

The One He Claimed Chapter 21

Chapter 21: One of Many

Hunter

I had to yank Shaw back the moment Sophie told me she wanted me to claim her. He was ready to sink his canines into her that minute.

'Shaw, this is an important moment and based on the way she kissed me, I'm guessing she has little to no experience with men. We aren't rushing this. I want it to be a night that she never forgets and remembers with happiness.'

He grumbled but agreed.

"Ummm, what....?" I watch as Sophie gets nervous looking around. Now that she's agreed to let me mark her, she's not sure what's next.

"Let's finish eating. You can take this time to touch me, if you want. I'd like to touch you as well!"

Her eyes immediately drop to my chest, and I see her fingers twitch. I fight my smile. I know she's remembering running her hand over my chest in her sleep earlier.

She looks up at me through her lashes and I feel my aching c**k flex, making her eyes drop even lower. Her eyes widen and her heart rate increases. I take her chin and tilt her head up to meet my eyes.

"How about starting with something a little more simple, like my shoulders, or my chest. For now, let's just ignore how aroused I

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am by being here with you," I suggest.

"Hard to ignore," she mumbles, and this time I can't hide my smile.

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She takes a deep breath, probably gaining courage, and tentatively reaches out to touch me, instantly looking up to make sure that I'm okay with it. I lean forward, kissing her nose and reach around her to take another piece of pork dragged through potatoes.

As she becomes bolder, flattening her hand against my chest. and running it over my pecs, I hold the food in front of her mouth. She doesn't look up as she takes the food, watching her hand as she caresses my chest.

“That feels incredible,” I say, my body shivering at her touch.

I run my free hand over her back, down to her hips then up to her neck and into her hair as I continue to feed the two of us with my free hand.

I watch as her eyes roll closed and I make a note that my mate likes to have her scalp rubbed. When she opens her eyes, they come back to my lips, and I watch her lick hers.

“You can touch me anywhere, kiss me anywhere you want,” I say softly, watching as her eyes flash up to mine before moving back to my lips.

“Your lips are so warm and soft,” she says, as if mesmerized by my lips.

I tap a finger on my lips. “Come feel them again, just to make sure,” I say, teasing her.

She smiles, but leans in, her eyes coming back up to mine as her lips gently press against mine. I gently coax her mouth into a kiss, letting my eyes drift closed as hers do, forgetting about the food and focusing on the sweet taste of my mate.

I deepen the kiss, letting her response to me set the pace. When she begins to whimper, I deepen the kiss even more, requesting access to her mouth with my tongue. This time, she seems as anxious as I am to deepen the kiss and her arms slide around my neck as she tilts her head and presses her body against mine.

I growl a low, hungry growl of desire, feeling her body shiver in my arms.

“Hunter,” she gasps as I move my kisses down to her jaw, then kissing the sensitive space under ear before moving my way to her marking spot. I lick and suck on it, smelling the increase in her arousal, feeling it dripping on my thigh as her hips begin moving on me, seeking a release to the ache I’m building inside. her. It’s the same ache that I have for her, but my release can wait. I want my mate to know how important she is to me, and I want to see her pretty face come undone as I make her come.

I move a hand to her thigh, stroking up and down the outside of her thigh until she begins to whimper with need.

I move my mouth back to her ear. “I want to help ease the ache between your thighs. I going to move my hand and touch you, stroke you, and help you find your release,” I say before pulling my head back and looking at her.

Her eyes are beautifully glassy with desire, flashing from dark to light as her wolf makes her presence known. I’m sure Hedda is as much involved with this as Shaw is and I know he’s right on the edge with me.

I keep my eyes on hers as I slide my hand up her inner thigh. “Spread your legs for me,” I say softly.

I looks at me and I can see the indecision on her face.

“Spread your legs for me, my mate. Let me help you ease your ache,” I say, keeping my voice steady but gentle as I remind her of what she is to me. My mate. My love.

She does as I ask, and I run my hand up her thigh until it begins to slide through her liquid arousal. She’s watching me, unsure of what is to happen next. Now, I’m confident my mate has never had a man touch her before.

Without taking my eyes off of her, I bring my wet fingers to my mouth, licking and sucking her arousal off of them.

“You taste so good, love. I hope you’ll let me lick you and taste you before the night is over,” I say to her, feeling her body shiver again as the sweet scent of her arousal **s.

I bring my hand back to her inner thigh, sliding it up again. “Spread your legs a bit wider for me, love,” I say. This time, there is no hesitation and I’m given access to her sweet, soaked p**y.

I look down and even from here I can see how swollen her p**y lips are with desire.

“Beautiful,” I say as I slide my finger over her **t. She gasps and I look back at her face. “Is this where it aches?”

“Yes,” she gasps, her hips beginning to gyrate on my thigh

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again.

I slide my fingers to her entrance, soaking my fingers before bringing them back to her c**t.

“You’re so wet for me, so very responsive to my touch.”

“Yes,” she says, and her head falls back, her mouth opening as I add-pressure to her c**t with my fingers.

“Yes,” she says more loudly, and I wrap my arm around her hips, holding her tightly against my body.

“I’ve got you, my love. Let go and let me make you feel good.”

“Hunter,” she says, gasping as her body begins to jerk.

“That’s it baby, come undone for me.”

Her hand grips my shoulder, and her body tenses a moment before she jolts with her o**m. S**he shudders violently against me, crying out, crying my name as I hold her against me, letting her feel safe as her body experiences the pleasures that only I will ever bring her.

I kiss and suck on her neck as I slowly bring her down, her body leaning heavily against me when finally release her.

She looks up at me, laying her head on my shoulder.

“That is just one of many o**m*s that I have planned for you tonight, my love.”

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Chapter 22: Dance

Sophie

I feel completely and totally languid in Hunter’s arms. I’ve touched myself before, brought myself to o**m. But nothing I’ve done before has ever felt like this. Maybe it’s because of the mate bond, or maybe Hunter is just really good at what he’s doing, but I’m pretty sure I saw stars, and not the ones in the sky, just now when I had that incredible o**m.

And now, he’s telling me that it’s going to be one of many?

‘S**y and talented,’ Hedda says, sounding just as relaxed as I feel.

“Are you still hungry?” he asks me.

Hungry? Who could be hungry after that?

‘I’m hungry for more of our mate, Hedda says and begins purring loudly before I can stop her.

Hunter chuckles as he runs his nose through my hair. The man is sex personified. Everything about him is s**y, even the way he laughs at me.

“I take it Hedda is feeling good as well?” he asks me, kissing my temple.

“Yes,” I say, lifting my head, just as Shaw begins purring at Hedda. I smile.

“I think your wolf likes my wolf,” I say.

“Correction, my wolf is head over heels in love with your wolf,” he says, making me blush.

The mate bond is so strange. I barely know this man, but he’s right. The feelings I have for him are very strong and my response to him, not just my body’s response, but also my desire to bind myself to him for the rest of my life are nearly overwhelming in their strength.

He leans forward and I have trouble catching my breath as I feel his warm breath on my cheek, his warm, soft lips brushing across my cheek as he moves to my ear.

“I’m head over heels in love with you, too,” he says.

I feel my heart s**p several beats and I have trouble catching my breath. He gently rubs his cheek against mine and I’m not sure if it’s Hunter or Shaw who is doing it. Rather than think too much about it, I close my eyes and enjoy the feel of him, the tingles that are still moving through my entire body, his warmth everywhere his body is touching mine, and the love that he’s openly showing me.

“Would you like to dance?” he asks me.

I open my eyes and look at him. “There’s no music.”

“I don’t need music to dance with my mate,” he says.

“Are you trying to help me relax before...before you claim me?” I ask nervously.

“Partly,” he says, standing and setting me on my feet in front of

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him. He takes my hand and pulls me to the only area where there’s enough room for us to move around. “But the other part is that I want you to remember tonight. I want you to look back on the night that I marked you, that you became mine with nothing but happy memories. I want to make tonight special for you. I want you to tell our pups about tonight, because you want the same for them that I’ve given to you,” he says.

I’m not sure how I got so lucky to not only have found a mate who is willing to fight our laws, but who also wants to make tonight as positive and memorable for me as possible. He wraps one arm around my waist and takes my hand in the other, holding it against his heart.

“I know it’s the mate bond that is making me feel this way, but that’s the point, right? That’s why the Moon Goddess created fated mates, so that when we found each other,

we'd know that we were perfect for each other. I know you don't know me that well. I know that will take time and that we have a mountain ahead of us to climb. But for tonight, it's just you and me, and the love that we share because we are the perfect halves making a perfect whole."

I feel tears p**k in my eyes. "You have a lot of pretty words, Alpha," I say, my throat tight.

"And I mean every one of them from my heart, my Luna," he says, using my title just as I used his.

He is slowly moving us around in circles, slow dancing under the moon light. I take the hand that is resting on his shoulder and move it up to his thick hair.

"I'm guessing you've figured out that I have no experience in relationships or with men," I say.

"Yes."

"I thought I would be scared if this night ever came, but I'm not."

"You have nothing to fear from me, ever."

I smile at him and lay my head against his chest as we slowly dance around the small space. I can feel his hard length. pressed against my stomach. Eventually I'll have to acknowledge that, but I'm not quite ready for that yet.

"Did your mother teach you to dance?" I ask. "Mine did. She taught both me and Amelia. Amelia is a better dancer than I am, but she had two more years of practice than I did. And now, I'm a bit rusty," I say, pulling back and looking up at him.

There's a sad look on his face and I stop dancing. "I'm sorry, did I do something wrong?"

"No. No, you didn't," he says, pulling me to him again and

continuing our dance. "It's just...it was my sister who taught me to dance."

"Oh," I say, not sure why that would make him sad. "She must be a very good dancer."

"She was," he says sadly, then sighs heavily. "My sister is the biggest reason that I'm so against this claiming process. She was a beautiful woman, happy, and kind. A lot like how you described Amelia to me on the night of her birthday."

I pull back, looking up at him. I can tell that this is important to him.

He's looking over my head, lost in his thoughts. "My sister was one of the many she-wolves that struggled with the public mating process. After her mate claimed her, she begged me to never do that to my mate. To you" he says, looking down at me.

