

# The One He Claimed Chapter 31

Chapter 31: Leavers

Hunter

It's strange feeling my mate's emotions so strongly. Maybe it's because I want to be close to her, want to be connected to her, but the moment I felt her sadness, I felt the need to go to her, to make sure she was okay. A lot has changed for her in a very short amount of time. She's been thrust back into pack life after being mated and claimed. Then to find out that she's become a legend for the ranked she-wolves on the run, I can only imagine how overwhelmed she must be feeling.

So, I'm surprised when her sadness is about remembering the night she ran, because of a dress, I'm not sure I fully understand why she's sad about that, unless it's just the memories of that time in her life. Hopefully, it's not about the dress itself.

I had to leave the room quickly. My mate is **\*\*y as f\*\*k** and the mate bond between us is already hard enough to resist. Seeing my mark clearly displayed on her neck, with the gold material draped round her gorgeous body, had me going instantly hard, which is the opposite of what my mate needs when she's feeling sad.

I'm glad that I got a hold of her father and that he agreed to meet with me tomorrow. He wanted to know why, but I just told him that it was a private matter that needed to be discussed in person. He had agreed, if a bit reluctantly. I know that tomorrow when I show up with Sophie, he'll receive the shock of a lifetime.

"Alpha," Lucas says, walking up to me as I head back to our offices.

"Head count?" I say as Kinsley walks up from the kitchens.

He looks at her. "By my estimation, I'd say about a quarter of the pack are readying themselves to leave."

"I'd agree," Kinsley says.

"So, around 50 pack members. How many omegas versus warriors?" I ask.

Lucas looks at Kinsley again. "Even split?" he asks, wanting her opinion.

"Yeah, probably more warriors than omegas, but many omegas are mated to warriors and the warriors seem to be the ones making the decision to leave. From what I can gather, the omegas don't want to leave."

"They have more to lose if they don't find a pack quickly," I say, walking into my office.

“And if the pack doesn’t treat their omegas well, even more to lose,” Kinsley adds.

“A good point,” I say.

“I expect we’ll see many coming back eventually,” Lucas says.

“Maybe, maybe not. If we go to war, they may not have the opportunity to return. Fifty is doable. Have you looked over the patrols?” I ask Lucas.

“Yes, and since many are still in their off rotation, Kinsley and I have agreed that we’ll each take a shift. I’m going to take a shift. tonight and she’ll take one in the morning. That way, I can run the pack while the two of you are gone tomorrow.”

“I can run patrols tonight,” I say.

“No, spend the night with your mate. Once word gets out, you don’t know when you’ll have a chance again to enjoy time with her and your bond is still fresh. Take another night with her. Kinsley and I have got this.”

“Thank you, both of you. I know this is a lot, especially without a G\*\*a here to help.”

“Honestly, I’m happier that he’s gone. It will make my job that much easier,” Kinsley says.

That makes me pause and I turn to look at her.

“You should have come to me about him,” I tell her.

I watch as Lucas turns and looks at her with an ‘I told you so’ look on his face.

When she doesn’t respond, Lucas does, but his eyes don’t leave his mate. “Apparently there are others making my mate uncomfortable. I’ve told Kinsley to feel free to break their noses as well, but I’ve also asked for a list of names.”

“I’ll take a copy of that list, especially of those individuals who remain in the pack. That won’t be tolerated, Kinsley, not by any of us. We’re going to be bringing more she-wolves into the pack. I won’t have them leaving again because they feel

uncomfortable. This isn’t just about you any longer. Although, I’m disappointed that you didn’t trust me enough to bring it to my attention sooner.”

My words are soft, but I know the meaning behind them will hit Kinsley hard. Everyone wants the approval of their Alpha. For me to tell my Beta female that I’m disappointed in her, will impact her more than anything else I can say.

“My apologies, Alpha. I never meant to disappoint you. I’ll have the list to you and Lucas by tomorrow.”

“See that you do. And Kinsley, I know you didn’t mean to disappoint me. That’s not who you are. So, make sure that you give yourself the same respect that you would give to the others in this pack. If you wouldn’t allow that behavior toward another pack member, you should absolutely not allow it towards yourself.”

“Yes, Alpha.”

“Good, now…” I begin, seeing Lucas move closer to Kinsley to comfort her, but I can also feel his happiness that I took the stand I did with his mate. “Sophie is getting fit for a dress, a gold one. I’d like to get her a necklace to go with her dress. Any ideas?” I ask, looking at Kinsley.

“What kind of dress are they making her?” she asks, and I frown.

“Uh…it looks like it’s going to wrap around her body and only have a strap on one side.”

“To show off her mate mark?” Kinsley asks astutely.

“Yes.”

Kinsley looks thoughtful for a moment. “Would you be opposed to dangle earrings instead of a necklace, Alpha. I think earrings. would go better.

“Do you have an idea of what and where we can get such earrings?” I ask her.

“I do, but I’d need to go now.”

“Go-and thank you.”

Kinsley hurries from the room and I turn to Lucas. “Do you have a dress for Kinsley?”

“No, but I have the omegas making her one. Her coloring isn’t as dark as our Luna’s, so they are going to use a lighter shade of gold for Luna Sophie, and a darker shade of gold for Kinsley.”

“I like it. A unified front. See if they can make gold ties or vests for you and I as well. I want it clear to the entire pack that their ranked members are all in agreement with this.”

“Yes, Alpha.”

“Oh, and Lucas,” I say as he moves to the door.

“Do you know where your mate is going for the earrings?” I ask when he turns to look at me.

“I believe so.”

“Good, call and order a pair of earrings for your mate as well. Have them give her something similar to what she orders for Sophie.

He smiles happily. “Thank you, Alpha. And thank you for talking to her. I wasn’t sure she was going to give me the list of names.

But I did let her know that we would always support her if she confronted any inappropriate pack member.”

“We absolutely will, and I’ll also let Sophie know that I want to know immediately if anyone ever makes her uncomfortable.”

Lucas chuckles as he reaches for the door. “I’m pretty sure our Luna won’t hesitate to put someone in their place if they so much as look at her wrong.”

I smile. Yeah, my mate is pretty incredible. “Now we just need to get Kinsley on board with that.”

“Definitely,” he says as he leaves.

I check to make sure there is nothing pressing on my desk, then I head outside to check on the preparations for tonight. On my way, I mind link Sophie.

‘How is my mate?’ I ask, feeling a sudden wave of pride coming from her.

‘I was just looking at my mate mark and thinking how s\*\*y it looks on my neck.’

I growl at her words, startling the omegas around me.

“That’s not directed towards you, I say, quickly, stepping away from them.

‘I’m glad you like my mark. I like you wearing it.’

‘I’m proud to wear it, Hunter. I truly am proud to be your mate,’ she says, once agairt making me feel like a f\*\*g king.

‘Do you need anything for tonight?’ I ask her.

‘Shoes? Or I was thinking I could go barefoot. I could ask Natalie to let the hem out a bit, so the dress is long enough not to show my feet.’

'I'll ask them if we have shoes first, but you may need to go barefoot, if you don't mind.'

'I don't mind.'

'How did I get lucky enough to get a perfect mate?' I ask her, feeling my love for her growing by the minute.

'I guess we both got lucky. I'm about to get into the bathtub, did you want to join me?' she purrs.

'Give me ten minutes, make it a shower, and we can practice me taking you in the shower. We'll try both ways, with you facing me and facing the shower wall. You can tell me which way you prefer,' I say, my c\*\*k rock hard.

'Hurry Alpha. I'm feeling desperate to have you inside me,' she says, and her voice in my head sounds as needy as she says she is.

'I'll be there just as quickly as I can,' I say, rushing outside to check to make sure everything is in order. The stage is set up and a table is up on the stage where we'll put the ceremonial knife and chalice. The omegas are stringing lights around the area and tables are being set up so we can have food and dancing to celebrate afterward.

"Do you need anything?" I ask, walking up to one of the omegas who is stringing lights.

"No, Alpha. We have everything handled. Those of us who are staying, at least," she says, glaring at a couple who are walking toward the borders with bags in their hands.

"It's their decision. If they can't respect Sophie as their Luna, they need to leave. I won't beg anyone to stay. I'm just glad to see that so many of you have decided to stay."

"You're a good Alpha. They are fools. They'll come back soon enough with their tails between their legs," another omega says.

"Why do you say that?" I ask.

"I came here after I met my mate, Alpha. This pack is much better than the one I left. Maybe they don't know how bad it can be in other packs, maybe they don't realize that it's only going to get worse if we go to war, but not all Alphas care as much about their pack members as you do. I'll take my chances here," she says.

"Most of the ones who want to leave are the warriors. Their mates are being forced to leave, even though they don't want to."

I look over and see the woman turning to look at where we are. Even from here I can see that she doesn't want to leave.

“If anyone returns because they feel like they made a mistake or were mistreated, I will accept them back. However, they will go through an interrogation because I won’t allow anyone to use their knowledge of what is going on in our pack to help another Alpha take us down.”

“We understand, Alpha. I just hope that when the time comes, because it will come, that the ones who didn’t want to leave in the first place, get to return.”

“I hope so, too. I’ll do everything in my power to make that happen. But once they cross our borders and renounce me as their Alpha, they are no longer my responsibility. Those who remain are my primary responsibility and I will protect you, all of you, even if that means I have to reject some of the individuals who want to return.”

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 32**

Chapter 32: Luna Ceremony

Sophie

I don’t know if the mate bond is this way for everyone, but for me, I hate being away from Hunter. I’ve never considered myself a needy person, but I feel a constant pull to be with him.

In my fairy tale dreams of finding my mate, it was all sweet kisses and dancing. The reality is much more intense. The kisses and dancing are there, because my mate made sure of it. But it’s so much more. I NEED Hunter, almost like I need air to breathe. I need his scent on me, I need mind touching mine...

‘You need that long, hard c\*\*k filling you until you scream in pleasure,’ Hedda purrs.

I’d scold her, but she’s absolutely right. Almost as soon as my body has recovered from having sex, I want it again. And right now, the idea that I could go into my Luna ceremony with my scent all over Hunter and his all over me, has me so turned on, that I’m struggling to focus and get ready.

When he tells me he’ll join me in the shower, I nearly moan out loud. That’s exactly what I need right now.

I hadn’t intended to wash my hair not having time to dry and style it, so I put it up in a messy bun on top of my head as I let the water warm in the shower. I step into the shower, after looking at my mating mark again. It really is s\*\*y having Hunter’s mark on my neck. I know it’s because it’s him, I wouldn’t feel that way if it was anyone else’s mark, but I really do feel lucky to be wearing his mark.

I’m washing my face when I feel heat, warmer than the water come up behind me. I didn’t even hear him come in.

“Rinse your face and then put your hands on the wall,” his soft voice says in my ear. He begins to leave a trail of kisses across my shoulders as his hands slide down my sides.

I rinse my face, just as his hand slides between my thighs, feeling how soaked I am.

“So wet for me,” he says, sliding two fingers inside me. I turn my head and he takes my mouth as he presses me forward with his body. My chest presses against the cold tile of the shower, making my nipples harden instantly. His foot comes in between mine, pushing my right foot out as his fingers begin to slide in and out of me.

I whimper in his mouth as he moves one of my hands over my head, running his hand down my arm and around my chest to stroke my cool, hard nipple.

