

Alpha's Abandoned Daughter is the Secret Heiress! - Chapter 441[1,117 words]

(Amelia's POV)

The stock charts on my screen shifted in real time.

I watched every flicker, every dip, every small tremor running through the Drake family's holdings. Three of their subsidiaries had dropped another two percent since morning.

A soft knock broke my focus.

"Ms. Stone?" Anya's voice came through the door. "Director Liam is here to see you."

"Send them both in."

Liam walked in ahead of Anya, crossed directly to the sofa, and dropped into it with the ease of someone

who'd been in this office enough times to stop asking permission.

Anya set two cups of coffee on the table, then slipped out and pulled the door shut behind her.

Liam reached into his document bag and drew out a stapled list. He set it on the table between us.

"Cast is finalized," he said. "Every role for *Treatment Diary*. If you don't have any objections, we can move

to pre-production."

I stepped away from the desk and settled onto the sofa across from him.

I picked up the list and flipped through the first few pages.

"I'll read through it and get back to you," I said.

Liam lifted his coffee and took a slow sip.

"What about Jasper?" he asked.

I glanced up.

“Wayne’s situation got sorted out,” he continued. “The rumors about him faded clean. But Jasper is still taking hits online. The backlash hasn’t let up.” He set the cup down. “When are you planning to deal with it?”

The audience needs to trust the cast before we even start filming.”

I leaned back slightly.

“I’ve been stretched thin lately,” I said. “Once I confirm the cast list is clean, I’ll have the media accounts push the clarification. The evidence on the bullying and the assault from Director Kyle – I’ll get it out.”

Liam nodded slowly.

“Good timing, actually,” he said. “Clear his name right before filming starts. Builds anticipation. People will be watching.”

We talked through a few more logistical details. Then Liam stood, tucked his bag under his arm, and

headed out to begin prep work.

I turned back to the cast list.

It was nearly the end of the afternoon when I finished cross-referencing the last name against the character profiles. I saved the file, pushed back from the desk, and reached for my bag.

The door burst open.

Anya stood in the frame, slightly breathless, her expression tight with alarm.

“Ms. Stone something’s happened.”

I set my bag down.

“There’s a story going around online,” she said. “About you and Jasper Calder.” She hesitated. “They’re saying there’s an illicit affair.”

I stared at her for a moment.

Then I almost laughed.

I pulled out my phone and opened the social feed.

Sure enough – my name and Jasper’s were sitting at the top of the trending list, and the number beside the hashtag was still climbing.

I scrolled through the comments.

She’s obviously his secret benefactor. Why else would she cast him?

Why hasn’t anyone cleared his name yet? Because she’s protecting him.

No physical contact in the photos, but a man and a woman walking out of a private building together – what more do you need?

Inside my head, Ava let out a sharp, contemptuous snort.

*Cheating on your mate? With your mate’s brother? These humans must be blind. If Logan ever saw this,

he’d want to tear every last one of them apart.*

Calm down, I told her silently.

I scrolled back to the photos.

There was nothing there. No contact, no intimacy. Just two people walking out of the same building.

I knew exactly what that afternoon had been.

After finishing Theodore’s treatment that day, I had gone to see Uncle M – applied the moonlight herbs, checked his progress, stayed until I was sure he was stable. When I left, Jasper had been standing in the corridor, clearly turning something over in his mind. Something about Uncle M, about the situation, about what he was supposed to do with all of it.

I had patted his shoulder and told him to focus on the work. Then I had left.

That was it.

That was the entire scandal.

I set the phone face-down on the desk.

“Anya,” I said.

She straightened immediately.

“Pull the recording of Jasper being assaulted by Director Kyle on set. And the documentation on the school bullying- everything we have.” I kept my voice even. “Don’t release any of it yet. Let the story run for

two days. On the third evening, push all of it out at once.”

Anya blinked.

“No clarification about the affair itself?”

“No,” I said.

She looked uncertain, but she nodded and started typing notes into her tablet.

I picked up my bag and headed out.

The drive back to the East House was quiet. The city moved past the windows in the early evening light,

the streets beginning to thin as people headed home.

My phone rang through the car speakers.

Jasper.

I answered.

“Ms. Stone.” His voice was low, carrying that particular weight people use when they’re trying to hold

something back. “I’m sorry. This is my fault. You shouldn’t be dealing with this because of me.”

I stopped at a red light.

“You didn’t take those photos,” I said. “You didn’t post them. You have nothing to apologize for.”

“If you hadn’t come to treat my family-”

“Jasper.” I cut him off gently. “I don’t care about the gossip. What I care about is using this moment properly.”

He went quiet.

—

“The heat is already there,” I said. “I’m going to use it. Before filming starts, I’ll push out the evidence – the recording from set, the bullying documentation. We clear your name while everyone is already paying attention.”

A pause.

“That’s-” He stopped. “Thank you.”

I let a beat pass. Then I sighed, making it sound slightly heavier than it needed to be.

“The bullying, the assault – those I can explain,” I said. “But the affair rumor...” I trailed off. “That one is harder. I haven’t quite figured out how to address it without making it worse.”

The silence on his end stretched longer this time.

I waited.

“If it’s causing real damage,” Jasper said slowly, “to you, or to the production – I can come forward. Publicly.” Another pause. “If people know who I actually am, the speculation stops.”

I felt something ease in my chest.

“Are you sure?” I asked.

“It’s the right thing to do,” he said quietly.

“Then we’ll arrange it,” I said. “Thank you, Jasper.”

We ended the call.

The light turned green.

I pulled forward, and the tension I’d been carrying since Anya burst through my office door dissolved

somewhere in the evening air.

By the time I turned into the East House garage and cut the engine, I was in a genuinely good mood.

I was still reaching for my bag when my phone lit up again.

Theodore.

I answered before the second ring.

“Amelia.” His voice was warm – warmer than usual, carrying something close to amusement. “Jasper just called me.”

I waited.

“He said he was worried the rumors online might hurt you,” Theodore said. “And the production.” A brief pause. “He told me he’s ready to publicly acknowledge that he’s my younger brother.”

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(Amelia’s POV)

Even through the phone, I could feel Theodore’s excitement.

It wasn’t something he would ever say outright. But it was there – in the slight warmth in his voice, in the way he paused just a beat longer than usual.

“Congratulations,” I said, smiling as I stepped out of the car and pushed the door shut behind me.

I walked toward the East House, the evening air cool against my face.

From the moment we confirmed Jasper was truly Theodore’s younger brother, I had known Theodore wanted to acknowledge him publicly. He didn’t want his brother to keep carrying false accusations. But he hadn’t wanted to force Jasper into anything, so he had waited, and respected Jasper’s pace.

Now Jasper had come forward on his own.

Of course Theodore was happy.

“When are you planning to make it official?” I asked.

A low, quiet laugh came through the speaker.

“That depends,” Theodore said, “on how you’re planning to use the current media frenzy.”

I felt the corner of my mouth lift.

“You always know exactly what I’m thinking,” I said.

“I’ve had practice.”

I stepped through the side entrance and into the hallway.

“I’ll let the rumors run for two more days,” I said. “Let the heat build. On the third day, when it peaks, I’ll push out the evidence – the recording from set, the bullying documentation. We clear Jasper’s name while everyone is already watching.”

“And then?” Theodore asked.

“And then,” I said, “it’s your turn.”

A brief pause.

“Five days from now,” he said. “I’ll make the official announcement. Jasper is my brother. No ambiguity.”

I nodded to myself.

“Watch Mason’s side,” I said. “Once this goes public, he’ll move.”

“I’ve already prepared for that.” Theodore’s voice was steady, carrying the particular calm of someone who has thought ten steps ahead. “Grandfather, Mason – neither of them will cause a real problem. The power struggle inside the Crimson Moon Pack has gone on long enough. It’s time to end it.”

I walked up the stairs toward my room.

“Then I’ll wish you every success,” I said.

“And I’ll wish you the same.” His voice softened slightly. “Don’t stay up too late.”

I laughed once, quietly, and ended the call.

Three days passed.

As the rumors about Jasper and me continued to spread online, *Treatment Diary’s official social media account announced the start of production. The comments section erupted immediately – the attacks focused on Jasper’s past scandals and the recent affair speculation, layered on top of each other in an ugly pile.

But that evening, everything reversed.

The evidence dropped without warning.

