

The One He Claimed Chapter 61

Chapter 61: Voting

Sophie

I knew Hunter was going to have to prove his point about my trust of him. I knew he wouldn't do anything to betray that trust, but it was still really hard for me to submit to him in this room. full of Alphas and then not to flinch when I felt his canines enter my neck.

'I love you.' His words had floated into my head as Shaw had put just enough venom into my body to make me shiver. Now I'm f**g aroused and ready to get out of here so I can show my mate just how s**y I think he is.

Instead, I have to focus. It's time for the vote. If they vote in our favor, we walk out. If not, it's war. I don't know much about wars, but I'd image that war would start now.

"You haven't explained what a 'yes' or 'no' vote means," Dutton says, watching me closely. I had felt all their eyes on me, every one of them. But not all of them had been lecherous. In Alpha Kayce's case, it feels like he's ready to get the hell out of here so he can start his relationship with Allison. The feeling I'm getting from Robin is similar. Dutton, though, is hard to read. However, Hunter said he trusts him, and I trust Hunter.

"A vote of yes means you agree with removing Alpha Hunter as Alpha. A vote of no means that you agree that he should retain his title. A majority of votes are needed to remove Alpha Hunter's title."

Dutton's eyes move from me to Hunter.

"No," he votes, and I sigh.

"Alpha Carter."

"No," my father says almost before Alpha Elias finishes saying his name.

"Alpha Kayce?"

"No."

"Alpha Robin?"

"No."

“Alpha Ezra?”

He looks at me a moment. “No.”

“Alpha Calvin?”

Calvin looks at me for a very long time. Long enough that everyone in the room turns to look at him, including Amelia. I can feel my heart rate speeding up. Without him, we’ll never have the numbers to win.

“No.”

I breathe a sigh of relief. Now for the right side. I expect every one of them will vote to remove Hunter’s title, but that will still be a tie.

“I vote yes,” Elias says, before turning to the other side of the room.

“Alpha Joshua?”

“Yes.”

“Alpha Aiden?”

“Yes.”

“Alpha Alaric?”

“Yes,” he growls, curling his lip in a snarl at Hunter.

“Alpha Zahn?”

He glares at me. “Yes.”

I don’t know why I feel the need to antagonize this man, but I do. So, I very subtly shrug at him as if his vote doesn’t matter to me at all. As if his vote is nothing. I watch as his glare turns to a snarl, only stopping when Hunter gives him a warning growl.

“Alpha Owen?”

Owen looks smug. I’m not sure why. There will be no majority and Hunter said a majority of the vote is required to make a change. Hunter is an Alpha, so Owen’s ‘yes’ vote won’t change anything.

He stares at Hunter, smiling an even broader smile.

“No,” he says finally, and I jolt with the shock of it. The others around him turn to him, murmuring their own shock but Owen’s eyes remain on Hunter.

‘He’s going to come up in front of the committee for what he did to Brooklyn. He thinks this is going to ensure my vote,’ Hunter says in our mind link.

That b**d. My fists clench with my need to punch the smug look off of his face. He must feel my eyes on him because he finally looks away from Hunter to look at me. Then, the arrogant. b**d winks.

“If that will be all...” Hunter says and reaches down to take my hand. Alpha Kayce is already starting to stand when Elias looks at us.

“Actually, that is not all, Alpha Hunter. Another matter has been brought to the attention of this Committee. You are housing ranked she-wolves that are not from your pack, some of them are underage,” he says, and he can’t hide the smirk. Hunter may have won the vote, he may have avoided a war to maintain his title, but these Alphas want a war and they’ve found another way to get one.

“I have provided sanctuary to those who have requested it. Age does not matter. If a wolf, any wolf, is in trouble and asks for the aid of an Alpha, it is at the Alpha’s discretion to provide such aid,” he says, as if quoting a law.

“Yes, that is the law, Alpha Hunter, but Alpha Alaric has petitioned this court to intervene. His sister, an Alpha, is me**y deranged and is in need of medical attention,” Elias

says.

Alpha Robin growls a low, warning growl, making Alaric smile.

“It has also been brought to the attention of this court that you are refusing to allow other Alphas to claim their mates properly, hiding them away from all but only a few of your select friends,” Elias growls, glaring over at Kayce, Dutton, and Robin.

“You will return these she-wolves to their families...”

“I will not,” Hunter says firmly. “They have asked for my protection, and I will give it to them even if it means protection from their fathers and brothers, or their previous Alphas,” he says, looking at the right side of the room. “I do not allow public claimings in my pack. So, if I have a visiting Alpha, and that Alpha is spending time with a ranked she-wolf who is under my protection, it is at the discretion of the she-wolf, not the Alpha. If anyone were to go against my wishes, well, that would be an attack against me and my pack, wouldn’t it,” Hunter says, glaring at Alpha Alaric.

“You kept me from claiming those twins!” Alpha Aiden says, standing and panting furiously.

“I kept you off my pack lands. They requested my assistance, and I gave it to them. I would never expect you to a**e by my rules, Aiden, so no. You are not welcome on my pack lands.”

“This. Is. WAR!” he roars.

“As if you, Alaric, and Owen weren’t already planning that, regardless of the outcome of this meeting. I’m not st**d and I don, underestimate the situation I’ve put myself and my pack in. They are aware and they have chosen to stay and fight for what is right.”

“How will you stand against three packs at once, Hunter? Is it worth it, to die for them?” Aiden asks.

Before he has a chance to answer, Robin steps in,

“You should be very careful, Aiden. Alpha Hunter already warned you about leaving your pack unprotected. If you are off fighting a war with Hunter, who’s watching your pack?”

“It wouldn’t be hard at all for, say, a neighboring Alpha to just walk in and take over, would it, Robin?” Kayce asks, as if they are having a simple conversation

The room erupts into arguing, words slinging across the room. all around me. The more I hear, the angrier I’m getting. These men, these Alphas, acting as if they have a right to decide the fate of women, as if we’re incapable of deciding for ourselves. what we want.

“Enough!” I shout with enough Alpha aura to make the room stop and look at me.

The One He Claimed Chapter 62

Chapter 62: Taking a Stand

Sophie

I move to stand in front of Hunter. He **ks his head at me curiously, and I feel his mind touching mine to see what I’m doing, but he doesn’t stop me.

“You are all forgetting one very important thing,” I snarl.

“And what is that,” Alpha Elias chuckles condescendingly.

“While I have no doubt that my mate would crush each and every one of you, decimating your packs for me, for our pack, and for what we believe in, I will also be

waging my own war. How quickly you forget who I am. I am Sophie Meyers-Reynolds. You all know me as the face of this 'revolution'. Your ranked she-wolves have stood behind me, without me even knowing it, killing themselves in my name and for the future generations of ranked she-wolves. You do not want me as your enemy Alphas, because I guarantee you, if I were to actively start a revolution, none of you would be left standing. I would rally every ranked she-wolf together and we would fight, side by side as sisters against each and every one of you, and we would win."

I look at all of them, some shocked faces, some admiring faces, and some arrogant, disbelieving faces. "Because even if we lose, we win. We have much, much more to fight for than you. You, and the werewolf population, cannot survive without us. If you want to weaken the packs, leave only warriors and omegas to mate with, be my guest, although, I'd bet that soon enough, those she-wolves will join our cause as well," I say, glaring at Owen.

"Do not push me, Alphas. You cannot afford to fight a battle. against me and my mate on two separate fronts. You will lose, you will die, and your bloodlines will end."

I stand my ground as the room stays quiet, everyone staring at me. I feel the heat of my mate as he comes to stand behind me.

"You heard my mate," he says. "Come for us and you will die. Good day, Alphas," he says, taking my hand and walking me out of the room.

The moment we're outside, Hunter presses me against the wall, taking my mouth in a hot, dirty kiss.

"You are so f**g **y. I want to bury myself inside you and roar to the world that you're mine," he growls before kissing me roughly, desperately again.

"Isn't there somewhere we can go?" I pant, as desperate for him as he is for me.

He pulls away, pressing his forehead against mine, panting with the rearily unbearable desire that I feel flowing through me.

"No, there's nowhere that I can ensure that we won't be interrupted. F**k, Sophie. I was already so turned on by your submission, then you had to go all Alpha on that room full of Alphas. I swear I almost o**d just listening to you."

I giggle at that, knowing my mate has more control than that, but also knowing that seeing him taking on those Alphas was a huge turn on for me too.

"Sorry, am I interrupting?" Alpha Calvin says from beside us.

"No. Well, yes, but no," Hunter says, pulling away from me and not so discreetly adjusting himself while I fix my clothing.

“Umm, I uh...” Calvin says, looking down then back up at me.

“I wanted you to understand my pause earlier, in the voting. It wasn’t about whether or not I believe that your mate deserves to remain an Alpha. You do, of course,” Calvin says, looking at Hunter then back at me.

“My hesitation was more about me seeing the difference between you and Amelia. I know sisters are different, but you’re both Alphas, you were raised by the same parents, and you’re both good, strong women. However...”

He pauses, looking down at his hands before making fists and looking back up at me. “She would never have trusted me like that. Not even two years later. She doesn’t and she may never have that level of trust in me.”

He huffs out a breath. “I envy you,” he says to Hunter. “I envy both of you for what you have, what I could have had if I had stood my ground two years ago. But I didn’t, and I have to live with that every day. When we saw you at your father’s pack, I didn’t truly understand the difference. I do now. And I wanted both of you to know that Amelia and I both stand behind you. The law needs to be changed. Our mates and our daughters deserve better.”

“Thank you, Alpha: And for what it’s worth, I noticed that Luna Amelia didn’t feel the pull of my Alpha command. She noticed it too. I hope that helps,” Hunter says to him.