“Spread your legs a little wider for me,” he says, his voice deep with desire when he pulls away.

I do as he says and the hand on my nipple moves down to pull my hips closer to him while his fingers continue working their magic inside me.

“Hunter,” I moan. He begins kissing his way down my back, before licking his way back up.

“You taste so good, Sophie. I’ve missed being inside you. It’s barely been eight hours and I already feel like a starving man, desperately needing to feast on you, desperately needing to feel you wrapped around me while you scream my name.

“Yes, Hunter.”

“Are you going to come on my fingers, baby?”

“Yes,” I whimper.

“Good girl,” he says and begins stroking faster until I’m right on the edge, then he twists his fingers, pressing against the perfect spot to have me crying out with the feel of the o\*m, m\*\*y body clenching tightly to his finger.

He moans behind me, gently biting onto my shoulder while my body jerks with aftershocks. Then he pulls out his fingers and puts the tip of his c\*\*k at my entrance.

“Is this what you want?”

“Yes,” I say, feeling almost desperate to have him inside me.

He slides in, growling as he finds me wet enough to bottom out, holding my hips with both hands.

“Both hands on the wall, Sophie,” he says, and I can hear and feel his desperation, the same as my own.

The moment my hands are on the wall, he begins thrusting inside me, hard and deep, filling me and giving me that sense of being complete once again.

“Yes, Hunter. Yes, Hunter! YES, HUNTER!!” I scream as I come. He forces me up and over again, continuing his punishing pace before he finally finds his release and empties inside me.

As soon as we both come down, he slides out of me, spinning me around and lifting me by my thighs. He presses my heated back to the cooler tiles of the shower and slides inside me again.

“I think I like this position better. I can see your mate mark, see your desire for me on your face, and I can kiss those pouty lips while I bury myself inside you.”

“Yes,” I say as he presses me tightly against the shower wall, his mouth taking mine as I wrap my arms around him, holding tightly while he brings me up and over again and again before finally finding his own release again.

When he finally sets me back on my feet, I feel wobbly, unstable and I’m panting. I lean against him, and he holds me to his chest.

“So, which one did you like better?” he asks me, his fingers stroking my back.

I think for a moment and then I look up at him. I know my smile is mischievous and naughty. “I’m not sure. I think we’ll have to do them both again so I can decide.”

“We can try both positions are many times and as frequently as you would like, my love,” he says.

We bathe each other and when we are dry and step out of the bathroom, my dress is hanging on my closet door. I try not to think too much about what the omegas might have heard when they dropped it off. Instead, I take a moment to appreciate the talent that these omegas have. I can’t believe that they were able to put together such a beautiful dress on such short notice.

“I’ll help you get into it,” Hunter says. The gold material is primarily pale but gets darker as it goes down to my feet. It wraps around my body and the zipper is so carefully hidden that I can barely find it. When I do, I unzip it and step into the dress, pulling it up and realizing that it fits perfectly, hugging my curves that I notice, when I look in the mirror, are much smaller than they used to be.



Hunter zips up my dress, letting his fingers drift over my back, sending waves of warmth of pleasure through my body. When there's a knock at the door, he kisses my bare shoulder then goes to open it.

"Thank you, Kinsley. Did you want to get a sneak peek at your Luna?" he asks, opening the door

I turn and see that her dress is a darker gold version of mine. She's wearing dangly gold and diamond earrings that come almost to her shoulders and accent the dress perfectly.

"Oh Luna, you look beautiful!" she says.

"We're like a matching set," I say to her.

"Except you're missing these. I had Kinsley pick them up for you, but I'll make sure you have some of your choosing soon, my love," Hunter says, handing me the bag that Kinsley had given to him.

I pull out the box and inside I find a pair of earrings that match Kinsley's.

"Lucas said I should, thank you for my earrings as well, Alpha," she says.

"No, you should definitely thank Lucas. I didn't order them," he says, glancing at her before turning his heated gaze back to me. I quickly put the earrings in and look in the mirror.

"They're perfect. Thank you, Kinsley. Thank you, Hunter."

Hunter turns to Kinsley. "We'll see you downstairs in a few moments. I just need to finish getting ready."

"See you down there," she says, before quickly rushing over and hugging me. "Most of the pack stayed," she whispers in my ear before rushing out the door.

I look at Hunter. "Is that true?" I ask him as he heads to the closet.

"Yes. We lost about 50, but that is only a quarter of the pack. There are more she-wolves than that on the run, I bet," he says. "Tomorrow, when Kinsley goes to leave food, I'm going to give the information to leave for the she-wolves who want sanctuary. I'm hoping we'll have some coming to our borders in the next couple of days. Once they start, I imagine it will be a domino effect and they'll all start coming."

"Let's hope so," I say, watching him put on a gold vest that matches my dress. "I'm feeling a theme here," I say, walking up to him and buttoning his vest.

"I wanted to present a unified front. Always, but most especially, today."

When he's done, he offers me his arm. "Are you ready to officially take your place at my side and as the Luna of this pack?"

"I'm ready," I say.

He walks me down the stairs and out of the packhouse into the back where a stage has been set up with lighting on one side and food and a dance floor on the other.

"I thought you might like to dance with your mate tonight," he says softly for only me to hear as we walk to the stage.

I'm surprised at the large number of pack members that are here and I know that it says a lot about the kind of Alpha that Hunter is that they've stayed. It only reinforces what I already know. That he's the perfect man and mate for me.

I walk with Hunter onto the stage, where Lucas and Kinsley are already waiting for us.

Hunter walks me to the table at the front of the stage, Kinsley on my left, Lucas on Hunter's right, flanking us, all of us in our gold colors.

Hunter turns to me, as Lucas comes to stand between us, reaching for the ceremonial cup.

"I, Hunter Reynolds, do hereby take Sophie Meyers as my mate and Luna. We have marked and mated under the watchful eye of the Moon Goddess herself and our bond has been sealed. Sophie Meyers, do you accept me, Hunter Reynolds, as your mate and Alpha, accepting your role as Luna of this pack, foregoing all others to love and protect your pack and your Alpha, for as long as you live?"

"I, Sophie Meyers, do hereby accept you, Hunter Reynolds, as my mate and Alpha. I will love you and cherish you above all others. I will love and protect this pack with my heart and my life for as long as I live," I say, having added the part about cherishing Hunter. It makes him smile, but I mean every word.

He slices his hand, holding it over the cup as his blood drips in. When he's done, Lucas hands the cup to me and I sip his blood, feeling the connection to a pack that I haven't felt in two years. I suck in a breath, closing my eyes as the feeling of belonging, of being part of a pack again, the feeling that I've missed for two years finally fills me again.

When I open my eyes, Hunter reaches out to brush my cheek. Then he takes my hand and turns to address the pack,

"My pack, I give you your Luna, Luna Sophie Reynolds!"

The pack cheers as Hunter takes my palm and slices it down the center letting it drip into the ceremonial cup. Once my blood has dripped, Lucas and Kinsley also slice their

palms and let their blood drip into the cup. Then one by one, each pack member comes to the stage and swears their loyalty to us and the pack, sipping from the cup before exiting the stage.

The sun sets long before the line is complete but when the last pack member finally swears their allegiance and loyalty to the pack, Hunter announces the celebration. Everyone cheers, someone starts the music, and the rest of the night, I find myself meeting and talking to all of the pack members, recounting my story of where I've been for the last two years over and over until Hunter sweeps me onto the dance floor.

I'm definitely rusty after two years of not dancing, but Hunter covers for any of my mistakes, being a perfect partner in dance and in life.

It's early in the morning when Hunter leads me back to our room, making love to me again in our bed, before tucking me up against him and falling into sleep.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 33**

### **Chapter 33: Homecoming**

Hunter

I wake, surrounded by the scent of orchids, naked body tucked against mine

I\*\*e's warm, Last night was a h\*\*e success, but today begins the real work. As much as I want to let my sweet mate sleep, we need to get up. It's time for Sophie to be reunited with her parents.

I snuggle closer to her, kissing her shoulder, and sliding my hand under the sheet to rub against her hip and thigh. I'd love nothing more than to make love to my mate again, but after last night, or early this morning, I know she's probably sore.

However, my mate doesn't seem to care, and as she comes awake, she presses her sweet a\*\*gainst my hard length, moaning softly.

"Good morning," I say, still kissing her shoulder, moving to her neck.

She reaches up, moving her hair to give me better access and I oblige by licking and sucking on her neck.

"Are you going to make it a good morning?" she asks me. Her voice is deep, partly with increasing desire and partly with decreasing sleepiness.

"Depends. How do you feel?"

"Achy?"

“Achy?” I ask, lifting my head to look at her more closely. Her body doesn’t feel warm, but if she’s sick.....

“I have an ache between my thighs that only you can alleviate,” she says, her eyes still closed, but her backside begins pressing against me even more.

I move my hand to slide between her thighs, feeling how wet she already is for me. I slide two fingers inside her, watching as she gasps. I love that her eyes are still closed. Something about this time, early in the morning when everything is still quiet feels extremely intimate.

“Is this where you’re aching?” I whisper in her ear.

“Yes,” she moans softly.

“Let me see if I can help you with that,” I say and replace my fingers with my hard length, sliding into her slowly.

She moans and whimpers, arching back to take me deeper into her body. “Will it ever go away? This constant need to feel your inside me?” she asks.

“Goddess, I hope not.”

I take my time, slowly waking my mate and easing her ache as well as my own. It’s nearly an hour and several o\*\*ms later, when we finally leave the bed, both of us still panting with beads of sweat on our brow.

“Come on, we need to shower. We have an appointment with your father.

That gets her attention and as we step into the shower, I can feel her apprehension.

“Talk to me,” I say, as I push her head under the water, getting her hair wet before pouring shampoo into my hand and rubbing it into her hair. I make a note to stop and pick up some feminine smelling shampoo, maybe they make something that smells like orchids that my mate would like.

Her eyes open, and she looks up at me as I massage the shampoo into her hair. “What if he’s angry that I left? What if blames me for everything that’s happened to him?”

I stop what I’m doing and put my hands on her shoulders. “He won’t be angry. He’ll be thrilled to finally see you again, to know that you are safe and alive.”

“How do you know?” she whispers.

“Because, if it were my daughter, I wouldn’t care what mountains I’d had to scale to keep you safe, I would only care that you were safe. Your father loves you, Sophie. That was obvious to me the night I met you. He’ll be happy, very, very happy, to see you.”

The rest of the morning and the drive to Alpha Carter’s pack, Sophie is quiet. I leave her to her thoughts, but I make sure that I’m constantly touching her, letting her know that she’s not alone. She barely eats her breakfast, picking at it before we leave.

When we get to the border of his pack lands, I stop for the border patrols, letting them know that I’ve arrived and to announce me to Alpha Carter. It’s standard protocol and I know Alpha Carter will want to greet me as is appropriate when an Alpha visits.

The border patrol leans in, sniffing the air. “Who’s with you?” he asks.

“My Luna,” I say. Sophie’s scent is partially covered with mine. and while she still smells like herself, it’s been two years since she’s been home. I’m hoping the patrol won’t recognize her.

I watch his eyes go unfocused and then he looks back at me. “Alpha Carter is expecting you,” he says, and we drive on, following the road to the packhouse.