Director Kyle – the man Jasper had allegedly assaulted on set – released a recorded video. In it, he admitted he had attempted to use his position to coerce a young actress into a sexual relationship. Jasper had intervened to stop him. The punch had been the result.

At nearly the same moment, the victim from the school bullying incident posted a public statement.

He wrote that he had lied. That he had been too afraid to name the real perpetrators, and in his cowardice, he had accused Jasper – the person who had actually tried to protect him. He wrote that Jasper had known the truth all along, and had chosen to stay silent rather than expose him.

In the media interviews that followed, Jasper was composed.

He said he didn't blame his former classmate. He blamed the people who had used their power to push innocent people into impossible corners.

The online reaction shifted completely.

Comments flooded in – apologies, praise, people calling themselves fools for believing the original stories. But beneath the support, the same question kept surfacing:

Then what is his real relationship with Amelia Stone?

Three more days passed.

At eight o'clock in the evening, Theodore's social media account – rarely updated, followed by millions

purely out of curiosity – posted a single line.

It tagged Jasper's account.

Welcome home, my true brother.*

Within seconds, Jasper reposted it.

“He is my real brother.*

The internet detonated.

I was sitting at my desk when the notifications started cascading across my screen. I watched the trending list rearrange itself in real time, Jasper's name and Theodore's climbing past everything else within minutes.

The comments moved fast.

The real Ronan was a fake this whole time? That's why he went after his own brother because he was never actually family.

Wait. So Jasper and Amelia were alone together because of Pack business. There was never anything else going on.

I feel sick. We attacked an innocent person for months.

Shortly after, Jasper posted a longer statement.

He explained that Amelia had been quietly helping him for some time. That Theodore had known about it from the beginning. That none of it had been hidden from anyone who mattered.

The misunderstanding dissolved completely.

And then the anger turned.

Someone cross-referenced the original paparazzi photos – the angle of the shots, the timestamp, the position of the vehicle parked across the street. Within an hour, they had traced the car.

It belonged to Celine.

The comments shifted direction without hesitation.

The fake daughter who got thrown out of the Stone River Pack is still running smear campaigns? What is wrong with her?

She deliberately targeted her own pack's true daughter. This isn't just petty jealousy. This is malicious.

Someone needs to hold her accountable.

I read through the threads for a while, then set my phone face-down on the nightstand.

I had eaten dinner, showered, and changed. The room was quiet. Outside, the city lights were faint against the dark sky.

I pulled the blanket up and settled back against the pillows.

My phone lit up.

Silas.

I answered

“Report,” I said.

“Our operative inside the talent agency sent word.” Silas’s voice was flat and precise, the way it always was when the news was bad. “A girl named Sherry. Celine took her out about a week ago. When she came back, she was barely functional severe depression, and our operative caught her trying to hurt herself twice.”

I stopped scrolling.

“Our operative spent days getting her to talk,” Silas continued. “Tonight she finally did. Celine took her to meet Griffin Drake. Celine forced her to put on revealing clothing and perform in front of him. When Sherry refused, she was beaten. Since then, Celine has been threatening her every day to keep her quiet.”

My hand tightened slightly around the phone.

“Tomorrow,” Silas said, “Celine plans to bring her back to Griffin again. If Sherry still won’t comply, she’ll be sold to an overseas criminal network.”

The lightness I had been carrying all evening was gone.

Inside my mind, Ava let out a low, vicious growl – the kind that came from somewhere deep and instinctive, fury and protectiveness twisted together.

These filthy cowards. Trafficking and brutalizing innocent girls. Let me tear their throats out.

I didn’t argue with her.

“Silas,” I said. My voice was very calm.

“Yes.”

“Tell our operative to prepare. Tomorrow night, we spring the trap.” I kept my tone even, each word deliberate. “We expose everything behind that agency – every dirty transaction, every name. Bring Celine to me directly.”

“Understood.”

“And Sherry,” I said. “And every other girl they’ve coerced or deceived. Make sure they’re protected. That’s the priority.”

“It will be done,” Silas said.

Alpha's Abandoned Daughter is the Secret Heiress! - Chapter 443[1,246 words]

(Author's POV)

The next evening.

Celine sat on the sofa with both hands stretched out across the small table, watching the nail artist carefully apply a fresh coat of deep burgundy lacquer to her fingernails.

The apartment was warm and quiet.

Griffin had arranged this place for her. It was comfortable, well-furnished, and far from the chaos of the outside world.

Sherry stood near the doorway.

She had been brought in ten minutes ago by one of Celine's assistants. She hadn't moved since. Her head was bowed, her fingers twisted together in front of her, her knuckles pale from the pressure.

Celine didn't look up from her nails right away.

"Well?" she said, her voice light, almost bored. "Have you thought it over?"

Sherry didn't answer immediately.

Celine finally raised her eyes.

Sherry's shoulders were trembling slightly. Her jaw was tight. She had clearly been fighting with herself for a long time before being brought here.

Then, slowly, Sherry lifted her head.

Her eyes were red, but her gaze was direct.

"I won't do it," Sherry said. Her voice cracked on the last word, but she didn't look away. "I refuse."

Celine stared at her for a moment.

Then she let out a short, contemptuous laugh.

“A pathetic nobody,” she said, “with nothing to her name, no family connections, no power, no future.” She tilted her head, studying Sherry the way someone might study an insect. “And you still think you have dignity worth protecting?”

Sherry’s lips pressed together.

“Those photos,” Celine said, reaching out with one hand and picking up a small envelope from the table beside her, “will be everywhere by morning if you keep this up.”

She tossed the envelope.

It landed at Sherry’s feet, and several photographs spilled out across the floor.

Sherry looked down.

The color drained from her face.

The photos were of her. Completely exposed. Taken while she had clearly been unconscious, without her knowledge, without her consent.

Her hands flew to her mouth.

“Consider this your last chance,” Celine said pleasantly. “Agree, and these disappear. Refuse, and every person you’ve ever known sees them by tomorrow.”

Sherry’s knees buckled.

She sank to the floor, her hands pressed over her face, a broken sob tearing out of her throat. She was shaking too hard to speak. Too frightened to form words.

Celine watched her for a moment.

Then she felt a wave of pure irritation..

“Pathetic,” she muttered under her breath.

She stood up, shaking her hands slightly to let the nail polish dry, and began walking toward Sherry. She reached out and grabbed a fistful of Sherry’s hair, ready to drag her upright.

Her phone rang.

Celine stopped.

“Miss Celine,” the nail artist said quietly, not looking up from her kit, “it’s the administrator from Lily Garden.”

Celine released Sherry's hair and snatched up the phone.

"What?" she snapped.

The voice on the other end was frantic.

"Miss Stone – Lily Garden is all over social media. Someone posted – they're saying we forced the trainees

– it's everywhere, Miss Stone, the comments –"

Celine's stomach dropped.

She pulled up her social media feed with her free hand.

The top trending topics hit her like a wall.

Lily Garden Talent Agency: Forcing Trainees to Serve Powerful Alphas.

Celine Stone's Secret Life After Being Expelled from Stone River Pack.

The posts were detailed. Ruthlessly detailed.

Her connection to Griffin Drake was laid out clearly. Photos of her at Lily Garden's events were posted side by side with screenshots of private communications. Someone had even dug up her medical records from a private clinic procedures she had undergone quietly, things she had never told anyone.

The comments were merciless.

The fake daughter who got thrown out of her own pack is running a trafficking operation now?

She latched onto Griffin Drake and took over this agency. These poor girls.

Someone needs to be arrested.

Then Zoey's account reposted a lengthy personal account from one of the victims.

The post described Lily Garden in precise, devastating detail – how girls were lured in with promises of entertainment careers, how they were gradually isolated from their families, how they were eventually coerced into meeting powerful Alphas at private gatherings.

The internet erupted.

People began connecting names. Former influencers who had come out of Lily Garden. Patterns that had seemed coincidental suddenly looked like a system.

Celine's hands were ice cold.

The details in the posts were too accurate. Too specific. This had come from someone on the inside – a victim, or an operative placed among them.

Her first instinct was to call Griffin.

She pulled up his contact, her thumb hovering over the call button.

Then she stopped.

She knew Griffin's temper. She had seen what he did to people when things went wrong. He didn't ask questions. He didn't accept explanations. When something became a liability, he removed it.

She would be the liability.

Her phone began to ring.

Griffin's name lit up the screen.

