

# The Alpha's Slave Mate

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## Chapter Forty-Six

### Caleb's Point of View

Leaving Daphne this morning was so difficult. I woke up earlier than usual so that I could watch her sleep a few more moments. Today is the day that we will be formally committed to each other, in front of our friends, pack members, and community. I have waited so long for this day and I am so excited that it is here. I know that Daphne thinks that I saved her, but in reality, she saved me. It is because of her that the blackness inside me, the anger, the rage has finally subsided. I am more focused on my pack, on leading us, and protecting us. I will spend everyday that I can showing her how grateful I am to her.

I decided that tonight will be the night I tell her how I feel. How much I love watching her sleep, hearing her voice, and feeling her touch. I will tell her how she saved me from being feral. I will tell her how much I get lost in her eyes, in the scent of her. How her laugh sounds like bells at Christmas. I will tell her how I have fallen helplessly in love with her.

As much as I do not want to, I ease myself off the bed. I have everything planned today so that she can relax. I know how hard she has worked to prepare for today. Not just the event planning with the catering and the dress, but with learning about the neighboring packs as well. With all the events of yesterday, I just want her to be at peace today.

I head out of the room, and into the den. It is so early that I doubt anyone else is up and about except for the patrolling guard. I ensure that I have everything I need for tonight, and then head downstairs. I am in serious need of a cup of coffee.

To my surprise Theo is already in the kitchen, nursing his own coffee cup. He grunts hello to me as I wander in, and gestures to the coffee pot still half full of my favorite brew. I grab a cup and sit with him at the island.

"What is on your mind, causing you to lose sleep?" I do not waste time trying to figure out what is bothering my friend.

"I am sorry for the way I acted yesterday. When I seen him on Hannah, I wanted to rip his throat out. I know that she is not my daughter by blood, but we have raised her all the same. If you had not come in when you did, I would have ended his life, and felt no remorse at all." Theo's voice is cold, and I can tell that he is reliving the events in his

mind. 8

“You have nothing to apologize for. If I had seen him on Hannah, I do not doubt that I would have killed him as well. There is no excuse for his behavior. The fact that he is claiming to be an Alpha and behaving in this way is disgusting to me.” I feel bad that Theo is second guessing his actions.

“It is not just that thought” Theo turns and looks me in the eye “I find myself drawn to Scarlet. I remember all those photos of her laughing and carefree on the walls at her parent’s house. I wish I had gotten the opportunity to meet that girl. To see that sparkle shine in her eyes again.” Hearing Theo talk about Scarlet makes me wonder if his hatred for Dorian is fueled by something other than Hannah.

“Theo, I need to ask you a very personal question. Have you had any lovers since Miranda has passed on?” I never say her name out loud, not since she died. We do not talk about it. Theo took some time after her death and dealt with it his way. We had an unspoken agreement that she was an off-limit topic of conversation.

“I tried once, but she wanted more than I could give her. She wanted a future, and I had made it very clear from the beginning that we were just two people looking for physical release. Since that fiasco no, I have not touched another woman. You know that I do not believe the fairy tale that there are second chance mates in this world.” I must admit that I am surprised that Theo opened up this much about Miranda, and his love life.

“I truly wish that you would not give up on finding another mate. I would love to see you with some little pups climbing your leg.” I laugh at the thought and clap him on the back.

“The nights get lonely sometimes, but I do not think that I could ever handle that pain again. I asked the Moon Goddess to take my life that night. I did not want to continue without her. I simply can not go through with that again. I am happy here, training, working, helping our people with special talents. That is what my life is meant for.” Theo has turned somewhat solemn, and I can not help but wonder if he truly feels that way or if fear is stopping him.

“If that is what you wish, then I will drop the matter. I do have to say though Scarlet is still a beauty.” Theo punches my shoulder at that remark, which I expected.

“It is not that way with her, I simply hate seeing someone broken down like that. It is weird but, in a way, it is almost as if her and Daphne have switched lives.” I mull over Theo’s words for a moment, and I agree with them. Daphne was broken down by her parents, made to feel like she was nothing. Dorian is doing the same thing to Scarlet, and it is a sad realization.

“Honestly, you are right. Unfortunately, there is not much that we can do with out starting a war. I do not know if they have powerful allies, although I have no fear of his pack warriors. I also wonder how it would make Daphne feel. I mean her and Scarlet have just reunited, and this could push them apart.”

"I have been researching relentlessly through the old scrolls, searching for anything that could possibly help Scarlet in any way. She could leave him, but because of the mating bond she would never find a second chance mate if it were possible. From what I have read the possibility of her being able to bear children is slim without her mate." Theo hangs his head with his own revelations. Now I better understand the coffee, he has been researching all night.

"Why not go and try to get some rest. I will speak with Scarlet and see where she stands. If she wants to leave Dorian, she will have our support. I will even offer her a place here." Theo nods at my words and places his cup in the sink. I believe that exhaustion has finally won out and I see him head for the stairs. Hopefully, he will be able to rest.