When we arrive, I step out, nodding to Alpha Carter and Luna Amy who is standing beside him to greet me.

“Alpha Hunter,” he says, looking from Sophie in the car to me. I can tell he doesn’t recognize her yet.

“Alpha Carter, I wanted you to meet my new Luna,” I say and open the door for Sophie. The moment she steps out, Alpha Carter’s nose goes in the air. Luna Amy gasps, one hand going to her stomach, the other shaking hand going to her mouth.

“Soapy?” Alpha Carter says, taking a step forward. Even from here, I can smell the salt of tears from both of Sophie’s parents.

“Daddy?” she says, and I step out of her way, wanting to give her this time to reunite with her parents. She runs to her father, and he pulls her into an embrace, hiding his face as he chokes back a s\*\*b. I’m not sure if it’s relief that his daughter is alive and well, or if he’s just missed her that much.

Luna Amy steps up to them and Alpha Carter opens his arm, pulling her in so the three of them can embrace, the two women sobbing as they all cling to each other.

I stay back by the car, giving them time to reunite. Because I’m watching, I notice when Alpha Carter looks up at me and glares. He’s just realized that my new Luha is his daughter. I didn’t expect anything else. He doesn’t know how I claimed her, not yet at least.

“Where have you been? You’re so thin, Sophie,” her mother says, looking her over as she wipes her eyes. “Come in, come in, have you eaten?”

Sophie chokes on a half laugh, half s\*\*\*b as she wraps her arm around her mother’s waist and takes a step to go inside.

“Sophie,” I call to her quietly, reminding her that I’m here.

“Oh! Oh, Dad, Mom, this is Alpha Hunter, my mate,” she says, holding out her hand for me.

I step up to her, but my eyes never leave Alpha Carter’s. I’m prepared for him to punch me. His hands are in fists.

“Perhaps we should have that breakfast in private. We have much to discuss,” I say to him.

“Yes, I guess we do,” he growls, turning on his heel and walking inside, but not before he wraps an arm around Sophie protectively, leading her inside ahead of me. Her mother glances at me worriedly over her shoulder as she hugs Sophie.

Alpha Carter leads us to a private room, not saying anything to his pack yet about Sophie’s return. I’m not sure if it’s because he’s angry, thinking that I publicly claimed his daughter, or if it’s because he just wants time alone with her before the pack demands their time.

“Sophie, what happened to your hair?” Luna Amy asks as we walk into the private room.

Sophie laughs. “Hunter hates it too. It was to help me hide, but now that I don’t have to hide anymore, I’ll let it grow out,” she says.

When we sit, Alpha Carter purposefully puts Sophie between himself and his mate while I sit across from them. It’s fine for now. I understand why he’s feeling so protective of his youngest daughter, but once he knows the truth, I’m hoping he’ll relax.

Luna Amy begins peppering Sophie with questions about where she’s been. I heard the story so many times after last night, I could probably tell it, but I stay quiet and let her tell her story, let her parents ask their questions.

She’s nearly done when there’s a knock at the door. Several omegas come in with a large amount of food. They glance at me and Sophie, noting the way she’s tucked in between her parents, but they don’t say anything as they lay out the food and leave.

Before her father can pull a plate to her, I grab two plates and setting one beside me, I quietly call Sophie to come sit with me.

She immediately hops up, moving around the table to sit beside me. Both her parents look nervous at having her sit beside me. I ignore that for now, dishing up food for her, hoping she'll eat now that she's more settled. She really is too thin.

Once the food is divided up, I turn to Sophie. "Why don't you tell your parents about how I claimed you."

I hear silverware clatter against a plate, and I look up to see Alpha Carter's hands in fists. "I don't think that is necessary, Alpha Hunter," he says through gritted teeth.

"I think it is, Alpha Carter," I insist, and I can see and feel that Sophie feels torn by her father's response to my request. He shoves his plate away as if disgusted by the thought of eating now and sits back in his chair, gesturing for Sophie to give the story.

She looks at me with worry in her eyes. I lean toward her, kissing the side of her head. "Go ahead."

She nods and looks at her parents. "Well, I told you I ran from the human town. I met a girl, Penny. Oh, did you happen to see her? She came this way a couple of days ago."

Alpha Carter and Luna Amy look at each other. I'm not sure what they are hiding, but they are hiding something.

"Yes, we saw her," Luna Amy says.

"Oh, I hope you helped her. I told her you would."

"Yes, we helped her," Alpha Carter says vaguely.

"Oh good. She was very sweet. She's the one who told me about the food."

"What food?" Alpha Carter asks.

"Alpha Hunter, well really, his Beta..."

"Our Beta," I correct. She turns, giving me the full force of her smile, melting my heart.

"Our Beta," she says. "She found a place, it's a really great place, inside the mountain where Alphas would struggle to fit through. There, she leaves food and water every day for the she-wolves who are on the run. There's a small pool where water drips from a river or maybe it's melted snow, I'm not sure, but you can bathe there, too. Anyway, it's very safe, it has a secondary exit. so if an Alpha or other ranked wolf were to get through, the she-wolf could escape."

She turns to smile at me again. I need to touch her, so I reach out to stroke her cheek.

“When Penny and I arrived, I smelled Alpha Hunter’s scent. I knew my mate was close, but I wasn’t willing to accept him. Penny and I stayed the night and then she ran, and I was going to stay to get the food the next day. However, when I went back inside the mountain, Alpha Hunter was waiting for me. He tried to talk to me, but I was too afraid to listen, and I rejected him and ran.”

“Sort of rejected me,” I clarify.

“Right. I wasn’t sure he knew who I was, so I didn’t use my name, so it wasn’t really a rejection, and I didn’t wait for him to accept it, not that he would have,” she says, looking at me again. I shake my head, confirming that I wouldn’t have accepted her rejection.

“Then I ran. Right into the path of another hunting Alpha,” she says.

look up at Alpha Carter who is frowning now. “Owen,” I growl.

His eyes go wide. “That a\*\*hole?”

“CARTER!” Luna Amy scolds.

“Sorry, sweetheart. But he IS an \*\*hole.”

“I couldn’t agree more,” Sophie says. She leans toward me as she remembers, and I wrap my arm around her protectively. “He ran me down, him and his pack members.”

Luna Amy’s hand goes to her mouth again.

“He ordered me to shift, and when I didn’t, he knew I was an Alpha. He was going to mark me and mate me in wolf form, then order me to shift so he could do it again in my human form. He nearly had me,” she says, her voice so soft I’m not sure her parents can hear her.

I lean forward again and kiss the side of her head. “But he didn’ t.”

She smiles and looks at me again. “No, he didn’t. Because even though I rejected him, Hunter came for me. He attacked Alpha Owen and told me to run.”

“Later he found me. I was so upset, so sick about almost being marked and mated against my will....” She stops as her voice chokes on the memory.

“I had Shaw, my wolf, offer her comfort and warmth. She was shivering and in shock.”

“Shaw’s really sweet,” Sophie says, making my wolf preen and purr softly. She chuckles at him, his purr having the desired effect of relaxing her again.



"I fell asleep and when I woke up, it was Hunter instead of Shaw holding me. He talked to me, told me that he doesn't believe in public claimings. I wasn't sure if I could believe him, but he took me back to the mountain, and after running into his...our Beta, he joined me for dinner and we talked for hours," she says, smiling up at me again.

"Then, when I agreed, he marked me. It was just him and me under the moonlight. It was perfect. The most amazing night of my life," she says, her eyes on mine.

I can feel her adoration and love for me pouring through the bond and d\*\*\*n if I don't feel like a f\*\*g king all over again.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 34**

Chapter 34: Surprise

Sophie

"You didn't mark and mate my daughter in public?" my father asks incredulously, looking at Hunter.

"No, sir. That's why I wanted you to hear the story from Sophie. I have never believed in the public claimings. I have more respect for my mate than that. And even if I didn't, I am one hell of a possessive Alpha. I will never allow anyone, any man, to see my mate like that except for me," he says, making me so proud once again that he's mine.

I lean against him, and he looks at me, kissing me gently on the lips.

"Mine," he growls softly.

"Oh, Sophie, sweetheart. I'm so happy for you," my mom says, crying again. My poor mother. This has been quite a shock for her.

I smile at her, then look at my father. He's still staring at Hunter. "This is going to present problems for you and your pack, Alpha Hunter."

"Yes, I'm aware of that and it's why you are our first stop. You won't be our last, but I expect a battle. Not only because I refuse to claim Sophie publicly, but I intend to open my borders to all of the she-wolves on the run. I intend to become a sanctuary for them."

My father blows out a breath, then scrubs his hands over his face. "When you go in, you go all in, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," Hunter says.

"You may as well call me Carter. We're family now."

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“Thank you, Carter. I’m hoping I can count on your support if it does come to war.”

“Yeah, you’ll have my support, for what it’s worth. But you’ll need more. Who else are you thinking?” he asks, pulling his plate of food forward and beginning to eat. Apparently talk of war is easier to stomach than his daughter’s claiming..

“I intend to reach out to Dutton, Kayce, and Robin. I wanted to get your thoughts on Alpha Calvin,” Hunter asks about my sister’s mate before also digging into his food.

“Oh, mother, how is Amelia?”

The men stop and my father looks at my mother. “It’s been hard for her, sweetheart. Seeing you with Hunter...it’s so different than how she’s been with Calvin.”

“But is she happy?”

Mother looks at my father. “I think she’s finally finding happiness. It’s been a hard road for them.”

“They’re coming by today, actually,” my father says. “It’s why I told you I needed to see you this morning instead of this afternoon, Hunter.”

I turn to look at Hunter. “Can we stay and see them. Please, Hunter?”

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Chapter 34: Surprise

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“Let me check with Lucas. If nothing else, you can stay, and I’ll head back to the pack. I can always come back and get your later.”

I frown. I don’t want him to leave me here.

Hunter looks at my father. “I made Sophie my official Luna last night. When we returned yesterday morning, I gave my pack the option to leave or swear their loyalty to her and me. I lost my Ga\*\*a and about a quarter of my pack.”

“Do you need warriors to help cover your borders? I can send some while you shuffle your pack members around,” my father offers.

“That would be a tremendous help. I lost about thirty warriors, so the patrol rotations have become much more strenuous. Our Betas ran patrols overnight and this morning.”

“After breakfast, you and I can talk to my Beta. We’ll see how many we can spare. Now that Sophie is back, my borders should be much safer. The Alphas will leave me alone.”

“I agree. It’s another reason that I made Sophie my Luna quickly. Not only can no one remove her title or say she isn’t truly a Luna, but now the word will spread, and the focus of the Alphas will come to my pack instead of yours.

“Our pack,” I correct him as he did with me.

“Our pack,” he smiles, leaning over to kiss me again.

When I look, my mother is staring at me in shock. Again.

“Mother?”

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She shakes her head and smiles a little. “It’s just so strange. Even after two years, Amelia is uncomfortable with Calvin kissing her in front of others. But you don’t seem to have any problem with it.”

Leven c

I smile and look at Hunter. “That’s because I know my mate loves and respects me. He would never do anything to me that would embarrass me. Amelia, Beta, Kinsley, don’t have that. I can’t imagine how hard it is for them, knowing how strong the pull of the mate bond is, but not being able to trust your mate to be respectful or keep you safe.”