The ringtone felt like a countdown.

Celine stared at his name, her hand shaking, the phone vibrating against her palm.

She couldn't answer.

She let it ring out.

When it started again almost immediately, she set the phone face-down on the sofa cushion and stood up.

"You're done," she said to the nail artist, her voice sharp. "Leave."

The nail artist gathered her kit without a word and left quickly.

Celine turned to her assistant. "Take Sherry away. Now."

The assistant grabbed Sherry's arm and pulled her out of the room.

Celine was alone.

She moved fast, pulling open drawers, checking the closet, searching for anything valuable she could take with her.

There was nothing.

Griffin had given her this apartment, the furniture, the clothes – but nothing that was actually hers. No cash, no documents, no assets she could carry out the door.

She stood in the middle of the room and the full weight of the last few months pressed down on her all at once.

She had come to Griffin with a plan. She had wanted to use him to destroy Amelia, to claw her way back into a position of power, to prove that she belonged in the world she had been ripped out of.

Instead, she had been used. Humiliated. Reduced to managing a criminal operation while Griffin kept her like a tool he could discard.

And now the Drake family itself was burning.

Every door she had tried to open had slammed shut.

She had one thought left.

Survive.

Celine grabbed her phone and her bag and walked to the apartment door.

She pulled it open.

The two guards stationed in the hallway turned to look at her.

“I’m not feeling well,” she said, keeping her voice even. “I need to go downstairs to get some medicine.”

“We can have it delivered,” one of the guards said immediately.

“I need air,” Celine said. “I’ll be back in ten minutes.”

She didn’t wait for an answer and walked toward the elevator, forcing herself not to move too quickly.

The guards exchanged a look behind her.

She reached the elevator and pressed the button.

The doors slid open.

Sloane stepped out.

Two of her people flanked her on either side.

Celine's face went rigid.

She recognized Sloane instantly. The same woman who had come with Jade to take her before. The same cold, unhurried expression. The same eyes that looked at her like she was already caught.

Celine spun around.

"Stop them!" she screamed at the guards. "They work for Amelia! Stop them right now!"

She bolted back toward her apartment door, running as fast as she could.

Behind her, she heard Sloane's voice – calm, almost casual.

"You two," Sloane said to her people, "go get her."

There was a pause, and then the soft sound of Sloane rolling her neck.

"The guards," Sloane said quietly, her voice dropping to something low and sharp, "are mine."

She moved toward the two guards, her wolf's instincts surging to the surface, her eyes going sharp and

predatory as she closed the distance between herself and the two large men.

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(Author's POV)

The moment Celine screamed, the two guards outside snapped into action.

They lunged forward with their fists raised, charging straight at Silas.

Silas didn't flinch.

She drew on the power coiled inside her and raised one arm, absorbing both men's strikes with a single clean block. The impact barely moved her.

Behind her, two of her operatives slipped past the guards and sprinted after Celine.

Celine was fast, but she had nowhere to go.

She made it back to the apartment door, her fingers clawing at the handle, and then a hand closed around

her arm and yanked her backward.

“Let I go of me!” she shrieked. “Griffin will kill you for this! All of you!”

She kicked and thrashed, her voice rising into a scream as she threatened to call the authorities.

The operative holding her didn’t say a word.

He reached into his coat pocket with his free hand and pulled out a cloth, pressing it firmly over Celine’s mouth and nose.

Celine’s eyes went wide.

She fought harder for exactly three seconds.

Then her body went slack, her weight collapsing into the operative’s arms, her eyes rolling shut.

Outside in the hallway, Silas was already finishing up.

She moved with the unhurried precision of someone who had done this a hundred times before, using her wolf’s speed and strength to put both guards on the floor in rapid succession. It was almost effortless.

When she stepped back into the apartment doorway and saw Celine motionless on the floor, she gave a single nod.

“Pack her up.”

Her people moved quickly, unzipping the large duffel case they had brought and folding Celine’s limp body inside.

Two minutes later, they were walking through the lobby with a heavy piece of luggage rolling between them, looking like any other group of people checking out of a hotel.

Silas pressed two fingers to the earpiece nestled in her ear as they stepped outside.

“Package secured,” she said quietly. “Send the tech team in. I want every second of footage from the past two hours wiped. Entrances, elevator, hallway. All of it.”

She didn’t wait for confirmation.

The van was already waiting at the curb.

The case went in the back, the doors closed, and they pulled smoothly into traffic.

Griffin’s apartment.

The scandal surrounding the Academy had exploded across every platform within hours.

Griffin’s phone had been ringing without pause since the first posts went live. Business contacts, lawyers, people demanding answers, people cutting ties, people who had never spoken to him directly suddenly flooding his message inbox with panicked warnings.

He ignored all of it.

What he couldn’t ignore was the silence on the other end when he called the guards stationed at Celine’s apartment.

No answer.

He called again.

Nothing.

He tried Celine’s number.

Straight to voicemail.

Griffin was already moving before he consciously decided to.

He took six of his people and drove directly to the apartment building. He took the elevator up without speaking. He walked down the hallway and pushed open the door to Celine’s unit.

Empty.

The apartment was perfectly undisturbed. The sofa cushions were still in place. The nail polish kit had been left on the table. There was no sign of a struggle, no overturned furniture, nothing broken.

It was as if everyone inside had simply evaporated.

Griffin walked to the balcony and stood there, his hands gripping the railing, staring out at the city below.

His jaw was tight.

The Academy had been Glenda's operation, built over years, carefully insulated from anything that could be traced directly back to him. Now Glenda was in custody, Celine had vanished, and the entire institution was leaderless and hemorrhaging information in real time.

Whoever had done this had moved fast, moved clean, and left nothing behind.

He knew exactly who that pointed to.

His phone rang.

He looked down at the screen.

Amelia Stone.

His eyes went cold.

He let it ring twice before he answered.

(Amelia's POV)

I was sitting in the back of the car when he picked up.

I didn't bother with a greeting.

"Consider this a return gift," I said. "For everything you've sent my way."

There was a pause on his end.

When Griffin spoke, his voice was controlled, but only barely. I could hear the effort it was costing him.

"If this is about settling old debts," he said, "name your price. Compensation, territory, resources – whatever you want. There's no reason for either of us to push this to a point of no return."

I almost laughed.

"No return?" I said. "Griffin, there's no mutually assured destruction here. That's not how this ends."

“Amelia –”

“The Drake family’s so-called legitimate transformation,” I said, cutting him off, “is a story you told yourselves. The Academy’s back-room dealings are documented. All of it. Every transaction, every name, every arrangement made at those private gatherings.”

He said nothing.

“That’s enough to bury your family,” I said. “Completely.”

Another silence.

I let it stretch for a moment.

Then I said, very softly, “Forcing Celine to get rid of that pup will be the decision you regret most for the rest of your life.”

I paused.

“Because you won’t have another chance. You’ll never have children of your own again.”

I could hear his breathing change.

I ended the call.

In the quiet of the car, I felt Ava stir somewhere deep inside me. She made a low, satisfied sound, like a wolf settling after a hunt.

I leaned back against the seat.

This wasn’t just about the Academy. That had been the opening move. What came next would strip away every layer of protection the Drake family had built, and when they finally stood exposed, there would be no one left to take the fall for them.

Not even Zane Jenkins.

“Change of route,” I said to the driver. “Take me to the Northgate safe house.”

Celine was waiting.

(Author’s POV)

Griffin’s face had gone the color of ash.

He stood on the balcony with the phone still in his hand, staring at nothing.

You'll never have children of your own again.

For an Alpha, the inability to carry on his bloodline wasn't just a personal loss.

It was a humiliation that reached into the marrow.

His wolf surged inside him with a sound like a thunderclap, howling for blood, for destruction, for something to tear apart that would make the shame stop.

He spun around and drove his foot into the glass coffee table in the center of the apartment.

The table shattered.

Glass sprayed across the floor in every direction, and the sound rang through the empty rooms like a gunshot.

"Find her," he said. His voice was very quiet. "I don't care what it takes. Find Celine."

His people scattered immediately.

He pulled up Arthur's number and called.

No answer.

He called again.

Nothing.

Griffin stared at the shattered glass at his feet for exactly four seconds.

Then he grabbed his coat and walked out the door.

He arrived at Arthur's residence with eight men.

The York family's butler was standing at the front entrance, arms spread slightly, expression carefully neutral.