I start making breakfast for two people. Mulling over the talk I had with Theo I have changed my plans a little. I will make Scarlet some breakfast and leave Daphne's in the oven. That will give me some time to speak with Scarlet and see where she stands with everything. It is clear to everyone that she is no longer happy in her mating but is she unhappy enough to change her own circumstances. Plate in hand I head upstairs to find out, knocking and waiting for her reply before coming in.

"Hey Scarlet, I brought you breakfast and was hoping to speak to you a moment." I can see that she has been up for a little while. She is already dressed, and it looks like she can use a friend right now.

"Yeah I was expecting that you would want to talk. First let me say that I am so sorry that Dorian hurt that girl. He was very wrong, and I cannot fathom what he was thinking."

"No, you do not need to apologize for his actions. He is a grown man; he will take responsibility for himself. It is regarding him that I wish to speak to you. Scarlet everyone can see that you are unhappy, that Dorian does not treat you well. Although I have not found a way outside of ending his life to break the mating bond, you are free to leave him if you want to. You will have mine and my pack's support, and a position and home here if you choose." I can see her thinking about my words for a few minutes and I do not rush her. This is a serious matter, and she must choose for herself.

"Thank you for your kind offer, but I am the Luna of my pack. You are right, Dorian has changed and for so long I have been unhappy. That is not all on him though, I should have stood up to him long ago. My people need me, so it is with that thought that I know that I must go back. I do want to thank you though, for Daphne and her happiness. She did not have a happy childhood, but I am overjoyed to see her smile now. I also want you to know that should you ever make her unhappy, I will find a way to end you." Scarlet looks me dead in the eye to let me know that she is serious. I respect her for her decision to protect her pack, even if I do not agree with it.

“I understand your decision and know that I love Daphne. It is no longer just the mating that pulls me to her. I need her more than I need air to breath.” I hope that Scarlet can see that I am sincere.

“I believe you. You do make her happy, and that is all I can ask.”

“Know that you are welcome here anytime. Also, if you need anything at all, please do not hesitate to ask. You are family now, anything I have is yours.” Scarlet nods letting me know that she understands. Then I explain to her my plan for Daphne today, and she is more than happy to help me out. She heads downstairs with me to grab the breakfast for Daphne. Then I check in with Hannah and ensure that she is set to go for help with hair and makeup.

I spend the rest of the day greeting the guests that have arrived. The neighboring packs have all shown up in support of me finding my mate. Marcus is here, Lola stands proud beside him. I make sure that everything is set in place, the catering is all top notch, and that nothing can go wrong. My patrolling guards are still working but are not as spread out. I allowed them to draw in closer to the ceremony so that they can also be a part of it. After all it is not everyday that their Alpha meets his mate. As time draws closer, I find that I am getting nervous. I cannot wait to see Daphne in her dress, but I am ready for this to be done with. I am ready for her to be mine.

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## Chapter Forty-Seven

### Daphne's Point of View

Scarlet gives me one more big hug. I know that once the doors open to the house, and I will walk down the steps, turn left and meet Caleb in the rose garden. My anxiety has me worried that I am going to fall on my face even getting down the steps. I take deep breaths trying to calm my nerves. Everything is going to be fine; Caleb is here. Scarlet steps forward, but before she can open the door I reach out and stop her.

“Scarlet, I'm scared.” My anxiety is full force now. My heart is beating a million miles a second, and I am pretty sure that I am going to drop dead right here. Scarlet turns back and faces me with a smile.

“Daphne, you are the strongest woman I know, and you are going to be a great Luna. You have been mated with a good man, a strong man that I think loves you.” She smiles at me reassuringly and I must admit her pep talk helped. My heartbeat is slowing a little. She is right, everything is going to be fine.

The doors are open, and I feel a light autumn breeze flow in. This is it, the moment that everyone is waiting for. I am shaking a little as I begin descending the steps. There are so many people here that some of them are milling about the circular drive in front of the

door. Everyone turns their head though when I make my way out of the house. I carefully walk behind Scarlet, slowly down the steps. I turn the corner, and immediately see Caleb.

Caleb is so handsome in his tuxedo. Scarlet was right, everyone else melts away and all I am focused on is Caleb. He stands proud with his hair pulled back, and his chest out. The button-down shirt looks like it is straining against his muscles, and I cannot deny the very sight of him brings a familiar ache to my womanhood. His eyes are locked with mine, and I can tell that he can feel the tension rising between us. I walk forward, intent on making this man mine and mine alone. He is my destiny, my mate.

The elder stands before us, performing the binding ceremony. Suddenly there is a long howl that echoes through the trees. Caleb stills beside me, and I believe he is using the mind link he shares with his warriors to gather information on the disruption. With out warning I see Dorian break through the tree line, behind Caleb. What shocks me the man standing next to him is my father.

Caleb turns and growls deep in his throat. I can see part of our pack immediately shift into combat mode and start to circle behind the intruders. My mind is spinning wondering why they are here.

“What the hell is the meaning of this. Coming here uninvited, interrupting my mating ceremony?” Caleb’s voice is colder than I have ever heard it before, as if ice is running through his veins.