"Oh."

He swallows hard and looks away again. "She got pregnant with a female pup and rather than have her pup suffer the way she did, she ended both of their lives.

I gasp, my hand coming to my mouth. "Oh, Hunter..."

He smiles, but it doesn't reach his eyes. "I don't want to spoil our night with sadness, but I told you that you can ask me anything and I'll always be honest with you. I loved my sister very much. It broke my heart when I found out that she was gone. That was when I knew that I had to somehow change our laws, for her, for you, and for all of the ranked she-wolves today and in the future. They truly are more than just pretty words to me, Sophie. I mean them. And I'm thrilled to know that I'll now have a strong partner to stand beside me, to fight beside me, to make that happen."

I lean my head against his chest again, this time wrapping my arms around his waist and holding him close to me. He does the same and we rock back and forth for several minutes before I step back and take his hand.

"Let's sit in the pool together and you can tell me about me being this legend that people keep talking about," I say to him.

He lets me lead him to the pool and I gently push him to sit. When he does, I straddle his lap, wanting to be able to see him as we talk. His hands go to my hips, helping to warm the cool water around me.

"You know, this isn't a good idea to sit like this if you want me to focus on anything besides wanting you," he says, his voice deep with desire.

I look down, then take his big, hard c**k in my hands, seeing that the tip is poking out of the water.

"What about this, is this going to help you focus?" I ask, feeling powerful at this man's instant response to my touch. He sucks in a breath as move my hands up, then down.

"Not on anything other than my need for you," he says, reaching up to stroke my nipples. My body jerks with pleasure at his touch and I realize that the conversation about our future can wait until tomorrow.

Tonight is about him and me, about me becoming his and him becoming mine.

Tomorrow, when I'm wearing his mark and my body is covered in his scent, then we can talk about what's next. But tonight, I want to focus on the pleasure he's promised me, and I want to know that I've been able to give him the same pleasure in return.

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Chapter 23: Under the Moonlight

Hunter

My mate is driving me utterly wild. She said she wants to talk but she's straddling my lap and stroking my c**k that is ready to blow in her hands. I'm not sure she's ready for that.

"Sophie, baby, if you don't stop what you're doing, I'm going to have an o**m and make a huge mess on your hands and chest."

I swear her eyes sparkle and she looks down which only makes my c**k twitch in her hands.

"You did give me an o**m. I think it's only fair that I give you one," she says and whether she means to or not, she sounds s**y as f**k.

"Love, it's not a contest and do you know what happens when a man o**ms?" I ask, panting with the effort not to blow all over her.

"I feel like I'm about to find out," she whispers, watching me intently. I can tell she's feeling pretty proud of herself, so I let go, crying out with the force of my o**m, my eyes rolling back into my head as I lean back against the side of the pool while my body jerks its release.

"Oh!" she says, and her hands stop.

"Don't stop, Sophie. Please, goddess, don't stop," I say, practically begging. I grab her hips and hold on as she begins stroking me again.

When I finally open my eyes again, her eyes are wide, watching as the last of my c**m spits out of my c**k.

She looks up at me and bites her lower lip, trying to keep from smiling. "Was that good?"

I laugh, my body jerking again as I lean forward and run my thumb over her lips. "That was f**g incredible."

I look down and see her chest and neck covered in my c***m. I growl, reaching out to smear it across her chest. She'll smell like me by morning anyway, but now, she's covered in my scent, and it helps Shaw to relax, knowing that our scent is coating hers,

When I look up, she's watching me with dark eyes. I lean forward and kiss her softly. She surprises me by leaning against me, wrapping her arms around me. I pull back, frowning.

"Did you want to talk?"

"It can wait until tomorrow," she says, breathily.

"Perfect," I say, taking her mouth and grabbing her thighs as I stand, walking out of the pool.

"Where are you going?" she asks, pulling away and looking around.

"I can't smell your arousal in the pool. I want to smell you and taste you. If we aren't going to talk, I want to touch you, explore your body, learn what makes you shiver, and what makes you moan," I say, running my nose up her throat.

Slowly and completely unexpectedly, she begins to lift her chin, exposing her throat to me. It's a complete and total act of submission. As an Alpha wolf, it's the greatest gift she can give me. She is giving herself to me, her wolf is giving herself to Shaw.

He pushes forward, gently biting her throat, letting her know that he accepts her submission. I feel her body twitch and the scent of her arousal begins to permeate the air again..

I lick her throat once Shaw lets go and move my nose to her ear again. "I will never give you a reason to regret your choice tonight," I say softly, making her body shiver again.

"See that you don't," she says. The words are demanding, but she's still submitting to me. It makes me feel even more powerful, having this woman give herself to me. She is a true Alpha, and she will be a strong mate and Luna for our pack.

I grab the blanket that Kinsley had in the basket and quickly spread it on the ground before laying her on top of it.

"How is that? Any rocks digging into your back?" I ask her.

She shakes her head, biting her lip again. I look down at her lip, leaning in so our lips are nearly touching. "That's my job."

"What?" she whispers, freeing her lip from her teeth. I suck her lip into my mouth and gently bite down on it before releasing it.

“That.”

I kiss her again, taking my time, feeling her body relax, her arms come around my neck, and into my hair, her orchid scent permeating the air around us.

I move to kiss her neck, moving my way down to her chest. “I’m going to touch you and taste you. If anything makes you uncomfortable, let me know.”

I lift my head and look at her. “Uncomfortable, like it hurts, not uncomfortable like it’s something new that you’ve never experienced before. And feel free to let me know if you like something. I’ll continue doing it,” tell her, smiling as I lower my head again.

“Can I...touch you?” she asks.

I look up at her again. “Anywhere. Everywhere. There will be no secrets between us after tonight, Sophie.”

stoke my hand down her side to her thigh as I kiss my way to her breast. I feel her hand come to my back gently running her fingers over the muscles in my shoulders.

“Mmmm,” I hum, encouraging her to touch me as I flick my tongue over her nipple. It immediately tightens into a tight little nub. As much as I’m enjoying the feel of her touching me, I want to know if she likes what I’m doing, so I watch her face as I suck her nipple into my mouth.

Her body’s response is instant, and she arches, pressing her breast into my mouth. I bring my hand up and gently squeeze her breast as I continue sucking on her nipple.

“Oh yes,” she says, her hand now gripping my back.

I pull back and flick my tongue over her nipple again, watching her. “Did you like that?”

“Yes,” she says, nearly panting as she looks down at me.

“Which part? This?” I ask, flicking my tongue over her nipple. “Or this?” I ask, sucking her nipple into my mouth.

“YES!” she says, arching up again. “That! I like that!” she says, her free hand coming to my hair and gripping it as she holds my face against her.

“Yes! Oh goddess, yes!” she moans, her body writhing

underneath me. I move my hand away from her breast and begin to slowly make my way down her stomach, feeling her stomach muscles quiver at my touch.

When my hand reaches the apex of her thighs, she's soaked for me. I moan, and whether it's the vibration against her nipple or the feel of my hand touching her c**t, her body jerks and she moans again.

I lift my head off her nipple, looking down at my fingers that are glistening in the moonlight, coated with her arousal. I pull my fingers to my mouth and watching her, I lick them clean.

"Oh yes, I definitely need to taste you tonight," I say, before leaning back down to suck her other nipple into my mouth.

"I'm not exactly sure what that means, but if it feels like this, I'm willing to try it," she says, panting. She's begun scratching her nails across my back. I know that I'll have marks that will probably last until tomorrow, but don't care.

I slide a finger into her tight entrance, and I moan. "You're so tight."

"Well, I am a bit worried about that..." she says, the light scent of fear mingling with her much stronger scent of arousal.

I look up at her, still moving my finger inside her. "You were made for me, and I was made for you. I will fit. I'm not going to say it won't hurt. It probably will at first, but Hedda will heal you quickly and then there will be nothing but pleasure for the rest of the night."

I hold her gaze for a moment. "Trust me?" I ask.

She nods. "I trust you."

"Good," I say smiling at her before dipping my head back down to her needy nipple. I run my tongue around it before sucking it back into my mouth. This time, I look down at my hand, carefully inserting a second finger inside her and slowly beginning to stretch her as I use the heel of my hand against her c**t.

"Hunter," she moans and while I know my fingers are probably a bit uncomfortable, the feel of my hand on her c**t and my tongue on her nipple are overriding the pain.

"Mmmm," I purr at her, sending vibrations through her body. I feel her body tightening and I know I've got her close to another o**m. I put more pressure against her c**t as I gently bite down on her nipple and that's enough to have her clamping down on my fingers.

She cries out, as I force her to ride out her o**m, pumping my fingers in and out of her, not too hard or fast, just enough for her to adjust to the feel of me.

When she finally comes down, I pull off of her nipple with a soft pop. I slide up her body, kissing her deeply and moving my body between her legs. She wraps her legs around me, her arms holding me tightly. I kiss her until her body relaxes and her hands begin to move over my back again.

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When I pull back, I run my nose over hers.

“I smell blood, but it’s not mine. Did I hurt you?” she asks.

“You might have scratched me while you were moaning through your o**m.”

“Oh my goddess, I’m so sorry!”

“Don’t be. I don’t mind carrying the evidence of the pleasure I gave you.”

Even in the dark, I can see her blush, feel the heat of it against my face.

“That felt really good,” she says shyly.

“Good, because I’m not done with you yet. Now, I want to taste you.”

The One He Claimed Chapter 24

Chapter 24: His

Sophie

Taste me? Does he mean lick his fingers after having them inside me again? I have to admit, the look of utter bliss on his face as he sucked my arousal off his fingers was one of the s**t things I’ve ever seen.

I unhook my legs, and he begins kissing his way down my body. He sucks each of my nipples into his mouth, but I’m surprised when he doesn’t stop there. He continues to kiss his way down my stomach and then, he looks up at me, pulling one of my legs over his shoulder.

I know my eyes go wide as his tongue flicks out, licking my aching p**y lips. He did that before, but this time, his eyes close and he growls loudly before attaching his mouth to my aching p**y. His warm tongue slides easily through my lips, swirling into my entrance and making me arch into his mouth. Nothing has ever felt as good as his warm

mouth. My body feels so desperate for him, desperate for the release that he seems know I need.