“It’s hard on both sides,” Hunter says, looking at my parents. “Our Beta, Lucas, still struggles with his mate’s inability to trust him.”

“As does Calvin. Which brings me back to your question, yes, I think he will take your side. If I may, I’d suggest that we send my warriors to your pack and have you stay for dinner. It would be good for you, me, and Calvin to talk. We could invite Dutton as well, if you’d like, since his pack borders mine. That would also give Soapy time to catch up with her mother and sister,” he says, smiling at me.

“Carter!” my mother scolds him again for using my kid name.

“Forget it, Amy. I’m never giving up that name,” he says winking at me.

I feel tears \*\*k my eyes. “It’s so good to be home. Well, technically it’s not my home any longer, but it’s good to be back.”

“You’re always welcome here, Sophie. And hopefully, since you and Hunter seem to feel so comfortable together, maybe we’ll

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have a grandpup in the near future?" she asks, looking between

US.

My cheeks go hot with my blush, but Hunter chuckles. "I'm doing my best, Luna Amy," Hunter says, making my father bark out a laugh.

"It's good to have you back, Soapy. But it's better to see you so happy."

"Thanks, Daddy. It's good to be back. And I'm so sorry for all the trouble that my leaving caused you. I didn't know anything about it until Hunter told me."

"Nonsense," he says, cutting me off. "It was worth it, especially knowing you've been claimed properly."

"Sweetheart, have....have you heard...?" my mother stops, looking from me to Hunter.

"She knows about being the legend. I told her."

"Yes, that has to stop! I'm hoping once we open our borders that these she-wolves who are killing themselves will stop," I say.

"That will very much depend on what happens in the near future and if we go to war," my father says, looking at Hunter who nods.

"If you're okay with it, let's invite Dutton tonight. The sooner I know who my allies are, the better." He reaches over, pulling my hand to his lips. "I want to keep my mate safe, and I want to make sure that any daughters that we have will have a better life than those in this generation."

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We finish breakfast and stand. "Sophie, why don't you go with your mother, see if there's anything you want to bring back to our pack. I'm going to go talk to your father about the warriors and call Lucas."

wrap my arms around Hunter's waist, looking up at him. "Thank you!"

"For what?"

"For giving me my life back."

He takes my chin between his thumb and forefinger. "It should never have been taken from you in the first place. All I did was right a wrong."

“You may potentially go to war to right that wrong,” I say, wanting him to know that understand what he’s done for me.

“You are worth it, my dear, sweet mate,” he says, leaning in to kiss me, deeper this time. I’m not sure if it’s to prove to my parents that I’m not bothered by the public display of affection or if he just wants me to know that he loves me. Either way, I let myself get lost in his kiss.

When he pulls back, he smiles at me. “Go with your mother. Feel free to bring back anything that you want. I don’t care how big or small it is. If it’s important to you, it’s important to me.”

“I love you.”

“And Hove you.”

As we walk out of the room, I hear my father.

“I’m glad I wasn’t wrong about you, Hunter.”

#### Chapter 34: Surprise

“No, sir, you absolutely were not.”

I smile as my mother wraps her arm around my waist and leads me to the stairs and up to the Alpha floor where my bedroom used to be. It’s feels strange being back here again, after everything that I’ve been through.

“I didn’t touch anything, in case you ever returned home. I wanted it kept just as it was when you left,” my mother says, opening the door to my old bedroom. I walk in and a feeling of nostalgia washes over me. The room no longer smells like me, but I can tell my mother has it aired out periodically since it’s not stuffy.

I take a moment to look around the room, remembering myself at sixteen, seeing the things that were important to me then. pictures of musicians and actors that I found attractive, doodles of my name with a different last name, sometimes with hearts around it. I smile when I see a page that says Sophie Reynolds with hearts all around it. I smile, remembering that I hadn’t even met Hunter then.

I quickly throw away the other names I had written, in case Hunter comes up here. I don’t want my mate getting jealous of a teenager’s musings, but I keep the one with my new name on it.

“Are you truly happy, Sophie?” my mother asks me, standing just inside my room.

“Yes, mother, I am. It’s been hard, Looking around this room, I realize just how much I have changed.” I chuckle. “When Hunter first realized who I was, he called me ‘Little Sophie Meyers’. I told him that girl was long gone. Seeing this room, I realize how true that is.”

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“But are you happy?” she says, walking up to me and putting her hands on my arms.

“I’m happy with Hunter, yes. But, if I’m being honest, I’m terrified. of what the future will bring for us. What will happen mother? I was lucky to be mated to a man like Hunter. But what about everyone else. Amelia should have had the opportunity that I’ve had. My Beta, Kinsley, should have had this opportunity. Penny, that sweet Ga\*\*a, should have had this opportunity.”

My mother hugs me tightly. “Sophie, I’ve never known you to not get something you put your mind to. You were always a strong- minded woman, who knew what she wanted. You now have a very powerful mate by your side, a man who obviously adores you and is willing to fight against the entire world for you. I think that the two of you will do great things together, my sweet daughter.”

“Thanks, Mom,” I say as we hug.

I look around my room, realizing that there is very little that still feels like me in this room. I do get some clothes, just so I have something to wear, but even those are too big on me now.

“You really do need to put on some weight, Soph,” my mother says.

“Yeah, I’m sure I will now that I have good pack food to eat again,” I say, taking a last look around the room.

As we step out into the hallway, I watch my mother’s eyes refocus. Then she turns and smiles at me. “I have a surprise for you. Your father agreed that it was okay to share it with you.”

“Ohhh, a surprise? I thought seeing Amelia was a surprise, which

Chapter 34-Surprise

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I'm really excited about. I've missed her. Well, I've missed all of you," I say as we walk downstairs

"We've missed you too, my sweet, tough girl. Not everyone could have survived like you did.'

I shrug. To me, it was survival. I did what I had to do.

Those are my thoughts as we enter the kitchen, so it takes me a moment to see my surprise.

"Sophie?"

"Penny?" I say when I realize my friend is standing in my family's pack kitchen. "What are you doing here?"

"I accidentally crossed your parents' borders the other day. I was taken to your father, and I told him and your mother that I'd just left you and that you were safe. Then....they offered to hide me here," she says.

I turn and look at my mother. "You aren't the only ones who have considered taking in the she-wolves on the run, my dear."

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 35**

Chapter 35: Another Surprise

Hunter

When Sophie and her mother leave, Carter looks at me. "I know it's early, but I could use a drink. Want one?"

"Sure. I'm sorry for the secrecy..."

"No. You were right not to tell me ahead of time. And you've done right by my daughter. I'm not sure I can ever repay you for that," he says, handing me a glass of bourbon before clinking his glass against mine and downing his in one go.

It's a bit early for me, but I follow suit and take the shot. I watch as Carter takes a deep breath, closing his eyes for a moment.

"I was so worried when I first saw her..." he says quietly.

"I know. That's why I wanted you to hear it from her that I marked her in private."

He nods his head and takes another deep breath. "Alright, let's get my Beta in here so we can reinforce your borders. You said your

Gamma left?"

"Well, technically, I kicked him out for ogling my mate in front of me and assuming that I was going to mark and mate her again in front of him and the pack. So, I cut off his airways until he passed out then threw him off my pack lands."

He looks at me a moment. "You might have been better off if you had killed him."

I sigh. I know he's right. "I'd just brought Sophie home, had literally just introduced her to the pack. I didn't want to mar that by killing my G\*\*a."

He nods and his eyes go unfocused. A moment later there's a knock at his door.

"Matthew, this is Alpha Hunter. Hunter, this is my Beta, Matthew."

"Nice to meet you," I say.

"Same."

"Alpha Hunter has mated my daughter, Sophie, and brought her home to see her family."

I watch the Beta press his lips together before he forces a smile. "Congratulations." Then he turns to Carter. "I didn't realize little Sophie was here. I can't wait to see her. My mate will be thrilled as well."

Carter watches his Beta as he delivers the news. "My new son-in-law marked and mated my little girl in private, Matthew."

Matthew turns and looks at me, his gaze intent. "In private?"

"That's correct," I say.

"But..." he begins, looking back at Carter.

"Alpha Hunter is going to take a stand against our laws, Matthew, and I intend to join him. I need to know now if you're with me."

"I have always been and will always be with you, Alpha," he says, turning back to me. "Alpha Hunter, you have my respect for what you did, but you do realize that this means war."



"I do which is my second reason for being here. My first was for Sophie to see her family again. The second was to ensure that your Alpha would support me in this fight. I'll be looking at other Alphas as well," I say and the three of us sit down as I go through it again.

In the end, the three of us look at their patrols and evaluate how many of their warriors they can send to assist.

"I don't think we can afford to send thirty, but we can make do with sending twenty, especially knowing that the heat we've been under for the last two years is about to end and refocus on you."

"I'm okay with that and I'd appreciate as many as you can safely send. I don't want you putting your pack at risk for me. But I also believe I'll be able to give you most of your warriors back once I have she-wolves entering my pack. They'll all be ranked members, and my guess is, they'll be willing to fight to maintain their freedom. I have warriors who aren't ranked pack members who are fierce fighters. I'm anticipating that these will be as well."

"I would agree with you," Carter says, and his eyes go unfocused again.

When they refocus, he looks at me. "We may as well tell that girl that was on the run with Sophie? She's here. We brought her into our pack."

"Penny?"

you,

"Yes. She accidentally crossed onto my borders and my patrols brought her to me. After she told me that she'd been with Sophie, she practically begged me to help her," Carter says.

"There's no practically about it, Alpha. She did beg," Beta Matthew says.

"Sophie said she's underage," I say, looking at them.

"Yes. Amy says she's sixteen," Carter says.

"And she was practically starving. I've never seen a wolf eat that much before," Matthew adds.

"Sophie said she stuffed herself the night before. I'm guessing she hadn't eaten for a long time before that. Do you know what pack she's from?"

"She's the daughter of Alpha Elias' G\*\*."

I nod. Alpha Elias is one of the Alphas who believes strongly in the old ways. His daughter is one that didn't put up a fight against the public claimings. It was as if she had been trained to understand her fate and she accepted it. However, to my knowledge, she's been mated for several years and still has yet to produce a pup.

The thought brings a smile to my face. I wonder if Sophie will be carrying my pup soon. I wasn't joking when I told Luna Amy that I was trying my best.

"I hope you intend to tell Sophie. She'll be thrilled to know that her friend is here."

"I just told Amy to let her know. Perhaps we should make our way out to see them. My daughter Amelia and her mate should be here soon," Carter says.

"I'll see to the patrols," Matthew says. I had already called Lucas to warn him that we had some of Carter's warriors come to assist with protecting our borders.

Carter and I walk out of his office and follow our mates' scents to the kitchens where I find Sophie hugging a young she-wolf.

I smile, feeling my mate's happiness that Penny is safe.

"Sophie, who is your friend?" I ask from the doorway. She turns quickly at the sound of my voice, her stunning smile sending shockwaves through my heart yet again. I have a moment to wonder if that will ever change before she pulls Penny up beside her.

"Hunter, this is Penny, the one I told you about. Penny, this is Hunter, my mate."

"Your...oh, Sophie. I mean..." she says, clearly distressed at what she thinks happened to Sophie.

