

## The Alpha's Slave Mate Chapter 36

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Daphne's Point of View

Caleb and I napped for a short time after all the fun that we had. I woke up to him nuzzling my neck and shoulder. I felt like we were in a magical place that was made solely for us. As if the Moon Goddess herself craft every blade of grass, the waterfall, the trees, and the rocks just for us. After Caleb realized I was awake he stood up and scooped me up in his arms, cradling me to his chest as if I were a baby.

"Caleb what are you doing?" I could not help but ask him.

"Well my love if you must know I am taking us for a little dip. I figure that our romp this afternoon is going to make you a little sore, and this water is fed from an underground spring which so happens to be a hot spring." As Caleb is finished filling me in, I hear him start to enter the water. :

"So, is this better than seeing me in a bikini?" I could not help but tease him a little bit. Our time together has made me slightly bolder in our relationship.

Perhaps I was really starting to believe that he truly wants me as his mate.

"Yes, it is far better." Glancing around I can see that Caleb is almost to the middle of the little wading pool.

Without warning Caleb suddenly releases me and I fall. I expected the water to be cooler but instead I am wrapped by nice warm water. Laughing I pop up and start to splash Caleb for dropping me. We play in the water for a while, splashing around like children.

"Come here I want to show you something." Caleb takes my hand and starts leading me toward the small waterfall. He has a little mischievous glint in his eyes, and I am curious as to what he is up to. "Careful the rocks are slippery because of moss." Caleb is pulling me up next to the falling water. I follow his footsteps carefully so that I do not fall. Caleb steps forward bent slightly at his waist and disappears behind the water. Following him, I see that there is a small cave behind the waterfall.

"Caleb this is amazing thank you for showing me."

"I came here a lot when I was younger. This place really helped me after I lost my parents. I could imagine I was a pirate going off on grand adventures."

Sometimes I would just come here to cry. I missed them so much.” As he is talking, I reach over and grab his hand, letting him know that I am here for him.

“Daphne, I have never brought anyone else here before. This place is special to me. I am glad that I get to share it with you. I want to share everything with you. My life, my happiness, even my sorrow because I know that we are meant to be together. You are my sun, my moon, and my stars. My world simply does not exist without you anymore.”

Caleb’s words are beyond touching.

“Caleb, I know that I have not been the easiest person to be mated with. I know that there are still a lot that I need to learn. I did not even fully trust that we were mates to begin with. I have never been close to anyone before, well besides my sister but even that was not like this. You have given me a life worth living. So, I am ready for the ceremony whenever you are.” I do not know why but I was blushing while I was telling him this, but I could feel my face flaming red.

In truth I am terrified of the mating ceremony. Even though we have marked each other since I am still learning basic knowledge I have not been made to step up as Luna. I do not even know all the responsibilities of a Luna. I know that I do not want to be like my mother, and I know that I do not want to embarrass Caleb. °

Caleb hugs me to him as if he can read my mind. We stay like that for a little while. Finally, we notice that the sky is turning, and the hike up here was hard, I do not want to make it in the dark. “Caleb it is getting late, I think we should head back.”

“I know, but I really want this moment to go on forever.” I understand his words because I equally have been enjoying this time. Caleb steps out first, and I follow in his footsteps, careful not to fall. We wade out of the water and find our discarded clothing. Caleb is sweet and goes slower so that I do not get hurt. Once we reach the town, Caleb asks me when I think that we should have the ceremony.

“I hate to admit it, but I do not really know when it is supposed to be. I have never been to a mating ceremony.” “Most couples have their ceremony within a few days of finding each other. Obviously, we did not do that, so I think as long as it is soon, we will be alright. I just was not sure if you wanted a more specific day or time.” I love that Caleb was taking my feelings into consideration. °

“Why don’t we pick this upcoming weekend. I think there is going to be a new moon, and since this is a new life for me the timing seems perfect.” ‘

“I love that idea sweetheart. We need to get you a dress, and I will send out the word to our neighboring packs.” Caleb pauses for a moment, lost in thought. “Daphne, um do you want to invite your parents?”