I'm watching him, trying to keep my breathing under control as he sends waves of heat through my body. When his eyes meet mine, I can't catch my breath. His eyes are so dark, so full of need and desire, desire for me.

"Take what you need and want from me," I say, not sure what I'm offering but knowing that I want to give him everything he desires, no matter what it is.

His answering growl is possessive, and he tugs my body closer to him, sucking my c**t into his mouth. If I thought his talented tongue worked wonders on my nipples, that's nothing compared to the feelings he's eliciting from my c**t.

"Hunter," I gasp, pressing my hips into his face. I feel his hands slide under my a**holding my p**y to his face as he licks and sucks on me like I'm the best thing he's ever tasted in his life, like he'll never get enough of me.

"Hunter!" I call out again as my body tenses and I feel the o**m rip through me. My body is still jerking when I feel the unfamiliar feeling of his fingers sliding inside me again. It's not uncomfortable, but it feels strange, like an intrusion.

He continues sucking on my c**t while his fingers begin stretching me. It's a bit painful, but I understand what he's doing. Soon enough, I feel the heat flowing through my body again, feel the tension, like my body is a spring that is getting tighter and tighter, ready to snap.

Hunter begins growling against my c**t, sending vibrations through my body and then his fingers rub a spot, a perfect spot, inside me that has yet another o**m ripping through me. I arch my back hard, grabbing onto the blanket underneath me as my body bows from the pleasure. His tongue slows, as I ride out my o**m on his face and fingers. When he finally pulls away, my body is still having little aftershocks. He makes his way up my body, leaning over me and kissing me. I can taste myself on his lips and tongue. It's a s**y, heady thing to know this strong, powerful Alpha was just between MY thighs, bringing ME pleasure.

I slide my hands up his strong arms as he pulls his mouth from mine. "Are you ready for me to make you mine forever? Are you ready for me to claim you?" he asks.

Maybe it's because I'm an Alpha, maybe it's because I feel smug after so many o**ms, or maybe it's because I want this man as much as he seems to want me.

"Are YOU ready to be claimed by ME, Alpha?" I ask him.

I suck in a breath as he turns his neck, exposing his throat to me. "I want your mark, right here," he says, lifting his hand and tapping the marking spot on his neck.

Much like he did with me, Hedda pushes me to lift up and I gently nip at his throat, accepting his submission and his request to claim him.

When he looks back down at me, his eyes are dark. "I'm glad we're in agreement," he says, settling himself between my thighs.

"We're going to take this slow. It will hurt, but once the pain is in pleasure," he goes, I promise, I'll make you scream my name the pain is says, making my body shiver in anticipation.

When I feel the head of his c**k, his very large **k, at my entrance, I realize that those two fingers weren't anywhere close to the size of this man.

He settles himself on his forearms, running his thumbs over my face, leaning in to run his nose over my jaw, and against my nose as he begins to push inside me.

I gasp, already feeling the sting of the intrusion.

"Relax," he says softly, leaning in to kiss me. I can feel his body shivering with the control he must be maintaining to go this slow. I force myself to focus on his mouth, on his tongue that is teasing mine and I make my body relax.

"That's my girl," he says before kissing me again as he starts to push further inside me.

I've never felt so full. The sting is there, the pain, but there is also the promise of the pleasure that told me he would give me. I know he will. I know he'll make this night even more memorable than it already is. He'll do that for me.

I pull his face away from me as he continues to slide slowly inside me.

"I love you, Hunter" I say, feeling it deep in my heart.

"And I love you, Sophie Meyers, soon to be Sophie Reynolds," he says, smiling.

Then, I see his slight frown as he continues to slide inside me.

"What? What is it?"

He tilts his head to the side. "I thought there would be resistance. If your hymen was intact..."

"I've never been with another man, I swear it," I say, suddenly fearful that he'll think that I've been with another.

“Baby, I know. I can tell that all of this is new to you. Your hymen probably broke while you were on the run. Any type of excessive exercise can break it. Hell, even warrior training could break it,” he says.

“Are you...are you disappointed?” ask quietly. He’s been so sweet, so kind to me. I don’t want to disappoint him.

He takes my face in his hands, forcing me to look at him. “Disappointed that this won’t hurt you as much as I expected? That I’ll be able to move more quickly inside you and that you’ll feel the pleasure I’m giving you faster? No, my love. I’m not. disappointed at all.”

He reaches down and pulls my thigh up to his hip. “As a matter of fact, I’m already buried all the way inside you. How do you feel?”

“Full, I say, smiling up at him.

“Sore?”

“It stings a little, but nothing I can’t handle.”

He slowly slides out of me and I can feel every inch of him, rubbing the aching spots inside me.

“And now?”

“Better,” I say, wanting more, of what I’m not sure.

“You, Sophie Meyers, continue to be a surprise to me.”

I want to ask what I’ve done to surprise him, but he slides inside me again and this time, the sting is much less.

“Does that feel good?” he asks, his voice rough with his control.

“Yes. What would make it feel good for you?”

He puts his forehead on mine. “You. Feel. Incredible. When you’re ready, I’ll move faster.”

“I’m ready,” I tell him, wanting him to feel as good as he’s making me feel.

He looks at me a moment, then begins moving faster, thrusting in and out of me.

“Oh yes, oh yes that feels good,” say, arching against him.

He moves up onto his hands, leaning over me and pulling my one leg over his shoulder, going even deeper inside of me.

“Yes!” I say, as he begins rubbing the spot that his fingers found earlier. “Yes!” I say again.

“You are mine, Sophie,” Hunter growls and his words are lisping.

open my eyes to see that his canines have extended.

“Mine!” he growls and begins thrusting even faster, harder, his body slapping against mine every time he bottoms out.

“Yes, Hunter. Yes, I’m yours!” I cry as I feel my body begin to tighten, feel my inner walls begin to flutter around Hunter.

“Yes!” I cry, throwing my head back as my body explodes into a million-points of pleasure. Hunter’s movements become jerky as he continues to thrust and then, just as his body tenses, he leans over and sinks his canines into my neck.

I scream, my body exploding yet again only this time, my focus narrows and I feel the tingling of my canines as they extend.

“Mine,” Hedda growls and I sink my canines into Hunter’s neck, feeling his body jerk again as he growls against my neck, milking his venom into my body as I am with him.

We’re connected in every possible way, and I wrap my arms and legs around him, holding him tightly as our bodies jerk with the pleasure of our o**ms.

Long after the venom in my canines is gone, Hunter pulls his canines from my neck, and I do the same. We both lick the wounds closed then he carefully turns on his side, pulling me against him.

“You’re mine now, Little Sophie Meyers,” he says smugly.

“That’s Sophie Reynolds to you, Alpha,” I say. His pleased chuckle is the last thing I hear before falling into the deepest sleep I can remember in years.

The One He Claimed Chapter 25

Chapter 25: Waking Up

Hunter

I held Sophie after she fell asleep. She’s mine. She agreed to be mine and now I’ve claimed her in every possible way.

'We need to make her our Luna, officially, when we return to our pack,' Shaw says, purring as our mate snuggles against us. 'And I want to run with Hedda before our pup begins growing inside them.'

'You think they're pregnant already?' I ask him.

'No telling, but I have no intention of only trying once, do you?' he asks smugly.

I stroke my fingers through her hair, rubbing her head and listening to the sweet, contented sounds she makes as she sleeps.

'Definitely not,' I say, smiling at the thought of my mate carrying my pup.

'You know we have a battle on our hands the moment we arrive back home?' I say to Shaw.

'I dare anyone to contest that Sophie is their Luna. If they do, they will answer to me.'

I intend to give them the opportunity to leave before her ceremony. If they do, I'll allow it. If they contest her leadership after they have sworn their loyalty to her, then I'll kill them,' I growl.

I lay awake, looking at the night sky and enjoying the feel of my mate's body pressed against mine as I think of the massive struggles we will face in the coming weeks. It doesn't matter, I will always fight for her. Now, I don't have to fight alone.

I'm not sure when I finally drifted off into sleep, but the feel of warm hands on my body and my throbbing erection wakes me.

When I open my eyes, I realize that it's not quite dawn. My mater is sitting up on her elbow, stroking her hand down my chest, to my stomach, by-passing my aching c**k, before sliding back up again.

"Sophie?" I ask, my voice thick with sleep.

"You said I could touch you anywhere," she says, the glint of a challenge in her eyes.

"I did, and I meant it. But your touch has a very specific effect on me," I say, gesturing to my hard length.

She looks down at me, her fingers trailing a line from my chest. to my belly button before gently caressing my length, making me jerk from the unexpected pleasure.

Her eyes return to mine. "You made me feel very good last night, and I want to return the favor."

“I told you it wasn’t a contest, but I have no problem if you want touch me, or even tease me into near insanity.”

She smiles at that and then looks back down at my c**k, her smile fading. She tucks her chin, looking away from me completely, even though her hand continues to stroke my body.

I reach out and stroke her cheek with my knuckles, feeling the heat of her embarrassment.

“What is it? You have nothing to be embarrassed about,” I say to her.

She glances at me, then looks away again, before pressing her lips together and forcing herself to look me in the eye. D**n she’s so f*g s**y.

“I want to do more than touch you and tease you. I want to make you feel good like you made me feel good. But...I don’t how,” she says quietly, as if admitting a terrible crime.

“Would you like me to give you some options of things that I like, or would you like to know what I want most right at this moment?” I ask her.

“What do you want most, right at this moment?”

I smile at her enthusiasm, pulling her mouth to mine for deep, passionate kiss.

“Straddle my hips, like you did last night,” I say when I release her mouth.

She does, quickly, then looks at me. “Touch yourself. Slide your fingers inside your entrance. Let me see if you are ready for me.”

I put my hand on her thighs, running them up and down slowly. I can feel her body vibrating with desire and I already know, just from her sitting on my stomach that she’s wet for me.

However, my sweet mate watches me as she follows my instructions, lifting up just enough to slide her fingers inside herself, before pulling them out and showing me how they glisten in the starlight.