"It's okay, Penny. Hunter isn't like the others," Sophie says, releasing her friend and walking toward me. If she wasn't talking to her friend, I might forget that there was anyone in the room but us.

"He marked and mated me in the mountain, just the two of us," she says, her eyes never leaving mine as she walks into my arms. I wrap my arms around her and she lifts up onto her toes, pressing her lips to mine.

I hear the gasps around us, the surprise that my Luna is so openly affectionate with me, but don't care at the moment. Right now, all I care about is that my mate has once again made me feel like I'm the king of the world. I wouldn't trade this feeling for anything. Every battle to come, every war I have to fight, every battle scar that I'll have will be worth it because of how my mate looks at me, how she responds to me, how she loves me.

She gives herself to me freely and I take what she's offering, not caring that others see how in love we are. I pull her to me, kissing her deeply, loving it when she wraps her arms around me and leans into me.

I get lost in my mate, still careful not to let it go too far, but willing to show everyone what it should be like in a mate bond.

"Sophie?" I feminine voice says, breaking through our haze.

Sophie pulls away and turns in the direction of the voice.

"Amelia?" she says, her smile breaking out across her face.

"Oh my goddess, Sophie!" Amelia says, rushing to her sister. The two of them hug and I once again step back allowing Sophie the time to reunite with her family.

I can feel my mate's happiness at seeing her sister again. I got the distinct impression when I met Sophie two years ago that she thought very highly of her sister, so I'm a little surprised when Amelia steps back and looks a little put out.

"Da\*\*it, Sophie. You just had to return today and rain on my parade?"

"Ummm..." Sophie turns and looks at me and I step up to comfort her.

"Amelia, your sister has been gone for two years. This is a joyous moment, especially when it looks like she and Alpha Hunter are now mated," Alpha Calvin says.

I nod at him. "You would be correct. Although, it's something that I would like to speak to you about later."

"Amelia, what parade is your sister's return raining on," Luna Amy asks, trying to placate both daughters.

Amelia steps back and wraps her arm around her mate, as he does the same to her.

"Well, I had planned to do this differently, but... Calvin and I are going to have a baby."

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 36**

Chapter 36: Amelia

Sophie

My sister's response to me being home was surprising, until she announces that she's pregnant. Then I understand.

My mother and I rush to hug her, Alpha Calvin stepping back and giving us space.

“Congratulations!” I say.

“How far along are you?” my mother asks.

“Is it a boy or a girl?” we ask, all in rapid succession.

Amelia laughs, hugging us.

“I’m just a couple of weeks along so we don’t know if it’s a boy or girl yet, but we’re both so happy,” she says, looking back at her mate.

“Yes, we are,” Alpha Calvin says.

“And Sophie. I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean for that to sound like I’m not excited to see you again. I’m so happy that you’re safe and home. But, well...now that you’re mated, I’m sure you understand what it’s like,” she says, looking at her mate again. This time, he comes up and wraps his arm around her.

“After...well, after being claimed, it’s hard. I’m sure it’s still hard for you and Alpha Hunter,” she says, looking from me to him and back again.

“Well...” begin.

“Perhaps we should move back to my office. We can chat before dinner. Now I have two very exciting announcements to make to the pack,” my father says, rescuing me from having to tell Amelia that my claiming was much better than hers.

“Yes, let’s. I want to hear all about it. I’m so happy. I’m finally going to be a grandmother!” my mother says. She gives me a look like I shouldn’t say anything yet as she wraps her arm around Amelia, steering her toward the office. I let them pass and Hunter comes up, wrapping his arm around my shoulders.

“Give her this moment. It’s important for both of them. It’s taken them two years to get pregnant. I know from talking to Lucas that it’s a huge struggle to get to a point where you mate is willing to be with you,” he says quietly.

I stop and look up at my mate, once again thanking the Moon Goddess that she gave me this man.

“What?” he asks, stroking my cheek.

“I’m so thankful for you.”

He smiles, leaning in to kiss me gently. “Not half as thankful as I am for you.”

“Hmm, I doubt that,” I say and turn to follow my family. I stop when I see Amelia staring at me open mouthed.

“How long have you been mated?” she asks me.

“Sweetheart, come inside. Let’s talk privately,” my mother says.

Hunter puts his arm on the small of my back, gently guiding me into the office. The moment the door is closed, she turns back to me.

“How long?”

“Two days,” I say and watch as something close to envy crosses my sister’s face.

Then she looks at Hunter before turning to Calvin and then back to me.

“How is this possible? There’s no way. I know you, Sophie. You would never be this comfortable with your mate after....”

“Amelia, come sit. I don’t want you getting worked up. You’re pregnant, you need to remember that your emotions impact our pup,” Alpha Calvin says.

When she doesn’t move, he walks over to her. “Amelia. I’m pretty sure that we will hear their story, and based on their interactions, I would bet money that there is a story,” Alpha Calvin says, but it’s more of a question and he’s looking at Hunter.

“That’s correct. I was glad to hear that you were going to be here this evening. I have something I want to talk to you about. Why don’t we all sit. As you said, your mate is pregnant, and this is a very happy time.”

“Yes, indeed,” my father says. Hunter waits until Calvin gets Amelia settled and then he gestures for me to sit on a loveseat that we can share. As soon as he sits beside me, I lean into him. I know I’ve changed a lot in two years, but apparently, my sister has as well.

Amelia frowns, watching our interaction, watching how I’m completely comfortable being in close proximity with Hunter.

“How?” she asks again.

I turn and look at Hunter. He leans in, kisses my nose, then turns back to Calvin and Amelia. He’s about to speak, but Calvin beats him to it. He’s been watching us closely, but not saying anything.

“You marked her in private, didn’t you?”

“WHAT? What do you mean?” Amelia asks, looking between her mate and me and Hunter.

Calvin continues to look at Hunter. “He did what I should have done two years ago, Ame. He took a stand, right? That’s why your mate doesn’t flinch every time you touch her. It’s why she has no problem with you kissing her in front of others. You have more with your mate in two days than I have with mine in two years,” he says, his frustration apparent.

“Calvin,” my sister says gently, reaching out to take his hand.

“Look at them, Ame. This is what it should have been like for us. It should have been this easy. But it wasn’t, although I’m thankful you’ve at least given me a chance to prove that I can be a good mate to you,” he says, his eyes softening as he looks at his mate.

He reaches out to stroke her cheek and I see her body tense, just a bit, then relax. He smiles, but it’s not a happy smile, having seen her reaction.

“So, you’ve taken a stand?” he says, turning back to Hunter.

“Yes. I came here today, first for Sophie to be reunited with her parents. I didn’t know the two of you were coming but it’s a bonus for Sophie to see her sister as well. But, I also need to know who my allies are. Who will stand by my side,” he says.

Alpha Calvin huffs out a breath. “Two weeks ago, I would have said yes, no hesitation. But now, I have a pup to consider.”

“Calvin!” Amelia says.

“Amelia, what Alpha Hunter is talking about is war. I just finally got you. I have no intention of losing you or our pup.”

“Calvin…” Amelia begins.

“Why don’t we all take a step back. Alpha Dutton will be joining us for dinner, and I know Hunter would like to speak to all of us. I have already told him he has my support, but each Alpha will have to make his own decisions on this,” my father says, trying to keep an argument from breaking out between Amelia and Calvin.

“Who else are you going to talk to beside Dutton? Kayce and Robin, I assume?”

“Yes, and also Alpha Ezra,” Hunter says.

“Alpha Ezra? Why do you think he’ll side with you?” Calvin asks him.

“He was mated to my sister,” Hunter says, and I can feel the sadness in him. I know how much his sister meant to him, how much taking this stand is as much for her as it is for me. I reach out and take his hand, intertwining our fingers together. He turns and gives me a sad smile.

“I had forgotten that Ezra was mated to your sister,” my father says.

I can see my sister’s mind working hard. She’s in agreement with making this stand and based on what she’s said tonight, I can understand why.

“You’re the legend,” she says softly, she’s looking down but the wheels in her mind are spinning so fast I’m surprised I don’t see steam coming out of her ears. “You knew that, right?” she asks, lifting her head and looking at me.

“Hunter told me the night he marked me. I had no idea before that.”

She nods, looking down again as she thinks through whatever is going through her mind.

“They will come to you, Sophie. They will trust you, the ranked she-wolves. If you and Alpha Hunter are making a stand, the she-wolves will rally behind you. I will rally behind you,” she says to me, but she turns and looks at her mate.

“Amelia, our pup...

“...Is exactly the reason why we should stand beside Alpha Hunter and my sister. Calvin, what if this pup is a female? Shouldn’t we do everything in our power to make her life better than the one that I had.”

I watch as pain flickers over his face at her words. She reaches out, cupping his face in her hands. “We have a responsibility to our children, to all she-wolves, to make this life better for them, Calvin. I know you love me. I know it scares you to think that something might happen to me now that we’ve finally found our way together. I understand that, but this is more important than you or me,” she says, turning her head to look at me. “And whether she wanted to be the face of this revolution or not, Sophie is the legend. They will follow her, they will rally behind her, and they will win. WE will win Calvin,” she says, turning back to him.

My sister is a lot of things, loving, caring, kind, and generous, but I’ve never heard her speak so passionately about anything in my life. She really has changed in the past two years.

Alpha Calvin takes his hand and covers hers, pulling her hand to his mouth and kissing her palm. “I won’t say no. I’ll listen to what Alpha Hunter has to say. But my first responsibility is to you, Amelia. I swore to you that I would never put anyone or anything

ahead of you again, and I meant it. But, for you, I will hear what Alpha Hunter has to say.

“Thank you,” she says, turning to the room. “Now, when do we eat? I’m starved!”

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 37**

Chapter 37: Dutton

Hunter

I didn’t spend much time with Amelia at her birthday party. Okay, I didn’t spend any time with her. I spent much more time with Sophie because Calvin spent the night with Amelia, allowing her the opportunity to get to know him. However, now I can see the similarities between the sisters. They are both passionate, caring, and strong Alpha females

I’m also glad that Calvin is willing hear me out. I would go to war alone if I had to, but I think it’s important for all of us who are against these claiming practices to stand together and fight for what we believe is right.

When we step out of Alpha Carter’s office, he is informed that Alpha Dutton has arrived. I haven’t seen Dutton in awhile. He, Kayce, and I always hit it off. Kayce and Robin are Alphas in neighboring packs and that’s how I met Robin, who also seems like a good man and Alpha, not letting the power of being an Alpha get to him. I met Calvin at some Alpha female’s party several years ago and realized that he was more like me, Kayce, Robin, and Dutton. We’ve never been friends like I am with the others, but I’ve always liked him.

“Alpha Carter,” Dutton says, greeting his host as he walks in. “And Luna Amy, looking as beautiful as ever,” he says flirtatiously, smiling when Carter growls softly at him.

“Dutton, you charmer, you know I’m old enough to be your mother,” Luna Amy says, and while she blushes at the compliment, no one takes offense. Dutton is charming. He’s charmed quite a few women into his bed, but this flirtation seems harmless.

“Hunter, I didn’t know you’d be here,” he says, smiling at me. before raising an eyebrow at Sophie who is standing at my side.

“And who is this?” he asks.