He nods and turns, seeing Amelia waiting for him. I’m glad to see my sister, reaching her hand out, beckoning her mate to her. He responds instantly.

“Congratulations, Sophie. I’m very happy to hear that you and Alpha Hunter are expecting,” she says to me.

“Thank you,” I say, leaning into my mate. “I hope our children can grow up together and be good friends like we were Amelia.”

“I’d like that,” she says, before she and Calvin turn and head out.

Hunter and I follow, finding my parents.

“Oh, sweetheart. I’m so proud of you, both of you,” my father says, hugging me. “What a strong Alpha female you are,” he says proudly.

“She gets that from me,” my mother says, and I turn to hug her, laughing.

“Goddess save me from strong-willed women,” my father says to Hunter, but he’s smiling as he says it.

“You love every minute of it,” my mother teases him.

“Yes, I do,” he says, smiling fondly at my mother.

“So do I,” Hunter says, holding out his hand to me. I walk to him instantly, letting him wrap his arm around me as we face my parents.

“You know they won’t heed the warning,” my father says to Hunter, turning serious.

“I know. But I also know that between my mate and I, we won’t lose,” Hunter says, looking at me proudly.

“No, we will not,” I say, smiling up at him.

“Let me know what you need from us. Robin has Aiden on one side, I have Alaric on one side. If you need my pack, or my resources, you have them.”

“Thank you, Alpha,” Hunter says, and we make our way to the car. Hunter keeps me close as the other Alphas are milling around, giving us angry, aggressive looks.

“I’ll see you in just over a week,” Alpha Robin says quietly, watching the other Alphas. “Nikki will be turning 18.

“We’ll see you soon then.”

“Alpha Hunter, Luna Sophie. I admit, I wasn’t sure what to expect from today, but it has been very intriguing indeed. I’d like to come visit your pack, get to know you better, Luna. I’m not sure if Alpha Hunter told you, but I was mated to his sister,” Alpha Ezra says.

“Yes, he did.”

Herods, looking sad. “She would have liked you,” he says.

“Yes, she would have,” Hunter agrees. “You’re welcome any time, Alpha Ezra.”

“I appreciate that. I’ll be in touch.”

When we get to the car, Kayce is there, waiting.

“About f**g time. Let’s go. I need to get back and mark my mate before one of these a**holes tries to take her from me.”

The One He Claimed Chapter 63

Chapter 63: Mate Marks

Hunter

I'm not sure who wanted to get home faster, me or Kayce. I've never felt the desperate need to be inside a woman like I'm feeling with Sophie. Maybe it's because she's feeling the same and our combined need is nearly overwhelming me. I almost s**d having a pack meeting when we returned. However, I know the entire pack was on edge with this committee meeting and I need to let them know that I'm still their Alpha and other than monitoring the borders, we're business as usual.

I got through that meeting as quickly as possible, answering a few questions before nodding to Lucas and Kinsley that I needed to go.

They took over, thankfully and I practically dragged Sophie up the stairs to our bedroom. The moment the door closed behind me, we were all over each other, clothes shredding, mouths everywhere. Our sex was rough, dirty, and desperate. I pounded into my mate like I've never done before. She clawed my back leaving painful slashes that just added to the intense pleasure of our f**g. When I let up just a bit, worried that maybe I was being too rough with her, she took control, flipping our positions and riding me like a f**g jack hammer, her head thrown back, as she roared her power and dominance along with her pleasure. Seeing my mate, so confident, so f**g s**y as she rode me, I'd had one of the strongest o**ms of my life, howling my own pleasure as I emptied myself inside her.

When we were both finally spent, our bodies slick with sweat, c**m, and saliva, she collapsed on top of me, her hair sticking to her body, both of us panting.

"We should do that again sometime," she said, making me bark out a laugh. I pulled her closer to me and kissed the top of her head before we'd fallen asleep curled up together. Later, when our sweat had dried, I woke, feeling a chill in the room and pulled the blanket over both of us before curling around my mate and falling back to sleep.

This morning, I slid inside my mate much more gently, slipping into her warm wetness from behind, kissing her, holding her, and teasing her while I slowly brought her up and over, loving the feel of her body clamping down on mine as I continued my thrusts.

"You are mine, little Alpha," I growl into her ear, getting aroused all over again thinking about yesterday and how she faced off against that room full of Alphas.

"Yes," she says breathily, arching her back to take me deeper as I force her to continue to ride out her o**m.

"Say it," I growl, needing to hear her say that she is mine. All mine.

"I'm yours. I'm yours, Hunter," she moans, her arm reaching back around my neck. I look down at her body as my thrusts become harder, seeing the bite marks that I left all over her last night. Shaw and I feel the need to leave another one, feel the need to mark her again, make her ours again.

I pull out of her, flipping her quickly as my canines extend. I pull her knees over my shoulders and press them to her chest as slam back into her.

“Mine!” I growl.

“Yes! Yes, Hunter, yes!” she screams, lifting her chin and giving me the access that I desire.

I sink my canines into her marking spot again, Shaw pushing his venom into her, our scent flooding her system as she screams her o**m, her body shooting off again around mine a moment before her teeth sink into my marking spot.

As my body explodes with the force of my o**m, I hear her growly voice in my head. “Mine!”

Once again, our wolves feel the need to pump a large amount of venom into our mates' bodies, so we stay there, locked

together, our bodies continuing to jerk with aftershocks until both of our wolves are satisfied.

When Shaw and Hedda finally release us, I pull my canines out, licking the wound closed as she does the same. Then I nip at her neck gently, moving my way to her mouth and kissing her softly, like I started with her this morning. It's a long, lingering kiss and when I finally pull away, I look down at the goddess. that I get to call mine.

“Fe better?” she asks, smirking at me.

“I love you so ***g much, Sophie. I love you more than I ever knew I could love another person. You are so perfect, so incredibly perfect.”

Her smile shifts to a sweet smile, a happy smile, as she caresses my arms and back. “I think you're pretty f**g perfect too, Alpha.” She nips at my chin. “And I love you with all my heart.”

I kiss her nose before pulling out and sitting up. “Come on, we smell of sex and it's almost time for training. We need to shower so we don't offend the noses of our pack mates,” I say, pulling her into the shower and taking her again in one of her favorite positions.

As we dry off, Sophie looks at our bodies in the mirror, raising an eyebrow. “I'm pretty sure the entire pack is going to know what we did last night. Both of us are covered in love bites and your back looks like you've been whipped.”

I look over her body. I hadn't paid attention to where Shaw and I were biting her, and obviously she wasn't paying attention either, but she's right. There's no hiding our possessive love.

"Does it bother you?" I ask her, running my fingers over a particularly deep bite mark on her **cheek.

"No. The pack knows I'm yours and that you are mine. Why shouldn't they see the evidence of that. It's already on our necks," she says smiling proudly.

I growl possessively, before taking her hand and walking to the training grounds. When we arrive downstairs, I'm not surprised that Alpha Kayce and Allison, or most likely now, Luna Allison, are. 't in attendance.

"I wasn't expecting you, Alpha," Lucas says as we walk up.

"Why's that?" I ask, leaving Sophie and moving to the front of the group.

"Uh, you weren't exactly quiet last night Alpha," one of the warriors says.

"And it's not like it's not obvious that you were up most of the night, Alpha," another says, gesturing at my bite and scratch covered torso. They're all unwilling to meet my gaze and they all have smirks on their faces.

"I make no apologies for making my mate happy," I say, making them snort. I can feel Sophie's embarrassment, but it's not about them having heard her as much as it's about them hearing her and seeing the evidence of her claim all over my body.

'Are you okay?' I ask in the mind link. It doesn't feel like it's a bad thing, but I want to make sure.

'Yes. I guess I need to try and be quieter next time and maybe try to control myself a little more. But it's really not my fault that I'm happy to be yours or that you feel so good when I'm riding you,' she says, finally looking up at me.

'I have no problem with you telling or showing the world how much you love me,' I say, smiling at her.

"Well, it's not like you were the only ones," Letti says, huffing. "I was next door to Allison and Alpha Kayce last night. They didn't sleep at all so neither did I," she says grumpily.

"I can move you if they decide to stay another night, but I'm guessing Kayce will want to return to his pack, especially now that he's found his Luna," I say.

I watch Letti's face fall at that. From what I understand, she and Allison have been together a while. I guess she feels like she's losing a friend.

We go through training, and I pair off with Sophie again, now it's not only to train her, but also, I won't allow her to spar with anyone else while she's carrying my pup. I won't risk injuring my child. I'm very careful during our training, only tagging her on her hips, legs, and arms, avoiding her stomach completely, but I can feel the difference in Sophie today. She's feeling her Alpha power. Maybe it was standing up to the committee together, or maybe it was her standing up to them on her own, whatever it was, she's attacking and blocking me with confidence this morning. Since she's still early on in her pregnancy, I don't limit her moves, but once she begins showing, we'll have to modify her training program. I'm not so foolish to think that I'll be able to convince my mate to stop sparring, at least until our pup is so large that it becomes impossible for her, but she'll need to modify her training because eventually her movements will be limited, and I don't her hurting herself or our pup.

After training, we head inside to have breakfast and find Kayce piling food on a plate.

"Where's Allison?"

"Sleeping," he says with a proud smile. I look at his neck and he pulls his shirt away.

"Nice mate mark."

"Thanks, yours looks pretty fresh too. Your mate re-claiming you?" he asks as Sophie walks up. "Ahhh, you've both been re- claimed I see."

"How is Allison?" Sophie asks him, coming up and wrapping her arm around my waist. I love how simple and easy it is for her to touch me.