“Put your fingers in my mouth. Let me taste your sweetness,” I say softly.

She does as I ask, licking her lips as I lick her fingers. I swirl my tongue around her fingers, licking them clean as the scent of her arousal continues to increase.

When I’m done, I pull her hand from my mouth, watching her.

“Lift yourself and take me in your hand. Put the head of my c**k at your entrance.”

She does as I say, and I continue to slide my hands over her body, moving up to her waist and hips.

“You can slide me back and forth, getting the tip wet, if you want, then, slowly and carefully, lower yourself onto my length. If you feel resistance, lift up, letting your arousal coat my c**k until you are seated completely on me and I’m buried deep inside you,” I say. I already feel like I’m ready to explode inside her, but I hold back, wanting her to have this moment.

She’s so soaking wet that she doesn’t have to stop as she slides down my length. I watch as her breathing quickens, her chest heaving with her gasps as I fill her, stretching her.

“You feel so good, Sophie,” I tell her, knowing no woman could ever feel as good as she does. I reach up and run my hands over her breasts.

“Move your hips, feel me inside you and find a movement that feels good to you, that touches you in just the right spot. You can make circles, slide up and down, or back and forth. Different positions will hit you differently, some will also rub your c**t which will make it even more pleasurable for you.”

Her eyes refocus on mine. “What about for you? I want to make you feel good.”

“Baby, I could have already come if I wanted this over quickly. I want you to learn how to ride me so we can do it again sometime, sometime very soon I hope,” I say, gently pinching her nipple and feeling it harden between my fingers.

She gasps and begins moving her hips.

“Oh, f**k, Sophie. That’s right. Find a movement you like. It all feels good to me.”

She leans forward putting her hands on my chest, giving me access to her breasts. While she grinds on me, finding a position she likes, I lean up, sucking her nipple into my mouth.

She cries out and her inner walls clamp down on me. I growl, excited by her unexpected o**m, and I continue to suck her nipple, as she rides out her pleasure. Her body floods with her arousal, soaking my groin and hips underneath her.

“Find another position, and come for me again, Sophie. Feeling your o**ms, while I fight to hold mine back, will only make my o**m that much better when I finally let go.”

“Are you sure I’m doing it right?” she asks breathlessly.

“Oh yes, love. When I finally come, you’ll know just how incredible you are.”

She catches her breath and I see determination in her eyes as she begins sliding up and down my length. F**k, I'll never hold out this time.

"Oh Hunter! Oh Hunter, this feels really good," she says, her head falling back as she bounces on my c**k, her breasts slapping together as her movements become faster.

"That's right baby, ride my c**k," say to her, grabbing her hips and beginning to thrust up into her as she bounces on me.

"Hunter! HUNTER!" she screams, and I feel her walls clamp down on me as her body jerks with her o**m. She begins keening with pleasure and I hold her hips, thrusting into her several more times before I explode and bury myself deep inside her.

She collapses against me as we both pant, gasping for air, the aftershocks still rippling through our bodies. I wrap my arms around her, stroking her back.

"Feel free to wake me like that every morning for the rest of our lives," I say, making her laugh.

She looks up at me and I can see her eyes starting to droop. "It was okay?"

"It was fantastic. It was perfect. You are perfect," I tell her.

"Well, practice does make perfect. So, perhaps I can find true perfection if I practice more," she says, snuggling against me.

"I will happily be your test subject each and every time you wish to practice," I say, feeling her chuckle. It isn't much longer before her breathing deepens and she falls asleep. This time, I follow closely behind her, my arms still wrapped tightly around her as we sleep.

The next time I wake, I'm hard inside her, never having slipped out while we slept.

'I'm pretty sure we stayed hard the entire time you slept,' Shaw smirks.

'How could I not? I have my s**y mate naked on top of me.'

I slowly begin moving inside her, gently waking her and enjoying the sweet sounds of arousal she makes as she wakes. When her eyes open, she sucks in a breath, looking up at me.

"Good morning, sunshine," I say, continuing to move inside her.

"Good morning, indeed," she says, her voice already sounding a bit desperate.

"Would you like to ride me again, or would you like to try a different position?"

She sits up, biting her lip as she thinks. I sit up too, pulling her lip from her teeth with my thumb.

“What did I tell you about that?” I growl, feeling her body shiver at the sensation.

I lean forward, nipping at her lip before sucking it into my mouth. She presses her lips to mine, kissing me as she wraps her arms around me.

“Ride or new,” I ask, flexing my c**k inside her. She gasps at the feel, then narrowing her eyes, I feel her tighten her walls around me.

“Well, that feels fantastic,” I growl

“I want to try something new,” she says, her eyes shining with excitement. I spare a brief moment and realize that Lucas has never had moments like this with Kinsley and it’s all because of the way he claimed her. This, this right here with me and Sophie, is how every claiming night and morning should be. This is what we’re fighting for.

I run my nose over hers. “I’ll take you from behind. Would you prefer to be on your knees, bent over the table, or pressed against the stone walls of the pool?” I ask her and watch as her eyes get wider with each suggestion.

“Which one is better?” she asks.

“That depends on what you like best. I’m not sure there’s a better option unless you have one in particular that you like.”

She looks around, making her decision. “The pool,” she finally says.

“Perfect, if you like it, we can try it again at home in the shower,” I say, lifting onto my feet and standing. She wraps her legs around me, and I walk to the pool, still deep inside her. I step into the pool, moving to the area where she can stand and put her hands against the stone wall where the water trickles down.

I lift her off my c**k and set her on her feet, kissing her nose before spinning her around. I pull her hair aside before I cover her hands with mine, leaning in to kiss the sensitive part of her neck. “Arch your back and spread your legs for me.”

She does as I ask, and it isn’t long before she’s screaming her release again. This position is perfect because it gives her leverage to push back against me as I thrust into her and I can wrap my arm around her, playing with her nipples and c**t, making her come several times before I finally roar my own release, hearing it echo around the small space we’re in as I pull her to me and bury myself inside her.

I lean my head against her back as she’s leaning against the stone wall.

“Does this ever get old?” she asks me.

I laugh. “If it does, tell me and we’ll mix it up.”

We laugh together as I slide out of her, turning her to kiss her again.

“Come on, we need to eat whatever is left and then we need to talk before we head back to the pack.”

“Yes. And I was serious last night. I want to know about being this legend that Kinsley and Penny talked about.”

I rinse the sex off of both of us before we get out and walk to the table. There is some bread and butter left over from last night and I sit Sophie on my lap and feed her, thinking through how to best tell my mate that she truly has become a legend.

The One He Claimed Chapter 26

Chapter 26: Being the Legend

Sophie

“You’re thinking very hard,” I say, chewing the bread that Hunter fed me.

I’ve thought more than once in the last 24 hours that I must be the luckiest woman in the world to have Hunter as a mate. He’s given me the fairy tale. Everything I ever dreamed that finding my mate would be when I was a young girl. And he’s perfect. He doesn’t make me feel foolish for not knowing things. He doesn’t make fun of me, but he gives me the choice, let’s me decide how I want to proceed. I’m pretty sure that even without the mate bond, I would have fallen completely in love with this man.

And let’s not ignore the fact that he’s the s**t man I’ve ever seen. It’s been a while, but I grew up in a pack. Nudity was common, so I’ve seen naked men and women. But this man...I’m getting warm in tender places just thinking about it. I touched quite a bit of his body while he was sleeping, and even after he woke. His strength, his muscles, only add to the heat that has begun to pool yet again in my core. Since I’m sitting on his lap, I’m not surprised when I see his lips twitch and he looks at me. out of the corner of his eye.

“Something on your mind?” he asks, holding another piece of bread up to my mouth. I don’t think either one of us loves this breakfast, but we’re both hungry after exerting so much energy last night and as Alphas, our bodies burn a lot of calories in general.

“Just thinking about how s**y you are,” I say honestly.

That makes him smile. “Mmmm, I’d love to explore that further, but for now, we should talk. We need to get back to the pack. I want to officially instate you as my Luna tonight.”

“Already?” I ask, surprised.

“Yes. You know there will be push back from many packs. We’ve been working to create a council, a group who can preside over these types of issues, but we’re so divided that we haven’t even been able to come to an agreement about who should sit on the council. So, without that, and knowing that I’ve technically

broken a law by claiming you like this, I want to take away any possibility of them stripping you of your title.”

“We’ve broken,” I say, and he frowns at me.

“We’ve broken the law. It wasn’t just you. If we’re going to face off against the ones who refuse to make change, then we will do it as a unified front,” I say, determined that I will stand beside him. I won’t let him take the brunt of whatever is to come because he wants to protect me. He’s already given me more than I ever dreamed to hope for in the last two years. For that alone, I’ll fight beside him. Add to that, I’m completely and totally in love with this man already, and I would die for him, just as I know in my heart, that he would die for me.

He takes my face in his hand, leaning into kiss me in a much deeper kiss than I was expecting. “How did I get so f**g lucky?” he asks, chewing the bread that was in my mouth a moment ago.

“Are you talking about me now, or the food?” I tease.

11 288 Vouchers

He smacks my a** making me jump. “You know exactly what I’m talking about,” he says, holding out another piece of bread for me. I use my tongue to pull his fingers into my mouth, then bite them, just enough to get him back for smacking my a**

All it does is make him smile and increase the possessive look on his face. I can feel the heat pooling in my core and Hunter’s nostrils flare before he shakes his head.

“Hold that thought for tonight. We do need to talk.”

I nod, wrapping an arm around his shoulders. I realize, I’m perfectly happy being naked in my mate’s presence now. That didn’t take long.

He takes a deep breath and sighs, before looking me in the eyes.

“What Kinsley and Penny said is true. I’m not sure why or how, but something about you leaving that night, changed everything. The news of your leaving spread like wildfire through the packs. The Alphas are probably partially responsible for that because they were very vocal about your father searching for you and bringing you back. His absolute refusal to search for you caused a ripple unlike anything I’ve ever seen in the packs.”

He looks past me, his eyes unfocused as he remembers. “The Alphas were angry. They threatened to wage war against your father and your pack. Several of us stood with him, your sister’s mate being one of them, agreeing to fight at his side if there was to be a war. There were enough of us, enough strong packs, that stood beside your father, that the other packs backed down.”