In truth I had not thought about that idea. If we had a normal relationship of course I would want them here. My life was anything but normal with them. I try to imagine them here, just in the village and the thought turns my stomach. No there is no way that I want them here, I would not be comfortable with even seeing them.

“No, I think it is better if we do not invite them. They hold no love for me, and I am realizing I have no love for them either. I would not mind inviting my sister Scarlet, she is mated and lives in California. We have not talked in a long time, but she was kind to me in my childhood and I never really had the chance to thank her.” I can not remember if I have told Caleb about Scarlet, but still he shakes his head with understanding. ’

“I will see what information Theo can gain on her whereabouts, and I will see that she receives an invitation.” I do not doubt that Caleb will hold true to his words.

We finally make it back to the manor house, and Theo is waiting for Caleb. I let Caleb know that I am going to go make us some dinner, and as I am walking away, I can hear Theo giving Caleb a play by play of the events of today.

I pull out some chicken breast and decide on making a small stir fry for us. As I am cooking, I replay the events of today through my mind. I had tried to build a wall between Caleb and I emotionally, but he showed me that he really cares. I do not know if I am ready to be a Luna yet, but I do know that I want to continue what I have with Caleb. °

I will talk with Hannah about going with me to pick out a dress, and perhaps she will tell me more about the mating ceremony. I am a bit nervous because I know that I will be committing myself to Caleb in front of our entire pack, as well as Caleb’s allies and friend. I am worried that I will embarrass him, but with some help I think it will turn out ok.

Soon I will find out I was very wrong to think that anything would ever be ok in my world again.

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Caleb's Point of View

Today with Daphne could not have gone better. Surprisingly even with our afternoon romp! learned a lot of new information about my mate. For years I have coveted a love like that of which my parents had. I feel like I can

eventually have that kind of relationship with Daphne. It gives me hope for a great future. I can vision us growing old together and watching our grandchildren run around the yard one day. Walking into the house, Theo is already waiting for me to give me the report. I know that nothing is wrong because if there was a crisis, he would have mind linked me to come home immediately. Daphne heads into the kitchen to make some dinner and I have news to tell Theo as well. Since Daphne has finally committed to a time frame for the mating ceremony there is a lot of things that I must get prepared beforehand. ~

“I have some interesting news to share with you.” I can tell by the way Theo is cocking his head to the side that I will like the news he has to share with me. I nod at him to continue. I want to have his full attention when I let him know about the ceremony. “We have three pups in the young training class that are showing peculiar talents. If you add those three, with the two that we have in the junior class than it appears that our offspring are showing evolutionary growth.”

I understand fully what Theo means when he says that we have some pups with peculiar talents. I noticed a few years back that certain werewolves have additional talents outside of being a shifter. Hannah is one of our wolves with a peculiar talent, she can instantly calm and mostly heal any injured animal. One of my elite soldier Brandon can summon fire in the palm of his hand. There is a wolf in our junior academy that can revive dead plants or make living plants bloom faster than they should be able to. 7

Neither I nor Theo have heard of any other packs having members with peculiar talents. We have been trying to figure out why it seems that our pack members are producing offspring like this. One theory we have is that it is an evolutionary thing, simply our genes evolving. Another theory we have produced is that it has something to do with the location of our land, although we have taken several soil tests and have not come up with anything strange or unusual. Hannah theorized that it was the work of a witch that has blessed our pack. No matter what the cause behind it is, we love having wolves with peculiar talents among us. In fact, Theo helps cultivate their talents, working with specialists in every field to develop lesson plans and training that will help promote and possibly grow these talents. °

“Theo are you sure that there are three new ones, and in the younger class at that?” I can not help but be skeptical. With the wolves we have discovered in the past, they were all above puberty and had already gone through with their first shift. Our younger class pups are between five and nine years old, too young to have gone through with their first shift.

“Yes, Caleb I am positive about two of them at least, I have a strong suspicion of the third. I did not know if I should mention it, but we may also have a fourth, and I have been detecting a fifth.” Theo’s words absolutely floor me, and my mind is spinning in circles. I long ago theorized that Theo himself is one of our talented wolves, he is the main one that has discovered our other talented wolves sometimes before they even discover themselves.

“Well do not make me wait any longer, what new talents are showing up?” I am excited for my pack this is an amazing opportunity.

