and Jaime’s G**a ceremony was a bit

muted. Hunter promised that we could have a real celebration after Alaric had been dealt with.

I was proud of our pack. As stressed as everyone is, they embraced Penny as their G**a, knowing that she's underage. They also embraced Jaime and when I asked Hunter about it, he said it was his fighting skill.

"He's really good, Soph. Like, really good. I can see why his previous Alpha felt intimidated by him. If he is anything like Aiden or Owen, Jaime would have had no problem defeating him for their Alpha title."

"How do Alphas like that stay in power? If they aren't strong, if they can't defeat every member of their pack, how do they remain the leaders?"

"The short answer is that they kill their competitors or threaten their families. Fear and intimidation don't make a strong pack, but it makes a dutiful one."

"Dutiful. What a c**y word. Do you think anyone in our pack feels like it's their duty to submit to any of us?" I ask him.

He smiles at me. "Why don't ask them?"

And I did. I got up on the stage where Penny and Jaime had so recently taken their vows as our G**as, I stopped the party and asked our pack if they felt that their allegiance to me and Hunter was because of duty rather than choice.

"Um, excuse me, Luna, but what are you asking? It is our duty to submit to you. I think I speak for the entire pack when I say that we all willingly fulfill that duty, but it is a duty. That's how a pack runs. There's a hierarchy and we all have our place, a duty to the pack," Lucas says, frowning at me.

I looked at Hunter who joined me on stage, wrapping an arm around me and kissing the top of my head before looking out over the pack. "Sophie and I were just discussing how Alphas such as Owen, Alaric, or Aiden remain in power. I told her it was based on fear and intimidation, and she was worried that some or all of you might feel that way about us," Hunter explained, much better than I did.

Immediately the entire pack, even the ones who hadn't chosen to join our pack yet, began to speak at once about how different our pack was and how happy they were to be a part of our pack.

"It's our choice, Luna. And I won't lie and say that choice was always easy. You and Alpha Hunter keep us on our toes by constantly pushing the old ways out and by protecting those who are running from the mistreatment of other packs. But that just makes me prouder to be a part of this pack. I respect every one of you as my leaders and I think every pack member here would say the same," Brutus says.

"I would add that it may be hard, but it's the right thing to do, and we, your pack, stand behind you. I've been to many, many packs in my years as a doctor, and I've never felt the cohesiveness that I feel in this pack. The stripes that you've faced have only made you stronger together, and I'm proud to have been able to accept all of you as my leaders tonight" Dr Caspian says

The others murmur their agreement, making me feel more settled. "I know it hasn't always been easy, and I want all of you to know how much your love and support means to me and to Hunter. Thank you for being such an incredible pack

I'm not sure if it was my words, or just that our pack is already so amazing, but everyone was up and ready to go in the early morning hours, including our new Gemmes.

"When we get close, Penny, I'm sending you and Jaime to make sure Sophie gets to Amelia's pack lands. You two support her pack members in the push from the west while Sophie follows behind," Hunter tells them before turning to me.

"I don't want you fighting, I want you to stay in the back. Amelia will do what she feels she must, but you have nothing to prove, Soph. The only reason you're going is so you and Amelia can deliver the killing blow."

He turned back to Penny and Jaime. "Alaric is the target, but Sophie's safety is both of your responsibility. I'm putting my entire life into your hands, I don't have to tell you how important that is," he says seriously

I look at the two of them concerned that this is too much to put on them so soon.

"We won't let you down," they both say, almost in unison.

"I know you won't, that's why you're my G**as," he said and when he shifted, I got on his back, and he howled our exit from the pack. Our warriors had howled with him, and the ones remaining sent up howls of luck and love.

When we got close enough, Hunter stopped, shifting quickly and pulling me into his arms. "Sophie, I know you'll want to fight, but please, for me, don't. Let me do this. I need you safe. I need our pup safe. I know it goes against everything inside of you to stand in the back and not fight at the front but please do this for me," he pleads, putting his face in my neck and breathing deeply.

I know my mate. I know that he won't be able to focus on getting Alaric if he's worried about me. I can't lose him any more. than he can lose me, so I wrap my arms around him and give him the comfort he needs.

"I won't fight, Hunter. Not unless I have to. I promise."

He leans down, kissing me hard and fast. "Take care of my mate and pup," he says.

"You better take care of MY mate," I growl back.

He nods at Penny and Jaime before turning, shifting, and informing the pack in the mind link to follow him.

Jaime and Penny shift, and I get on Jaime's back, since he's the bigger wolf. We run to Amelia's borders and let the patrols know that we're here.