"Mr. Drake," the butler began, "Alpha York is not receiving –"

Griffin released his Alpha Aura.

It came out like a pressure wave, heavy and suffocating, filling the space between them in an instant.

The butler was a pack member.

His body knew what it was facing before his mind could argue. His knees trembled. His feet shuffled backward without him choosing to move.

Griffin walked past him and pushed the front door open.

Inside, Arthur was on the sofa with a young woman tucked under his arm.

He looked up when Griffin came in, and the expression on his face wasn't fear.

It was contempt.

"Griffin," Arthur said flatly. He didn't move.

Griffin pointed at him. "Get up."

Arthur's eyes narrowed.

Then he reached out and clapped his hands together twice.

From every corner of the room, figures emerged. One by one, then in groups, until Griffin counted twenty armed guards forming a loose ring around the space.

Arthur gently set the young woman aside and stood, smoothing the front of his jacket.

"The times have changed," Arthur said. "The Drake family can barely keep its own house standing. Don't come here dragging your disasters through my door."

He shook his head slowly.

"Gale Media is in the state it's in because your family couldn't leave Amelia Stone alone. I haven't come to collect that debt yet." His voice hardened. "And you walk in here like you own the place."

Griffin's eyes moved across the twenty guards surrounding him and his eight men.

His gaze went flat and predatory.

Arthur raised one hand.

"To protect myself," Arthur said coldly, "I have no choice today."

He dropped his hand.

Two guards stepped back to flank Arthur directly.

The remaining eighteen drew their weapons.

They came forward all at once, closing in from every angle like a pack running down prey.

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(Author's POV)

Arthur's lips curved into a smug smile.

He pulled his mistress into his arms and bent down to kiss her, as if the eight men Griffin had brought were already handled.

Then the sound hit.

A series of dull, heavy impacts – fists meeting bodies, boots hitting the floor, men grunting as they went down.

It lasted less than ten seconds.

When Arthur looked up, every single one of his twenty guards was on the ground.

His eight men stood over them, barely breathing hard.

Arthur's face drained of color.

His body began to shake. Sweat broke out across his forehead. He shoved the mistress away from him and stumbled backward, his eyes fixed on Griffin, who was walking toward him with slow, deliberate steps.

Griffin's expression was completely flat.

He crossed the room without hurrying, stopped directly in front of Arthur, and drove his foot into Arthur's stomach with full force.

Arthur's cry tore through the room.

The sofa toppled backward. Arthur crashed to the floor with it, gasping, folding in on himself.

The mistress screamed.

Two of Griffin's guards moved instantly, grabbing both of them and hauling them upright, forcing them to their knees in front of Griffin.

The mistress was shaking so hard her teeth were chattering. She pressed her hands together and begged, her voice dissolving into incoherent pleas, insisting she had no choice, that she had been forced into all of this.

Griffin didn't even glance at her.

He reached down to his belt and drew a silver dagger.

The blade caught the light as he turned it once in his hand, then drove it straight into Arthur's thigh.

The sound Arthur made wasn't a scream.

It was something worse.

Silver against flesh and muscle- the burning was immediate and deep, far worse than ordinary steel, the kind of pain that didn't peak and fade but kept building in waves.

Arthur's whole body convulsed.

Griffin set his boot on Arthur's face, pressing down steadily, and said in a quiet voice, "You're awfully bold. Did you think the Drake family was already finished?"

Arthur sobbed against the floor.

"No - no, I didn't - I'll do anything, anything you need, just stop -"

Griffin lifted his boot.

He crouched down and pressed the flat of the silver dagger against the back of Arthur's hand, applying slow, increasing pressure. Arthur whimpered and went rigid, too terrified to move.

"Then make yourself useful," Griffin said.

He let the silence sit for a moment.

"Call Jade. Tell her to come home."

Arthur's hand was trembling so badly he could barely hold the phone.

He found Jade York's contact and pressed call.

The line rang twice,

Then she hung up.

Griffin's eyes went cold.

He set his boot on the side of Arthur's head again, pressing his face sideways into the floor.

"You have ten seconds," Griffin said. "If you want to keep breathing, figure it out."

Arthur typed a message with shaking fingers.

He told Jade he was prepared to transfer every share of every company in his name directly to her.

The reply came in less than a minute.

Jade called back.

Arthur forced himself upright. He pressed the phone to his ear and kept his voice as level as he could manage, though each breath cost him.

"Jade," he said. "I've been thinking clearly about this. Amelia Stone is beyond what I can handle anymore. I've decided to hand over full management of Gale Entertainment to you – the shares, all of it."

There was a pause on the other end.

"Fifty million," Jade said.

Arthur's jaw tightened.

Fifty million for a company worth hundreds of times that.

He looked up.

Griffin was watching him from the sofa, one arm draped over the back, his gaze flat and utterly without mercy.

"Agreed," Arthur said.

He arranged for Jade to come home and sign the transfer contract, then ended the call. Griffin stood, crossed the room, and told his guards to drop Arthur back on the floor.

They let go.

Arthur crumpled.

Griffin settled himself on the sofa and looked down at the two of them – Arthur and the mistress, both pale, both shaking.

“We have some time before she arrives,” Griffin said.

He nodded toward the mistress.

“Pick up where you left off.” Arthur stared at him.

“I’m not going to ask twice,” Griffin said.

The Alpha pressure in the room pressed down like a physical weight, suffocating and absolute.

Neither of them dared to refuse.

The safe house Amelia used was a quiet building on the eastern edge of Northgate City.

Amelia walked down the corridor on the lower level and stopped in front of a reinforced door.

She pushed it open.

The room inside was sparse – bare walls, a single overhead light, two figures on the floor.

One of them was Lance Drake.

His wrists were bound, and two of his front teeth were missing, leaving dark gaps when he opened his mouth. His face was still swollen from before.

The other figure was Celine.

She was sitting against the far wall, hugging her knees, her expensive clothes rumpled, her hair loose around her shoulders.

When Amelia stepped through the door, Lance was in the middle of speaking.

His voice was low and urgent, the way someone sounds when they’re trying very hard to convince themselves as much as the person they’re talking to.

“Don’t worry,” he was telling Celine. “Griffin is fine. The Drake family has backing you can’t even imagine. The moment I get out of here, you walk out with me. And when that happens He smiled, and the gap in his teeth made it look grotesque. “That’s when Amelia dies.”

Celine let out a slow breath and pressed a hand to her chest.

“I was so worried about you,” she said. “When they brought me in and I saw you here, I thought something terrible had happened,”

Amelia leaned against the doorframe.

“You two seem to be getting along well,” she said.

Both of them snapped their heads toward her.

Lance’s expression twisted into something between rage and fear. Celine went rigid.

Amelia looked at Lance.

“You’re missing two teeth and you’re still this mouthy,” she said. “Impressive.”

Lance’s mouth opened.

Then it closed.

He glared at her, but he didn’t say anything.

Celine watched him, and something shifted in her expression. She had heard the confidence in his voice just a moment ago. Now, watching him sit there in silence while Amelia looked at him like he was nothing, she understood.

He had been performing.

All of it – the certainty, the promises, the talk of Griffin’s backing – it had been bluster. A man trying to hold himself together in a room he couldn’t leave.

Amelia took a few steps into the room.

Lance flinched back instinctively.

Amelia waved a hand at him without looking.

“Relax,” she said. “I’m not here for you today.”

She turned to Celine.

“I’m here for her.”

Amelia reached down and pulled Celine to her feet in one smooth motion.

Celine stumbled upright and immediately tried to step back.

She made it half a step before Silas's people moved in from both sides, gripping her arms and holding her completely still.

Celine thrashed once, then stopped when she realized it was pointless.

Amelia reached into the small case she carried and withdrew a silver needle.

It was extremely fine – barely visible, the kind of thing that would be easy to miss in poor light.

She stepped close to Celine, turned her head to the side, and pressed the needle into a precise point just behind Celine's left ear.

The insertion took less than a second.

Amelia withdrew the needle cleanly and placed it into a sealed metal case.

Celine's eyes had gone wide.

She had caught a glimpse of the needle tip as Amelia pulled it back – something tiny and faintly luminescent clung to the end of it, smaller than a grain of sand.

"What did you just do to me?" Celine demanded. Her voice came out higher than she intended.

Amelia closed the metal case and looked at her without any particular urgency.