“Let me start with Lily, age six and she is confirmed, I found her levitating outside of the training grounds when she was late for class. Then we have the other confirmation as Orion age eight who can control water, and I am hoping eventually to be able to conjure water. I have a strong suspicion about Carolyn, age seven being able to see visions, or perhaps the spirit world. I am unsure yet what exactly is going on with her, but she trusts me and draws what she calls dreams. The fourth that I have a suspicion about is Anita in the junior class, age sixteen, already shifted. I believe that she has a gift of granting fertility. I noticed that most of the women she has visited with that has expressed a desire for children, are suddenly with child.” Theo takes a deep breath and I can tell that he is worried about telling me about the last person he suspects.

“This is great news, who is the fifth person that you are thinking might be talented?”

“Caleb, ever since we have known Daphne, I have felt something. I still can not say for sure, but I think that your mate has a hidden talent. Unfortunately, she has not lived a normal life, so I have been observing her. I still do not know what or even if she has a peculiar talent, but my gut is telling me that she does.” I can understand now why Theo was hesitant to tell me this. Since Daphne is my mate, she will be with me when I attend functions involving other packs. To this point we have been able to maintain secrecy about our peculiar wolves, but if Daphne does have a hidden talent who knows when it will present itself. \* “Just like with everyone else we will figure it out as we go. I understand the danger that she could be in, but I think that everything will turn out just fine.

Speaking of Daphne, we have finally set a date for the mating ceremony. This weekend is a new moon, and a great time for new beginnings. I will need your help contacting our allies, neighboring packs, and friends. I am going to ask Hannah to help with the planning.” I am overjoyed that finally my mate and I will be joined in front of our community. ‘

“Congratulations my friend, I know that for a moment you were worried if she would eventually reject you. I will gladly help with all the preparations.” Theo claps me on the back. I am a very blessed man to be able to call him friend, he is the closest I will ever have to a brother.

“I actually have a very special mission for you if you are up to it. Daphne does not want to invite any of her old pack to the ceremony; however, she has an older sister that is mated to someone in one of the California coasts packs. I know that it is short timing and not a lot of information, but it would please her greatly if she were here. The only other information that I know is the sister’s name is Scarlet.” I know that I am asking Theo to do the impossible, but if anyone can get it done, he can.

“I have a few contacts with various coastal packs, and I do still have an informant in the Silver Moon pack. I briefly remember a few details about Scarlet that I picked up while we were there for the Mabon ball. Scarlet would be about thirty years old and judging from photos she is a red head like her mother. With all this information I am positive that I can find her.” Theo pauses and I watch his face shift into a frown. “Caleb, you do realize that there is a possibility that she may not want to come. I assume it has been a few years since they have talked to each other.” Theo’s words make me pause. I had never considered that Daphne’s sister would not want to see her. I could not fathom a world that siblings are not close. I could not imagine being distant from Theo and we do not even share blood. »

“If that is the case, then I will simply let Daphne know that her sister is unable to attend the ceremony. She does not need to be hurt anymore than she already has been. I also want to ensure that Alpha Jerome and his Luna get an invitation. Daphne mentioned that they had been kind to her when she was younger. I think he would attend for him.” Theo nods at my words and I know that it will be done. °

Too soon Daphne is poking her head out of the kitchen letting me know that dinner is done. Theo has given me a lot to think about, and most of it is great news. Walking in the kitchen I eye my mate. Could Theo be right? Does my mate have a peculiar talent? I guess only time will tell.

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Daphne's Point of View

I was wrong to think that my life could not get any busier. The last four days I feel like I have been running a marathon. The day after we decided to have the mating ceremony this weekend, Hannah has dragged me everywhere shopping for the event. I never realized that there was so much to do for a mating ceremony, but Hannah explained that it was similar to a human wedding. Evidently, we needed music, dancing, food, and of course a killer dress.

At least with Hannah helping with all the preparations I have been able to learn more about the mating ceremony. The only part that I am worried about is the vows during the binding.

Werewolves cite vows pledging to stay loyal to their mate while an elder binds them under the moon. It is supposed to pay homage to the Moon Goddess that created us.