Kayce's smile is that of a man in love. I know the look well. I've seen it on my face every day since I marked Sophie.

"She's perfect."

The One He Claimed Chapter 64

Chapter 64: Pride

Sophie

I thought I would be more embarrassed by the jokes the warriors made about my bite marks and scratches that are all over Hunter and which he is proudly displaying. I didn't exactly hide my bite marks, but I didn't flaunt them either. However, rather than feeling embarrassed, I felt proud, possessive. This man is mine and everyone should know it. Although, maybe I need to be a bit quieter in the future.

'Why? Everyone knows you're mated. Everyone knows you're pregnant with our mate's pup. Who cares if they hear you. It's not the same as being in front of them while it's happening, is it?' Hedda asks.

I guess it isn't. Maybe it's the difference in the feeling of the pack members. Yes, they're teasing Hunter about it, careful not to say anything to me, but it's all in good fun. Rather than feeling sleazy or malicious, there's a happiness in the pack. They like that Hunter and I are so close. It helps them to feel more confident and calmer as our pack members.

I was thrilled to see Alpha Kayce and see that he was wearing Allison's mark. I truly hope that they find the happiness that Hunter and I have found together

"What are your plans, Kayce?" Hunter asks him, grabbing a plate and putting food on it. I quickly realize that the plate is for me, based on my likes, not Hunter's. Goddess, I love this man.

"I want to leave today. I've been here too long already and with Aiden acting like an a** I don't want Robin to have to face him alone if he decides to attack." He glances behind us, and I turn, seeing Nikki coming in from training.

"Also, I think Robin plans to come back here next week," he says, smiling.

"Make sure that he sees how happy you and your new Luna are, Alpha Kayce," I tell him.

He stops, his look becoming serious. "It's so different. I really didn't understand. I mean, I saw the two of you, I saw what you did in that committee meeting, but until I felt her emotions, so strong and powerful, so loving, so...happy with me for the choice that I made, I didn't truly get. But do now. I would never do anything to betray the trust that she has given me. Never. You have my support, one-hundred percent Hunter."

"Thank you, because I intend to petition the committee to change that law. It's going to take a lot of pressure and we'll get a lot of push-back, but it needs to change."

"Which law are we talking about? And nice mate mark, Alpha," Nikki says coming to join us.

"The law about the public claimings. Hunter's going to petition to change the law. Alpha Kayce is now on board as well."

She looks at him assessingly. He waits her out. "That's good to know. How is my friend?"

"Tired," he says, smirking again.

“Happy?” she asks.

“Very, but I’ll let her tell you herself, after she gets some sleep. and some food. Which,” he says, lifting the nearly overflowing plate of food in his hands, “I need to go.”

“Just let me know if you plan to stay another night. You’re both welcome, I just want to make sure we’re make preparations.”

He nods and just before he turns, he looks past me again. “Will you let Letti know that Allison wants to speak with her later today?”

“I’ll let her know if you let Allison know that I want to speak with HER later today,” Nikki says.

He grins at her. “Should I tell Robin you said hi when I see him?”

She huffs and walks off, not answering. Kayce only grins wider. “I’ll take that as a yes. I’ll see you later and I’ll talk to Ali about our plans, and let you know this afternoon what they are, if that’s okay.”

“Sure thing,” Hunter says.

Hunter guides us to sit with Nikki and Letti for breakfast. I look around. “Where are the twins?”

“I’m not sure they’ve come out of their rooms since they got here,” Nikki says.

“Yeah, I went to see them yesterday, but they didn’t come out at all,” Letti adds.

“Are they afraid?” I ask.

“I’m not sure. I told them it was safe, so did Letti, but they might have heard Alpha Kayce and Allison last night. I’m pretty sure everyone on that side of the packhouse heard them,”

Nikki grimaces.

“I’ll go talk to them. Do we know if they’re eating?” I ask.

“I’m not sure, Luna,” Nikki says and Letti shrugs that she doesn’t know either.

I look at Hunter. “Eat first. You’re eating for two. Then take care of our guests,” he says, leaning over to kiss the side of my head.

“So, how did the committee meeting go? The real story. I’m guessing it went really well since the two of you look like you literally tried to devour each other last night,” Nikki says, smirking.

“My mate was incredible,” Hunter growls, looking at me with pride, passion, and desire, sending a wave of heat through my body.

I shrug. “They p**d me off. They were acting like we don’t matter, like Hunter is in this fight alone. I just reminded them that I’m Sophie Meyers and that if I decided to truly start a revolution, we, the ranked she-wolves, would destroy them.”

Boin Nikki and Letti stop eating and stare at me. I notice that the other tables around us have gone quiet too.

“See? Incredible,” Hunter says proudly.

“You threatened the Alphas?” Letti asks.

“Only some of them? Half of them were in agreement to at least let Hunter keep his title. Alpha Kayce obviously is on our side, Alpha Robin is too,” I say, smiling at Nikki. She looks down as a light blush colors her cheeks. “My father is and now, Alpha Calvin is as well. The only one I’m still not sure about is Alpha Ezra, but he said he wants to come visit and see more of our interactions.”

“I intend to call him today,” Hunter says. “He needs to see us, to see you, to see how happy you are. It’s important.”

“Can we get back to the part where you threatened the Alphas?” Nikki asks.

“Well, Hunter had already threatened to decimate their packs. Alpha Robin and my father reminded your brother and Alpha Aiden that their packs border each other, so if they were to wage war on us, their packs might not still be there when they return,” I say, smiling and taking a bite of food.

“Alpha Robin said that?” Nikki asks quietly.

“He did,” I confirm, watching her nod as she looks down thoughtfully. “You know he’ll be here next week?”

She nods. Alpha Robin was clear that he intends to be here for Nikki’s birthday, in case they truly are mates.

“A oha, Alpha Ezra is on the phone for you,” Lucas says, jogging up.

Hunter looks at me. “Saves me the phone call,” he says standing and looking at my plate. “Will you finish that, please?”

“Hunter, it’s so much food,” I say.

“Please, Soph. Try, for me,” he asks softly, leaning down to kiss me.

I huff. “I’m making an appointment to see the doctor soon. You need to know that I’m not fragile, Hunter.”

“Baby, there was nothing fragile about you in front of those Alphas yesterday,” he growls. This time when he kisses me, he grabs my hair and takes my mouth in a possessive kiss. It’s so reminiscent of last night that I know we’re going to have another marathon love fest tonight.

“Come see me after you talk to the twins,” he says, his eyes dark.

“Okay,” I say softly.

“Ladies,” he says, barely glancing at Nikki and Letti before holding my gaze. He releases my hair and stands.

“See you soon, lover.”

I watch him walk away.

“Do you think....do you think we can all find that?” Letti asks me when I turn back with a dopey smile on my face.

“I hope so. If we can change the law, it will make a huge difference. But honestly, it depends on the man. Hunter is a good man, and he obviously doesn’t care who knows how much he adores me.”

“Did you really submit to him in front of the other Alphas?” Nikki asks quietly.

“I did. Neither of us liked it, but it was important to show that I have absolute faith in him. Besides, I was in his arms. He would never let another man get that close to me,” I say smiling.

“I don’t know that I could ever trust someone like that,” Nikki says.

“I didn’t think I could either, but Hunter is a man of his word,” I say.

“Does he have any brothers?” Letti asks, making me laugh as I take the last bite of food my stomach can handle. It’s not the entire plate, but it’s more than I had planned to eat. That will have to do.

I mind link the pack doctor, letting him know I need to make an appointment.

'Tomorrow, Luna. Nine o'clock?' he asks.

'Perfect. Hunter and I will see you then, I say, as I grab some food and make my way to the twins' rooms. I need to find out what has them scared and what we can do about it.

The One He Claimed Chapter 65

Chapter 65: Tiffany and Tammi

Sophie

I take the plate of food in one hand and knock on the door with the other.

"Who is it?" a scared voice asks.

"It's Luna Sophie. Can I come in?"

The door opens a crack and I see a bluish-grey eye peeking out at me.

"It's just me," I say, waiting.

When she opens the door, I show her the food. "Have you your sister eaten?"

and

She shakes her head, no, and I walk in, seeing that it looks like the twins are sharing a room now.

I walk to the desk area and set the food down, hearing both women's stomachs growling. If Hunter thinks I'm thin, then he hasn't looked at these two closely enough. As I look around, I see that the clothes that have been brought for them are still sitting in the bag by the door, untouched.

When I turn back, the women are staring at me wide-eyed.

"What's going on?" I stand facing them, clasping my hands in front of me and keeping my voice soft. Both women are giving off the vibe of being frightened wolves, ready to bolt at the first sign of trouble.

"Are you sending us home?" one of the twins asks.

"I'm sorry, before I answer that, I can't tell you two apart by your looks. But your scents are just different enough that I could. Which sister are you?"

They look at each other, as if deciding whether or not they want to tell me. The one sister nods and the other looks back at me. "I'm Tammi."

Tammi smells of vanilla and orange, so Tiffany must have the vanilla and lemon scent.

“Tammi, I have no intention of sending you home unless you want to go. Hunter and I offered you refuge so you wouldn’t be on the run, so you could have food, shelter, clothing,” I say gesturing around the room with each word. “So, why are you not taking advantage of our hospitality?”

The girls look at each other again. I call them girls, but I’m not sure if they’re still underage or not. It’s hard to tell with their wide eyes and their gaunt faces, their clothes hanging on their small frames.

“We don’t have any money,” Tiffany finally says.

“And?” I ask, unsure why that matters.

“And we can’t pay for this,” Tammi says, gesturing to the food and the clothing.

