

Alpha Damien & His Troublemaker - Hope is not optional manuel flores 231[1,833 words]

Chapter 231

Chapter 231

At the royal palace

Third Person pov

155 vouchers

The grand meeting hall of the Mooncrest Pack was heavy with tension as Alpha Rhydian and Luna Elara sat upon their thrones at the highest point of the room. Below them, the elders stood in a respectful but anxious line, heads slightly bowed, bodies rigid with worry. The air felt thick, almost suffocating, as if the very walls understood the gravity of the conversation taking place.

One of the eldest among them stepped forward, bowing deeply before speaking with a trembling voice. "Alpha... most of our crops are drying out, and the rivers and wells are shrinking faster than we can manage. I fear things will only get worse. Even our stored rice keeps decreasing at an alarming rate. The people are beginning to worry."

Alpha Rhydian remained silent for a long moment, his gaze heavy. He had aged noticeably in the past few weeks, streaks of white now ran through his once-dark hair, and deep wrinkles etched across his forehead and around his eyes. Yet even with these signs of strain, his aura remained overwhelmingly powerful. He still carried the commanding presence of a ruler who had led his pack through countless storms. No one would dare challenge him lightly.

Beside him, the Luna sat with her usual elegant posture. Her beauty remained undeniable, but there was a weariness in her eyes and a subtle tightness around her mouth that revealed she was far more tired than she let on.

The elders exchanged uneasy glances, none of them daring to speak further. The issue of food and water scarcity had been growing steadily worse. For now, only the lower classes were truly suffering, but they all knew it wouldn't be long before the problem reached the nobles and threatened the entire pack. They had tried to stockpile as much as possible when the signs first appeared, but their efforts were proving insufficient.

Then, one elder, clearly not reading the mood in the room, trembled and blurted out, "This is definitely punishment."

The entire hall froze. Every head turned toward him. Even Alpha Rhydian and Luna shifted their gaze sharply in his direction.

"Punishment?" Alpha Rhydian's voice was deep and dangerously low, sending a chill through the room.

One of the other elders tried to warn him with a subtle shake of the head, but it was too late. The man continued, voice shaking, "Y-yes, punishment. This is divine punishment. B-because we mistreated the Moonborn. The Goddess must want to punish us for how we treated her direct descendant. This is definitely divine punishment. We are all going to die." He swallowed hard. "Even if we don't die by the Moon Goddess's hands, General Ian is going to kill all of us. His patience is running thin."

Chaos erupted.

One elder frowned angrily and snapped, "You! How dare you!! Who do you think you're talking to? Are you saying the Alpha and Luna bullied the Moonborn?"

Others quickly joined in, their voices rising in denial. "Right! How dare you! Nobody bullied anyone! It's not

May

Chapter 231

our fault the Moonborn was an outcast. She caused this herself, so don't blame anyone else!"

99

55 vouchers

The room filled with shouting and accusations as more elders agreed, trying desperately to distance themselves from any blame. The tension climbed higher and higher until-

BANG!

Alpha Rhydian slammed his fist down on the arm of his throne with such force that the sound cracked through the hall. Everyone instantly fell silent, bowing their heads low in fear. His powerful alpha aura exploded, pressing down on every person in the room.

“I must have been dead for you to be arguing in front of me like this,” he said, his voice cold and commanding. “How dare you.”

The hall became so quiet that the sound of breathing felt too loud. No one dared move. No one dared speak.

The guards standing beside the thrones gripped their swords tighter, their sharp eyes fixed on the elders with a clear warning: the next disrespectful word would result in swift punishment. One of the elders, realizing he had crossed a dangerous line, took a shaky step back, breathing hard as he bowed even lower and stammered, “Forgive us, Alpha.”

Alpha Rhydian sat in silence for a long moment, his aged face etched with exhaustion. He rubbed his forehead wearily and said in a low, strained voice, “You people are arguing instead of trying to find a solution to the problem. My people are already starving. We must find a way to stop this famine and calm Ian’s anger before it spirals out of control.”

One of the elders spoke up hesitantly, “The temples have prayed to the Moon Goddess for guidance, but she has not responded. Even the new Moonborn, Sienna, has received no answer. The Goddess must be truly angry with us. We have no idea what to do. Other packs are already coming to us, asking for help to reach the Moon Goddess, and if we cannot provide it, it will create even more problems.”