The legend goes that the Moon Goddess fell in love with a mortal man. He proclaimed that he loved her as well. As time went on the man aged, but the Moon Goddess lives forever so she went in search of a way to help him stay young, so that they could spend eternity together. The Moon Goddess was so in love that she went to the Great Creator and asked him to turn her love immortal. The Great Creator questioned if the mortal man really loved the Moon Goddess, or if he just loved the things that she could provide for him. The Great Creator made a deal with the Moon Goddess, he would give her an elixir that would make her love live for eternity. This elixir would make it so that she could spend eternity with her love. There was a catch though, if the man were unfaithful or betrayed the Goddess, he would lose his immortality, and suffer a curse. The other stipulation is that the Moon Goddess could never tell the man about the conditions of the elixir. The Moon Goddess was so sure of the man's love that she felt confident enough to agree to the terms. For a long time after the man drank the elixir, he and the Moon Goddess lived happily.

The man marveled at his young face, and muscled body and rejoiced in the fact that he did not age. The man was vain, and it would be his undoing. As time stretched on the man became bored with the Moon Goddess. He forgot that his own immortality came from her. He soon became enamored with a human female, showing her the affection that he once held for the Moon Goddess. Eventually he convinced the human to lay with him in carnal pleasure, releasing the curse of the elixir. The man turned into a wolf, and it devastated the Moon Goddess.

Her heart broken she went to the Great Creator and asked why the man turned into a wolf. The Great Creator reminded her that she was a Goddess and should be celebrated, loved, and held in the highest esteem of all men; therefore he turned her love into a wolf so that he would always howl and give praise to the moon. :

The Moon Goddess was still sad, her heart was broken. After a few years of watching the man she loved howl at her in agony she once again went to the Great Creator. She told him that she had made a mistake in asking for the man to be made immortal. She told him that she could no longer bear to see the man's pain. The Great Creator was surprised when the Moon Goddess asked him to create a mate for the man so that he would not be lonely anymore.

The Great Creator was in awe of the Moon Goddess ability to be generous to someone that hurt her so badly. The

Great Creator still did not choose to grant her wish, instead he agreed to make the man the first shifter in existence. He told the Moon Goddess that now she can talk to the man and find out what he feels would be the best choice for him in a mate and that she herself would have to create it for him.

Although it hurt the Moon Goddess to do so she talked with the man that betrayed her, he apologized and begged for her forgiveness, but she could not trust him again. Instead she did create him a mate, someone that could handle his vanity, and help him

be the best version of himself. They in turn celebrated her, and it was the birth of our people.

That is why when we first shift it is a horrible pain, a reminder that our human side once hurt our creator.

Since we celebrate her with love and loyalty that is why we live longer than humans. Our homage of loyalty and vowing before her is exalting her kindness through love, and our vow to cherish it.

I have memorized this story since Hannah told it to me. The elder that binds Caleb and I will be telling the story as we make vows to not betray the other, to be loyal, and to place our mate first in our lives. It is the most important part of the whole ceremony, and I am terrified that I am somehow going to mess it up. It does not help my anxiety that I know that we will be reciting these vows not only in front of our pack, but most of Caleb's allies, the neighboring packs and whoever else he chooses to invite. To say that it is a big deal would be an understatement.

Today though I am focused on finding a dress. Currently we are in the third shop that Hannah has dragged me to.

Hannah is busy pulling all kinds of different dresses from racks and handing them to a middle-aged woman, that seems more than happy to help since Hannah flashed Caleb's platinum card when we came in. I told Hannah! wanted something simple, but elegant.

The first shop we had visited the saleswoman was pushy and kept trying to put me in these large puffy ball gowns that I detested immediately. The second shop was better, but their selection was small, and I did not find anything that felt right. I am hoping that we find the dress here, I hate to admit it, but shopping is tiring. The woman retreats into a back room to get

the dresses prepared for me to try them on.