“I didn’t ask you to pay for this and I don’t expect it,” I tell them.

“But then we’re just parasites on your pack. Why would help us?”

“Okay, well first, I don’t know who told you that you were parasites on our pack or any pack, but that’s not true. And I’m helping you because I was on the run too. I know what it’s like and my mate and I are working to change things. While that happens, the she-wolves on the run need a safe place where the Alphas and other ranked wolves can’t hunt you down.”

They look at each other again. “What do you want from us?” Tiffany asks.

“Well, first, I’d like for you to eat, shower, change clothes, and maybe actually sleep in one or both of the beds that I’ve provided for you. If you get sick and die in my pack and word gets out, none of the other she-wolves will trust that this is a safe place for them. Second, I’d like for you to come join in our pack activities. Eat in our dining room, join our training class in the morning, get to know our pack members, talk to Nikki and Letti. I’m not sure if Allison is going to be here long enough for you to get to know her, but if you came out today, you’d get to see her. Talk to them. We haven’t asked any of them for anything, other than if they choose to fight, we’d like that. We believe a war is coming, after yesterday at the committee, definitely think there are some Alphas who intend to wage war against our pack, but it’s not a requirement. You can do as much good inside a safe room keeping others calm as you can on the battlefield. You’re Betas, the warriors and omegas will look up to you.”

The girls look at each other again and frown. “You’d let us fight?”

“Let you? Umm, that would be your choice, not mine.”

They look at each other again. "We weren't allowed to train in our pack."

"Well, you are here. My mate still has me sparring with him even though I'm pregnant."

"YOU'RE PREGNANT?" Tiffany asks, jumping to her feet.

I take a step back, not sure of her intent. My hands instinctively going to my stomach in a protective gesture. "Yes."

"Sorry, sorry...it's just...our Luna didn't have a pup for years. Our mother only had us. She was never able to get pregnant again," they tell me. "But you've only just found your mate. How are you already pregnant?"

"Well, besides the biology of how you get pregnant, I believe that it has more to do with my love for my mate. I enjoy being with him, we love each other, we enjoy our... intimacy."

"Why do you have bite marks all over you?" Tammi asks.

I look at the marks that are faded but still noticeable. "Hunter and I might have gotten a little carried away last night."

"Soooo, it wasn't a punishment?" Tiffany asks.

"A punishment?" I scoff. "If you think I look bad, you should see my mate. Trust me, it was mutual, and it was done in the heat of pleasure, not as something mean and cruel."

The twins look at each other again.

"Why don't you eat, and then, if you'd like, I can take you to see Hunter and I can show you my bite marks on him."

"Why did that Alpha have the Beta female in his room all night?"

"That would be Allison. I heard maybe they were a bit loud. Sorry about that. But he'd been waiting a week to mark her. He had to wait so he didn't have her mark on him before the committee meeting that we went to yesterday. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to vote for and support us in the meeting. When he returned, he couldn't wait to mark his mate. She consented, it was done privately...or as privately as possible, and now they are mated. The only question is, when will they return to his pack."

"Would you mind if we eat and shower, maybe change our clothes and then we can come find you? I'm not sure I'm ready to wander around your pack alone, but if we know where you'll be..." Tiffany begins.

“Sure. I’ll probably be in my office or Hunter’s, or if it’s later, in the dining hall for dinner. Nikki and Letti will be around too, so feel free to find them if you can’t find me. I know you’re probably not comfortable with Hunter yet, but he’d be happy to let you know where I am if you can’t find me, and Kinsley, my Beta, is amazing.”

“Thanks, Luna. And thank you for letting us stay here.”

“You’re welcome. You have nothing to fear here. That doesn’t mean that there won’t be battles on our borders, but you have nothing to fear from any of our pack members or our guests, even if they are Alphas. Hunter has a rule that no one can be publicly claimed in his pack, our pack. Anyone who enters our pack lands will know and agree to that, so you have nothing to fear. Believe me, he and I will not allow anyone to claim you against your will.”

“Your pack seems very different than ours. Our father and our Alpha...well, they have very specific ideas about the role of a she-wolf, ranked or otherwise.”

“Some Alphas do, but not Hunter, and not many of his friends. We’re helping them to see that there is a better way to claim us, better for us, and better for them, I’ll see you soon?”

“Yes.”

“Good,” I say and head out to find my mate.

I knock on his office door, and he waves me in.

“I look forward to seeing you this weekend, Alpha Ezra,” he says, smiling at me and tapping his lap.

“Goodbye,” he says as I crawl onto his lap.

“So, Alpha Ezra is coming to visit?”

“Yes. How are the twins?”

“Scared, but hopefully I’ve convinced them to come out of their rooms and visit with us and the pack. They thought my bite marks were a punishment,” I say sadly. ;

“A unishment?”

“From you.

He growls, shaking his head. “And here I was, hoping to leave a few more bite marks on you tonight,” he says.

I wrap my arms around him and lean forward, kissing his neck and running my nose down to his shoulder.

“I was going to leave one right now,” I whisper before sinking my teeth into his shoulder.

He’s up and moving, closing and locking his door before both of us shred the other’s clothes, needing to be connected, needing to touch, and taste each other again.

The One He Claimed Chapter 66

Chapter 66: Mated

Allison

I feel incredible. Well, I’m sore in a lot of places, but mostly, I feel incredible. I understand why Sophie feels the way she does. about Hunter now.

I open my mouth as my mate hand feeds me another bite of food. He hasn’t stopped touching me, caressing me, running his nose over my body since we came into the room last night. I was nervous, even though it was just us, but he has been so loving, so gentle, and so kind, taking his time, exploring my body, and letting me explore his. And wow! What a body he has.

I reach out as I chew the piece of bacon, stroking his muscular chest. I have touched every inch of this man now, I know every part of his body and he knows mine, but still, I want more.

“You need to eat something. I won’t be deterred this time, little mate,” he growls into my neck, making my body shiver and heat pool in between my thighs. Since I’m naked and sitting in his lap, I’m sure he can feel my heat dripping onto his leg.

“That’s what you said the last two times,” I say, grinning. I grab a piece of egg and put it in his mouth, his eyes holding mine as he licks my fingers clean. The sensation of his tongue on my fingers has memories of last night and my mate’s exceptionally talented tongue, racing through my mind.

“The last two times, I didn’t smell blood on you. Your body has had enough for now,” he says seriously.

“Tell that to my body. I still want you. I’m sore, yes, but it isn’t stopping this intense need that I have to be with you,” I say. I won’t say that I won’t ever be embarrassed with this man in the future, but after last night, after everything that we did, after baring myself to this man as he did to me, for me, there’s not a lot of room for embarrassment.

“Mmm, I have an idea about that, but you’ll have to be honest with me and let me know if it doesn’t work.”

“What kind of idea?” I ask excitedly. Anything that I can do to make this man agree to take me again, I’ll do. I’ve become the type of woman I never thought I’d be. I’m a puddle of goo for this man.

He made it easy though. I hadn’t expected him to submit to me. I knew I would have to submit to him, he’s the Alpha. But he submitted to me, more than once during the night, exposing his neck to me and making me his equal. That, more than anything, has bonded me to this man for the rest of my life.

The thought makes me lean in, kissing him gently as my emotions, my feelings for him overwhelm me again. I feel tears p**k at my eyes, and I feel him frown as he pulls away from the kiss, just enough to look at me.

“What are these emotions I’m feeling from you?”

“I’m so overwhelmed by you. You, this, it’s so much more than I ever dreamed of,” I say as my throat closes and a tear falls down my cheek. Kayce is quick to lean over and kiss my tear

away.

“I don’t like you crying. Tell me what you’re feeling,” he says, stroking his hand up and down my back as I lay my head on his shoulder.

“You submitted to me.”

“You’re my mate,” he says simply

I lift my head, another tear falling. “And that’s why I almost can’t stand how strong my feelings are for you. You’re so perfect.”

“Shhh,” he says, as the tears start falling. He wipes them away with his thumbs. “Allison, I’m far from perfect. But I get why Hunter is willing to put everything at risk to protect his mate. I would do anything for you, Allison. You are my mate, my partner. I want you to stand by my side. I want you to argue with me when you don’t agree with me. I want you to love me with the trust and openness that you showed me last night. I want to know all your secrets and I want to share mine with you. I was envious of Hunter the first time I saw him and Sophie together, frustrated for the last week as I watched them get closer while I waited to mark you. But now, this is so much more than I ever realized. I thought I understood, but you can’t until you feel it, until you have it. You are my equal, Allison. You are my love. You are my everything.”

I lean in, kissing him, opening my mind to him so he can feel h** deeply, how desperately, I already love him. He growls, opening his mind to me and before I know it, we’re back on the bed.

I thought he would slide inside me again, but instead, he begins moving down my body, smirking up at me. "I want to try my idea."

"And what was your idea?" I ask, stroking my fingers through his thick hair.

"A wolf's saliva is healing. Rodion is pretty sure he can heal you, and then I can take you again. Or, if my little mate wants, she can ride me again, since you seem to like taking control."

I feel the heat on my cheeks, but bite my lip and refuse to turn away from my mate. "Yes, I do like it."

"I do too. I get to watch that glorious body bouncing on me while you make yourself come on my **k. S**t f**g thing I've ever seen," he growls before spreading my legs wide and licking every part of me until I'm h**e once again from screaming.