“Alpha Caleb you have committed a grave grievance against the Cedar Woods pack, and against the Silver Moon pack.” Surprisingly, it is my father that has chosen to speak. I feel a hand on my right shoulder, and I look up to find Scarlet by my side, her face pale.

“What grievance do you have with me old man? As you can see my patience is wearing thin.” Caleb’s voice is thundering, and a chill runs along my spine.

“Firstly, you purchased a slave from me under false pretenses. You knew before you purchased her that she was your mate. You withheld that information in order to procure the murderous bitch at a lower price. Then you have the audacity to speak to my beloved mate as if she was a common wench. Now I find out that you are holding my precious daughter hostage, keeping her from her destined mate. Our laws demand that you answer for your petulant behavior.” My father has his chest puffed out in righteousness. He spews his false tale loud, as if hoping to garner support from those in attendance.

“I have heard enough of this. The contract in which I purchased a slave from you was witnessed by both of our Betas. You had the chance to ask for more money. You had the chance to ask me any question you wanted, and I would have answered them truthfully. You did not care though; you only wanted the deal done. You have your

money; I have honored the contract. Now be gone, off my lands before you start a war that you will not win." The tension is thick, I can see that my father's face is red with anger. Caleb struck a nerve with him.

"You are a liar and a cheat. I have eyes, I can see my daughter right there. Her mate came to me last night with tales of your depravity. Hoping to have both of the sisters to yourself." Caleb's growl is lower this time, and I can see the seams of his suit jacket starting to tear. He is in danger of shifting and attacking my father head on.

"Enough of this." My head swivels over to my sister as her words ring out clear in the night. "I am not a captive here; I am a guest. Alpha Caleb has been nothing but stellar in his treatment of me. It was Dorian's foolish actions that got him banished from here. He is lucky that Caleb spared his life." From the silence I can tell that no one expected Scarlet to speak.

"Scarlet shut your mouth." Dorian barks at her.

"No Dorian, I have been silent for far too long. Your monstrous ways end tonight. You have driven our pack into the dirt. Tormenting the young women, cheating and rutting around on me. You have depleted all our money with your gluttonous actions. Hell, most of our pack has turned rogue just to escape from you. You are not half the man that Caleb is." Scarlet's face is as red as her hair, and I am in rapture of her at this moment. My attention is quickly snapped back to Dorian though as he goes to move forward.

Caleb steps farther in front of both Scarlet and I. "If you take another step, I will end your life." Caleb is in full war mode. I glance around and see that our warriors are ready to do battle if needed.

"Do you really think you can stop me. That is my mate, she is coming with me." I do not think that Dorian has realized that there are people who have surrounded him. Glancing at my father I can see that he is aware of the warrior's positions, but he does not seem fazed. I am confused at how he is so calm, knowing that he does not stand a chance fighting against Caleb's pack.

"Scarlet I am disappointed in you. You were raised better than to act like this. Dorian is your mate, and your Alpha. You should be kneeling to him." Scarlet is just as shocked as I am by his words.

"Like I said you two need to get off of my lands before you start a war, we both know you won't win." Caleb's jacket is continuing to break apart at the seams. I know that he will turn soon if this situation is not handled.

From behind me I hear a long howl, and I turn in time to see about thirty wolves break through the tree line, attacking our nearest warriors. For a moment there is chaos, as people try to figure out who is attacking who and where these wolves are coming from. Then I hear more fighting towards the north side of the town. I turn back in time to see

my father and Dorian shift. Caleb shifts right in front of me as well. Scarlet grabs my arm and starts pulling me towards the house.

“Daphne snap out of it; you are under attack and we need to make sure that the elders and children are safe.” Scarlet’s words spur me into action, and I help lead our pack elders, and young children in the house. I am grateful that Hannah is nearby, and she jumps in heralding people and getting them inside. Bethany and Scarlet are helping to ensure that we have the neighboring pack elders and children as well safe and secure in the house. Once I am sure that everyone is in, I turn and head for the door.

“Daphne what are you doing?” Scarlet seems shocked that I am headed out the door.

“I am going to make sure that Caleb is alright. I know how to fight Scarlet.” She seems shocked by my words, but it is true. I have grown a lot stronger than I was. Caleb ensured that my lessons progressed, and I excelled at them.

Once outside I shift into my wolf. I am stronger this way. I am barely off the steps before a large silver wolf tackles me, going for my throat. Using my hind legs, I throw the wolf from me and swipe at its snout. In my wolf form I can smell that this wolf is from the Silver Moon pack. I am not really interested in dueling with this wolf, I want to find Caleb, but it is persistent. Even though I move as to walk away the wolf jumps and attempts to land on my back. I quickly sidestep and whip around to face the attacker once again. I watch their motions intently waiting for them to spring up again, when it does, I quickly lunge and hit their side knocking them hard into the stone steps. Although the blow jolts me a little, I am satisfied that I have managed to knock this wolf out for now. I turn once again intent on finding Caleb.