"A listening device," she said. "Roughly the size of a sand grain. It was already embedded under the skin behind your ear – in a region with minimal nerve endings, so you never felt it. Standard detection equipment won't find it."

She tucked the case back into her bag.

"Its range is about three meters. To avoid triggering scans, it only activates for two hours each day."

She looked at Celine with calm, unhurried eyes.

"Two hours is more than enough to pull everything useful from your conversations with Griffin."

Alpha's Abandoned Daughter is the Secret Heiress! - Chapter 446[
1,284 words]

(Amelia's POV)

The warehouse smelled of rust and salt water.

It sat at the edge of the city, where the docks had long since been abandoned, where no one came unless they had a reason to disappear.

Celine stood in the middle of the concrete floor, her wrists bound, her expensive clothes rumpled and damp at the collar.

When I told her about the wire, she went completely still.

Then her whole body shuddered.

“A listening device?” Her voice cracked on the words. “You put a listening device on me?”

She stared at me like I had reached into her chest and rearranged something vital.

I watched her process it. I watched the color drain from her face as the full weight of it landed,

Everything she had said in Griffin’s private compound. Every word she had exchanged with him about their plans, their arrangements, the things they had done and intended to do. All of it had traveled through that tiny microphone and into my ears.

Every single word.

Ava made a low, contemptuous sound somewhere deep inside me.

The counterfeit finally realizes how stupid she’s been.

I agreed with her completely, though I didn’t say so out loud.

Instead, I let the silence do the work.

Celine’s lips moved without sound for a moment. Then she found her voice again, though it was barely more than a whisper.

“When?” she breathed. “When did you put it on me?”

I tilted my head slightly and let the corner of my mouth curve upward.

“What do you think?”

She swayed on her feet.

Her eyes went blank, the kind of blank that comes when a person’s mind simply refuses to process what it’s being shown.

She knew what it meant. I could see it happening in real time. The moment she understood that her killing of Chuck had been recorded. The moment she understood that every secret she had whispered inside Griffin's walls was no longer a secret at all.

"I'm finished," she said.

The words came out flat and hollow, like she was reading them off a wall.

"I'm completely finished."

She wasn't wrong.

I turned away from her.

Lance was in the corner of the warehouse, his ruined wrists wrapped in rough bandaging, his eyes fixed on Celine with an expression that had nothing human left in it.

I held up the encrypted black drive so he could see it clearly.

"With what she gave me," I said, "Griffin has no path back. Not one."

Lance's gaze moved from the drive to Celine's face.

I didn't wait to watch what happened next.

I walked toward the exit, the drive tucked into my palm, and I didn't look back.

I had barely made it twenty steps outside when I heard it.

Lance's voice tore through the walls of the warehouse like something animal and broken, full of a hatred so concentrated it had become its own kind of violence.

I kept walking,

My phone buzzed in my coat pocket.

I pulled it out, Jade.

I answered before the second ring.

"He agreed." Her voice was tight and breathless, like she had been holding it in for too long.

"Arthur agreed to sell the Gale Pack company shares. Amelia, he actually agreed."

"It's a trap," I said.

A pause.

“I know,” she said. “I know it probably is. But Amelia – it’s my family’s company. If there’s ever a small chance –”

“There isn’t,” I said. “Arthur wouldn’t sell unless Griffin told him to. Griffin wants you in a room where he controls the exits.”

She went quiet.

“But you’re going to go anyway,” I said. It wasn’t a question.

“I have to at least –”

“Go,” I said. “Keep the earpiece in. I’ll bring people and we’ll follow behind. Whatever he’s setting up, we’ll use it against him.”

I heard her exhale.

“Amelia.”

“Don’t thank me yet,” I said. “Just don’t take the earpiece out for any reason.”

I ended the call.

I looked down at the encrypted drive in my hand.

There was one more use left in it.

One more move to make before this was over.

(Author’s POV)

The York Pack House living room was quiet in the way that expensive rooms are quiet when something wrong is happening inside them.

Griffin had been waiting for two hours.

He sat in the center of the sofa with his jacket off, his sleeves rolled to the elbow, a half-empty glass of red wine on the table in front of him that he hadn’t touched in an hour.

When Jade finally appeared in the doorway, he straightened.

She took one look at him and turned immediately to leave.

The two guards at the door moved faster.

They stepped into the frame before she could reach it, their bodies blocking the exit without a word.

Jade stopped.

She turned back around slowly.

Griffin's eyes were wrong. Anyone who knew what a wolf looked like in the grip of something uncontrollable would have recognized it immediately. The fixation. The heat behind the irises. The way his attention locked onto her and didn't move.

In the far corner of the room, Arthur York sat hunched against the wall with a young woman pressed close against him. Both of them were shaking. Neither of them looked up.

Jade's chest tightened.

She kept her voice level.

"I want to cut the mate bond," she said. "Whatever we had is done. I'm telling you clearly."

Griffin stood up.

He moved toward her slowly, like he had all the time in the world.

"I haven't agreed to that," he said. "Until I do, you're still mine."

"Griffin –"

"I didn't bring you here to negotiate." He stopped in front of her, close enough that she had to tilt her head back to meet his eyes. "I brought you here because I'm done waiting."

His hand came up and closed around her arm.

"You'll carry my pup," he said. "That's what's going to happen."

Jade's expression shifted into something that looked like revulsion, open and undisguised.

It hit him like a slap,

His grip tightened.

Then he shoved her backward onto the sofa and came down over her, his full weight pinning her in place.

“Celine was carrying my child,” he said, his voice dropping into something raw and ugly. “I ended it. I made that choice. And I’m not making it again with you.”

He reached into his inner jacket pocket.

“You think you get to look at me like that?” He pulled out a small glass vial filled with pale liquid. “You’ll stop looking at me like that very soon.”

Jade twisted hard under him, her hand sweeping across the surface of the side table, fingers closing around the first solid object they found.

A silver letter opener.

She drove it into his shoulder.

The silver bit into his flesh and the reaction was immediate. Griffin’s whole body recoiled, a sound tearing out of him that was more wolf than man. His eyes flooded red at the edges.

He ripped the letter opener free and flung it across the room.

Then he grabbed her jaw with one hand, his fingers digging in hard enough to bruise, and tipped the vial toward her mouth.

“You’ll thank me for this,” he said. “Eventually.”

The Aquid reached the edge of the vial.

The front door exploded inward.

The sound of fighting filled the hallway, bodies hitting walls, something heavy crashing to the floor, and then it was over in seconds.

Amelia walked through the doorway.

Her arm came up in one clean motion.

A silver throwing blade left her fingers and crossed the room in a straight line, burying itself in the back of Griffin’s hand.

The silver burned.

It burned through skin and tissue and sent a shock of white-hot pain up his arm that locked every muscle from his wrist to his shoulder.

The vial dropped.

Jade caught it.

She shoved Griffin off her with both hands, scrambled across the sofa, and ran.

She stopped when she reached Amelia's side, breathing hard, the vial clutched against her chest.

She held it up.

"Everything he just did," Jade said between ragged breaths, "the earpiece caught all of it. And this –" she looked down at the vial in her hand, "– this is the proof."

Alpha's Abandoned Daughter is the Secret Heiress! - Chapter 447[1,209 words]

(Amelia's POV)

Griffin ripped the silver blade out of the back of his hand.

The sound he made was animal and raw, something between a snarl and a scream. The silver had burned deep, and his golden eyes flooded with the red light of an Alpha pushed past his limits.

He fixed that gaze on Jade.

"You knew." His voice shook with disbelief and something uglier beneath it. "You knew this was a trap.

Arthur agreed to sell the shares just to get me here. You planned this. You called her."

Jade looked back at him without a single flicker of guilt.

"Arthur would never give up shares for free," she said, her voice flat with contempt. "The only reason he'd agree is if someone told him to play along and draw you in."

She paused.

"And I really didn't think you'd actually do it." Her expression curdled into something like revulsion. "I thought maybe you'd threaten me. Intimidate me. But drag me here to force a mark on me? To use me like that?"

She shook her head slowly.

"You're disgusting."

I let out a short, cold laugh.

“Griffin,” I said, “congratulations. You’ve officially destroyed any chance of continuing your bloodline.”

I tilted my head at him.

“Get ready for the pack council’s dungeon. I’d hate for Matriarch Octavia to look down from wherever she is and find no peace.”

Griffin’s jaw locked.