"They have a great selection, and I am sure that we will find a winner this time." Hannah is so excited as she flounces over to me. Even though I am tired I give her a smile and nod my head agreeing with her. Soon the lady motions us to follow her, there is an assistant waiting to help me try on the dresses. The first couple of dresses were beautiful but they just did not feel right. As I was nearing the bottom of the pile of dresses that Hannah had picked out, I seen one that felt like it was Calling me. I grabbed it and decided to try it on next. °

The moment I stepped into the dress I knew it was the one for me. It was a slim dress that did not widen out until the ankle area. It was sleeveless, with a higher choker, that was covered in a fine lace. Silver pearls dotted the dress randomly, looking like stars falling down the dress. The back was dipped low but had strings of pearls leading from



the collar neckline that attached to the waist. Standing and looking at the full-length mirror I knew that this was the dress I was going to choose.

Hannah knew the moment that I walked out of the dressing area that this was the dress I was going to choose. We gushed over how beautiful it was, and the pearls, and the lace. I felt like a queen.

“Do you think Caleb will like it?” I can not help but wonder what his reaction to this dress will be.

“Girl you are going to be lucky if he does not kidnap you caveman style and haul you back to your room. You look amazing in that dress. Actually, you look like royalty in that dress, definitely a great choice for our new Luna.”

Hannah’s words made me want to tear up. She knows that I am worried about being the new Luna. Hannah is the closest female I have in my life and realizing that makes me miss Scarlet. A part of me wishes that I had a mom to share this moment with or even my sister.

Hannah breaks me out of my thoughts, as she announces that if I do not change out of the dress soon, we are going to have to go to the catering place with me in it. I had forgotten that we were going to taste some sample food from the catering company that Caleb had hired. Heaving a heavy sigh, I reluctantly return to the dressing room to change back into my jeans. The sales lady rings up my dress, and my eyes go wide at the total. Hannah just swipes Caleb’s card as if it is no big deal, and then we are on the road again this time to the catering company.

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Caleb's Point of View

I have been having Hannah take Daphne out, and finalize the preparations for the mating ceremony. I miss spending time with her, but it has been strategic having her away from home. Theo left two days ago with a strong lead on her sister, and I am hoping to avoid any questions from her about it. I will do anything to avoid her getting hurt, and if Theo finds her sister and she does not want to come then I know it would hurt Daphne. 2

On a positive note Marcus and Lola will be here tomorrow, and I am excited for their visit. I have also received confirmation that Alpha Jerome will be attending as well. I think that this group of friendly faces will bring Daphne joy. Hannah sends me a text

letting me know that Daphne has found a dress and they are heading over to the catering company.

I was hoping that Theo would have been in contact by now, but I have not heard from him since he left. I know that my Beta can handle himself in any fight, but I do not like him being out of contact for so long. I am hoping that it means he is bringing Scarlet back with him.

My workload has almost tripled since Theo has been gone. I have had to contact various companies to set up tables, chairs, music, catering, basically the works. I have also had to take over most of Theo's classes, as well as handling my duties as Alpha, and ensuring that the neighboring packs have all received invitations to the mating ceremony. Luckily, I already have my tuxedo for the event. Hannah handled the flowers, except for the flowers I personally picked out for Daphne. Almost everything was done, and I am grateful for it.

Just then my phone starts ringing, exhausted I look down expecting it to be one of the businesses I have contracted for the event. To my utter surprise I see that it is Theo that is calling me.

"Please say that you have good news for me." Theo will appreciate me getting down to business quick.

"I found her, and she and her mate are coming back with me. Are you alone?"

There is something worrisome in Theo's voice. I let him know that I am indeed alone.

"Caleb I cannot put my finger on it yet, but I have a bad feeling about this. They have been nothing but hospitable to me since I have arrived, but something seems off with their behavior. Her sister is utterly submissive to her mate.

Almost as if she fears him. I have a bad feeling, but nothing to confirm my suspicions." Theo sounds exhausted, which I am sure that he is. I know that he acted quickly on my behalf in order to find Daphne's sister. °

"We will closely monitor the situation, once they are on our grounds. Tell me more about her mate." I am curious as to who this male is that could possibly be hurting my mate's family.

"His name is Dorian; he was the Beta of his pack when he mated with Scarlet. Since that time, the original Alpha has passed away never producing an heir, so Dorian stepped into his place. There are rumors that he poisoned the old Alpha, but no one is willing to openly talk about him. He is not like us; he owns Slaves and is openly aggressive towards them. I briefly inquired about purchasing some slaves from him, but I was quickly shot down." Theo has done great gathering information.