Coming around the side of the manor house I am dumbstruck by the carnage I see before me. It looks like a scene from a horror film. There appears to be close to a hundred wolves engaged in various states of battle. Looking at the ground I can see that some of these wolves will never rise again. I wonder briefly where my father managed to get so many wolves from. The Silver Moon pack does not have these numbers, and from what I have heard from Scarlet neither does the Cedar Woods pack.

Pushing the thought from my mind, I scan the battlefield again intent on finding Caleb. I quickly recognize Theo’s wolf holding its own against two wolves attacking him. Then I spot Caleb and I know that he is going head to head with my father. I start sprinting towards him determined to help him win. I am less than ten feet away when I see another large wolf come up from behind Caleb and jump on his back. Caleb’s whimper of pain spurs me to move faster. I can see my father moving in to rip his jugular out, using every ounce of energy I can I leap into the air, and jump on my father. The motion was enough to knock him off balance and we both go tumbling over.

I hit my head on a rock as I attempt to get up. I am dizzy but try to shake it off as my father’s attention is on me now. He has hated me since the day I was born, and I can see the rage in his eyes. I have never before raised a hand to him, and yet here I am

openly challenging him. He wastes no time in his attack and jumps forward. I am able to move to the side, but I feel his sharp claws puncture and tear skin by my rib cage. Pain shoots through my body, but I have no time to nurse the wound. He is once again circling me, looking for a weakness. He goes with a frontal attack swiping my snout, I move forward as well attempting to get my claws into his throat. I do not hit my target though, instead I puncture his chest. He moves again this time quickly going for the side that he has already damaged. His claws sink into my ribs, and I cannot help but howl in pain. He takes advantage and jumps on my back trying to bite my neck. I try to buck him, but his wolf is too big. I can feel him get a superficial bite into my neck. I know that if I do not find a way to get out of this that he will kill me. I throw myself onto my injured side, throwing him off balance and getting him off my back. He is stunned by the movement, and his head is thrown back. Taking advantage, with adrenaline pumping through my veins I waste no time lunging for his throat. This time I do not miss, this time my teeth sink in, tearing and ripping until he does not move anymore.

I do not have time to think about what just happened. My sole focus is on Caleb. I have lost him again in the foray of battle. Then out of the corner of my eye, I spot him. He is still fighting the large wolf that had attacked him with my father. I charge after them, intent on helping my mate. Before I can get there a smaller red wolf leaps from the other side and has the black wolf by the throat. Everything happened so quickly that I am stunned.

Caleb shifts back to his human form and quickly covers his manhood. I do not understand what is happening. Looking at where the black wolf was, I can see Dorian's body is in its place. I glance behind me and see that my father's body is also in its human form. I hear the wolves howling around me, as people start to shift back into their human forms. Caleb approaches me.

"Baby it is ok. You can change." I see that he has fetched a shirt from somewhere for me to cover up with. I change back into my human form, utterly exhausted. Caleb quickly wraps me in the shirt that he has found and quickly pulls me into his chest. This whole night has left me confused.

"Caleb, I thought that you were going to die." My voice is hoarse, and I am choking back sobs. From behind me I can hear our people gathering. The ones that were in the house are spilling out. Theo comes up beside Caleb.

"We have been able to detain a few for questioning. From what I have been able to gather so far Dorian enlisted the help of some rogues, his warriors, the Silver Moon pack, some warriors from the Mission pack, and some warriors from another pack from California. They were under the false pretense that you were holding Scarlet hostage." Theo is all business, quickly reporting to Caleb what he knows. Caleb is only half listening though; he is staring intently behind me. I turn so that I can see what has captured his attention, and my heart breaks.



I watch as the red wolf that ended Dorian's life shifts. In its place is my sister. Tears start streaming down my face as I watch her reach out to his lifeless body. I can hear her heart wrenching sobs, and I know that there is nothing I can do to ease her pain.

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### *Chapter Forty-Eight*

#### Caleb's Point of View

Today has not gone the way that I had planned. I had planned so carefully, down to the flower arrangements. I thought that I had every base covered, surely nothing could go wrong. I had been arrogant, cocky enough to believe that no one would try to attack. My pack was known to be fearless, and it was no secret that my allies would be in attendance of my mating ceremony. I had pulled my guards in so that they could witness the ceremony, and in doing so I left my people vulnerable. I did this, in my own arrogance I created the war zone that was before me.

I can only stare in horror at the woman who saved my life. I underestimated Dorian. I was already tired from fighting Alpha Jason when Dorian had surprised me from behind. He was quicker than I imagined he would be. He was also a better fighter than I ever would have given him credit for. Scarlet saved my life, but in doing so she lost her destined mate. I can only imagine what is going through her head, knowing that she was the one that took his life.

"Mine." Theo's words snap my attention directly to him. I turn to see him staring at Scarlet, tears in his eyes. His eyes are boring into Scarlet, and I can see that his body is fighting a war with itself.

"Theo" I try to draw his attention away, but it can not be deterred from Scarlet. I know that he does not believe in second chance mates, but perhaps she is his. Daphne starts wiggling in my arms, trying to break free from my grasp. My attention finally falls on her and I realize she is fighting to go to her sister. I let her go.