“Dutton, let me introduce you to my mate, Sophie. And I’ll warn you now, we’re recently mated, so don’t even think about trying to charm her,” I say, narrowing my eyes at him.



He looks at Sophie and I can tell he's expecting her to be shy and nervous like all new Lunas or recently mated ranked females. "Luna Sophie, it's nice to meet you," he says gently.

"You as well, Alpha Dutton. It sounds as if you know Hunter well. I look forward to hearing more about how you know my mate," Sophie says easily.

Dutton jerks, almost imperceptibly, before raising his eyebrow again.

"You're not, Sophie Meyers, by chance?"

"She is," I say, wrapping my arm possessively around her waist.

He looks her over, smiling. "Little Sophie Meyers, all grown up. I'm glad to see you're alive and well, as I'm sure your parents are too," he says.

"Why does everyone call me little? Was I really that small?" Sophie asks me.

"My sweet little mate, you still are," I say, leaning in to kiss her. Now it's Dutton's turn to narrow his eyes at me. "What..."

"Alpha Dutton," Alpha Calvin says, stepping up.

"Alpha Calvin, I didn't expect you either," he says, tearing his eyes away from me and Sophie to look at Calvin. "And Amelia," he says, purring her name as he leans over her hand to kiss it.

"Dutton..." Calvin growls out a warning.

"How about we go sit for dinner before Alpha Dutton causes a fight to break out," Luna Amy says, putting her arm through his.

"Yes, your mate was quite close-mouthed about why I was being invited to dinner. But now, I'm guessing it has to do with the two other Alphas who are here."

"Charming AND intelligent, what a wonderful combination," Luna Amy says.

"If only I could find my mate and charm her," Dutton says, turning to look back at me and Sophie again, frowning at our closeness and Sophie's relaxed posture around me. "And apparently I need to have a little of whatever it is that Alpha Hunter has," he says as we walk into the dining room.

The room goes quiet as we walk in. Sophie hasn't really been around the pack since we arrived, only being seen by a few omegas who may or may not have remembered her, but in here, there are warriors and older wolves who wouldn't be fooled by her red hair.

She was the beloved youngest daughter of their Alpha and Luna who ran away and hasn't been seen or heard from in two years.

Alpha Carter stands at the head of the table that is set aside for us, Beta Matthew is already seated with his mate, Beta Caroline. Carter gestures for Luna Amy to sit to his right, Beta Matthew is at his left. She has Alpha Dutton sit beside her and I move to sit Sophie beside Dutton, knowing he'll want to speak to her. I take the seat on her right side, sitting across from Alpha Calvin who put Luna Amelia between himself and Beta Caroline.

Alpha Carter stays standing and turns to the room which has remained quiet.

"I have two exciting announcements this evening. First, my daughter Amelia and her mate, Alpha Calvin informed me this afternoon that they are pregnant with my grandchild."

The room erupts into howls and cheers as Amelia blushes and Calvin preens.

"Congratulations," Dutton says as Sophie and I clap along with the rest of the pack.

When it quiets down, Alpha Carter continues. "It's too soon to know if I'll have a grandson or granddaughter, but either way, Amy and I will spoil them rotten!"

"Dad..." Amelia groans at her father.

"Benefits of being a grandparent, Amelia," he says unabashedly, as the pack laughs and cheers again.

"Please make sure that you take time to congratulate them this evening while they are here visiting. And my second announcement," he says, coming to stand behind Sophie.

"Our daughter, our little girl, has returned. Sophie is now mated to Alpha Hunter who most of you know has been and remains a friend of this pack. Our daughter is safe and loved and she's come back to us."

There's a lot of murmuring before the pack begins cheering again, although not as strongly as they did for the announcement of Amelia's baby. I can tell that they aren't sure how to feel about Sophie being mated, but they all seem happy to have her back.

Carter looks at me. "Will you stand with me, Hunter."

"Are you sure, Carter?"

"My pack needs to know, regardless of the decisions that are made by others."

I stand, seeing Dutton angle his chair to watch us, realizing that this is the reason that he was invited this evening.

“Members of my pack, you all know how difficult it’s been for us since Sophie left. You all know my stance and how I refused to search for my daughter because I didn’t want to see her go through what so many other ranked she-wolves have and continue to go through. You’ve all felt the pressure that many of the Alphas have put on us, the constant monitoring to see if we were sneaking Sophie home. Obviously, now that she’s back, that will stop,” he says and the pack cheers again. The constant pressure of being under the scrutiny of the Alphas must have been a lot for them to bear.

I feel Sophie’s sadness, taking on the responsibility of the pack’s stress caused by these Alphas. I reach out and put my hand on her shoulder, reassuring her. When she looks up at me, I wink at her. She places her hand on mine and takes a deep breath, calming herself.

I notice Dutton watching the interaction intently. Surprisingly, Calvin is also watching the interaction. It makes me wonder if he still struggles to calm Amelia with his touch. Sophie responds to mine almost instantly.

“As I said, Alpha Hunter has always been and remains a friend. of this pack. Unlike the other Alphas,” he says and nods at Calvin to let him know he holds no ill-will towards him, “Alpha Hunter marked and mated my daughter in private.”

There are gasps throughout the room, then the murmuring begins. I see Dutton nodding his head as if Carter just confirmed his guess.

“I am telling you now, as your Alpha, that I intend to put the full force of this pack behind Alpha Hunter as he fights against the injustices that our she-wolves suffer on their 18th birthdays. He intends to fight our laws and change them. With my daughter at his side, I know that he will succeed.”

I wait, not sure what to expect from the pack’s reaction. I’m shocked when they all begin cheering and howling. Carter’s pack is more strongly unified behind him than mine was behind me. I need to figure out how he managed that so I can bring that same unity to my pack.

I turn and look at my mate. Maybe it’s Sophie. Carter’s pack obviously adores her. Their happiness at hearing that she has returned is so strong that it’s almost tangible in the air. Maybe there is a reason that my mate is the legend. Maybe it’s more than her just being the first she-wolf to run from the claiming process. Maybe she’s the kind of woman that people adore, the kind that people believe in.

The kind of woman, as Amelia said, who people can rally behind.

Without thinking, I take her hand, helping her to stand. “I have no doubt that with you by my side, we will win,” I say, leaning in to kiss her. I feel her hesitation for just a moment, and I stop, a hair’s breadth from her lips.

When she leans forward, pressing her lips to mine, the pack becomes so quiet, you could hear a pin drop.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 38**

Chapter 38: Dinner

Sophie

When Hunter leaned in to kiss me, I could see in his eyes, feel through our bond, that something sparked a strong emotion, a flash of love for me. So, while I wasn’t surprised that he leaned in to kiss me, my immediate reaction was concern that others would see us.

It only took me a moment to realize that those are old fears, fears that I don’t need to have with Hunter. He would never hurt me. Ever.

So, after a split second’s hesitation, one where he stopped and let me decide if I was willing to kiss him, I closed the distance between us.

The moment our lips touched, I forgot everyone and everything around us. I don’t know how Hunter has this effect on me, but it’s like he’s the only one in the room. I lean into him, wrapping my arms around his neck and tilting my head to the side, letting him take the kiss deeper. His arms come around my waist, holding me in a way that feels safe and protective. There’s a possessiveness there as well, but I like that. I like that he wants everyone to know that I’m his and only his.

A throat clearing distracts me and I feel Hunter smile against my lips. I open my eyes and his are smiling down at me.

“Perhaps we should let your father continue with his announcement,” he says softly.

“Oh!” I say, jumping out of his arms and blushing a deep shade of crimson as I realize that I just kissed my mate in front of my previous pack. The entire pack!

“I’m so sorry,” I say, not knowing what else to say. The room is exceptionally quiet.

Hunter takes my hand and strokes his knuckles across my flaming cheeks. “Never apologize for loving me, Sophie.”

“Uh, right. So, that’s all my announcements,” my father says from behind me. I smile at him, completely embarrassed by my very public display of affection for my mate, before sitting down and trying to make myself as small as possible.

Hunter however, puts his arm around my shoulders and leans in to kiss the side of my head. “You have nothing to be embarrassed about, my love,” he whispers in my ear.

“Hunter, I completely forgot we were in a room full of people. People who have known me since I was a pup,” I whisper yell, glancing around and seeing that people are starting to talk amongst themselves again, but many are still stealing glances our way.

“About that,” Alpha Dutton says from beside me. “Is it really just that Alpha Hunter didn’t claim you publicly that your interactions with him are different than every other Luna or ranked she-wolf I’ve ever seen? Or is it something about Alpha Hunter himself?”

“I’d be interested in knowing the answer to that as well,” Alpha Calvin says, leaning forward.

I turn and look at Hunter. He just watches me, letting me answer the question.

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It is about him not claiming me publicly,” I say, turning back to Alpha Dutton. “But it’s more than that. I know that he me, that he will protect me, that he would take on the world for respects me. A man like that deserves to be trusted enough for me to give myself to him completely. I know that Hunter would never do anything to embarrass me or hurt me, so I know that I can give myself to him freely, no matter where we are.”

I can feel Hunter preening at my praise through the bond, and I’m glad. I mean what I say. He’s a man who deserves for me to trust him wholeheartedly.

Alpha Dutton turns back to his food, eating quietly and looking thoughtful.

Alpha Calvin, however, isn’t done. “But Amelia knows that I would never hurt her, that I respect her. The only difference is that I did claim her publicly,” he says.

I look at my sister, not sure I should be the one to say anything.

“Calvin, you know that I love you and I’ve learned over time that you respect me. We’ve built trust in the last two years, enough that I’m carrying your pup. But it’s wasn’t always like that. That trust had to be earned, rebuilt, if you will. Whereas Sophie and Alpha Hunter don’t have those problems in their mate bond.”

“So, it is about the public claiming? Even though Alpha Calvin did everything he possibly could to make that night as positive for you as possible, it wasn’t enough? Not

enough to make your relationship as easy and basically carefree like what Luna Sophie and Alpha Hunter have,” Dutton pushes.

Amelia looks at her mate whose lips are pressed tightly together, before looking back at Alpha Dutton.

“I was mated in a room full of men cheering the act, my first time, the first time I’d ever been with a man, and it was in public. Yes, Calvin did his best, but even that.... When you’re rushing a woman her first time, it’s not pleasant.”

“My mate is being generous,” Calvin growls, tossing his napkin on his plate as if he’s lost his appetite. “She tore, bled, because of me. Not only that, but I’ll tell you Dutton, the worst feeling in the world is when you sink your canines into their neck, and you feel every goddess-awful emotion that you are causing them, your mate, the one should love above all others. I don’t know how some of the other Alphas do it, knowing their mates are horrified or that they despise them for what they’ve done.”

“Those Alphas don’t love their mates,” Hunter says quietly, watching Calvin.

“It wasn’t like that for you, though, was it?” he asks, angrily.

“Calvin?” Amelia says, putting her hand on his arm.

“Was it, Hunter?” he growls again!

“No, it wasn’t,” Hunter says quietly.

I look from Alpha Calvin to Hunter. If what Hunter felt was anything close to what I felt, it was love, happiness, pleasure, pride, all positive things.

“Excuse me, Amelia, I need some air,” Calvin says, abruptly getting up. When Amelia reaches out to him, he takes her hand, kissing the top of it gently, before releasing it and quickly walking away.