His eyes burned.

“Amelia.” His voice dropped into something low and trembling with rage. “I’m going to kill you.”

He reached into his jacket and pulled out a gun.

The safety clicked off.

He raised it and pointed it directly at me.

I didn’t move.

I didn’t need to.

His arm swayed.

Then his knees buckled.

Then his entire body simply folded, like the strings holding him upright had been cut all at once. The gun slipped from his fingers and clattered across the floor.

He hit the ground hard and couldn’t get back up.

Deep inside me, Ava made a sound of pure contempt.

Did this stupid Alpha really think the silver only burned one hand?

I agreed with her completely.

I walked over to where Griffin was sprawled on the floor, his eyes burning with fury and humiliation, his body completely refusing to obey him. I looked down at him for a moment.

“You’re too naive,” I said. “Silver toxin travels through the blood. It’s been spreading through your entire system since the moment that blade hit you.”

I kicked him.

Once. Twice. Three times, clean and deliberate.

Then I placed the sole of my shoe on the side of his head and pressed down.

“Attempted assault,” I said. “Illegal possession of a firearm. Human trafficking. Use of prohibited substances. Murder.”

I looked down at him.

“Take a guess, Griffin. Do you think you’ll get the death sentence?”

He snarled up at me through gritted teeth.

“Zane Jenkins will get me out of this.”

I laughed.

It came out genuine.

“Zane Jenkins,” I said, “is currently drowning in his own problems. He can’t even save himself right now.”

I crouched down and patted Griffin’s cheek with two fingers.

He flinched away from the touch, his eyes blazing.

“Honestly?” I said pleasantly. “I don’t actually want you to get the death penalty. That would be too quick. Too easy.”

I stood back up.

“The pack council’s dungeon is so much more interesting.”

I turned to Silas, who was waiting just inside the doorway.

“Take him,” I said. “Griffin, Celine, and every piece of evidence from that illegal facility. Hand all of it over to the council’s enforcers.”

Silas gave a single nod and moved forward.

(Author’s POV)

Jade watched Griffin get dragged across the floor like a dead animal.

She exhaled slowly and pushed her tangled hair back from her face.

“Amelia.” Her voice was quiet. “Thank you.”

Amelia looked at her.

“Once Griffin is in the council’s dungeon,” Amelia said, “the mate bond becomes irrelevant. You’re free.”

Jade’s expression shifted. Something flickered behind her eyes, and she glanced away.

“I still didn’t get the shares back,” she said. “The ones Arthur holds. I thought maybe, if everything went right tonight, there was a chance I could –”

She stopped herself.

“I know. It was foolish to hope.”

Amelia reached over and touched her shoulder briefly.

“Your personal shares are already with me,” she said. “You have protection. As for Arthur’s shares –” She

paused. “He’s in no position to hold onto them much longer. With everything that’s happened, he’ll give them up. It’s only a matter of time.”

Jade looked at her for a long moment.

Then she nodded.

The next morning, the news broke like a dam giving way.

Griffin Drake had been arrested.

The photographs spread everywhere within hours. Griffin being escorted out by council enforcers, his face

still twisted with fury, his eyes carrying the look of something cornered and dangerous that hadn’t yet

accepted it was caught.

The comments flooded in from every direction.

People were furious. People were vindicated. People described Jade's escape from the forced marking as fleeing a living nightmare. The illegal facility's full record of crimes was released alongside the arrest announcement, and the public reaction was volcanic.

The Drake family hadn't just preyed on women.

They had gone after everyone.

The outrage was immediate and overwhelming. People invoked the old pack laws, the ancient statutes

that allowed for the complete erasure of a bloodline that had brought this level of harm to the community. Others speculated about the Drake family's operations overseas, their hidden assets, their buried connections.

The consensus was unanimous.

A family like this wouldn't survive.

On the way back to Sterling Manor.

Amelia was driving home after work when she turned onto a quiet side street and someone stepped directly into the road in front of her car.

She hit the brakes hard.

The tires screamed against the pavement.

She sat for a moment, heart still steady, and looked through the windshield at the figure blocking her path.

A woman. Bruised face. Torn clothes. Hair in disarray.

Amelia's eyes narrowed.

She got out of the car.

"Aunt Lyra," she said, keeping her voice light. "What happened to you?"

Lyra Drake looked like she had been through something catastrophic. After being expelled from the Stone family, her old social circle had evaporated overnight. The people who had smiled at her over expensive dinners had handed her pocket change and stopped returning her calls. She'd ended up working as a household helper for a family she'd never have glanced at before, and when she'd tried to use her looks to charm the husband, the wife had found out and thrown her into the street.

Today she had seen Griffin's arrest on the news.

She had gone looking for Lance.

The last person Lance had been seen with before his disappearance was Amelia.

Lyra came at her like something unhinged.

"Amelia!" Her voice cracked with desperation and rage. "Tell me the truth. Where are you hiding my son?"

Where is he?"

Amelia spread her hands open in a gesture of complete innocence.

"That's really a question for the council's enforcers," she said. "I filed a formal complaint about being harassed. It's all on record."

She tilted her head

"But since you're asking" She kept her expression perfectly helpful. "Griffin was just taken to the council dungeon today You should go visit him. Ask him directly

She paused.

"Because the last time I saw Lance, he showed up covered in blood. And he told me himself that Griffin was the one who did it to him."

Deep inside her, Ava let out a slow, cold laugh.

Go on. Let the Drake family tear each other apart.

Amelia kept her face open and innocent.

But behind her eyes, something glacial and amused watched Lyra's expression collapse into confusion and dawning horror.

Alpha's Abandoned Daughter is the Secret Heiress! - Chapter 448[
1,241 words]

(Author's POV)

Lyra's face twisted into something ugly.

“If anything happens to my son,” she spat, “I swear I will drag you down with me. I don’t care where you go.

I will find you.”

Her voice cracked on the last word, raw and shaking.

Amelia stood there and listened.

She felt nothing except a mild, creeping irritation.

Lyra wasn’t a real threat. She never had been. But a woman this unhinged, left to roam free, would become a recurring headache. She’d show up at inconvenient moments. She’d make noise. She’d waste everyone’s time.

Amelia made a decision.

“All right,” she said pleasantly. “I’ll take you to see him.”

Lyra blinked.

The fury on her face flickered, replaced by sudden, suspicious confusion.

“What?”

“Your son,” Amelia said. “I’ll bring you to him. And if you still want to stay together after you see him, I won’t stop you.”

She smiled.

“Mother and son, reunited. It’s very touching.”

Before Lyra could process another word, Amelia’s hand moved.

A small dart, barely visible, crossed the distance between them in under a second.

It hit Lyra in the side of the neck.

The wolfsbane extract was a trace amount. Enough to drop her cleanly. Not enough to cause lasting damage.

Lyra’s legs buckled immediately.

Her eyes went wide and glassy, her mouth still open around a word she never finished.

“Catch her,” Amelia said without turning around.

The pack enforcer standing just behind her stepped forward and caught Lyra before she hit the ground, lowering her with practiced efficiency.

Amelia watched for a moment to make sure she was settled, then turned and got back into the car.

She pulled out her phone and called Silas.

Silas picked up on the first ring.

“Send a car,” Amelia said. “I’ve got Lyra Drake. She wants to see her son. Arrange transport to the Rogue

Territory.”

A brief pause.

“Understood,” Silas said. “I’ll have it there in ten minutes.”

Amelia ended the call and set the phone down on the seat beside her.

Inside her, Ava flicked her tail with lazy contempt.

Good. Let the noisy crow go find her pup in the trash heap where she belongs.

Amelia leaned back against the headrest.

She wasn’t worried about anyone noticing Lyra’s disappearance. After the Stone family had cut ties with Adrian’s branch, Lyra’s entire social world had collapsed. The people who had once flattered her were long gone. Her connections had dried up overnight.

The only person in the world who might still feel something for Lyra was Alpha Alaric, and even that was probably more habit than genuine care.

No one else would come looking.

Theodore had just stepped out of the car and onto the front steps of the Pack House when he saw the figure waiting for him.

Mason was standing near the entrance in a heavy parka, his breath fogging in the cold air. He held his phone out the moment Theodore approached, already typing.

Theodore read the screen.

When are you going to bring Jasper home?

“He’s not planning to move back here,” Theodore said.

Mason’s jaw tightened. He typed again quickly.