Daphne runs over and wraps Scarlet in her arms. Pulling her back into her chest and rocking her on the ground as if she were a child. I knew that today would change our lives, but I could have never predicted that it would be this way. For once I do not know what to do, what to say, or even how to begin processing everything.

"Caleb, I need to go. Something is not right with me; I think I am headed to the infirmary." Theo's voice pulls me out of my self-loathing and snaps me back into reality. I look Theo over, looking for any signs of trauma, other than the superficial bruises and cuts that have appeared. I can find nothing that would warrant a trip to the infirmary.

"Theo what is going on, I do not see anything." I do not normally question Theo, but on this occasion I must.

“No, there is something not right with my head. I am imagining things.” Theo’s voice is shaky, and I notice that he is still staring at Scarlet. Since we are in such close vicinity, and werewolves have excellent hearing I decide to use the mind link.

Would your trip to the infirmary have anything to do with the fact that you are staring at Scarlet, and called her yours? I do not mean to be blunt with Theo, but I cannot waste any time trying to figure out the next moves for everyone involved.

She just lost her destined mate. She cannot possibly be mine. I do not believe in second chance mates. I want to go to her, but I cannot. I am not the man that she needs. Theo also chooses to use the mind link to communicate. Looking to where Daphne and Scarlet are, I can understand his hesitation, and my heart breaks at the predicament that Theo has found himself in.

I cannot tell you how long we stood there, simply staring at the two women. Unsure of how to bring them any comfort. Scarlet lost her mate, Daphne had to kill her father, and I was helpless to do anything to help them. Finally, both women stood, arms wrapped around each other they turned and started walking towards Theo and me.

When they are less than twenty feet away, I watch as Scarlet skids to a sudden halt. Her head snaps up, her eyes go wide as if she is a deer in the headlights. I can tell that Daphne is asking her what is wrong, but Scarlet is staring straight at Theo. Although it is the worst timing ever, I can tell that she is processing the fact that every fiber of her being is telling her that Theo is her mate. Again, I am lost as to how I can help anyone. Theo is as stiff as a board beside me. The great Alpha and Beta of the Blue Mountain pack are completely useless right now to the two people that need them the most. Slowly the girls continue to make their way to us.

“We need to talk.” I was surprised that it was Scarlet that spoke first. Of course, her words were directed at Theo. I can see the worry and the fear flash through his eyes. This will not be an easy start for them. Daphne is utterly lost as to what is happening between the two of them.

“I will understand whatever decision you make. I only have one request and that is that you give it some time, before you decide.” Theo’s voice is soft, and I can tell that he is fighting the urge to try and comfort Scarlet. Scarlet thankfully shakes her head in agreement with Theo’s request.

“Daphne, I am so sorry. It was my own arrogance that lead to this chaos. I am the reason our ceremony is ruined.” There is so much more that I need to apologize to my mate for, but right now is not the time for me to get into all of that.

“No, it was not your fault. It was my father’s fault, and Dorian’s fault. Their greed, their arrogance, their demented minds. My father’s violence is all I have known since I was born. Now he is gone, and I feel free.” Daphne’s voice is hard, and I can tell that she is

fighting back her emotions. Even if it is a stranger, the first time you take a life is hard. I wrap my arms around her pulling her tight to me.

Behind me I hear a wail piercing the night sky, and both Daphne and Scarlet stiffen. Daphne moves to look behind me and her face goes ghostly white. I shift trying to see what is causing her pain, only to find her mother kneeling over Alpha Jason's corpse. It did not occur to me that she would be here and judging from the girl's faces they did not expect it either.

The shrieking woman turns and zeros her attention on Daphne. "You murderous whore. You have taken everything from me, everything. It should be your corpse laying here, just like it should have been you that died instead of your brother." I watch a tear fall down Daphne's cheek, and I have had enough of this madness.

"I will permit you to take your mates body and leave here. If you ever come back, I will kill you myself." My voice is booming through the night air. Daphne has suffered enough; I will not permit anything else happening to her. Amanda does not heed my warning, or perhaps she does not care. She starts stalking towards Daphne and I, murder evident in her eyes.

She never made it close to us though. Scarlet stepped around Theo, ran full force and tackled her mother on the ground. Before I can even blink Scarlet has both of her mother's hand above her face, and she is sitting on her chest.

"You are not going to hurt her anymore, do you understand. I watched you hurt her for years, the only joy you ever found was in hurting her. I hate you for it, I think I hated you then. Look at what that has done. Dad is dead, our brother is dead, and if you do not leave here you will be too." Scarlet is releasing some of the anger of her childhood out, and I can see that she needed to.

"You spoiled bitch, get off me. You killed your own mate you are no better than her. Both of you murdering, lying little whores. I curse the Moon Goddess for your existence." I can see the fire in Scarlet die at her mother's words. Words that she has heard yelled at Daphne over and over, but never at her. In her own pain Scarlet had loosened the grip she had on her mother's hands, and Amanda breaks free. She swings up and hits Scarlet in the jaw. The blow was enough to knock Scarlet off balance. I move, but Theo is quicker. He quickly snaps Amanda's neck, before turning his attention to Scarlet. This time he does not fight the urge to wrap her in his arms.