Much, much later, I'm wrapped up in Kayce's arms and I feel him kiss the top of my head. "I'm going to let Hunter know we're staying another night, but we need to leave tomorrow, Allison. I need to get back to the pack and they need to know that I've found my Luna. We'll have to do what Hunter did, give the pack the option to stay or go. I hope that most or all of them will stay, but I'm not counting on it. The practice of public claimings will no longer be allowed in our pack. It's not just about this," he says, gesturing with his hands to show us happily naked and sated in bed. "It's about what's right, it's about fulfilling my oath as an Alpha, and it's about ensuring that our population can continue for generations. I mean, look at Hunter and Sophie, pregnant already."

He looks down at me. "I hope like hell that's you in a couple of weeks."

I smile up at him. "Me too. And with the amount of sex we're having and I hope we'll continue to have, I don't see how I won't be."

"Aren't you a greedy little mate?" he asks, looking down at me possessively.

I lift up, putting my chin on his chest so I can look him in the eye. "Is that a complaint?"

"Nope. I'm thrilled you seem to want me as much as I want you."

He strokes my hair away from my face. "As much as I hate it, we need to get up. I need to talk to Hunter, and you need to talk to Letti. Oh, and Nikki wants to talk to you. I'm pretty sure she's ready to take me on if you're not happy with our relationship," I say smiling.

"She's a good friend. She'll make a great Luna if she finds the right man."

"I'm pretty sure that man is Robin and if so, you two will be neighbors."

My head pops up. "I hadn't even thought of that. I'll still get to see her!"

He smiles at me. "I like it when you're happy."

I smile back at him. "You make me happy."

"I intend to keep it, that way," he says, sitting up and bringing me with him, kissing me and pulling me into his lap.

I feel his hand slap my a** cheek as he pulls back. "Now, get that cute a** in the shower."

I crawl off his lap, and turn, looking at him over my shoulder. "Wasn't there some new position you wanted to show me in the shower?" I ask, seductively.

His growl is the only notice I get before I feel his arms around me. I yip as he carries me into the bathroom and shows me yet again how fantastic my life is going to be with this man.

When we finally emerge from our room, it's nearly dinner time. We walk downstairs and see Alpha Hunter first. He's smirking at Kayce. "I guess you're staying another night?"

"Yes, thank you."

"No problem," he says, turning to me. "You're glowing, Allison."

I smile shyly, as Kayce puts a protective arm around me.

"I'm very happy, Alpha," I say, smiling up at my mate.

"That's makes two of us," he says.

"I know Nikki has been anxiously waiting to talk to you and the twins have finally emerged from their room. Sophie is with them, but it might help them to see you. You know them, right?"

"Yes, I do. I didn't get the impression that their pack was a good one," I say, stepping forward. Kayce is right. We do have things we need to do, things that can't continue to be put aside because I want to be selfish and have my mate all to myself.

'We'll make time to be selfish together. I want the same with you, but yes, we both have responsibilities,' Kayce says in my mind.

I nod, but I'm looking around the packhouse. "I need to find Letti, Alpha. Do you know where she is?"

"I believe she's with Nikki on the back porch, waiting for Sophie and the twins to return from seeing the pack lands. Sophie wanted to make sure they knew where the borders were so they could stay inside.

I nod and take a step away, feeling Kayce's hand take mine, holding me in place. I turn and look at him.

"Aren't you forgetting something?"

I frown at him. "What?"

He taps his lips with his finger, smiling at me. He wants me to kiss him, wants me to publicly show my affection for him, publicly accept him. Now, I do blush. He wants to know that I trust him, that I know that he'll always protect me, and I know it's important to him that I believe that.

I step up to him, putting my hands on his chest and lift up on my toes. Much like I've seen Hunter do with Sophie, Kayce lets me lead the kiss, only taking it as deep as I'm comfortable making it. Since it's the first time we're kissing in public, it's short and not a deep kiss, but he seems happy that I showed that level of trust.

"Let me know if you need anything," he says, kissing my hand before finally releasing me.

"It's incredible, isn't it?" I hear Hunter say as I walk away.

"It's so much more than ever expected," my mate replies, making me smile as I head outside.

"Hey girls!" I say, and they both jump up to hug me.

"How are you?" Nikki asks, looking at me intently.

"Really, truly fantastic. I've never felt better. It's not a fluke with Sophie. The mate bond with the right man is incredible. Kayce is incredible!" I gush.

"Does this mean we have to start calling you Luna?" Letti asks me.

"Actually, I wanted to talk to you about that. I talked to Kayce, and we were hoping that you'd want to move to our pack. You don't have to, I know you feel safe here, but...we've been together a long time, and I was hoping..."

"You want me to come with you?"

I nod. "Kayce promises to keep you safe and he and I, well, we need to talk about it more, but we're talking about opening our -pack as a safe place for she-wolves as well."

She throws her arms around me. "I was so sad thinking that I'd lost you. I would love to come with you!"

I smile, wrapping my arms around her. "The thought of leaving you here felt like I was losing a sister."

"I felt the same. When are we leaving?"

"To morrow."

The One He Claimed Chapter 67

Chapter 67: Plans

Hunter

I swear the longer I'm with Sophie, the more I need to touch her, to be with her. It's like I can't get enough, like it will never be enough. She seems to feel the same and I love it.

I was thankful that she didn't seem to mind that the pack was teasing me about her bite marks. I was also thankful that they were smart enough to not tease her about it. I can feel her confidence growing, her willingness to openly show her love and possession of me, but I don't want to rush it.

I'm not surprised but I am disappointed to hear that other packs have and use bite marks as a punishment. It's something I need to remember before I go to any Committee meeting with Sophie. I don't want any of those Alphas to think that I've punished Sophie in some way. My bite marks are purely because I love having my scent and my mark all over her. Well, that, and I can't keep my mouth off of her.

After adding some new bite marks to each other, Sophie had been the one to end our fun. "The twins are supposed to be coming down soon. I don't want to scare them off, but..." she had turned and pressed her still half naked body against mine. "I expect you to pick up where we left off later tonight, Alpha."

"What my Luna wants, my Luna gets," I growled, loving how her body shivered in response.

As soon as the twins had emerged, I knew it was going to take time with them. They have not had it easy. I haven't asked, and I won't for a while, but I'm guessing their pack is one where the ranked she-wolves are locked in until they turn 18, which makes me wonder how they escaped.

I let Sophie take the lead with them, seeing how skittish they are around me. I mind link Kinsley and ask her to join them. The twins are Betas and may feel more comfortable with another Beta, at least until Allison emerges with Kayce.

While Sophie is out, I check my emails, seeing that we have another Committee meeting next week, this one is for Owen. I mind link Dr. Felicity, getting an update on Brooklyn and asking for a medical summary of Brooklyn's injuries and treatment to provide to the Committee members. Owen may be hoping that I'll support him in this, but he is mistaken.

"Alpha, did our Luna let you know that she has an appointment at nine o'clock tomorrow morning to have your first evaluation of her pregnancy?"

"It must have slipped her mind but thank you for letting me know. We'll be there," I say, excited to find out more about our

pup.

She chuckles. "That's what she said. I'll warn you, it's early, but we should at least be able to hear a heartbeat."

A heartbeat! I thank Dr. Felicity and turn back to my work, trying to focus while still excited about the idea of hearing my son or daughter's heart beating tomorrow.

'We should listen tonight. I might be able to hear it,' Shaw says, as excited as I am.

'Definitely.'

While I'm looking over the Committee meeting agenda, I pull up the paperwork to petition the changing of the law that allows she-wolves to be claimed publicly, I begin going through it and marking the changes that I want to see made and penalties for continuing with this practice.

By the time I'm finished with my first draft, my eyes are blurry and I'm missing my mate, so I walk out to find them, seeing Letti and Nikki on the back porch.

"Good afternoon, ladies. How are we today?" I ask them.

"Hello, Alpha. We're good. Have you seen Allison?" Nikki asks.

"I'm sure she's fine, Nikki, but no. They haven't emerged yet."

She nods, still looking worried. "Is there anything you'd like for your birthday, Nikki? Eighteen is a special birthday. Anyone we should invite to your party?"

"I don't need a party, Alpha. Actually, I'd almost prefer not to have one, given the bad connotation that it's had for so long," she says.

"Well, you'll have to take that up with my mate. She's planning a party for you, but Nikki, there are no public claimings in my pack. No matter if you find your mate or not, I won't

allow it. You can just enjoy your birthday as it was always meant to be, a celebration of you.”

“Thank you, Alpha.”

“I will say, though, that there are several unmated Alphas who would like to be here, in the event that you are their mate. Would you be opposed to me inviting Alpha Dutton, Alpha Ezra, and Alpha Robin to attend?”

I watch her eyes dilate when I mention Robin. “I thought Alpha Robin was already planning to attend?”

“He invited himself, but it’s your party, Nikki. If you don’t want him here, I’ll tell him to stay home.”

“You swear you won’t allow anyone to claim me?”

“My word as an Alpha. The only way someone will claim you is if you allow it. It will be your choice.”

She nods. “Okay then, yes, I would be okay with the three of them. But not the others,” she says quickly.

“Good, because none of the other unmated Alphas are welcome on my pack lands anyway,” I say, smiling at her.

I’ve just walked back inside, ready to call Alpha Robin to confirm that Nikki officially invited him, when I run into Kayce and Allison. Allison looks just like Sophie did the day after our mating, happy, overwhelmed, and glowing. Kayce probably looks more like I did, smug, happy, and proud.

I send Allison in search of the twins and ask Kayce if he’ll look over the law change that I’ve started.

“Send it to me. Also, you should know that Allison is going to ask Letti to come with us. Apparently, they are closer than I realized, having been on the run together for a while.”

I look at him. “You’ll keep her safe?”

He nods. “I’ve given my word to my mate, and I’m sure you understand how important that is.”