His bloodline is public now. He’s exposed. The other branches will see him as a target. He needs to be inside the Pack House where the Alpha bloodline can protect him.

Theodore looked at him for a moment.

“What would you suggest?”

Mason’s fingers moved fast across the screen.

Alpha King Gideon should go in person. Apologize directly. And offer five percent of Crimson Group shares as compensation.

Theodore was quiet for a beat.

Then he nodded.

“I’ll pass that along to my grandfather.”

Mason held his gaze for a second longer, then gave a short nod. He turned, walked to his motorcycle, and pulled on his helmet without another word.

Theodore watched the motorcycle disappear down the drive.

His golden eyes went still and dark.

He turned to Marcus, who had been standing two steps behind him throughout the entire exchange.

“He came specifically to say that,” Theodore said quietly. “Which means he’s getting ready to move.”

Marcus said nothing, waiting.

“If Jasper isn’t brought in soon,” Theodore continued, “Garrett’s faction won’t hold back much longer. Mason knows that. He’s giving us a deadline wrapped up in a request.”

Marcus exhaled slowly.

“Then we move first,” he said.

Theodore didn’t answer.

He turned and walked toward the entrance.

Marcus followed, pushing the empty wheelchair behind him.

Theodore had made a decision that morning, following Amelia's medical instructions to the letter. He walked on his own two feet.

Each step was deliberate. Controlled. Still not fully effortless, but steady enough that no one watching could mistake what they were seeing.

He pushed the doors open himself and walked into the main hall.

The conversation inside stopped.

Alpha King Gideon was seated near the far end of the room, mid-sentence, a cup of tea halfway to his mouth. He looked up.

The moment he saw Theodore walking toward him under his own power, the old man's eyes lit up with something fierce and proud.

Garrett was sitting across from him.

The smile on Garrett's face went rigid.

Across the room, Derek had been typing something on his phone. His head snapped up. His eyes tracked Theodore's steady walk from the door to the nearest chair, and something shifted behind his expression.

Theodore settled into the chair and glanced at Garrett.

Garrett recovered quickly.

"Congratulations are in order," he said, his voice smooth and warm and entirely false. "Legs fully recovered. Long-lost brother found. And Griffin Drake arrested." He spread his hands with a generous smile. "You've hit the trifecta. If you formalize the succession on top of all that, it's practically hitting the jackpot."

Inside Theodore's mind, Logan's presence surged forward with a sound like grinding stone.

Tear out his throat.

Theodore held the wolf back without effort.

He let the silence stretch for exactly two seconds.

Then he smiled.

“Speaking of managing what’s in front of you,” Theodore said conversationally, “how are those new energy projects going? The ones Victor was overseeing? I heard the African operations took some losses recently.”

Garrett’s smile didn’t waver, but something behind his eyes went cold.

“Things happen in business,” he said.

“Of course,” Theodore agreed pleasantly. “Just something to keep an eye on. New energy is a sensitive sector. Difficult to recover from a bad quarter if the foundation isn’t solid.”

The message was clear to everyone in the room.

Garrett heard it perfectly.

Theodore turned to his grandfather.

“About Jasper,” he said. “I think it would mean a great deal if you went to see him in person tomorrow. He’s been through a great deal. Hearing it from you directly would carry more weight than any formal announcement.”

Gideon set down his teacup.

“I’ll go,” the old man said simply.

Garrett’s expression stayed composed.

But behind it, something curdled. The African operations had taken real damage. Assets had been frozen. Two projects had collapsed entirely. And not once had Gideon said a single word of blame toward Theodore, despite the fact that Amelia’s actions had triggered the chain of events.

Not one word.

And now Gideon was going to personally lower himself to collect Theodore’s newly discovered brother, as though this were the most natural thing in the world.

Garrett breathed through it.

He smiled.

He picked up his tea.

A few minutes later, he glanced at his watch and made a vague comment about another appointment. He stood, straightened his jacket, and looked at Derek.

Derek was already pocketing his phone.

They walked out together.

The cold outside hit them both as the doors swung shut behind them.

They made it maybe twenty steps down the front path before Derek stopped pretending.

“Garrett.” His voice was low and tight with barely contained urgency. “His legs are almost fully recovered.

Once he’s back to full Alpha strength, we lose every advantage we have left.”

He turned to face his cousin.

“If we don’t do something extreme, and soon, our shot at the succession is gone. Completely gone.”

Alpha’s Abandoned Daughter is the Secret Heiress! - Chapter 449[1,306 words]

(Author’s POV)

Theodore watched Garrett and Derek walk out the door.

He didn’t move from his chair.

But his Alpha hearing followed them every step of the way.

Their voices were low, barely above a murmur, meant for no one but each other.

Garrett’s voice was smooth and deliberate.

“Don’t rush. It’ll happen soon enough.”

Derek exhaled sharply. “You’re sure about Mason? He’ll actually move?”

“The moment he sees the forged evidence,” Garrett said, “he won’t hesitate. A rogue wolf with that kind of rage? He’ll act on instinct. That’s what men like him do.”

A brief silence.

Then Derek's voice, still tight with worry. "It had better work. Once Theodore formally takes the succession, I'm finished. We're all finished."

"It will work," Garrett said quietly.

Their footsteps faded down the path.

Theodore sat very still.

Inside his mind, Logan went silent. The black wolf had heard every word, and his stillness was the stillness of something coiling before it struck.

Theodore set down his tea.

Gideon was watching him from across the room.

The old man said nothing, but his sharp grey eyes hadn't missed a thing.

The two of them sat in the quiet of the study, and the silence between them was not uncomfortable.

It was the silence of two people who understood each other completely.

Gideon spoke first.

"So the young man named Jasper. He's truly your brother."

"He is," Theodore said.

The old Alpha was quiet for a moment.

Theodore could see him working through it. He remembered Jasper at Amelia's birthday banquet. The way the young man had stood slightly apart from everything, watching with eyes that held too much and said too little. At the time, it had seemed like the brooding temperament of an artist. Now it made a different kind of sense entirely.

"Mason made the request himself," Theodore said. "He wants you to go in person. To apologize directly."

Gideon's jaw tightened almost imperceptibly.

Once, a demand like that would have been treated as an insult. A rogue wolf, setting conditions for the Alpha King. It would have been unthinkable.

But Gideon had lived long enough to know the weight of what his family had done. The child had been lost. A mother had died. A man had spent decades raising someone else's son out of nothing but stubborn, silent loyalty.

Even if Mason had his own reasons for making this demand, even if there was calculation underneath the grief, the grief itself was real.

Gideon could not pretend otherwise.

"I'll go tomorrow morning," he said. "In person. I'll bring him home myself."

Theodore said nothing.

He didn't point out what they both already knew. That Mason was likely planning something. That the apology visit was probably a trap being laid in plain sight.

Gideon didn't mention it either.

Theodore understood. This was the old man's way of testing him. The crisis would come, and Theodore would have to navigate it. Dismantle Garrett's scheme, neutralize Mason's intentions, and bring Jasper home without anyone getting destroyed in the process.

If he couldn't manage that, he had no business leading this family.

Gideon shifted in his chair and changed the subject.

"Griffin Drake's arrest has been all over the news."

"He won't recover from it," Theodore said. "The trafficking connections alone would end him. But the Drake family has been funneling resources to rogue wolf factions outside the territory for twenty years. Once every charge is fully prosecuted, Griffin will spend the rest of his life behind bars."

Gideon was quiet for a moment,

"Amelia did that," he said. Not a question. A statement, and something close to wonder sitting underneath it.

At the sound of her name, something shifted in Theodore's expression.

The cold, measured look he wore in every other conversation softened.

Just slightly. Just enough.

"She gave me something I didn't have before," he said. "Courage that didn't come from calculation. The willingness to go all the way without holding anything back."

Inside his mind, Logan rumbled with deep, unhurried pride.

Our mate is the strongest Luna this pack has ever seen. She deserves every word of praise. Every drop of awe.

Gideon looked at his grandson for a long moment.

The boy had always been brilliant. Controlled. Formidable in every measurable way. But there had always

been something slightly unreachable about him, something locked behind the composure.

It wasn't locked anymore.

The old Alpha felt something ease in his chest.

"Release the news tonight," he said. "Let everyone know I'll be going in person tomorrow morning to bring Jasper home."

Theodore nodded.

The next morning, the news had already spread through every corner of the Northern Territories' upper circles before sunrise.