We all watch as Calvin walks outside, and Dutton looks back at his plate. “I don’t mean to be meddlesome or obtuse, but, is it really that terrible? Even when your mate tries his best?”

“Yes,” Amelia says softly, watching the place where her mate walked out.

“Alpha Dutton, I wouldn’t have run, other she-wolves wouldn’t be running, if it wasn’t that terrible. And sadly, what Amelia went through is the best that ranked she-wolves can hope for. I saw a she-wolf hunted down in the woods, her mate growling at her to never run from him again before he slammed his canines into her. She was already sobbing from being mated roughly and he didn’t even try to make the marking gentle. It’s not a risk that I was willing to take and not a risk that many she-wolves are willing to

take. From what I understand, many are putting their lives in peril to escape, and some are taking their lives preferring death to such a life, so yes, Alpha Dutton, it is that bad," I say firmly.

"I guess...I guess I never considered what it would be like, for the woman. I assumed, st\*\*ly apparently, that if I did my best, like Alpha Calvin did, that it would be okay," he says, looking between me and Amelia.

She drags her eyes away from where her mate went. "We've found our way, but it took nearly two years." She turns and looks at me. "And I still don't find accepting my mate's touch as easy as Sophie does, especially not in public. Excuse me, I need to check on my mate."

Amelia gets up from the table and follows in the direction that her mate went.

Alpha Dutton looks up at Hunter. "So, you're going to war?"

"If I have to, yes. They'll come for Sophie, the other Alphas. They' ll try to force me to mark her publicly, try to strip her of her title when I refuse. I won't allow it. She's my mate, she's my Luna, and I shouldn't have to make her suffer for others to accept that. I won't."

I turn from Alpha Dutton and take Hunter's hand. "And this, Alpha Dutton, is why I trust my mate implicitly. Because I know that he will always put my best interests first, always put ME first," I say, smiling up at Hunter.

"Always," he says.

Calvin POV

I run my fingers through my hair, again, and take a deep breath.

I'm so filled with envy that I want to punch something. No, I want to punch Hunter. But I know it's not his fault that his mate responds in the way we all want our mates to respond us. Even now, two years later, Amelia doesn't respond to me the way Sophie responds to him.

I remember that night, remember the horror I felt when my teeth sank into Amelia's neck and her emotions came flooding into me. I remember....

"Calvin," my mate's sweet voice says softly from behind me. I spin and without thinking, I pull her into my embrace, burying my face into her neck and hair.

As always, she stiffens in my arms. I go to release her, but she wraps her arms around me, holding me to her.

“You did what you could, Calvin,” she says softly in my ear.

“No, Amelia, I didn’t,” I choke, my throat getting tight. “It should have been like that with us. I should have made a stand, I should have...”

“You did what you thought was right. You didn’t understand, you didn’t know. Just like Alpha Dutton. It’s not the same for men as it is for women, so how could you know.”

“Hunter knew,” I growl.

“Alpha Hunter had a sister who killed herself and her unborn daughter,” she says, making me pull away and look at her.

“How do you know that?”

“I heard about it at the time and felt awful about what had happened. I didn’t know why or how she died, of course. That was never explained to me. But I looked into it, after we were mated, and everything made much more sense to me. From what I gather, Alpha Hunter and his sister were quite close.”

“From what I understand, they were. I gehim being devastated when they told him she was gone.”

I lean my forehead against my mate’s. “Thank you for giving me a chance to show you that I can be trusted, that I do love you, and the I will always protect you.

She nods, leaning up and running her nose against mine. “You need to protect our future daughters as well, Calvin. You need to join this fight,” she says softly.

I pull her tighter against me, loving that she holds on to me just as tightly.

“Okay, my love. I’ll let Hunter know tonight that he has my support, our support.”

Then, my sweet mate does something she’s never done before. She takes my face in her hands, and she kisses me first. I don’t waste one second before I’m accepting the gift that she’s offering me.

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 39**

Chapter 39: Drive Home

Hunter

“How are you feeling?” I ask Sophie as we drive home. We left Alpha Carter’s pack with three Alphas pledging to stand beside us in the coming battles and possibly a war. Sophie and I also talked privately to Carter and Amy about bringing Penny into our



pack. That way, there would be no reason for any of the Alphas to attack their pack. The focus would be solely on my pack. Because they have accepted responsibility for her and she has accepted their safety, they want to talk to her about it first.

“I’m good. Sad, but also happy, if that makes sense.”

“Let’s talk about the sad part first,” I say. I’m pretty sure I already know why she’s feeling sad. The conversation with her sister over dinner was tough. But Calvin had returned with his mate and promised that he’d stand with us.

“I feel so sad for Amelia. I feel sad for all of them. And, honestly, I feel badly for Alpha Calvin as well. It seems to be as hard for him as it is for Amelia. I can’t imagine feeling all of the things that I do for you, but not trusting you, not feeling capable of giving myself to you. That’s not just hard for me, it would be…”

“It would be devastating to me as your mate and your Alpha. It’s my job to protect you, to protect all of our pack members. And somehow, the ones we are supposed to hold most dear are the ones we treat the worst,” I finish.

What Calvin said tonight over dinner is the same as what I’d heard from Lucas when he sank his canines into Kinsley. And I agree, I don’t understand how a mate can be okay with feeling those emotions from the one they love. Unless some of those Alphas just don’t respect or appreciate the mate bond.

“And, of course, I’m happy because I have you. I didn’t have to go through any of that. But, Hunter, how am I going to get these she-wolves to believe me that we have a safe pack for them? How can I convince them to follow me? Amelia seems to think they will follow me just because I’m Sophie Meyers-Reynolds, but that can’t be enough.”

“I think it is. I think you underestimate how powerful your words and your actions are. I felt it tonight from your father’s pack. When you leaned in to kiss me, your actions impacted everyone in the room. You saw it with Alpha Dutton and Alpha Calvin. You saw how Dutton asked you about why it mattered, not me. You, and your sister as well, have a lot of pull. But Amelia is right, you are the face of this revolution, whether you intended to be or not. The question is, Sophie Reynolds, what are you going to do about it?”

I watch as she struggles with this idea. “What do you think I should do?” she finally asks, turning back to me. I take her hand, pulling it to my lips, thrilled that she wants my opinion.

“Start with the mountain. Start going with Kinsley. If there are she-wolves there, talk to them if you can. If not, leave a note letting them know that you’ve found your mate, how we came together and that they will be safe in our pack. That’s how we start.”

“You make it sound easy.”

“It’s not going to be easy. I can guarantee if they haven’t already, the Alphas will get together and they will call a meeting, basically a trial where you and I will have to go in front of them and they will try to force me to mark you publicly.”

I feel her unease and I kiss her hand again. “I won’t do it. I don’t care if I have to fight every last one of them, I won’t do it. But they’ll have their Lunas there. That will be your chance to make an impact, to give them the knowledge that they can then take back to their packs, to their ranked females. Death isn’t their only option now and the Lunas will unite behind you. Once they do, the others will as well.”

“What about you? What will you tell them?” she asks me.

“I’m not sure yet. It depends on which way they fight. If it’s about the law, then I’ll fight for the law to be changed. If they think that I’m weak, then I’ll have to fight them,” I say and hear her gasp.

“Hunter…”

“I’m a strong Alpha, my love. But that is also why I’m getting allies now. We still need to go see Kayce and Robin and I need to call Alpha Ezra. We need them on our side before we go in front of the Alpha council. That group makes up half of the Alphas. If we have them on our side and I do have to fight the Alphas, I won’t be fighting all of them alone.”

She looks back out the windows, staring out into the darkness as I drive.

“I can fight too,” she says quietly.

“I don’t want you fighting the Alphas. I will do that.”

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She turns and looks at me. “Why, because I’m a woman? I’m strong, I’m an Alpha female. I can fight and if they come after you…”

I pull her hand to my mouth again, smiling at my passionate mate. “Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that.” I glance at her, not sure I want to approach this subject yet. “There’s also the possibility that you’re already carrying my pup, Sophie.” I say it as gently as possible, not sure how she’ll feel about yet another change in her life so quickly. But, we haven’t been careful and we’ve been pretty active, which I intend to continue.

Sophie looks at me, then down at her stomach. “Do you think so? It’s so soon.”

“It’s a big possibility, not just because we’re mates, but, we were trying different positions, so…you have a lot of my Alpha sperm floating around in your body right now searching for an egg to attach itself to.”

She bursts out laughing. "I just got an image of an army of sperm storming a castle trying to find their princess hidden in the tallest tower."

"Close enough," I say, smiling because I made her laugh. Her laughter is a beautiful sound.

"How long do think it'll be before know?" she asks, putting the hand that isn't in mine on her stomach.

"A couple of weeks, I'd guess, maybe less. But I wasn't planning to stop until we know for sure. There are still many, many positions to show you, my curious mate," I purr at her.

I smile, much more possessively this time, when I see her body shivers at my words.

"Like what?" she asks me.

"Oh, there are quite a few positions we haven't tried. If you'd like, we can try them all," I say and she's instantly nodding her head, yes. "And that doesn't even begin to cover all the positions where we can try oral sex."

Her eyes flicker to my lap where my d\*\*k has gone hard with this conversation.

"Do you have an \*\*m with oral sex?" she asks me.

"I don't have to, but I'd prefer it. Besides, I have Alpha sperm. Even if I came in your mouth once, I'd still have plenty left to... add to the army, shall we say."

She smiles at my words, but her eyes are still glued to my lap, making my \*\*k twitch in my pants. She turns and looks at the road before turning back to me.

"Can I try it while you're driving?"

"You want to go down on me while I'm driving?" I ask, having to control my voice so it doesn't squeak with my excitement. My mate is so adventurous.

"Well, I've never done it, so I might not be very good at it," she says.

I check the distance to our pack on the GPS. "We have about 30 minutes for you to play and see if you like it. The biggest thing is, don't use your teeth. Hands, lips, and tongue only," I tell her.

Her eyes flash with excitement. "You'll let me know when we're getting close to the pack?"

“Absolutely. You can always trust me.”

She starts to lean forward but I grab her hair, kissing her passionately and quickly before letting her go.

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She smiles at me, a devilish, mischievous smile. “You want me to do this?”

“Very, very much.”

She turns in her seat, moving her seat belt to give her better access before she begins undoing my pants.

When I spring free, I lift my hips, pulling my pants down just enough to give her free access. I push the seat back and watch her.

“Hands, lips, and tongue,” she says to herself before reaching out and taking me in her hand.

I gasp and adjust my hips, thrilled that my mate is so curious. She looks up at me, watching my face as she strokes me.

“That feels fantastic,” I encourage her.

She bites her bottom lip, making me growl as she looks back down, watching herself stroke me. Then she leans forward and licks the tip of my c\*\*k.

I suck in air and pull her hair out of her face. I want to see her pretty face while she sucks on me.

Her warm lips surround my tip, and she sucks gently. Her mouth already feels so good on me. I moan as she swirls her tongue around my c\*\*k.

The scent of her arousal begins to permeate the air and I realize that she’s enjoying my response as much as I’m enjoying her mouth. I quickly twist her hair, leaving it laying on her back so I can still see her face, but I begin moving my hand down her back and to the waistband of her pants. Since we didn’t have any clothes that fit her and even her old clothing was too large, I easily slide my hand inside her pants and down to her panties.