"Oh, I did not see that coming." Daphne's voice is soft. I look down and see the stream of tears coming from her eyes. I wish I had a time machine.

I do not get long to process everything. Marcus is at my side, informing me that our warriors have removed the bodies of the dead. We had some wounded on our side, and a few casualties. I am thankful that our pack is strong. Our wounded warriors will heal

up in a few days at most. Our fallen warriors will be celebrated, and I will ensure that their families are taken care of. I glance over at Daphne; this is her first fight.

“Please make sure that all the warriors are attended to immediately.” She surprises me by her request of Marcus. Hannah is right behind Marcus, with a few of our other pack members.

“Caleb, we have an issue. You and Daphne did not get to complete the ceremony.” Hannah’s brow is creased with worry.

“Hannah I will make sure that we reschedule the ceremony soon. Right now, we need to finish cleaning up, tend to the wounded, and make sure that all of our guests are accounted for.” I hope that Hannah is not offended by my tone.

“No Elder Preston informed me that the ceremony had to be completed tonight. You and Daphne have already started the binding ceremony. He said if it is not completed tonight, then the Moon Goddess could see that as a refusal and the mating bond could be broken.” Now I understand why Hannah was so worried. I look to Theo to see if he can confirm the Elder’s words, or if it is just superstition.

“I am sorry Caleb, but she speaks the truth.” Theo looks at me, and then at Daphne. “I am so sorry Luna, I know that this is not a great night for you, but the ceremony was started and must be completed.”

“Fine, Hannah please gather everyone if you can. It may not be the night that we hoped but it is what will have to do.” I can only be proud of my mate. She rolls her shoulders back and has handled tonight with a level head. I know that she may break down later, and I will be there for her.

Hannah is quick to gather everyone, and once again Daphne and I are facing each other. She is still in the overly large shirt I found, and I am in a pair of shorts. This is not how I intended to be bound to my mate, but I still can not be happier. Elder Preston continues where he left off earlier, and soon he is wrapping the blue ribbon around my wrist.

“With this tie, you Alpha Caleb of the Blue Mountain pack are tying yourself to your mate. You will protect, and cherish her throughout this lifetime, and the next.” I agree, and he moves on to Daphne and repeats the same vows. She agrees and our hands are formally tied together, a binding for life.

“Daphne, as your mate I promise to love and cherish you. Words can not express how happy I am that we are destined to be one. You have saved me in more ways than one. I once questioned how the Moon Goddess could mate me with a slave, but the truth is that you were always a queen. Everyone was just too blind to see it. I am proud to have you as my Luna, and my partner in life. My life means nothing unless you are by my

side. It is not only the mating pull that brings me to you. I love you and will spend everyday proving that love to you.”

“Caleb, as your mate I promise to stay loyal to you, and to cherish every moment we have together. You have given me a life that I could only imagine in my wildest dreams. I thought that no one would ever love me, that no one would ever see me as anything more than a slave. You taught me how to love myself. I am proud to stand by your side and will try my best to be the Luna you deserve, the Luna our pack deserves. I love you too.”

With our personal vows said and the binding ceremony completed, I pull my mate in and kiss her. Sparks flow through us. We are now one, I am in love with my mate.

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## Chapter Forty-Nine

### Daphne's Point of View

My mating ceremony was a few days ago, and although it was not the wonderful event we had originally planned, in the end I was still bound to Caleb. I was also announced as the Luna of our pack. Life did not slow down from there.

The only living heirs to my father's pack were my sister and I. My sister also happens to be the only living heir to her pack in California. On top of all of this, Scarlet has also discovered that she and Theo are second chance mates. There has been so much going on lately that Caleb and I have not been able to celebrate our mating ceremony.

Right now, we are in talks with Beta Noah regarding the Silver Moon pack and the line of succession. Scarlet has already stated that she has no desire to be the acting Luna of the pack. The next in line for the job is me. I have no desire to try to lead people that could not even treat me like I was human; however, I do not want there to be any mistreatment of the people there. There have been suggestions back and forth about Noah taking over, or one of our warriors stepping forward as the new Alpha. There is also the issue of Theo being Scarlet's mate. By all rights even if Scarlet does not desire the position, Theo could step forward as the new Alpha. Noah is not aware of that situation though.

“Noah if you do not mind, there is a lot of information for my family to discuss. If you could step outside, I will have Hannah take you downstairs and get you fed some lunch while we discuss the options.” Caleb's voice is firm but friendly. I marvel at how well he does politically. Noah nods at him and leaves the room.

Caleb turns to face Scarlet, Theo, and I. I can see the worry lines creasing his forehead already. “Scarlet, I know that you believe that you have been away too long, to be an effective leader to the Silver Moon pack. Theo you as her mate have a choice, one that I

will back either way. You have always been an excellent Beta, and I believe with all my heart that you will make an amazing Alpha. I know that the two of you have a lot of heavy decisions on your shoulders right now so Daphne and I will leave you alone to discuss the options.” With Caleb’s words I stand. I am ready to get out of this room for a minute. We leave them alone to talk, and retreat into our bedroom.