“I absolutely do.”

“Tell me about the twins,” he says.

I give him the little bit of information that I know.

“They’re not from around here, are they?” he asks.

“I don’t think so. I have Lucas subtly looking into packs who have posted for missing she-wolves. I’m trying to find where they came from, but so far, we haven’t found notices of missing twins.”

“They probably didn’t want to alert the hunting Alphas that twins were out there. Talk about a hunt!”

“They’re lucky they found me when they did.”

“Yeah, if Aiden had caught them, their lives would have stayed the same as what you’re describing,” he says, just as our mates re-emerge with Nikki, Letti, and the twins.

“Letti is coming with us tomorrow, just so you know. She agreed,” Kayce says to me in an aside, not taking his eyes off of his mate. I haven’t taken my eyes off of mine either. Both of them look up, giving us sweet, perfect smiles.

Almost as if pulled to them, Kayce and I begin walking toward them. I notice the twins flinch as step up, and I’m careful not to touch them, but I need to touch my mate.

“Hi,” I say to her. She smells like the outdoors, like the forest around us mixed with her orchid scent.

“Hi,” she says softly, coming to wrap her arms around my waist as I pull her to me. “I missed you.”

“I missed you, too.” From beside me, I can hear Kayce having a similar conversation with his mate, even though they’ve only been apart less than an hour. But they are newly mated.

“Did you have a nice time showing off our pack?” I love seeing those green eyes shining with her love for me.

“Yes. Tiffany and Tammi prefer staying closer to the packhouse, but they at least know where the boundaries are now.

She raises her hand to stroke my face, lifting up on her toes. I lean in, pressing my lips to hers, letting her guide the kiss since we have some skittish she-wolves around us. I’m surprised when she deepens the kiss, pressing herself against me, her orchid scent intensifying.

I growl, pulling away. “Sophie...”

“I told you I missed you,” she says, smiling unapologetically.

“I hear we have a doctor’s appointment tomorrow morning.”

She nods. “I was planning to tell you earlier, but...I got

distracted.” She grins at me, reminding me of our earlier time in my office.

“Yes, I have the bite marks to prove it,” I grin, hearing the twins suck in air.

I refocus, tucking Sophie against my side. “It’s nearly dinner time. How about all of us have dinner together. I hear we have some news to share and some of you will be leaving us tomorrow.”

Over dinner, Kayce and I mostly stay quiet, letting our mates chatter happily with their friends. The twins mostly stay quiet too, but their eyes are wide, listening and watching the interactions around them.

They become hyper aware when Nikki and Sophie start talking about Nikki’s birthday and that’s the first time they enter the conversation.

“You’re having a party?” Tiffany asks. I see Kayce’s head snap up as the scent of fear increases quickly.

“It’s not like that,” Nikki says. “I know you don’t know Alpha Hunter, but you must have heard of Sophie. Trust her. I do and neither she nor Alpha Hunter have let me down yet. Until they do, I’m going to trust them, and I believe that you can as well.”

“Are you eighteen?” Kayce asks gently.

They both nod.

“If you’re afraid to stay here for Nikki’s party, you’re welcome to come with us, but I’ll warn you, I haven’t had the same conversation or given my pack the same ultimatum that Hunter has with this pack. There may be some in my pack that are still in favor of public claimings. I won’t know for sure until we return. That could cause you some discomfort. I, like Hunter, won’t allow you to be hurt or claimed against your will, but that doesn’t mean that my pack members won’t be irritated or angry that they are being made to leave.”

I watch as Allison reaches out to take his hand and he immediately picks it up to kiss the back of her hand.

“We’ve spent nearly as much time with Alpha Kayce as we have with Alpha Hunter. I believe you can trust both of them, but if I were you, I’d stay here. This pack is settled, they already know and have agreed to protect everyone here against any attacking

Alphas. Alpha Kayce and Luna Allison still have to get their pack to that point,” Letti says.

When the twins nod, agreeing to stay, I look at Kayce. Nikki’s birthday, with three ranked she-wolves and three unmated Alphas in attendance, is going to be very interesting.

The One He Claimed Chapter 68

Chapter 68: Birthday Party

Sophie

“Are you nervous Nikki?” I ask, watching her as she gets ready for her party.

“Yes and no,” she says, but I can see her nerves.

Allison and Letti left with Kayce several days ago to return to his pack. According to Hunter, he lost several members of his pack too when he refused to claim Allison publicly, but word of Brooklyn had spread like wildfire through the packs, so not as many omegas and warriors were willing to leave, even if they did agree to continue the public matings. No one wants that for their daughter, or their sister. It seems it’s only okay if it’s for someone else.

The twins have been out and around the pack more often. Hunter and I had heard them sucking in air several times when they’d see us do something unexpected. It was much like it had been when Nikki, Allison, and Letti first arrived.

We’ve had several more she-wolves find us, some who were on the run, but now, we’re starting to see warriors and omegas who are afraid that they will be taken as mates or worse, raped and cast aside like Brooklyn. Nearly every day we have at least one she-wolf come to our borders requesting protection. We’d also heard that Alpha Kayce had received his first request for protection, and he had accepted.

Hunter had called Alpha Ezra and told him that he was invited to Nikki’s birthday party if he wanted to extend his stay or delay it a couple of days. He chose to delay it, wanting to see a birthday party that didn’t include a public claiming.

“You know that neither Hunter nor I will allow anyone to claim you against your will, right Nikki?” I ask her.

“Yes. I do trust that. It’s just....” she looks at me in the mirror where she’s putting the last touches on her outfit.

“What if he’s my mate? What if he isn’t? What if...”

I step forward and put my hands on her shoulders. I'm not that much older than she is, but in some ways, I feel much, much older.

"You take it one step at a time, one day at a time," I tell her. "If he is, you get to know him, you take things as slow or fast as the two of you choose to, together. If he's not, then..."

"I hope he is," she says, looking at herself in the mirror. "Is that crazy to say?"

"No, it's not. I think we all saw the chemistry between the two of you when he was here. From the little bit of time I had with him, he seems like a good man."

"He does. I never thought I'd say this, but...I think, with time, I could learn to trust him."

"Believe me, if he's a good man, it won't take very long at all. Look at me. Look at Allison. I think Alpha Robin will be the same."

She takes a deep breath. "When will they be here?"

"I think they're all planning to arrive around the same time. Alpha Dutton is bringing Penny. She wanted to join our pack. I'm glad. I liked Penny and I think she can help with the she-wolves. that are starting to flood our borders. It will be good for her to see a birthday party as it was meant to be. A party about you, not about getting claimed."

"You know you'll have to start patrolling out farther, right? Alphas like Owen will plan an attack where they could catch a she-wolf on her way to your borders."

"Alpha Owen has his committee meeting in a couple of days, so hopefully, he's busy with that." I look at her in the mirror. "You know your brother asked to be here?"

"Yes, Alpha Hunter told me. He also told me that if I wanted him here, he'd make the exception, but he couldn't promise that I'd be safe. I'm sure Alaric planned to bring his Beta, He's wanted me as his mate for years."

"I'm glad you said no. I'm sure Alaric will bring it up at the committee meeting, and who knows, if you're a newly mated Luna, you can tell him yourself that you requested he not be in attendance."

I catch the fierce smile spread across her face. "Oh, I would love to see the look on his face if I showed up at the committee with a mark on my neck."

I hug her from behind. "We'll see how it goes. It could be a really fun meeting with you and Allison there as well," I say.

"I'll see you downstairs," I say to her, leaving her to go check on the twins. They had gone back and forth about being at the party. I know they're terrified, not only because

it's an 18th birthday party, but also because there will be three unmated Alphas in attendance.

I find them in the room they decided to share. Maybe it's because they are twins, or maybe it's just fear, but they don't seem to want to be separated..

"Hey, how are you both?" I ask, sniffing the air so I can tell them apart. They both have their dark blond hair down, but Tiffany has the sides of hers twisted and pinned up in the back. They wanted to wear blue dresses today, which surprised me because it will only accent their startling blue eyes, bringing attention to them and their beauty.

"Nervous, if we're being honest," Tammi says.

"I understand that. But you truly have nothing to fear. Hunter made sure each Alpha was aware that there would not be any public claimings in our pack, that you, Nikki, and all the other she-wolves are under our protection, and that he would protect them with his life."

"We know, it's just..." Tammi begins.

"We've been to these sorts of birthday parties before. Some were awful and some were...okay. That's the best it ever was, okay. Unlike you, our Alpha wanted all his ranked she-wolves to know and understand what was in store for us. We were to accept our fate and go along with it."

"Well, tonight will be about eating and dancing and enjoying an amazing woman on her 18th birthday," I say to them. "If you're nervous, stay close to Kinsley. I'll be keeping tabs on our Alphas along with Hunter. But Kinsley is in charge of making sure the party moves along."

"Luna?" Tiffany says as I turn to leave.

"Yes?"

"I'm not sure we've told you how much we appreciate you and Alpha Hunter for taking us in. Neither of us believes that we would have survived on our own much longer. You saved us."

"You saved yourselves. All I did was give you a safe place to live. The two of you had to find your way here and you had to accept what we were offering."

They smile and look at each other. It sometimes feels like they share a brain or have a secret way of communicating. Maybe they share a mind link since they're sisters.

"You really are the Sophie Meyers we heard about, aren't you?" Tammi asks.

"I don't know what you're talking about. I'm Sophie Reynolds," I say, smiling as I turn to go.

"I think Sophie Reynolds is going to be more powerful than Sophie Meyers ever was," I hear one of the twins say to the other as I walk down the hall.

I shake my head as I go back into the main hall, checking to see that everything is ready, answering last-minute questions and getting ready to greet our guests.