I gasp as she slides more of me inside her mouth and I lean over, sliding my hand over her a\*\* and between her thighs. Her panties are soaked with her arousal and I moan with the pleasure of her mouth and how wet she is for me.

I slip my fingers under her panties and begin rubbing the rim of

her entrance. She moans with me in her mouth and my d\*\*k twitches against her tongue. She moans again, but this time it's one of understanding. My mate just realized that her moans are enjoyable to me as well, especially in this position. She removes her hand from my \*\*k and leaving my c\*\*k in her mouth, unbuttons and unzips her pants, giving me easier access.

I'll give my mate credit, she's either a quick learner or she's paying attention to what I like, because before long, she's sucking on me in long strokes, swirling her tongue around my tip before taking me in again until I hit the back of her throat.

I slide my fingers inside her soaking wet warmth, leaning over even further so I can begin to stroke my fingers in and out of her. She arches her back, pressing her body closer to me so I can slide my fingers even deeper inside her.

"Does my baby like my fingers inside her?" I ask her.

Utive Home

"Mmhmm," she responds, without taking my c\*\*k from her mouth.

"You feel so f\*\*g good, Sophie."

I feel the walls of her p\*\*y begin to flutter around my fingers and I know she's close.

"Can you open your throat baby, take me deeper? I want us to come together."

I can feel her trying to figure out how to do it while still moaning because of my fingers. I slow my movements, giving her a minute to focus and gently press my hips up when I feel myself hit her throat again. It takes a second, then I slide into her tight throat.

"Oh f\*\*k, Sophie, that's it," I say and begin moving my fingers faster again. I pull off on the side of the road, knowing I'm going to explode in her mouth and wanting to experience the pleasure of it without having to focus on the road.

She begins moaning louder as my fingers pump into her.

"Yes, Sophie! Yes! F\*\*K!" I say as her p\*\*y clamps onto my fingers, and I push my c\*\*k into her throat a second before I explode. She moans before instinctively swallowing as I come, taking everything that I'm giving her.

I look down and see her pretty mouth pressed tightly against my body, her throat contracting as I come.

As she comes down, she slides me out of her throat, licking and sucking me clean before sliding her mouth off my c\*\*k. I grab her hair and pull her to me for a kiss as my fingers continue to stroke inside her, loving the feel of her aftershocks.

When I finally release her, sliding my fingers out of her and pulling her away from the kiss, I hold her close while I suck her fingers into my mouth, licking them clean. Her eyes are still dark with desire as she watches me.

“You taste delicious, floral and sweet. I’m going to need to taste more of you when we get home,” I say, watching her.

“Does that mean we get to try another position?” she asks, her eyes sparkling.

“Did you want more soldiers to add to your army?” I ask, keeping with her earlier analogy.

“Yes.”

I smile at my incredible mate. “We can try as many as you like.”

## **The One He Claimed Chapter 40**

Chapter 40: Kinsley’s Acceptance

Kinsley

I’d forgotten how grueling running patrols is. It’s eight hours of nearly non-stop running and since I’m a Beta and running with a bunch of male warriors, I have to set an example, not only that I’m worthy of being a Beta but also that I’m just as strong as any male in this pack.

I’m tired, not having slept well with Lucas out running patrols all night. While I’ve been struggling with intimacy between us, realize that I miss him when he’s gone. Now that I’ve invited him back to our bed, I really miss feeling his arms around me at night.

When we finish our patrol, I shift and reach for my clothes.

I hear a wolf-whistle behind me and I turn, seeing one of our warriors staring at me. Ogling me, really.

“Knock it off, Trent. You’re being disrespectful,” one of the other patrols says.

Trent shrugs nonchalantly and opens his mouth to say something else. Before he can, his eyes move to something behind me, and I turn, seeing Lucas standing at the back of the packhouse, waiting for me, watching out for me.

I see that he’s holding a shirt for me, and he steps off the patio, heading my way.

“Don’t know why he bothers. We’ve all seen you anyway,” Trent sneers quietly enough that only I hear him as he passes me.

“Good afternoon, Beta,” he says cheerfully as he passes Lucas.

“Trevor,” he says, his eyes not leaving mine. “Kinsley,” he says, pulling the shirt over my head.

“I have my own clothes, Lucas,” I say, but I take a deep breath, letting his scent of the rainforest fill my senses and relax me after Trevor’s comments.

“I noticed you slept in my shirt last night,” he says, wrapping an arm around my waist, but not pulling me to him. He’s always so careful with me, ever since the day he marked me. But I’ve decided that it’s time for me to put the past behind me. I need to start trusting my mate to care for me, to protect me. So, for the first time in our relationship, I lean into him.

His eyes instantly brighten, and he tightens his arm around me, wrapping the second around me as well, just holding me. We stand like that for a while before he kisses the top of my head. “How was your run?”

“Exhausting,” I say. “But no scent of Alphas or she-wolves.”

“Well, the she-wolves won’t know that we’re a sanctuary yet, but I’m glad to hear that there are no Alphas. And speaking of Alphas, Alpha Calvin is sending 20 warriors to help us run patrols, so we have some time to reorganize the patrol schedules.

“Oh, that’s great news,” I say walking inside.

“Yes, and Alpha Hunter and Luna Sophie won’t be home until late. They are meeting with Alpha Calvin and Alpha Dutton tonight at Alpha Carter’s pack.”

“That’s excellent! Do you think they’ll stand with us?” I ask him.

“Hunter said that Alpha Carter has already agreed, so I have hope that the others will too. Alpha Calvin is mated to Lunal Sophie’s sister, and Alpha Dutton hasn’t found his mate yet, but he’s at least not one of the Alphas out hunting for a mate.”

“Do you think it’s safe for me let the she-wolves know our borders are open? I can leave a note when go to drop off the food today,” I ask Lucas.

“Alpha Hunter was pretty clear, Kins. I think it’s safe. But I want you to be careful. My legs are stiff after running all night. I’m guessing yours will be too and I still don’t like you going alone.”

“I’ll go now before it gets dark,” I tell him.

He holds onto my hand. “Hurry home to me, Kins.”

I nod and turn to head upstairs. Every time he says something like that, my heart melts a little bit more. Not for the first time, I wonder what it would have been like for us if our mating night had been like Alpha Hunter's and Luna Sophie's.

When I get to the mountain, I see that the food is gone. I'm glad because the scent of sex and Alpha Hunter still lingers in this area, but if the she-wolves are hungry enough, that won't deter them, at least not until they have food in their stomachs. I leave the food and the note that we are now offering sanctuary. I also added that Sophie Meyers has found her mate, our Alpha, but he mated her privately and she is now the Luna of our pack. I'm hoping that they trust my words enough to at least check out our pack.

When I return, Lucas and I have dinner and once Alpha Hunter and Luna Sophie return, we head to our room. It's good to know that at least two more Alphas are on our side and while I would have liked to talk to Luna Sophie more, I'm exhausted and as Lucas expected, I'm very sore.

"I think I need to start training more," I tell him as we walk into our room. "Are you still sore?"

"No, but it took several hours to wear off," he says. "Why don't you get ready for bed and lie down, I'll massage your legs."

I do as he suggests, and he begins massaging my legs. I know he wants to touch me more than I'm comfortable allowing, so this is a nice compromise, and my mate's fingers are magic.

I try to be good, but a moan slips out occasionally. I can see that he's getting aroused and while it makes me nervous that he might want something more, he doesn't act on it. I feel bad for my mate. I feel his arousal pressed against my back every night when we go to sleep and every morning when we wake. I know it must be hard for him, but even now, he doesn't push me. He accepts what I'm willing to give him.

"How's that?" he asks me nearly an hour later.

"So much better," I tell him.

"Good, we should get some sleep," he says, moving up to lay behind me. Yep, he's hard as a rock. I feel like I want to thank him, in a way that might be more meaningful to him and push me in my desire to show more trust in him, so I turn in his arms and rest my hand on his shoulder

"Kinsley?"

"I thought...I mean, I'm not ready to have sex, but I thought, maybe we could kiss for a bit before we go to sleep?"



“I’d like that. If at any point it gets to be more than you want, let me know,” he says.

I nod and tilt my head up to his. His warm lips press softly against mine. He takes his time, slowly deepening the kiss and when his tongue licks the seam of my lips, I open for him, letting him slide his tongue into my mouth. I love the way he tastes, fresh and clean, like the forest after the rain.

I hear myself whimper against him and he growls softly in return. I can feel my body responding to my mate, heat pooling in my core, making my body crave more. I begin pressing myself closer against him, wanting to ease the ache between my thighs.

“Will you let me help you with that?” he asks me, pulling away enough to look at me in the dark room.

“I don’t…”

“Just my hands. Nothing else. I can smell your arousal, Kinsley. It’s making me crazy, so I’m guessing that your body is craving a release.”

I nod.

“Let me give you what your body wants,” he says softly.

I nod and he slides his hand down my body, gently running his fingers under the silk pajama top that I’m wearing. The feel of his fingers against my skin makes my body feel like it’s on fire, desperately needing a release.

He continues kissing me, shifting so that his hand can move down into my sleep shorts. He gently massages his way to my core, his hand sliding between my thighs.

“You’re soaking wet, Kins,” he growls against my mouth before. taking the kiss even deeper. When his fingers find my c\*\*t, I gasp, looking up at Lucas.

“Will you unbutton your top for me, I want to see you, I want to taste you.”

His fingers are working magic on my c\*\*t, and I open my legs giving him better access while unbuttoning my top. When I’m done, I look up at him.

“Open it for me. Let me see you, Kinsley.”

I do as he asks, and he gently pushes against my hips, pushing me onto my back. “Can we take these shorts off? I promise I won’t push for anything more. I just want to see you.”

I reach my hands down, pulling off my shorts. My heart is racing and I’m not sure if it’s because of what Lucas is doing, or my own fear that I’m struggling to keep hold of.

When they're off, I look back up at him. His eyes are devouring my body.

"So beautiful, Kinsley." He leans forward and runs his nose over my throat, down my chest and to my breasts as his fingers continue to move in slow circles around my c\*\*. I put my fingers into his thick, curly hair and he looks up at me, his tongue flicking out and licking my nipple.

I arch up, nearly pressing my breast into his mouth.

"Mmm, so sensitive."

"Yes," I say watching his dark eyes as they hold my gaze.

"What do you want, Kinsley?"

"..."

"Do you want me to make you come?"

"Yes."

"Mmmm, I want that too," he says before sucking my nipple into his mouth, his warm tongue moving the in the same circles that his fingers are.

"Lucas!"

He growls against my breast, making me arch again. This time, he takes my breast, sucking on my nipple as his fingers begin moving faster.

"Oh, Lucas," I say and a moment later I feel like my body is exploding, pleasure rocketing through me as I grip onto Lucas' hair, holding him against me as my body jerks with pleasure.

His fingers begin to slow and when I start to come down and think that we're done, he slides his fingers inside me.

He looks up at me, pulling off of my nipple. "Tell me if this is too much," he says, his fingers sliding in and out of me.

"No," I say, making him smile.

"Good. I like watching you come undone for me, Kinsley. Let's see how many more times I can make you come."