“Caleb, if Theo does decide to become the next Alpha who would be your Beta?” Out of everything I heard in the den, this was the one question that I was worried about the most. I am aware that I have trust issues, and I want to make sure that the next Beta is someone that both Caleb and I can trust.

“No matter who I choose no one is going to be as good as Theo.” Caleb’s head is bowed, and I can tell that this is weighing heavily on him. I walk over and wrap my arms around his waist giving him a tight hug so that he knows I am here for him. “Theo and I have grown up together. We trained together; we have fought together. We have found love together; we have gone through everything in our lives together. I want what is best for him, but the thought of him leaving is making me sad.” Caleb is resting his head on top of mine, and I rub his back simply trying to provide a sense of comfort to him.

“Think about it this way love, if Theo does decide to be the next Alpha then he is still very close. It also means that you will have another allied pack close to us. Plus, it is an opportunity for Theo, as you said he is a great Beta but would make an excellent Alpha.” I am hoping that my words will provide Caleb some comfort.

“Hmmm I have such a smart and beautiful mate. How did I get so lucky?” Caleb lets out a little laugh. I am glad that I was able to ease the tension somewhat.

“Unfortunately, I think we need to get back in there and see if they have reached a decision. We still have other meetings to get to today, and it is already past lunch.” I did not want to let go of Caleb, and I definitely did not want to go back to meetings. I knew that we had to finish them though, it was the only way that Caleb and I would be able to finally get some time together. Linking my hand with Caleb’s hand I start to lead us out of the bedroom.

Caleb knocked before we went back into the den. Looking at Scarlet and Theo I can see that their decisions have not been easy for them to make. My heart breaks a little for them. They have had such a tragic start to what will hopefully become a better future for them both.

“Caleb, Daphne we have a few things to discuss with you two before we get Noah back up here.” Theo’s voice is all business. “Scarlet and I have tried to look at this from every angle, taking in every scenario. We need to settle things with the Cedar Wood pack. Scarlet is their Luna, and we both feel that we have a responsibility to ensuring that what remains of the pack is taken care of. Dorian caused a lot of damage, and we need to fix as much of it as we can.” Theo pauses to take a deep breath and squeezes Scarlet’s hand in reassurance.

“Although Scarlet is also the rightful accession to the Silver Moon pack, she does not feel like she has any strong ties there. We have a potential plan that we have talked through and we need your input on it. Do you want to take it from here?” Theo asks Scarlet.

“Yes, so um I want what is best for everyone involved. Dorian caused a lot of damage within the Cedar Wood pack. In truth the pack is broke, I have no idea who or if we have any allies, and I do not even know if anyone would choose to stay under my leadership. Theo is happy here, this is his home and I can see why he is happy. At one time this was also my home, and I really want to stay and continue growing my bond with my sister. There is no one left in the Cedar Wood pack that would be able to take over the Alpha position, Dorian’s warriors are snakes in the grass. I would be worried that they would continue destroying what is left of the pack. After speaking with Theo and seeing how great you two work together I would like to offer the rest of the pack the option to relocate here, and pledge allegiance to your pack.” With this declaration, I can see that Scarlet is starting to get nervous. “I was thinking and hoping to offer the territory to the Red Wood pack, which is the closest pack to our territory. Now I would need to meet with their Alpha, because ultimately, I would love for the pack members that do not want to relocate, to be able to join a neighboring pack.” Scarlet is definitely nervous and rushes through the ending of her speech.

Caleb takes a moment to process everything that they just explained to us. I am new to politics so I can not really jump in with an opinion on the whole subject.” I would openly accept anyone that wanted to be apart of our pack as long as their hearts are aligned with our pack values.” Caleb I can tell is trying to reassure my sister. “I think that you have a great plan in mind for your pack, and I have to say that I think it is very mature and wise. It takes a lot of strength, and courage to try to right the wrongs of other people.” Scarlet smiles at Caleb’s praise.

“Theo, I love you as if you were my true blood brother. We have been through many things in this life together. I am proud of you always.” Caleb gets emotional as he addresses Theo.

“I feel the same brother, which is why Scarlet and I both think that Noah should take over the Silver Moon pack. I have investigated his character, and I believe that he will be a strong, but fair Alpha. I do not care for his wife, nor his daughter but I believe that he can keep their attitudes in check. Scarlet and I wish to stay here, with you and Daphne. I have never had the desire to be an Alpha, and I would like the opportunity to get to know my mate better before trying to lead an entire pack.” Theo is also getting emotional.

“You will always have a home here with us. I will help arrange everything that you and Scarlet will need to travel to her pack. We will also cover the expenses of anyone that would like to relocate here as well. I will send you with some of the pack warriors to help in negotiations with the neighboring pack. I would feel better if I knew you had our men

at your back.” Caleb and Theo go on to discuss more of the logistics, but I am worried about Scarlet.

“Scarlet, are you sure this is what you want?” I cannot help but ask her. She was nervous through her speech and I do not want her to feel pressured to give her pack up.