When I turn, I see Hunter watching me, a hungry look in his eye that I know well. We'd seen the doctor and confirmed that I was pregnant, getting to hear our baby's heartbeat. I had cried and although Hunter didn't shed a tear, his eyes were glassy, and I could feel his overwhelming emotions. We're both very excited, and tomorrow, we find out if we're having a boy or a girl.

'Ezra's here,' he mind links me, smiling his very possessive smile as he walks toward me, looking down at my stomach and then back up at me.

"Shall we greet our guest together?" I ask him, sliding into his arms, leaning against him and wrapping my own arms around his waist as I look up at him.

"Yes," he says, kissing my nose. I'm hoping we can have our own celebration later, alone,' he says in the mind link.

'I'd be disappointed if we didn't. I believe I won today's wager,' I reply, smirking up at him. I know I only won because Hunter is being very careful with me. The doctor agreed that I could

continue to spar, but Hunter won't allow anyone to spar with me except himself.

'Isn't that what this afternoon was about?' he asks, raising an eyebrow.

'The day isn't over. The wager is for the entire day, is it not?'

"Damn, I love you," he says out loud, leaning in to kiss me. He pulls away before I'm ready for the kiss to end, but he takes my hand as we walk outside to greet Alpha Ezra.

When we walk out, he's looking around, but he zeros in on our clasped hands immediately.

"Welcome, Alpha Ezra. We're so glad you decided to join us," I say.

"It's been a long time since I've been to an 18th birthday party, and it's the first one I actually wanted to attend since I met my mate," he says, the sadness flickering over his face.

“Today will be different,” Hunter assures him.

“That’s the only reason I’m here. Well, that and to meet a rare Alpha female,” he says, smiling. He’s older than Hunter, maybe in his early 30’s. He’s still muscular and strong, but the loss of his mate and pup have taken their toll on him, making him look older than he is.

“Nikki is nervous, but excited. It will be what we hope is the first of many happy 18th birthday parties,” I say, sliding my arm through his and leading him inside. I can feel his sadness and reluctance setting in, but I want him here. I want him to see what it can be like if things change.

When we walk back inside, I’ve just gotten Alpha Ezra a drink when I hear people gasp. I turn and see Nikki making her way down the stairs. She looks stunning. I smile and walk toward her.

“Well everyone, the guest of honor has arrived! Let the party begin!” I say, walking her over to meet Alpha Ezra. I see the twins hovering near Kinsley, thankful that they’ve come down. I’m going to wait to introduce them, give them some time to relax.

Nikki has just taken a sip of her drink when I hear a growl at the entrance. I turn seeing Alpha Robin, staring straight at Nikki.

“Mate,” he says, his eyes burning into hers. I take a step closer to her, just in case Alpha Robin can’t control his wolf.

“Mate,” Nikki says softly before smiling at him.

“Mates!” another growl comes from behind Robin. He turns, snarling at Alpha Dutton who has just entered the room. Robin moves quickly to put himself between Nikki and Alpha Dutton, his claws coming out.

“MINE!” Robin snarls, as the room goes quiet.

“Mate” I hear beside me, ringing out in chorus. All of our heads snap to the twins, staring wide-eyed at Alpha Dutton.

“Is it always this interesting around here?” Alpha Ezra says to no one in particular.

The One He Claimed Chapter 69

Chapter 69: Mates

Dutton

I smelled them the moment I got out of the car. Well, I didn't know there were two, I just knew my mate was here. I could smell her – vanilla and citrus. I had completely ignored Penny, who I brought with me to the pack and raced inside, leaving her yelling behind me that she needed help with her bags. I never wanted to hunt my mate down, but that doesn't mean I didn't want her. I do. I desperately want her.

Except her, is them. Twins. I'm mated to twins.

When Robin had snarled that my mates were his, Orion, my wolf, had been ready to kill him or anyone else who got in our way. Only he was standing in front of some other female I could care less about. My mates, plural, two, more than one, holy goddess above what did I do to deserve two of the most gorgeous women in the world? My mates were on the other side of the room.

I took a step toward them, only for someone else to get in my Wa J. I refocus. Hunter.

"Get out of my way, Hunter," Orion and I snarl together.

"You need to get control of your wolf, Dutton," he growls back, Shaw close to the surface.

"We could take Shaw. He's strong, but if he thinks he can keep us from our mates, I will destroy him," Orion says.

"They are scared, and you will only alienate them or cause them to run from you. They come from a pack that mistreated them. They are under my protection so if you want a chance to get to know them, rein in Orion, now!" Hunter growls in a low voice meant only for me.

When I look back, I can see the women, my mates, clinging to each other, their eyes wide with fear. Now that I'm paying attention, I can smell their fear intermingled with their divine scent.

I shake my head, grabbing hold of Orion.

"I didn't mean to scare you. When we stepped out of the car, I smelled..." I stop, breathing deeply of their scent. No wonder I was overwhelmed by it. There are two of them, their scent and my pull to them being amplified because they are twins. "I smelled your scents, and my wolf took over. But I have him under control now. I won't hurt you," I tell them gently.

I feel Hunter's body relax, but he doesn't move out of my way.

"May I at least have your names?" I ask.

They turn their heads to look at someone else. I follow their eyes and see Luna Sophie. She looks at me, her wolf at the forefront, sniffing my intentions. Then she looks back at my mates and nods.

"I'm Tiffany," the one who smells like vanilla and lemons says.

"And I'm Tammi," the one who smells like vanilla and oranges says.

"I'm Dutton, Alpha Dutton. Is there..." I suddenly realize that we're in the middle of a party and everyone has gone quiet, watching our interactions. "Is there someplace more private. where we might talk?" I ask.

Their electric blue eyes go wide again, and again, they turn to look at Luna Sophie.

"Hunter, why don't we switch. I think that Nikki and Alpha Robin are good," she says, turning to look at the woman standing behind her. So, she's the birthday girl and Robin is her mate. Good for them, but I could give a s***t right now. My mates are standing in front of me.

"Remember my rule, Dutton. I will not hesitate to keep you in line. And if you get out of control around my pregnant mate, will kill you," Hunter says, deadly serious.

I look at Luna Sophie as she walks over, casually putting herself between me and my mates. "I'm sure now that Alpha Dutton has had a moment to collect himself and his wolf, he'll be on his best behavior, right Alpha?" she asks me. Her tone is casual, but I can see the threat in her eyes as well. If I try anything with these she-wolves, she won't hesitate to put me down. Knowing what I know about her, I feel confident that she could do it. And even without Hunter's threat, Orion and I wouldn't hurt her even if he did attack us. I can smell the pup on her. Her scent has subtly changed since I last saw her.

"Absolutely, Luna. I just want to get to know my mates."

"Well then, follow me," she says, turning and wrapping her arms around my mates, continuing to keep herself between me and them.

"Will you stay with us, Luna? We don't want to be alone with him," I hear Tammi ask. It hurts my heart, makes Orion howl with pain inside my head, but I get it. This is the very first birthday party in history that a ranked female finds her mate and won't be marked publicly. F***k, how will that even work with two of them? I can't mark both of them at once. We have a lot to talk about.

'How about we get them to agree to letting us mark them before we worry about who we will mark first,' Orion grumbles.

'You agree with a private marking and mating?' I ask him, surprised.

'Look at them, they're terrified of us. They're ours, I'll do

anything they need to make them feel safe, even if it means I have to wait to mark them. Hunter said they were mistreated in their pack. I will kill anyone and everyone who ever hurt them,' he growls.

"Why don't we sit in here. It's a bit away from the noise of the party. I can have someone bring us some food and something to drink, if that works for everyone?" Sophie says.

"Whatever my mates would like. Have you eaten? You both look like you need to eat more," I say, looking them over quickly. I don't want to make them afraid, but they are much too small. It makes me wonder how long they've been on the run.

'Or maybe their Alpha kept them underfed so they couldn't run,' Orion growls.

"We could eat," Tiffany says. I'm starting to get a feel for the two of them. Tiffany already seems to be the more outgoing of the two, Tammi is shyer.

"And you Tammi? You'll eat as well?" I ask her, and I see her. surprise that I can already tell her apart from her sister.

She nods. "Yes."

"Why don't you sit down, and I'll ask someone to bring us some food and did you want something to drink?" Sophie asks, looking at the girls.

"Wine for us," Tiffany says, giving even more confirmation that she's more outspoken.

"Red or white?" I ask.

"White," she says, and Tammi nods when I look at her.

"And I'll have what they're having. I say to Sophie. "Please, sit," I say, taking control of the meeting. I'm not sure if that was Sophie's intention but she gave me an opening and I'm taking it.

I see them both glance at Sophie whose eyes are unfocused in the mind link.

"Please," I say, gesturing to a two-seater sofa. They sit and I sit across from them. I'm itching to touch them, but I refrain.

"Why don't you tell me a little about yourselves. You're twins, you're at least eighteen, you've been on the run and are here under Hunter's protection," I begin. I'm on the edge

of my seat, literally, getting as close to them as possible, but also because I want to know everything about them.

“We’re eighteen,” Tammi says, and I smile at her encouragingly.

“Who was born first?” I ask.

“I was,” Tiffany says.

“By two minutes,” Tammi says.

“Where are you from?” I ask them.

They look at each other.

“I’m not planning to send you away. But I’ve never met you and I’ve been to many birthday parties in the packs in our territory, so you’ve obviously run from quite a distance.”

“We’re from out west, California.”

“Beach bunnies?” I ask, earning a giggle from Tammi. F**k, she’s so sweet.

“No,” she says, blushing.