“Are all the packs either for or against the law?” I ask.

“There are a few who are neutral. Those that have few, if any, ranked she-wolves in their pack. But for the most part, the packs are divided one way or the other.”

“So, what does that have to do with me?” I ask.

“You remember how naïve you were that night? It was the same with your sister, I’m sure,” he says, and I nod. I remember my mother giving Amelia ‘the talk’ that morning. Why wait until just before the event to tell her what was going to transpire?

“It was the same with my sister as well and I’m sure, most ranked she-wolves. There are almost never any ranked she-wolves at a coming-of-age party for another ranked she-wolf, for that reason. However, once you left, everything changed. Mothers who hated the future for their daughters began telling them of what was to come. They began hiding money, setting up secret bank accounts, apartments in big cities, anything they could do to get their daughters out of the packs before they turned 18.”

He sighs. “It worked, for a while, especially for Alpha females, I’m told. Having more money, they were able to hide and put away money more easily. But then, she-wolves started disappearing, not just from a pack here or a pack there, but from all of them. The Alphas and other ranked wolves figured out what was happening and some of them started locking their ranked she-wolves in the pack, not letting them leave, even if they are years away from turning 18. Others went on the hunt, as you know, hunting down ranked she-wolves and claiming them. They stopped caring if the she-wolf was their fated mate, they only cared that they caught and claimed their mate.”

I knew this, Penny had basically told me how awful it had gotten, but to hear it from Hunter’s perspective, to hear it from an Alpha, was almost worse. He looks at me, and I’m not sure what I see in his eyes, but it feels almost like pity. It makes my stomach clench and I know I’m not going to like whatever he’s about to say.

“It started about a year or so ago. A ranked she-wolf was captured, dragged back to her pack and claimed publicly in front of the pack. I’m not sure if the Alpha was her fated

mate or not, and honestly, I don't think it matters. From what I heard, he wasn't careful with her, he was angry at having to hunt her down, so he punished her, by stripping her down while he claimed her for all to see."

He stops, clenching his teeth. I'm not sure he realizes that his arm has tightened around me, almost as if he's instinctively protecting me from something like that ever happening to me.

"To my knowledge, she was the first to start it."

"Start what?" I whisper.

He looks into my eyes and takes a deep breath. "She ran to a cliff edge. Her mate and the pack tried to stop her, but she had already decided death was better than the life she had. I wasn't there, but the rumors flew afterward. She apparently turned to look at the pack and before she jumped," he sighs, taking another deep breath. "Before she jumped, she cried out, 'For Sophie! For all of us!' and then she jumped to her death."

I gasp, my hand flying to my mouth. "Why? Why me?"

"I don't know. I don't know why she said it, but it started a whole other ripple effect. Every time a she-wolf intentionally took her life after that, she'd either scream the words, or write them down, so someone would find the note and know that she chose death over this life. That's why they call you the legend. You started this ball rolling, and they've turned you into a martyr, a beacon for the choices that they are making.

I stand, the bread in my stomach threatening to come back up. When I turn, Hunter hasn't moved, the hand that was around my hip reaching out like he was trying to hold on to me.

"I never wanted any of this. I just. I just didn't want to be claimed publicly. How...?"

In a moment, he's up and his arms are wrapped around me. "Breathe, Sophie. Breathe. This is why I waited to tell you. I knew it would be a lot. I knew it would be a heavy burden on you.

"All those lives..." I say, tears running down my face.

Hunter pulls back, taking my face in his hands and wiping away the tears. "Those lives are not lost because of you. Do you hear me?" he asks fiercely. "It's because of this process, this law, that needs to be eliminated. You are not responsible for those deaths, Sophie. The law is. Tell me you understand that."

My head is spinning, I don't know what to think. I had no idea, none, that any of this was happening.

“SOPHIE!” Hunter growls, shaking me, bringing my attention back to him. “You are not responsible for their deaths,” he says carefully and slowly.

“Aren’t I?”

“No, you are not.”

There’s something about the way he says it, the way he is looking at me, that helps me to breathe, helps my head to stop spinning.

“No one knew what happened to you. You hid much better than anyone else did. Maybe the first woman thought you were dead. or at least assumed you were. I don’t know. But it’s become frequent enough that everyone, and I do mean everyone, knows your name Sophie. You need to be prepared for that.”

I look into his eyes, feeling desperate and lost. “What am I going to do?”

“We, Sophie,” he says, putting his forehead against mine. “What are WE going to do? A unified front, remember? You and me, together. And WE are going to change the law, WE are going to change history. WE are going to make a better life for all she- wolves.”

The One He Claimed Chapter 27

Chapter 27: Return to the Pack

Hunter

Now that our bond is complete, I can feel Sophie’s emotions, I can feel the weight of what she is taking on as her

responsibility. It’s not her responsibility to bear, and the responsibility that we will be taking on isn’t hers alone. We are in this together. But we will have a steep, difficult mountain to climb.

I stare into her eyes, pouring my strength and my determination. into her until she finally nods. I know she’s been away for two years, and a lot has happened and changed since that time. Her being the face, or at least the name, of the revolution is going to make those who are against the change in the claiming process push that much harder against us.

“We will fight,” she says.

“Yes. WE will,” I confirm.

I hold her face in my hands until I feel her calm, until she takes a deep breath, and her body relaxes.

“You are not alone anymore, Sophie. And while we do have our work cut out for us, there will be positives,” I say, stroking my hands down her arms.

“Like seeing my family again,” she says.

“Yes. And now, we’ll make our stand. Anyone who doesn’t agree can leave our pack. Once it’s cleared and only those who agree with eliminating public claimings remain, we can open our borders to all the she-wolves who are running.”

She gasps, grabbing onto my arm. “But Hunter, don’t you think. that means that the packs will join together and fight against us? We’d never be able to withstand that type of attack.”

“Yes, there will be battles. Yes, there will be fighting. But the first thing we are going to do, before we announce that our borders are open to all she-wolves on the run, is to find out who is on our side and who will stand with us. Like I said, many packs stood beside your father. I believe that some good Alphas, Alphas like Alpha Kayce and Alpha Dutton who haven’t found their mates yet, may have lost their fated mates to the Alphas who are hunting the she-wolves. I think, once we explain to them that we could potentially provide a safe refuge for their mates, fated, second-chance, or chosen, that they will side with us. I don’t think it has occurred to them that some of these Alphas hunting their mates have taken more than one mate. Even if the first was their fated mate, the second one surely wasn’t.”

“You’ve thought a lot about this,” she says, leaning into me. I can feel her respect and admiration for me through the bond. It makes me feel proud to be her mate.

I lean forward and nuzzle my nose against hers. “I know we need to head back. I know we need to leave this place. But I’m also resistant. I know once we leave, reality will set in and like you said, we’ll have battle after battle on our hands. I’ve loved every minute of our time here together and I hope, someday, we can come back here, and remember our night together. Until then, will you stand with me, beside me, as my Luna and partner in life?”

Now it’s her turn to take my face in her hands. “I’m not sure I could love you any more than I already do, Hunter Reynolds. I will be proud to stand beside you to call you my Alpha, and my mate.”

I take her mouth in a passionate kiss, one that provides the promise of a life to come, a life where we are happy together. A new beginning for the mating of ranked wolves.

She begins whimpering, pressing against me. I reach down and grab her thighs wrapping her legs around me. I can smell her arousal and I sit her on the edge of the stone table, pulling back just enough to look at her.

“Once more before we go. I need to be inside you,” I say to her.

“Yes,” she breathes, guiding me to her entrance, as greedy for me as I am for her.

It’s beautiful the way she wants me, her confidence that I want her and that she is safe with me. I watch her beautiful face as I thrust into her, watching her come undone for me once, twice, and then a third time before I empty myself inside her.

I kiss her again, letting her feel my love for her in the kiss, opening my mind and heart to her. When I smell her arousal s**e again, I pull away from her.

“No more, witch. At least not for now,” I say laughing and pulling away from her before I do take her again.

“Does Shaw agree with that?” she asks, her voice deeper. I’m about to answer when Shaw pushes forward.

“Absolutely not. We have an hours run back to the pack. I’m pretty sure I can catch my little mate several times on that run, and when I do, I’ll make you mine.”

Sophie, or maybe it’s Hedda, shivers in anticipation. I quickly look around, cleaning up the dishes from last night, knowing Kinsley will be by here today to clean it up. Once that’s done, I walk out the front entrance, ahead of Sophie, making sure there are no Alphas lingering in the area. When I ensure that the coast is clear and my mate is safe, I step aside and watch while she shifts.

This time, I take my time looking over Hedda’s body. I stroke my fingers through her fur, feeling her body shiver at my touch.

“You are beautiful, Hedda,” Shaw says to her. She preens at the praise.

After we’ve circled her body, looking her over, he returns to stand in front of her. “The pack is that direction. Now, run. Escape me if you think you can my little mate,” he says, and she yips excitedly, taking off toward the pack.

‘You’re giving her a head start?’ I ask Shaw.

‘I’ll catch her,’ he says confidently pulling the shift and howling his hunt of his mate.

I’m thankful that no answering howls go up around us. I’d be concerned if there were other Alphas out hunting nearby. However, Owen is the first I’ve seen in this area.

Shaw catches up to Hedda quickly, whether it’s his speed or her willingness to be caught I’m not sure. Either way, he leaps onto her back, careful not to hurt her, while pinning her to the ground and mating her, marking her in wolf form, and sealing their bond. She purrs her pleasure while they mate and when he lets her up, she races off again, only to be captured by Shaw again. and again.

It takes us nearly two hours to reach the pack, and as we get close, I shift back, letting Sophie know that we need to slow down. Before we get to the borders, I mind link Kinsley.

'Alpha?'

'Kinsley, can you bring one of my shirts and two pairs of shorts to the eastern border?'

'I'll be right there, Alpha,' she says.

From where we're standing, I point out the patrols to Sophie, showing her the borders on this side of our pack.

"Where is the packhouse from here?" she asks.

"More to the center of the pack. You can't see it from here. We'll have to secure these borders now, but from here, I can see where we have gaps that need to be filled."