"If he proves to be problematic, do we have anything to worry about as far as numbers go?" I have snapped into strategic mode, if this Dorian is going to be a problem, I want to know exactly what we are facing.

"Caleb this is barely a pack. I have found that many of the former pack members have turned rogue, what remains is pitiful. I believe fully that the dwindling numbers in the main reason behind him being against the purchase of slaves. Our junior class alone could crush them." It pains me to see a pack reduced to nothing due to tyrannical leadership. Theo's words put my mind at ease regarding any attacks, but I am concerned now for Daphne's sister. :

"Caleb I am also worried about how Daphne is going to react to seeing her sister now. I can guarantee that the girl she used to know is not the woman she has been turned into. I know that you wanted to surprise Daphne but perhaps you should talk with her and give her a heads up." Theo makes an excellent point. I need to get to the bottom of the situation quickly.

"Theo make this guy an offer he cannot resist. Make sure that we foot the bill for getting them up here, and quickly. I need to assess the situation, and if needed we will intervene. I will talk with Daphne, and hopefully prepare her for what is to come. Additionally, it sounds like his people are not being treated well before you leave make sure that it is known that any who wish to make there way here are welcome." I know that if this last bit of information falls into the wrong hands it could start a war. Theo is a highly skilled soldier though, and I trust his discretion in this matter. °

"I understand, Caleb there is one favor I need to ask of you regarding these two. I do not want Hannah to ever be left alone with Dorian, and I would prefer it if she was not left alone with Scarlet either. I still do not know if Scarlet is innocent and a victim or a helper in this situation. I just know that I do not feel comfortable with them, and I do not want Hannah alone with them." Theo has always treated Hannah as if she was his own blood daughter, I let him know that I will be more than happy to fulfill that request. 2

After hanging up with Theo, I wonder how I am going to broach the subject with Daphne. I do not want to bring her any pain, but I am afraid if I do not talk with her that she will be hurt beyond words. I also want to alert my elite guard to the upcoming guests and explain that I want them to keep a close but discrete eye on them. If Theo is worried about the situation, then I am as well.

I mind link my elite warriors and summon them to my office. I carefully lay out the details of our soon to be guests and the worries that I have with them. After brainstorming with them, we have a full plan of action. Two of my elite female warriors have volunteered to pose as Omegas to gather information that may not be available openly. I have learned that egotistical people rarely

pay attention to what they consider people beneath them. I am hoping my girls can gather information that this posing Alpha does not want revealed. My other members

will be scattered, constantly alert. I am also increasing the amount of night rounds that my squads will run while we have visitors. Hopefully, these safeguards will not need to be tested but if they do, I know that my people will be victorious.

With a heavy heart I dismiss them. They know the game plan and will inform the other warriors. Now I need to figure out how I am going to inform my lovely mate that her sister may be radically different than she remembers. What started as a great idea for a gift for my mate may have just turned into utter disaster.

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Daphne's Point of View

Finally, Hannah and I were done shopping, I was so excited to be home. I had a lot of fun with Hannah, but planning everything so quickly has been hectic, and truly all I want to do is sink into a hot bath and let my muscles relax. Hannah grabs the rest of the bags out of the trunk while I carefully retrieve my dress from the back seat.

The sales lady made sure that it was in a solid white cover so that Caleb would not see it before I was ready for him to.

"Thank you, Hannah, for shopping with me, and teaching me about the mating ceremony." I hope she knows how much I appreciate her.

"That is what family is for silly."

Hannah's bouncy nature shines through in her words. She lets me know that she is going to take everything up to the room, and we walk in the house. I can tell right away that something is not right. There is a feeling in the house, a tension so thick that it is like a blanket of fog. I see Caleb pacing in the living room, and my heart speeds up.

"Caleb is everything alright?" Caleb stops immediately and looks at me. He looks like he has been caught sneaking cookies from the cookie jar. If I was not so worried, I might have laughed at his expression. I watch his face and can only imagine his mind trying to shift gears.

"Did you have a fun trip? Is that the dress?" Caleb puts on a fake smile and is trying to change the subject. I hate when he acts like this, as if I am a child and cannot stand bad news. Hannah is already headed upstairs with the rest of the bags.