“You look like it with your blond hair and blue eyes,” I tell them.

“We lived in the mountains, or our pack did. We weren’t...” Tiffany begins, looking at Tammi. The grin from a moment ago is gone. “We weren’t allowed to leave.”

I nod, holding onto Orion as he snarls and thrashes around in my head.

“You’re the daughters of the pack Beta?” I ask, noticing that Sophie is watching us, but staying back and letting me talk.

“Yes, the only children of our parents,” Tammi says.

“And, they were okay with you not being allowed to leave the pack?” I ask gently, trying to figure out how they got away.

“No...well, our father was,” Tiffany says.

“But not our mother,” Tammi says.

“Is that how you got away?” I ask.

“It was supposed to be all three of us,” Tammi says, and her eyes fill with tears. I’m practically desperate to pull her into my lap and hold her, but instead, I reach out my hand, offering to hold hers. She looks at it a moment then reaches out, taking my hand. Hers are soft and small in mine. I smile at her then turn to Tiffany, extending my other hand to her.

She smiles and takes my hand. I swear I feel both of them relax a bit with just my touch. I know Orion relaxes, and he begins purring softly. I don’t cut him off, wanting to soothe both of them.

“Who was the other person who was supposed to come with you?” I ask.

“Alex,” Tiffany says and I instantly growl, causing both women to s**h their hands away from me. S**t.

I get hold of my jealousy and anger. “You were supposed to run with a man?” I grit out.

“What? No!” Tammi exclaims, frowning.

“Alex is short for Alexandra. She’s the Alphas daughter and our best friend,” Tiffany says. “Our mothers worked together to get us out, but something happened. The Alpha and our father were supposed to be gone longer than they were, and our mothers couldn’t get us out of our locked rooms fast enough. Alex, she....” Tiffany stops and once again, I desperately want to comfort them.

The look at each other and when they turn back, they both have tears in their eyes. “Alex sacrificed herself so that we could get away.”

They both begin sobbing and I drop to the floor in front of them. “Please, please let me hold you. My wolf is howling with our need to comfort you. I hate seeing you cry,” I say, opening my arms. I know better than to try to hold them. These two are very skittish and will take a lot of time and patience on mine and Orion’s part, but it’s no wonder they’re terrified after what they’ve been through.,

It’s Tammi who drops into my arms first, putting her head on my shoulder and wrapping an arm around me. I kiss the top of her head, wrapping one arm around her while keeping the other one open to Tiffany. When she finally falls into my arms, I kiss the top of her head and take a deep breath, holding on to these sweet, gentle women, my mates.

I know the moment that Tiffany puts her head on my shoulder that they truly are meant for me. And while I hate that they are both crying, nothing has felt so perfect in my life as having these two women in my arms.

The One He Claimed Chapter 70

Chapter 70: Promises

Nikki

When someone else had cried mate, I'd felt fear slither down my spine. All the horrors, all the spectacles of public claimings, came smashing into me. But then....Robin had moved in front of me, his claws extended, ready to fight another Alpha for me, even though his mark isn't on my neck.

As soon as I hear the twins softly cry 'mate', I knew what had happened, even if it took the rest of the room a minute to figure it out.

I put my hand on Robin's back, letting him know that I'm safe, but also enjoying the feeling of his muscles quivering under my touch. He smells like musk and earth, like raw masculinity. Everything about this man screams Alpha to me, even his willingness to let me stand up to him. Nothing says power like a man who isn't afraid to let others show theirs.

I feel his body relax and while I continue to watch Hunter trying to calm Dutton and his wolf, I step up to Robin. "Are you going to go all protective Alpha all night?" I ask softly, helping to diffuse his anger, but also happy to be teasing him again.

"That depends," he says, still watching Dutton intently. "Are you planning to dance with anyone other than me tonight, mate?" He turns and looks at me over his shoulder. His intense gaze sends heat pooling south. My mouth has gone dry so all I can do is shake my head, no.

"Good," he growls softly.

When Sophie suggests that she help the twins and Hunter check on Robin and I, I can see his reticence, but Sophie, being the queen she is, takes control of the situation. I know the twins are worried, but I also know that Sophie won't allow anything to happen to them, letting me focus on my mate.

I look back at Robin. If things between us work out, I hope to be the same kind of Luna that Sophie is, strong and confident.

As Sophie begins to lead the twins and Alpha Dutton from the room, Robin turns to me. "Now, where were we?"

"I believe our wolves were identifying each other as mates," say. I'm feeling shy all of a sudden. What does Robin expect of me now?

"Nikki, are you good?" Alpha Hunter asks, walking over.

"Yes, Alpha. I think we're good."

“Robin, remember my rule,” he says.

Robin nods but doesn't look away from me. “I'm here until the committee meeting so that my mate and I can spend time together,” he says. I jerk in surprise, and he merely smiles at me.

“What, you didn't think I'd come in, and expect you to leave with me immediately, did you?”

“I wasn't sure what to expect,” I say.

“Hunter, can we get the music back on so I can dance with my mate?” Robin asks and when Hunter doesn't respond, we both look to find him gone.

“Oh, well...” I look around wanting to find Kinsley. Robin, however, pulls me to him.

“We can make our own music,” he says and begins swaying back and forth. His gaze on me is so intense, it makes me blush.

“You look so beautiful tonight. Even if you weren't my mate, I'd be jealous of the man who was lucky enough to call you his,” he says.

I tilt my chin up and narrow my eyes. “So, you only want me for my looks?”

His smile grows wide, and I realize that while he probably was giving me a real compliment, he also knew it would antagonize me and I played right into it.

His eyes drop to my mouth and his gaze turns to a burning hunger. “I also love that smart mouth of yours and I can't wait to taste it.”

He drags his eyes back to mine. “I love the intelligence and strength that are behind that beautiful face and the passion...Oh my little mate, how I do hope that you keep your passion. I think you and I can have a wonderful life together.”

“I have a lot of things that I want to change about our world,” I say, defiantly. He may as well know what he's getting into.

“Like what?” he asks softly, watching me as if every word I say is of the utmost importance.

“Women should have an equal say in the packs. We should have the same rights as men. Women should have the right to take over as Alpha,” I say, quickly muttering the biggest of my issues, the one that would cause other Alphas the most concern.

“So, you're saying if our first child is a girl, she should have the right to take over our pack?” he asks, as if it's a simple conversation, casually bringing up our child.

I swallow hard, struggling with the image of having this man's pup as a flash of hot desire rushes through me. I really want that.

"Why not? I would have made a better Alpha than Alaric," I say, defensively, trying to get myself and my purring wolf under control.

"You definitely would have, but that's not saying much. Your brother is a terrible Alpha. Would you, let's say, have made a better Alpha than Hunter?"

I turn, looking around the room for our host. I see him putting together plates of food, possibly for Dutton and the twins. I'm guessing he wants to check on his mate.

I think about his question a moment. Robin's right. There's a huge difference in being better than my brother versus being better than Hunter. "I would always strive to do my best and to be the best Alpha I could be for my pack. I would be open to their worries and concerns, listening to their ideas and trying to make the pack more cohesive and stronger. I don't know if that would make me a better Alpha than Hunter, but I would think it would at least make me as good an Alpha as he is."

Robin reaches up and strokes my cheek. "You can do all those things as my Luna. Listen, make the pack feel heard, be open to their ideas, make the pack stronger," he says.

I look up at him, seeing pride at what I've said. "And what about you, Alpha Robin? What do you want in a mate?"

"A partner," he says without hesitation. "Running a pack, if you do it well, isn't easy. I want someone who is kind, loving, intelligent, strong, passionate, someone who will stand up to me if they think I'm wrong, someone who will aggravate me to the point of nearly losing my mind, someone who make me crave them every minute of the day so that I can barely stand to be away from them, someone who will learn to trust me, someone who will give themselves to me completely, freely, and with complete and utter abandon."

"Well, with such simple criteria, I can't imagine why you haven't found her before today," I say sarcastically, feeling a bit

overwhelmed by his words. He's very confident about what he wants.

"I've had a week to think about it, wondering if you were my mate. I've had a week to realize that you meet every one of those criteria, or hopefully, you will one day when you learn to trust me and give yourself to me. I would never want to compare what I have with my mate to someone else and theirs but when we were in that committee meeting and Hunter asked Sophie to submit to him? I can't imagine the amount of trust that it took for her or the amount of love and respect that it took from him for her to give it. I want that. The moment I saw them, I knew that it was exactly what I wanted in my

relationship with my mate. I want her, you, to know that if we were in a room full of Alphas, that you would never, ever have to worry that I wouldn't put you first, that I would never betray your trust, that I would never let you down."

We've stopped dancing, his words impacting me more strongly than I would have imagined.

"All I'm asking, is for you to give me a chance, to let me prove to you that I can be that man to you, I've seen what Hunter and Sophie have, I've seen what Kayce and Allison already have. I want it. I desperately want you and I to have that, that trust, that love, that respect, all of it. But with you, I also want your F**g passion. You have a fire, Nikki, and I want to burn in your flames every f**g night for the rest of my life."

I don't know what to say, all I know is his words are having a very strong effect on my body. I feel hot and uncomfortable in ways 'I'm unaccustomed to.

He looks down at my mouth, and unconsciously lick my lips. His low growl of approval sends another wave of heat to my core, causing me to press my thighs together so my arousal doesn't begin to drip down my thighs.

"And I desperately want to taste that mouth," he says, and now he's panting, his eyes glued to my lips. "Please tell me that I can."

"Yes," I say, and in a fraction of a second, his warm, soft mouth is devouring mine in a gentle, dominant kiss, promising everything that he intends to give me in our future.