I'm surprised when Sophie also identifies areas where we should increase our patrols. I pull her to me and keep my arms wrapped around her as we talk and look over our pack. When Kinsley arrives, she hands the shirt and a pair of shorts to Sophie, giving the second pair of shorts to me.

"Welcome to our pack, Luna," she says, showing Sophie her throat.

"Beta Kinsley, I'm counting on you and I becoming good friends. From what Hunter has told me, we have a lot of work to do if to the Pack we're going to make the changes that we need to make."

She looks over at me as I mind link Lucas to join us. I want to present a unified front.

"You're really going to do it? You're going up against all the packs?" Kinsley asks.

"I'm-hoping it's not all of the packs, but yes. I have my mate. I will not tolerate any disrespect to her, and I refuse to claim her publicly and share her. It's time to make our stand Kinsley, not just by giving food to those on the run but providing them a safe refuge from harm."

I watch as tears fill her eyes, and she huffs out a breath before -turning to Sophie. "I would be proud to stand by your side and fight alongside you, Sophie Meyers."

"I would like that, but I'm Sophie Reynolds now."

She smiles, ducking her head, just as her mate joins us. "Yes, you are."

"So, your Little Sophie Meyers?" he says.

I growl softly. "She's Luna Sophie Reynolds now."

"Of course, my apologies Luna. I meant no disrespect," he says, showing her his throat before turning to me.

"Sophie, meet my Beta, Lucas, This is Kinsley's mate."

"It's nice to meet you, Beta, Lucas."

"How do you want to do this?" Lucas asks, turning back to me.

"This is my pack," I say, reaching over to take Sophie's hand. "This is my mate. This is the pack's Luna. They accept it or they leave," I tell him.

He nods and I can feel his concern that most of the pack will leave.

"We will present a unified front. You said you were with me. Have you changed your mind?" I ask him, and Kinsley frowns at him.

"No, I haven't. I just.....we're going to lose a lot of pack members," he says.

"So be it. In the next few days, we'll be opening our borders to all the she-wolves on the run. If we lose warriors and omegas, they will be replaced with ranked she-wolves. Our pack will only become stronger, not weaker."

He nods, taking a deep breath. "I notice that Kodan isn't here."

"I don't expect him to stay," I say, watching as Kinsley ducks her head, hiding the flush on her cheeks.

"Who is Kodan?" Sophie asks.

"My G**a," I say, reaching out to stroke her cheek. She leans into my touch, making me smile. From the corner of my eye, see Kinsley's eyes widen at my touch and Sophie's response. Lucas grits his teeth.

"Hunter, are you sure he won't stand with us?" Sophie asks. Instead of answering her, I look at Kinsley and Lucas.

"What do you two think?"

Return to the Pack

"He won't," Kinsley answers immediately. "Believe me, he's one of the ones that gets off on the public claimings."

I watch as Sophie takes in this information, then stands tall, lifting her chin. “Well, then he is no longer welcome in our pack.”

I smile, leaning in to kiss my mate. I hear Kinsley’s gasp of surprise, but I don’t look at her. Sophie stiffens, but only for a moment. “Right you are, my mate,” I say, before touching my lips to hers.

I take Sophie’s hand and stand up. “Ready?”

“Ready.”

The One He Claimed Chapter 28

Chapter 28: Pack’s Reaction

Sophie

As I walk hand in hand with Hunter, I can’t help but feel nervous. I trust him. Everything he has told me up until now, everything that has happened, has proven to me that he’s the real deal. He cares about me, and he refuses to share me with anyone. But, I’m still walking into his pack on faith alone. Faith in him.

I notice that Kinsley doesn’t take Lucas’ hand as easily and readily as I take Hunter’s and I think about what Hunter told me about their struggles. I feel the mate bond so strongly, the pull to Hunter is almost impossible to resist, I can’t imagine how frustrating or upsetting it would be to have your mate and not be able to trust them. Or, on Lucas’ side, to have your mate but they distrust you so much that they don’t even want you to touch them.

I’ll admit, I tensed a moment when Hunter bent down to kiss me in front of the two of them, but that’s all it was. A kiss. He was showing his love and adoration of me to his Betas. He has no problem expressing his love for me in front of others, and I know that it won’t take long before I don’t tense up and I just accept his public displays of affection, knowing that’s as far as it will ever go. He told me so, that he has no problem letting others see our love, but he will never share me with anyone, never share our intimacy with anyone.

Kinsley’s response, however, was telling. I heard her gasp, heard her heart rate increase as Hunter reached down to kiss me. She still struggles with what happened to her. I don’t know if there is anything that I can do to help her get past that, but I will try, not only as her Luna, but also, hopefully, as her friend.

The patrols hear us first, howling their hello for the return of their Alpha. Perhaps it’s my scent that has the patrols continuing to head our way rather than continuing their patrol, but I can’t be sure. When they arrive at the border, the leader shifts, but the others stay in wolf form.

The leader looks at me, quickly noticing that I'm wearing his Alpha's clothing.

"Alpha, welcome home. We smelled a new scent, and I just wanted to check to see who it was," he says, his eyes continuing to glance at me.

"Nathan, let me introduce you, all of you, to your new Luna. This is Luna Sophie," Hunter says to him and the other wolves. They shuffle around and just based on their body language, I feel pretty confident that I can tell which ones are for and which are against the public claimings. The ones who are acting excited think they're going to watch me get claimed tonight.

"Alpha Hunter will be making an announcement to the pack, isn't that right, Alpha?" Beta Lucas says, stepping up.

"That is correct, and we will be having our Luna ceremony tonight. I'm going to make an announcement in a few moments, make sure you hear it," he says, causing the patrols to howl their excitement. I'm pretty sure they think this means that the public -claim on me will occur tonight, but they couldn't be farther from the truth.

However, their howls alert the pack and as Hunter leads me farther into the pack lands, the pack begins congregating our way, surrounding us and murmuring about me.

I feel Hunter squeeze my hand and look down at me, smiling his encouragement. I smile back at him, pulling on all my strength and training as an Alpha not to crumble at the pressure that I feel building within the pack.

"Do my eyes deceive me, or has our Alpha captured our Luna?" a man with dark hair says, sauntering out of the packhouse.

"You would be correct, Ga**a Koden, although 'capture' may not be the correct word," Hunter says.

The man's eyes look over my body hungrily. I'm thankful for the bagginess of Hunter's clothing which allows this man to see -nothing of me or my body.

Hunter growls a warning growl at his Ga**a. The man lifts his chin in submission, but it's almost a placating gesture, not a true submission.

"And do we get the name of our Luna?" he asks, his neck still raised. Hunter hasn't released him yet.

"Your new Luna is Sophie Reynolds."

"Sophie.... You mean our Alpha has captured Sophie Meyers? Well done, Alpha. It's about time. Now we can put this so-called revolution to bed," Koden says. His neck is

still bent in submission, and he doesn't seem to realize that he's only making Hunter more and more angry with every word.

Hunter releases my hand and steps up to him, grabbing him by the throat and lifting him off the ground.

"Now, why would you say that, Koden?"

He frowns, finally turning his attention away from me and focusing on Hunter.

"Well, you'll claim her properly now that you've got her back to the pack, I'm sure. Once that's done, the ranked she-wolves on the run will no longer have their martyr. They can all return home back to life as usual," he chokes out.

Hunter pulls Koden's face close to his. "Do you really think that my stance on public claimings will change now that I've found my mate?"

"It has to Alpha. It's the law. If you don't claim her properly, we can't accept her as our Luna," he sputters.

Hunter continues to hold him off the ground as he looks at the pack members who have surrounded us. I notice that Kinsley and Lucas move to stand on either side of me, ready to protect their Luna if a fight breaks out. They don't seem to understand that I'm the other Alpha wolf here. It's my job to protect them.

'We should kill the a**hole. I'd be happy to, except my mate looks so s**y snarling at him,' Hedda says admiringly.

"You all know me. You know my stance on public claimings. I have forbidden them in this pack for over a year. My belief that the public claimings are wrong and should be outlawed hasn't changed because I found my mate. You're all werewolves. You can smell my scent on Sophie. She is already claimed."

He turns and looks at me. "Show them, my love," he says, and I pull his shirt away from my neck, turning in a circle so everyone can see his mark on my neck.

"There will be no public claiming. will never share my mate with anyone, law or no. You have until tonight to decide if you will give your allegiance to me and to Sophie as your Luna. If you do not, you are free to pack your bags and leave this pack before sundown when her Luna ceremony will occur. If you choose to stay, you will swear your allegiance to me and to Sophie and any disrespect to her after that will result in your death. I am giving you the choice, the choice that our ranked she-wolves do not have. If you decide to leave now, there will be no penalty, other than you will need to find another pack to live in. Questions?"

He still hasn't released his G**a who has begun turning blue and is flailing around, scratching at Hunter's hand. Hunter acts as if he doesn't even feel it, as if holding a full-grown man off the ground is simple.

'For him it seems to be, Hedda purrs in my head.

'Focus, Hedda.'

"Alpha, how can we possibly find a new pack in less than a day?"

"You knew my stance long before now. You know me. Have I ever wavered in my decisions? If you didn't agree with me before, you should have left sooner," he says, resolutely.

"What about the pack? The other packs will shun us at best, declare war on us at worst," someone says.

"Yes, I expect a war," Hunter says. "The war has been coming for a long time, long before Sophie ran two years ago," he says, holding his arm out to me. I immediately walk into his embrace. He holds me tightly to one side, still holding a flailing Koden by the throat in his other hand away from his body. "But, I don't believe it will be us against everyone. I believe that there are others who will stand beside us. Sophie and I know that we have a tough road ahead of us..."

"Tough? Try impossible," someone says.

"I don't believe it's impossible. Change only happens when people make a stand. Well, it's time to make a stand, past time really. Our she-wolves have been making a stand for two years. Shame on me and shame on us for not making a stand with them sooner," he says.