"Yes, I found a dress, let me take it upstairs and then we can talk." I want him to know that I am not going to let this go. There is obviously something bothering him, and if we are to spend our lives together, he needs to quit hiding the negative stuff from me. I quickly jog up the stairs, wasting no time in placing the dress carefully in my closet.

Once I am back in the living room Caleb is seated on the couch. "Come sweetheart, sit and tell me all about your day with Hannah. Did you like the catering samples?" Caleb is truly trying to hide what is bothering him. I go and sit on the couch, but I turn so that I am facing him.

"Caleb the shopping trip was great, the food is wonderful, and it will be fine for the ceremony. Now tell me what has you pacing in the living room? What is going on?" I cut to the chase quickly, I am not giving him any room to wiggle out of this conversation. Caleb sighs and puts his head in his hands. I can tell that whatever is going on is weighing on him heavily.

"Daphne, I wanted to surprise you with something, but I fear that my gift may ultimately cause you more pain." I am confused by Caleb's words what could he have possibly gotten me that would cause me any pain.

"Caleb, I do not understand. How could any gift cause me pain?"

"Remember when I said that I would try to find your sister Scarlet, and invite her to the mating ceremony?" I nod my head acknowledging that yes, I remember the conversation. "The reason you have not seen Theo the last couple of days, is that I sent him on a mission to locate Scarlet and invite her here. Theo is very good at finding people." I nod my head encouraging him to go on. "Theo has located your sister, as well as her mate in California. They will be here very early tomorrow

morning."

"Caleb that is fantastic news, how could you think that this would hurt me. I have not seen Scarlet in so long, almost ten years. I cannot wait to catch up on her life."

"Daphne stop there is more." Caleb's voice was firm as he interrupted my bubble of excitement. "Daphne, the thing is ten years can really change a person. I need you to understand that you and Scarlet are not the same girls that you once were. This is what I am worried about. She may look different now, act different, and possibly have different values now." Caleb's eyes are hard as he is telling me all of this, I can feel that he knows more than he is telling me.

"I know that time changes people Caleb, I mean my life changed drastically in a day. I know Scarlet though, she never hit me like my parents. She did not call me names; she was not cruel to me. I know that she will be happy that my life has changed for the better. I also feel like you know something that you are not tell me, and that is hurting me."

As much as I do not want to admit it, Caleb's demeanor regarding my sister is ticking me off. How can he judge her, or worry about her character if he has never met her?

"Sweetheart, I am only saying that I do not want you to have an image of your sister in your head that may not equal up to her in real life." I hate that he just called me sweetheart, it sounds condescending, as if he is trying to soothe a child throwing a tantrum, and I find my anger ramping up even more.

"CALEB ENOUGH." I have never yelled at anyone, but jumping up from the couch all I can see is red. "How dare you judge her when you do not know her. You have no idea how bad it was when I was younger. I wanted to die every single day. Scarlet was the only person I had then. She was the only person that cared if I lived or died. The only person that hugged me." Tears are flowing down my face at this point, and Caleb gets off the couch trying to pull me into a hug.

"No do not touch me. I know that my family is screwed up, but not Scarlet. I mean she is dropping everything to come see our mating ceremony, and your sitting here talking about her as if she is some devil." My voice is breaking now, I am crying but I have the strong urge to hit something, anything at this moment.

"Daphne, please calm down. I did not intend to hurt your feelings, and I was not trying to talk ill of your sister. It is clear that she means a lot to you." I can not stand the tone of his voice right now. Rationally I know that he is just trying to calm me down, but that is not registering with me right now. Now I am riding the roller coaster that my emotions have gone on.

"Stop treating me like I am a child Caleb. You do that all the time. I know that you know more than you are telling me, but you are hiding it from me. How am I supposed to be the Luna of

this pack if you cannot even trust me enough to talk to me?" I can see that my words have struck a chord within him.

He stops in front of me, speechless for a moment. I take this opportunity to turn from him and stomp up the stairs. I do not want to see Caleb right now. I slam the door to our bedroom, and it dawns on me that I am throwing a tantrum like a child.