When we get deeper into the pack, we find their warriors ready to go. I slide off of Jaime's back and walk to my sister. She's changed so much since taking over as Alpha. It's almost as if she's become more serious, her strength and confidence surrounding her. As I walk toward her, the term 'Warrior Alpha' comes to my mind.

Hunter is right, my sister had no idea how strong she was, but she's learning quickly.

The One He Claimed Chapter 140

Chapter 140: The Battle

Sophie

"Soapy," Amelia says and hugs me as I walk up. That, at least, is still my sister. "Hunter wants you behind the warriors."

"I know and I won't fight him on that. Where will you be?"

"Up front, with my warriors." I look at her and unlike most warriors who go into the fight, she's wearing armor and carrying a sword.

"I found it in mom's closet," she says softly.

"It suits you," I say to her. She smiles and checks the time.

"We need to get into position."

I nod and Penny and Jaime flank me as we move to the back of the warriors.

Several warriors nod their heads in greeting. There's an

anxiousness in the air, but also determination. Alaric killed their Alpha and therefore their Luna. The pack wants blood, and they're about to get it.

It's eerily silent as we wait for the signal to go. I see Amelia raise her sword in the air, letting everyone know to be ready and the moment it slices through the air, a whistling sound following its descent, the pack leaps.

More than half of them shift, and we all run hard to get to the border of Alaric's pack. Just before the frontline of Amelia's pack breaches the border, the howls of alarm go up and the battle begins.

It takes several moments before the battle gets to us and when it does, it's light, most of Alaric's warriors getting attacked by our warriors. Not only that, but they also have to divide their warriors into three areas since Dutton is attacking on one side and Hunter on another.

No one gets close to me, Penny and Jaime make sure of it and while I'm jostled around and pulled between the two while they protect me and keep me out of harm's way, it isn't until the warriors in front of us stop and stand aside that I know that Alaric has been captured.

When I step forward, I feel Hunter's relief that I'm safe. I can feel his eyes looking me over for any signs of injury.

What I see first is Amelia, standing in front of Alaric who is on his knees. Her chest is heaving from her own fighting. Hunter and Dutton, both covered in blood and guts, each have one of Alaric's arms and are holding him down on the ground.

I walk up on Amelia's left side. We're both right-handed and that will be the hand that we use to give him the killing blow. When I step up, I realize that my sister is also covered in blood, some of it is hers. I'm not sure how badly she's injured, but she's not showing any weakness at all.

"Alpha Alaric, you have committed crimes against my pack. You did knowingly, and without cause, attack and murder my father, the Alpha, in cold blood. His death caused the death of my mother and the Luna of the pack. For your crimes, I sentence you to death," Amelia says, her strong voice ringing out over the Alan the axle kook up and gods boost at our feet, causing bethke and Button to groan yana hus arma lighter

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This will be your one and only opportunity. Come to my pack and attempt to cause problems or betray me or my pack members, and I will kill you. The choice is yours," she says reaching out to grab Alaric's head.

"Bury the dead. I don't want their stink drifting into our pack lands," she says to her warriors, beginning to walk back to her pack.

"Yes, Alpha."

"I will have breakfast prepared for all who fought for me and all who want to join my pack," she says, turning to look at everyone before her eyes finally fall on mine.

"It's done."

I nod, and as she walks away, I move to Hunter's side, needing his comfort.

"Are you hurt? Are you injured in any way?" he asks, worry filling his tone as he looks me over.

"No, but you are. How bad is it?" I ask him, looking him over.

"Not bad. I was mostly worried about you."

"Our new Gammas kept me very safe," I tell him, smiling proudly at them. They, however, especially Jaime, have quite a few scratches and bite marks on them. I'm guessing that Jaime was doing his best to protect me and Penny.

"Come on, we need to feed my son, and I want a shower. I smell like Alaric which is ruining my appetite."

"Our pack members?" I ask.

"Are all alive. Some are injured and I'm sending them back home right after they eat."

"Alpha Dutton?" I ask him, watching as he looks at what's going on around us.

“My pack members are all alive as well, Luna. Thank you for asking. Mine, however, can head straight home. I’m willing to take your injured too, if they need help, Hunter.”

“Thank you. I think I might have a few who could use help, and I think Amelia’s hospital might be pretty full.”

They talk as we walk. Up ahead, I see Amelia stop and help one of her warriors who has a bad injury on his leg. She wraps his arm over her shoulder and helps him to hobble back.

We make it back to her pack and she continues to hold her warrior with one arm, carrying Alaric’s head in the other. We’ve just reached the edge of the forest that opens up to the back of the packhouse when I hear his voice.

“Amelia, what the fuck? You went to war and didn’t tell me?” Alpha Calvin says, looking shocked and angry.