"I've seen my share of public claimings," an older woman says, stepping forward. "Most of us have, at one time or another." She turns and looks at me. "Tell me the last time you saw a new Luna walk into the arms of her mate so willingly? When's the last time you saw an Alpha or any ranked member's mate look at him with love in her eyes like our Luna's doing with our Alpha, no offense Betas," she says, glancing at them, then back at me. "I don't think we have to worry about our Luna jumpin' off a cliff any time soon, do we Luna?" she asks me. She has a slight accent, as if her family descended from a European country.

"No ma'am. You don't, and I won't, ever. I absolutely love your Alpha, my Alpha now too," I say, smiling up at him. "As you all know, I've been away for two years and honestly, I had no idea what was going on in the packs. But now that I do, now that I'm back, I intend to stand beside Alpha Hunter and fight this injustice, not just for me, but for all the ranked she-wolves out there. They deserve to find the happiness that I've

already found with my mate. I want to stop these senseless deaths. I want everyone to have what I've found with my mate."

I pause, looking at all of them. "I saw my sister's claiming. I saw the horror on her face and the tears in her eyes." I look up at Hunter. "The tears that I cried last night were the tears of love, so strong that it made my heart hurt. There was no part of the night where I was afraid, or embarrassed. We sealed our bond, given to us by our Moon Goddess, and he claimed me under the moonlight honoring and thanking her for this gift. We both did. This is what it should be like to be claimed. It should feel like this, like nothing in the world can come close to comparing to your love for your mate, that nothing is more important than your mate."

Hunter drops Koden on the ground and slides his hand into my hair. His lips come to mine and he kisses me, his tongue requesting entrance to my mouth, which I readily give him. I know I can trust him, and I feel his pride at my words, his need to show me how much he appreciates what I've said and the trust that I've given him. I lose myself in the kiss, leaning into him, my arms going around his neck as his arms pull me closer to him.

When I hear someone clearing their throat, I've completely forgotten that we're standing in front of a large group of people. Hunter pulls back, smiling down at me and stroking my cheek.

"No one and nothing could ever make me do anything that would take away the trust that my mate has in me," he says, kissing my nose and looking at his pack. I realize that they have all gone silent, watching our embrace.

"Well, that was all I needed to see. I haven't seen a love like that among our ranked members in...well...much too long. I'm staying. I'd rather fight for an Alpha and Luna who love each other like that, than rush to a pack with a Luna who's constantly looking for a way to escape and is willing to end her life to get away from her mate," the woman says, turning around and looking at the pack members behind her.

"Any of you who leave, are fools. If you're foolish enough to go, I'll be biding my time until you come crawling back begging for a second chance. Who do you think the ranked members are going to come to when the ranked she-wolves are all gone? That would be our pups and our grand-pups."

"They can't do that. That's not part of the law," someone says from the back.

"Who do you think makes the laws, you g**t?" she asks, her accent getting stronger with her irritation.

"You have until sundown," Hunter says again. "And let this be the first and only warning to you," he says, gesturing at Koden lying unconscious on the ground. "If anyone dares

to ogle my mate again, you won't get off so easily. I do not share my mate. Not now, not ever. Dismissed!"

Hunter, still holding me to his side, turns to Lucas. "Get him off our pack lands. He is no longer welcome here."

"Yes, Alpha."

"I'll help you," Kinsley says, walking over to Koden's unconscious body and kicking him in the face, breaking his nose. "Oops."

"Kins..." Lucas says, but there's a hint of a smile on his face.

"He deserves it after the way he looked at our Luna. Plus, I'm tired of him leering at me all the time," she says, lifting his arm and smashing her boot into his ribs, causing a crunch of bones.

Chapter 28: Packs Reaction

"Oops," she says again smiling, before she and Lucas begin. dragging him away from the packhouse, back toward the borders.

The One He Claimed Chapter 29

Chapter 29: Names

Lucas

"I can't believe you broke his nose and who knows how many ribs, Kinsley," I say, equally shocked and impressed by my mate.

She stares down at his unconscious, bl**dy body with her hands on her hips, her chest expanding and contracting with the effort of dragging his dead weight past the pack's borders.

"He was a lascivious, arrogant p**k. He knew better than to look at me like that in front of you, but that didn't mean that he didn't look at me like he was remembering seeing my naked body every chance he got.

I step up to her, taking her face in my hand, gritting my teeth. when she flinches away from my touch. "Why didn't you tell me?"

She turns away from me, wrapping her arms around her body. "You want the truth?"

"Yes," I say softly, knowing I won't like whatever it is she has to say.

“I didn’t trust you to do anything about it.”

put my hands on my hips, looking down at the ground and regretting our mating night for the thousandth time.

“Hunter was right. About us taking too long to make a stand. I should have listened to him before I met you. I should have taken a stand like he did. But I can’t change the past, Kinsley. All I can do is try to make it better in the future.”

I stand there, staring at the ground. “Do you know how hard it was to see our new Luna accepting Hunter so easily, knowing that I may never have that level of trust with you?” I stop, my throat closing.

I turn, looking at Koden lying unconscious on the ground. I walk over to him and stomp on his hand, smashing it to bits.

“Lucas!” Kinsley says, rushing over and pushing me back.

I know I have tears in my eyes when I look at her. “You can’t even trust me to protect you? Even now? What the f**k kind of mate does that make me, Kins? A sh**ty one. Is there anyone else? Anyone else that looks at you like that? Because I swear to the goddess Kinsley, I will make sure that it never, ever happens again. This is your home. Our home. And I will not allow anyone to make you feel uncomfortable in your home. You are a Beta female. They should fall at your feet and submit to you, not make you feel....”

I stop, taking a deep breath. “If not me, why didn’t you go to Hunter? I know you trust him.”

“I can’t go to him every time someone looks at me in a way that makes me uncomfortable, like I know they are remembering that night, remembering me in that position, Goddess, Lucas, don’t you get it? I’d be in his office every day! We’re a huge pack. Lots of our warriors were invited to my birthday party.”

“I want names, Kinsley,” I growl at her.

“It’s not their fault they remember Lucas. Not all of them are creepy about it like Koden was. Most of them aren’t. Usually, if I catch them staring, they stop and turn away. But....”

“Names,” I growl, and this time I pull her against me. “You are mine. Anyone who looks at you like they want you, will die. I don’t feel any differently about you than Alpha Hunter does about Luna Sophie. Don’t YOU get it, Kinsley? I won’t tolerate it. That’s why it doesn’t happen in front of me. The pack seems to know what you don’t. I won’t allow them to disrespect my mate.”

She puts her hands on my chest, but she doesn't push me away. I watch as she stares at her hands, fiddling with the buttons on my polo shirt. "Does it help that I've started to believe that?" she asks me quietly, looking up at me through her dark lashes.

"Let me prove it to you," I say gently. "Please. I'll never gain your trust if you don't give me a chance."

She nods and looks at her hands again. "Honestly, I feel like I should stand up for myself, punch them in the face when they do it."

"Why don't you?"

She looks up at me surprised. I raise an eyebrow at her. "Did you think that I wouldn't believe you? Support you? Did you think that Hunter wouldn't believe you? You're a Beta. Both of us know that you're an honest, incredible woman. If you put a pack member in their place, I may ask what happened. Hunter would do the same. But that doesn't mean that we wouldn't stand behind you and support you. I still want names. But next time it happens, punch the a**hole in the face. Break his f**g nose, like you did with Koden. That will send a stronger message than anything I do."

I watch as a smile spreads across her face. Then she surprises me, lifting up on her toes and placing her lips against mine.

"Okay," she says softly.

I desperately want to take her mouth, to devour her, taste her, explore her mouth until she's moaning and lost in the kiss, much like Luna Sophie was earlier. But, I know it's too soon for that: I need to go at Kinsley's pace. So, instead, I step back, quickly rearranging my now hard length in my pants before reaching out my hand to her.

This time, she accepts it without hesitation, and I get to walk back to the packhouse hand-in-hand with my mate.

Hunter POV

I was beyond thrilled that Sophie not only let me kiss her in front of the pack, but I could tell that she lost herself in the kiss. I nearly did as well, but I need to make sure that I maintain the trust that she is giving me. I feel like a f**g king after what she said about me and our mating night. I will never do anything to make her regret trusting me.

"Come on," I say, extending my hand as Kinsley and Lucas drag Koden to the pack border. "I'll give you a quick tour of the packhouse and then we need to figure out some clothes for you."

Sophie takes my hand, looking around at the back of the packhouse. "Is this where we'll have my Luna ceremony?"

“Yes, is that okay with you?” I ask, wanting her to have a say in everything.

She laughs and looks at me. “I’ll have to trust you on this. I don’t know anything about your pack lands or this packhouse.”

“Our pack lands and packhouse,” correct her. “And I’d love to say you’ll have time tomorrow to look around, but I intend to call your father tonight and see if we can meet with him in the morning. Would you like that?” I ask.

She stops and through the bond can feel how overwhelmed she is at the idea of seeing her parents again. A stray tear falls down her cheek and I reach up to wipe it away.

“Thank you,” she whispers.

“There’s nothing to thank me for,” I say, leaning in to kiss her again. I feel like I can’t get enough of her taste, her scent, her warm, plumps lips.

When we pull away, I give her a quick tour of the first floor, showing her the offices where Lucas and I work, the office that will become hers and next to that, Kinsley’s office. Then I show her around the kitchen, noting that there are fewer omegas. working than normal.

“Do I need to find additional staff for tonight?” I ask them.

They all look at each other, then back at me. “We mind linked Beta Kinsley. We’re down about four kitchen omegas, Alpha, and several more of the packhouse omegas.”

“I’m sure Kinsley can handle it, but if there is a problem putting together a feast for our Luna ceremony tonight, please let me know,” I start to turn away, but Sophie steps up to them.

“Have all of you decided to stay?” she asks.

They all duck their heads. “Yes, Luna.”

“I’m so pleased. Thank you. Thank you for supporting all she- wolves and helping Alpha Hunter and I make a better future for everyone,” she says, and I watch the omegas smile with her praise but also the thought that they now have a role to play in the future betterment of our species.

“Well done, Luna,” I say as we step out of the kitchens.

“Omegas thrive on praise. I haven’t been gone so long that I’ve forgotten that. But beyond that, they are taking a risk staying with us. If there is a war, their lives become dependent upon us. I take that seriously and based on everything I know about you, you do as well.”