I go into the bathroom and start filling the tub. After shopping all day, the stress from the mating ceremony, the news about my sister, and fighting with Caleb I am exhausted. I need a bath, I need to relax, and I need my mind to stop going a million miles a moment.

Tears are still streaking down my face as I drop a little jasmine oil into the rapidly filling tub and start to undress. Sinking into the steamy hot bath, I try to calm my mind.

Taking a deep breath, I replay the conversation between Caleb and I, getting to the root of my anger. I can see

why Caleb was scared to talk to me, he does not want me to get hurt. I understand that feeling. I should have talked to him about how I was feeling instead of blowing up at him. It is frustrating that he treats me like a glass doll. I can handle problems, and if I am going to be Luna, he needs to communicate problems to me instead of trying to hide them. I am old enough to know that life will not always be rainbows and butterflies.

Sinking farther into the tub, I think of Scarlet. Perhaps I have idolized my sister for so long because she was the only person at the time that was nice to me. I know that Caleb is right, and that time can change people, but I do not think that she has changed into a malicious person. I am excited to see her and I hope she feels the same way. I know that I need to apologize to Caleb and have a real conversation with him about my feelings. Sighing I let the water surround my body and relax my muscles. Admitting that I am wrong is hard, but I do not want there to be strife between Caleb and I.

I drain the water in the tub and step out.

I dry myself off quickly, resolved in the fact that I need to make things right between Caleb and I. I wrap a robe around myself and exit the bathroom, going in search of Caleb. I do not have to look far he is waiting for me in the bedroom. Looking at his face, I can tell that our argument has affected him too. "Daphne I am sorry." Caleb is quick to spit out.

"Caleb stop, you need to sit down. We need to have a talk." Although I am not yelling my voice is firm. I need to have a serious discussion with him. We both sit on the couch in our room. A part of me really wants to crawl on his lap right now and bury my face in his shoulder. I am ashamed of my actions earlier.

"Caleb I am sorry; I shouldn't have yelled at you in the living room." Caleb moves as if he is going to interrupt me, I raise my hand stopping him. "No please I need to get this out. I was angry but not for the reasons you think. I have noticed that you keep things from me that are not good, or that you think will hurt me. I get upset because it is like you see me as if I am a glass doll. I am stronger than you think I am." Caleb looks down at his hands, I can see that he is trying to process my words.

"Caleb in a few short days we will have our mating ceremony, where in front of our pack, our allies, and your friends we dedicate our lives to each other. This ceremony also puts me front and center as the Luna to this pack. No one is ever going to respect me, if I do not know what is going on with this pack, both the good and the bad." Caleb nods, and I can see that he is listening to my words. I am encouraged that he is taking my concerns seriously.

"You have to quit hiding things from me, so that we can work as a team in protecting and growing this pack. I also need to apologize about Scarlet. I think I have idolized her

for so long because she was the only person that showed me kindness when I was younger. She may have changed in the last few years, but I am hoping it is not a malicious change. I also want to thank you for finding her. I think it is important for her and I to catch up, even if we choose not to continue a close relationship.” I can tell that Caleb is impressed with my words. He can see my resolve to be a good Luna.

“Daphne you are right, I am sorry for the way I have been treating you. I am learning to open myself up, but you are right I do try to hide unpleasant news from you. I guess in a way I have viewed myself as the white knight and you as the damsel in distress. My own ego getting in the way of myself.” Caleb wraps his arm around my shoulder, and I bury my head in his chest.

I am relieved that after earlier we can come together like this. I am still embarrassed about yelling at him, but he is right we are both learning. I can hear his heart and it brings me peace. Like a bomb dropping out of the sky, I realize that I think I love Caleb. I am not ready to tell him yet, but he is the one that puts my mind at ease. He is the one that makes me happy. My heart is light, and I find myself smiling. Soon I feel Caleb shifting and he is getting up from the couch. I was not expecting him to lift me up from the couch as well.

“Caleb what are you doing?”

“We have both had a long day, and we are exhausted so I am putting my beautiful mate in bed where I can snuggle her.” Caleb is laughing as he puts me under the covers. He quickly strips down and joins me. We spoon, and I soon find myself drifting off to sleep.