All eyes turned toward Alpha Rhydian, silently begging for direction, but even he looked lost. Deep regret weighed heavily on his shoulders. He couldn’t stop thinking that if he had protected that girl, the real Moonborn, everything might have turned out differently. Perhaps Selene would have become his son’s mate. Perhaps the pack would not be facing this crisis. His hand clenched tightly into a fist, his heart beating faster as the painful truth settled in. It was too late. She was dead. She could never be his son’s mate now.

Just as the silence threatened to crush them all, the grand doors suddenly swung open with a loud creak. Everyone's heads snapped toward the entrance. A soldier stumbled in, breathing hard, his face pale and eyes wide with urgency.

The Luna leaned forward slightly, her usual composure cracking as she demanded, "You had better have a good reason for interrupting us."

The soldier swallowed hard, still catching his breath, and blurted out, "T-the Moonborn..."

One of the elders raised an eyebrow and asked sharply, "Princess Sienna?"

The soldier shook his head frantically. "N-no... The Moonborn! Lady Selene... she is back!"

A collective gasp ripped through the hall. Eyes widened in disbelief. Alpha Rhydian froze, his powerful frame going completely still as the words sank in. The Luna's indifferent mask shattered completely, she leaned

Chapter 231

forward even more, her eyes wide with shock as she whispered, "W-what?"

The Alpha's voice came out rough and urgent. "Is this true? Is Selene really back?"

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The soldier nodded vigorously. "Yes! I just saw her in the garden with Princess Sienna. They seemed to have had an argument—"

He didn't get to finish. Alpha Rhydian stood up abruptly, his chair scraping loudly against the floor. "Take me there this instant."

Without waiting for anyone, he strode out of the hall, following the soldier with long, determined steps. No one had ever seen the Alpha move with such urgency before. The Luna and the elders quickly rose and hurried after him, their hearts pounding with a mixture of shock, fear, and fragile hope.

The pack's greatest hope had finally returned.

At the temple

In the sanctity of the temple's inner chamber, Selene's father sat behind a heavy wooden table, staring at the stack of urgent requests from the palace that lay piled high before him. The papers seemed to mock him with their presence, each one a silent accusation of his failing leadership. He frowned deeply, a sharp headache already forming behind his eyes as he pushed the documents aside with a frustrated sweep of his hand.

Ever since that girl had disappeared, things had briefly improved, or so he had thought. But now the situation had worsened dramatically. The drought was merciless, drying up rivers, wells, and fields alike. No matter how desperately Sienna prayed and begged the Moon Goddess for mercy, the divine goddess remained silent, as if she had turned her back on the entire pack in cold anger. This had never happened before in their long history. He was furious that it was occurring under his rule. The people would start gossiping soon, whispering that he was the cause of their misfortune. It would ruin his carefully built record as a strong and prosperous Alpha.

He groaned under his breath, rubbing his temples. "That idiot. If she was going to disappear, she should have just disappeared for good instead of making everything harder for me."

She was his blood daughter, yet he felt almost no parental affection toward her. She had always been a thorn in his side, a mistake that disrupted his perfectly planned life.

When his late mate had given birth to twins, he had already considered it unfortunate enough, but then one of them had to be born with that cursed black-and-white hair. Selene had been the only flaw in his grand design, and he had hated her for it from the very beginning. To make matters worse, he could tolerate her when she was timid and obedient, but before she vanished, she had changed. She had become uncontrollable, defiant, and far too much like her mother, a woman who had once held too much power over him.

He clenched his hand into a tight fist at the memory. That woman had been free, doing whatever she pleased, and he refused to let history repeat itself. That was one of the main reasons he had despised Selene so deeply, she reminded him too much of the mate he hated, both in appearance and spirit.

Even if the Moon Goddess had turned her back on them, he did not regret what had happened to Selene. If it had been up to him before, he would have wanted her to disappear permanently.

9:19 Tue, May 12

Just then, the heavy doors burst open. His wife, Selene's stepmother, rushed in, her face pale and her eyes wide with panic.

"Honey..." she began, breathless.

He waved her off irritably. "Let's have this conversation later. I have too many problems to deal with right now."

She shook her head frantically, refusing to leave. "N-no... this is a much bigger problem. Selene... that curse... she is back, honey. She is back from whatever hole she crawled out of."

He froze mid-motion, his heart dropping. "What?" His voice came out hoarse. "Selene? Are you sure it's her? It could be Sienna."

She shook her head again, more vigorously this time. "Of course not. How could I not recognize my own daughter? It's definitely her. That curse is back. Selene is back."

He stood up immediately, his face drained of color. Without wasting another second, he strode out of the chamber, his steps hurried and heavy. He had to see it for himself. If that girl had truly returned, nothing would ever be the same again.