Dozens of media vehicles lined the street outside Crimson Moon Pack House. Cameras were set up. Reporters stood in clusters, breath fogging in the cold air, all of them waiting for the moment the Alpha King appeared.

Theodore stood at the second-floor window.

He looked down at the crowd below with cold, steady eyes.

He spotted Derek's car almost immediately. Vivian's vehicle was parked two spots behind it. They hadn't even tried to be subtle about it. They had come to watch.

Garrett and Victor were almost certainly somewhere else, following the whole thing through a live feed.

Derek's window slid down. He leaned out slightly toward Vivian's car.

Vivian's voice carried a sharp, bitter edge even from a distance.

"Grandfather is giving Theodore far too much face," she said. "When Ronan came back, there was nothing like this. No cameras. No ceremony. And Ronan was supposedly the real thing." She let out a short, humorless laugh. "Now this Jasper shows up and suddenly it's a royal procession."

Derek's expression curdled.

"It's disgusting," he muttered.

Then the passenger door of one of the cars near the front opened.

Amelia stepped out.

Derek's face went dark with instant fury.

Vivian's eyes locked onto her, and something vicious moved behind them. She remembered every moment of it. The wheelchair mechanism. The wolfsbane that had burned through her system. The helplessness of being completely at Theodore's mercy.

She had never hated anyone the way she hated Amelia Stone.

"She's here to go with them," Derek said through his teeth. "Of course she is."

He watched Amelia cross toward the entrance, unhurried and composed, as though she belonged there completely.

"Mason," Derek said quietly, his voice dropping to something ugly. "If you're going to move today, take her out too. Do everyone a favor."

Vivian shot him a warning look.

"Keep your voice down," she said sharply.

But her eyes stayed fixed on Amelia until the door closed behind her.

(Jasper's POV)

Jasper hadn't slept.

He had lain in bed for hours, staring at the ceiling, and somewhere around three in the morning he had simply stopped pretending he might drift off.

By the time he got dressed and walked out of his room, the apartment was already grey with early light.

Mason was sitting on the couch.

There was a cigarette between his fingers, burning slow.

Jasper stopped in the doorway.

Mason hadn't smoked in years. Not since the worst of it, back when they had nothing and the cold was brutal and Mason had spent three days tracking down the men who had tried to take Jasper when he was twelve.

Every time Mason smoked, it meant something was about to happen.

Something violent.

Jasper crossed the room in four quick steps and crouched down in front of him.

"Don't," he said.

Mason didn't answer. He looked at Jasper with eyes that held twenty years of compressed, airless rage. Eyes that had never quite learned how to put it down.

Then he pressed the cigarette out against the edge of the ashtray and dropped it into the trash.

The gesture confirmed everything Jasper already knew.

He sank down onto the floor, his back against the couch, and stared at nothing.

The exhaustion hit him all at once.

"Mason." His voice came out rough and unsteady. "Even if what they did to my mother was real. Even if all of it was exactly as bad as you believe. Please. Stop."

He turned to look up at the older man.

"If you move against the Alpha King today, you won't survive it. And Theodore-" His voice cracked slightly. "My brother will be dragged into it. Everything he's built will be used against him."

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(Author's POV)

Mason's expression finally shifted.

He looked at Jasper for a long moment, then raised his hands and signed slowly.

"Are you worried about me? Or about yourself? Or about Alpha King Gideon and Theodore?"

Jasper stayed crouched on the floor, looking up at him.

He knew Mason had been watching him these past few days. Watching the guilt that crept into his face time Theodore's name came up. The older man had always been able to read him like that, even without a single word.

"All of them," Jasper said quietly. "I'm worried about all of them."

He pushed himself up and sat on the edge

of the couch beside Mason.

"But mostly you. You're my father. You've always been my father."

He paused.

"And Theodore. He's done nothing wrong. If you move against Gideon today, Theodore gets dragged into it. Everything he's built, everything he's fighting for, it all gets used against him."

He hesitated, then added honestly, "As for Gideon himself? I won't lie to you. I don't care about him. Not the way I should."

His voice dropped.

"He listened to a ridiculous prophecy and sent me away. My mother died because of that. I can't forgive him for it. I don't know if I ever will."

Mason watched him with those dark, compressed eyes.

Then he signed again, steady and deliberate.

"I've already got blood on my hands. One more doesn't change anything. After I avenge your mother, I'll turn myself in. I'll confess everything, I won't drag Theodore into it. Not a single shadow of this will touch him."

"Mason—"

A sharp sting hit the side of his arm.

Jasper looked down.

A syringe. Already half-empty.

His vision blurred almost immediately. The edges of the room softened and tilted.

‘Mason-”

His voice came out wrong. Too slow. Too thick.

He managed to get one hand onto the older man’s arm before his legs stopped working entirely

“Dad-”

The word came out barely above a breath.

Then the floor came up to meet him, and Mason caught him before he hit it, lowering him carefully onto the couch.

The last thing Jasper felt was the rough drag of Mason’s thumb across his cheekbone.

Gentle. The way it had always been, just between the two of them, in the years when there had been nothing else.

Then the darkness closed in completely.

Mason pulled the syringe free and set it aside.

He looked down at the young man on the couch. Twenty-one years. He had watched this boy grow from a terrified child into someone worth being proud of.

He pressed two fingers briefly to Jasper’s forehead.

Then he stood, turned, and walked out of the apartment without looking back.

Outside, the morning was cold and bright.

The media vehicles were already lined up along the street outside Crimson Moon Pack House, cameras rolling, reporters clustered in tight groups with their breath fogging in the sharp air.

When the iron gates swung open, the crowd surged forward.

Nine black cars emerged in a long, sweeping line, moving with the unhurried weight of absolute authority. The convoy looked like a dark serpent uncoiling from the gates, Gideon’s private vehicle sealed in the center, four escort cars before it and four behind.

The reporters erupted into a frenzy of camera flashes and shouted questions.

Derek stood at the edge of the crowd, watching with a sneer pulling at his mouth.

“Nine cars,” he muttered to Vivian. “For a rogue wolf who grew up in the slums. This is completely absurd.”

Vivian’s eyes tracked the convoy with cold contempt.

“Grandfather is making Theodore look good,” she said. “That’s all this is. A performance.”

The convoy turned onto the main road and began moving toward Jasper’s apartment. The reporters scrambled for their vehicles and swarmed after it like a tide.

Vivian watched them, and the cold feeling in her chest spread outward like frost.

Amelia held the car door open, and Theodore transferred himself into the passenger seat with practiced ease.

She rounded the car and got in on the driver’s side.

“They’re not going with the convoy,” Derek said slowly. “They took a separate car.”

Vivian said nothing.

Her phone screen showed Victor’s name with a row of unanswered calls beneath it.

Inside the car, Amelia pulled onto the road.

Something almost like satisfaction moved through Theodore’s expression.

“Does Gideon know?” she asked.

Theodore’s mouth curved, just slightly.

“He didn’t agree to it.”

“Then how-”

“The Shadow Enforcers put him in the car,” Theodore said. “He didn’t have a choice in the matter.”

Amelia stared at the road ahead.

Then she let out a slow breath that was almost a laugh.

Inside Theodore’s mind, Logan rumbled low and deep.

Our mate is impressed. Good. A true Alpha crushes his enemies without hesitation. She sees it. She understands it.

Inside the Alpha King's vehicle, the convoy moved in tight formation.

The back seat was silent.

Theron blinked slowly, his head heavy, the edges of his thoughts sluggish and wrong.

He was awake.

Barely.

He became aware of a shoulder pressed against his left side, and another on his right.

He turned his head.

Victor. Face pale and rigid, jaw locked, eyes burning with barely contained fury.

Theron turned the other way.

Garrett. Expression shuttered. Hands very still in his lap.

Theron blinked again and looked forward.

The front seat.

Alpha King Gideon sat in the passenger seat, his back straight, his face like thunder,

Theron's mind lurched into full wakefulness all at once.

He straightened sharply.

"What-" His voice came out hoarse. He swallowed. "Where am I?"

He turned to Victor, panic rising fast.

Victor's teeth were clenched so tight his jaw was white.

"We're in the Alpha King's car," Victor said through his teeth.

Theron snapped his head forward again.

His father's profile was carved from stone.

"Father." Theron's voice cracked, "Why am I-why was I put in this car?"