“I take the lives of all of our pack members seriously. But your point is valid. Omegas require the most protection, and so it means more that they are willing to stay and entrust us with their lives.”

I begin to walk Sophie toward the stairs, wanting to show her our room when Kinsley and Lucas return. I see that they are holding hands. I'm glad. Maybe seeing my relationship with Sophie will help theirs improve.

“Alpha, I need to restructure the patrol schedules. We already have several warriors who are packing to leave,” Lucas says.

“We have several omegas who are leaving as well,” Kinsley tells me.

“I knew about the omegas. Get a head count of how many are leaving, how many are staying and how many are still contemplating. If we need more omegas in the kitchen, put them on shorter, more frequent rotations. Lucas, let me know what our warrior status is as quickly as you can. Once word gets out, we'll need to make sure our borders are secure.”

“Yes, Alpha,” he says and the two of them head toward their offices.

“Do we need to help? I feel like I should be doing something,” Sophie says.

“You should. You should be familiarizing yourself with our pack. Soon enough, you'll be taking on a huge part of this workload. But for today, let's get you acquainted with the pack, our room, and finding something to wear tonight to the Luna ceremony. There is plenty of time for us to do start doing everything else tomorrow. Today, is about you, my love.”

When we get up to our bedroom, I open the door and let Sophie walk in ahead of me. “Before you say anything, feel free to change anything you want to feel more comfortable. If you want to bring anything from your pack that was yours, we'll find a place for it.”

I watch as she laughs derisively, looking around the room. “Do you know, my entire efficiency was smaller than this room. None of it was mine. It was furnished and old. It smelled of stale smoke and sweat, but I felt safe there for nearly two years.”

She turns and looks at me, walking into my arms. “Everything I want is already in this room. I don't need anything else to make it feel like home. It's already better than where I lived for the last two years.”

“Baby, that's not saying much. I want it to be everything you ever dreamed of. All those things you wanted when I met you at 16, I want you to have those things.”

She smiles and looks up at me. "I realized something over the past two years, Hunter. I don't need 'things' to make me happy. The things I need to be happy aren't tangible objects. I need things like love, security, safety, respect. Those are all things that you've given me. The rest is just....decoration."

I slide my hands into her hair, leaning her head back so I can look into her green eyes. "You humble me, my sweet mate."

I lean in, kissing her slowly and deeply before pulling away

The One He Claimed Chapter 30

Chapter 30: Dress

Sophie

I understand why Hunter wants to have the Luna ceremony tonight. If the pack hasn't sworn their allegiance to me as their Luna, then anyone could contest my position and title. However, it feels like there is so much going on, so much that we need to do just because Hunter claimed me the way he did, that I'm struggling with the idea of having a party instead of protecting our borders or helping around the pack.

Since I'm in our room, I don't know how many of the pack members are leaving. I stop, looking around the room. Our room. It smells deliciously of pine in here and while it's got a very masculine feel, Hunter said I could add anything I wanted. I'm not the same girlie girl I was two years ago, but the room. could use a woman's touch.

He left me here while he went to see about finding a dress. While I'm alone, I look around, poking my head into the bathroom and seeing masculine scented shampoo and body wash and dark towels hanging neatly on the towel rack. Maybe I could get some cream-colored towels to offset the darker colors he seems to like.

I've just stepped out of the bathroom when there's a knock at the door.

"Come in."

The door opens and three women, omegas by the smell of them, step into the room.

"Hello, Luna. Alpha said you needed a dress for your ceremony tonight," the one woman says.

"Yes, please come in," I say, and the women all come in. None of them look up at me.

"May I ask, have all of you decided to stay?"

This does cause them to look up. "Yes, Luna. We're all staying."

I smile and slowly approach them. They look terrified of me. I'm sure they don't know what to expect of their new Luna and depending on what they've heard of me, I may be pretty frightening to them.

"I'm so grateful that you will trust your Alpha and I to keep you safe with the battles that are to come. We will do everything in our power to ensure that the pack remains safe for everyone. Now, since we're going to be spending a lot of time together, can I have your names?"

"I'm Elodie, Miss," the one carrying a bunch of gold material says.

"I'm Aria, Luna," the one carrying scissors and measuring tape says.

"And I'm Natalie," the one carrying pins, needles, and thread says.

"I'm Sophie, as I'm sure you all know by now."

"Yes, Luna."

"So, what do we have here?"

"We're hoping that gold is okay with you, Luna. It's the only material we have on hand that is fancy enough to make a gown for this evening," Elodie says, holding out the gold material.

I frown, stepping forward and touching the material. "Make? As in you're going to sew something before the ceremony tonight?" I ask, appalled.

"Yes, Luna. We're very good at what we do, but with such a limited amount of time, it will be very simple," Aria says.

"Our apologies, Luna. If we'd had more time..." Natalie begins.

I hold up my hands and they all stop talking. "Is there nothing that is already made? I don't want you to go to all this trouble for me."

They all look at each other. "But...it's your Luna ceremony."

"Well, I know, but to your point, you've only got a couple of hours.

"We promise it will be beautiful, just simple," Aria says.

"That's not my concern. There are so many other things going on. I know that some of the pack members are leaving, that must be leaving more work for everyone. No one has time to make me a dress."

“We want to do this for you, Luna” Elodie says.

“Yes. We would be proud if you would wear our dress tonight,” Natalie says.

“Please, Luna,” Aria says.

I sigh. “Alright. What do you need me to do?”

I strip down, once again reminded that it’s been a long time since I’ve been around those who are comfortable with nudity.

The three women begin wrapping the material around me, talking in a language that I don’t particularly understand about darting this and hemming that.

“If you don’t mind me saying, you’re very thin, Luna,” Natalie says, looking up at me from where she’s putting pins in the hem of the dress.

I smile. “You all know I’ve been on the run for two years, right?”

They nod.

“Well, when you’re alone and hiding, you don’t really have the ability to cook food like you do here in the packhouse. I don’t know who made the pork that Beta Kinsley brought to me and Alpha Hunter last night, but I can tell you, it’s the best thing I’ve put in my mouth since I left the packs.”

Elodie smiles. “My sister, Eloise, works in the kitchens. I’ll tell her you said so,” she says.

“Thank you. It’s praise well deserved.”

“What do you think of one strap on the dress, Luna? On the side opposite of your mate mark?” Natalie asks.

“You mean so my mark is clearly visible?” I ask, looking in the mirror across the room and bringing my hand to the mark. I haven’t had any time to really look at it.

“Yes.”

“I’d like that. I think Hunter would too.”

They all chuckle.

“What?”

“Our Alpha is a very possessive man. Perhaps you’ve noticed. He’ll be thrilled to have your mark on display like that,” Elodie says.

“Luna, now that we’ve got your measurements, would you like us to make a few dresses for you? Everyday dresses, I mean?” Natalie asks.

“That would be wonderful. I only have a couple of outfits that I took when I had to run.” I chuckle. “I don’t remember the last time I wore a dress. I think it must have been the night I ran,” I say sadly, remembering that night.

A moment later, the door opens, and all three women step back, baring their throats to Hunter.

“Sophie?” Hunter says, walking toward me and wrapping me in his arms.

“What is it?” I ask.

He looks down at me. “I should ask you. I felt your sadness just now. What happened?”

He looks around at the three women as if they have the answer.

“Oh, I was just remembering the night I ran. It’s nothing.”

He runs his hands up and down my arms. “What made you think. of that? Seeing your parents tomorrow? I called your father. I asked to see him in the morning, but I didn’t tell him why. I thought it would be a nice surprise for him,” he says, smiling at me.

“Thank you for that. It will be a nice surprise, but the sadness was from me remembering the night I ran because it was the last night I wore a dress. Until tonight,” I say, gesturing to the women.

“I remember that dress,” he says, before turning to the three women.

“Is this the color you chose, Elodie?” he asks, stepping back and looking at the material draped over my body.

“We only had gold and black, Alpha. I thought we should use gold for the more festive occasion,” she says.

He looks me over, and I feel my cheeks heating. “Are you going to leave this shoulder bare?” he asks, his voice going soft as he strokes my mating mark, sending shivers through my entire body.

“Yes, Alpha. We thought you’d like our Luna to show off her mating mark during her ceremony.”

“You were absolutely right. Well, I’ll leave you to it. I just wanted to check on my mate,” he says, leaning down and kissing me softly before stepping away from me, not dropping my hands until he can no longer hold them.

“I’ll be back. Mind link me if you need anything,” he says, and I smile as he closes the door.

He runs his hands up and down my arms. “What made you think of that? Seeing your parents tomorrow? I called your father. I asked to see him in the morning, but I didn’t tell him why. I thought it would be a nice surprise for him,” he says, smiling at me.

“Thank you for that. It will be a nice surprise, but the sadness was from me remembering the night I ran because it was the last night I wore a dress. Until tonight,” I say, gesturing to the women.

“I remember that dress,” he says, before turning to the three women.

“Is this the color you chose, Elodie?” he asks, stepping back and looking at the material draped over my body.

“We only had gold and black, Alpha. I thought we should use gold for the more festive occasion,” she says.

He looks me over, and I feel my cheeks heating. “Are you going to leave this shoulder bare?” he asks, his voice going soft as he strokes my mating mark, sending shivers through my entire body.

“Yes, Alpha. We thought you’d like our Luna to show off her mating mark during her ceremony.”

“You were absolutely right. Well, I’ll leave you to it. I just wanted to check on my mate,” he says, leaning down and kissing me softly before stepping away from me, not dropping my hands until he can no longer hold them.

“I’ll be back. Mind link me if you need anything,” he says, and I smile as he closes the door.

“You really do love him, don’t you?” Natalie asks. She’s the youngest of the three women.

“I do. I love him more because of what he stands for, because he’s willing to fight for the rights of others. That’s the kind of man I’m proud to call my mate and my Alpha,” I say passionately.

I see Elodie duck her head and smile.

“What?” I ask her.

She shrugs. “I knew we made the right decision to stay.”

“But I still want to see you in a fancy dress for your Luna ceremony,” I say, making her laugh.