“Actually, I was the one that talked Theo into all of this. Daphne, I think that I would make a good Luna, but I was Dorian’s mate. No matter how great I am, there will always be some anger at the past. That is not good for any pack. This plan was the best that I could come up with that may help heal some of the pain that they have had to deal with.” Scarlet looks down at her hands, and I can tell that she is reliving some of the worst of Dorian’s behaviors.

“Besides, I think that Theo and I could have something great. We have both experienced tragedy, love, misery, and pain. Those kinds of things change how a person views life, and love.” Scarlet looks over at Theo and there is a slight shimmer in her eyes. “I did not truly believe in second chance mates, and neither did Theo. Perhaps this was the Moon Goddess’s way of blessing me for finally coming to my senses.”

The boys finish up their preplanning of the trip and we ask Noah to rejoin us all in the den. Caleb and Theo explain to Noah that Scarlet and I do not wish to lead the pack. Caleb, Theo and Noah hammer out the finer details of allies, future trades, and whatever else they could think of. Since night was falling Noah decided to stay one more night with our pack before going home tomorrow. Theo and Scarlet also planned to leave for California tomorrow.

Finally, all the negotiations were done, and Caleb and I were getting ready for bed. The long talks and the stress of the last few days have left me exhausted. I can only imagine the toll it has taken on Caleb as well.

“Are you excited that Scarlet is going to be so close now?” Caleb asks me as he is changing.

“Yes, I am very happy about it. I am worried and sad for her and Theo though. Those two have been through so much, and they deserve some happiness.” I am already yawning as I slip under the covers.

“I agree love. Hopefully, they can find some of that happiness together.” Caleb is also yawning as he slides into bed, wrapping his arm around my waist and spooning me close to him. Even with all the hectic drama we have been dealing with I am grateful that I am in his arms every night. Soon we are both fast asleep.



## *Chapter Fifty*

### Caleb's Point of View

I am startled awake a little after midnight and turn to find Daphne tossing about in our bed. Her forehead is beaded with sweat and she is practically crying in her sleep. My heart breaks imagining the horrors that my mate is living through in her dreams. My beautiful love has had to endure so much in her short life. I reach out and gather her in my arms, kissing her and softly reassuring her that she is safe and in my arms. She slowly wakes up and I continue to hold her, reassuring her in every way I can think of that I am here, she is safe, and I will always keep her safe.

"I am sorry I woke you up." Her voice is soft, and she hiccups a little with the last of her sobs finally subsiding.

"Do not be sorry my love. You have been through so much. I wish I could have saved you from everything that you have experienced. Daphne you are so strong, and I love that about you. Never feel sorry for finding solace in my arms. I love holding you. I love touching your body, feeling your heart beat next to mine, brushing your hair back from your face. I will never not want to touch you or hold you." I pull her closer and kiss her forehead. There is no denying that I have fallen head over heels in love with my mate.

Daphne moves closer and soon our bodies are so entwined that there is no space remaining between us. I continue holding her, softly caressing her back. Unfortunately, I am male, and so other parts of my body have woken up as well. Too soon there is an undeniable bulge pressing into Daphne.

"Sorry love there are some things that I can not control." Daphne lets out a soft giggle but does not move away. We laid entangled in each other's arms, feeling the heat between us, and the rhythm of our hearts beating in time. I could hold her like this forever, but far too soon Daphne starts moving slowly.

She tilts her head and starts kissing my collarbone, sliding her tongue in the crevice between the bone, and my throat. I cannot help but release a small moan. Having my beautiful mate pressed against me and feeling the softness of her lips, instantly sparks a fire in me.

"Oh, my love if you do not intend to be ravaged tonight than you should stop. Sorry but having you this close, and feeling your lips is not helping my man hood shrink any." I was trying not to be brash, but she needed to know how I was feeling.

Daphne shifts and props herself up on one arm, letting the moonlight from the widow cascade down her softly. "Who said I wanted it to shrink?" She shoots me a coy smile; I am delightfully taken back by her boldness. Daphne is not normally this bold in the bedroom, but Goddess knows I am not going to stop her.

My mate playfully pushes on my shoulder, and I lay back on my back as she asks. She straddles me and push up against her letting her feel my full desire that is ready for her command. She leans down and kisses my neck; I wrap a hand in her hair loving the silky strands that get entangled in my finger. Daphne moans into my neck as I rock my hips up, pressing every inch of me into her. Making her feel how ready I am to be buried deep inside her warm, wet folds.

I slide my other hand up her side under her tank top and capture her perky nipple between my fingers. Giving it a teasing tug, before massaging the rest of her breast. I can feel that she is wet through the small tight shorts she wore to bed. I love how responsive she is, and I am rock hard. I unravel my hand from her hair and reach for her top, I want to feel her skin on mine. She sits back and allows me to remove it from her.

Seeing Daphne straddling me, her hair wild and perched on top of me topless is a sight that takes my breath away. "You are so damn beautiful." I cannot stop the words from flowing from my lips as I reach up and recapture her gorgeous breasts with my hands. Daphne arches her back, pressing her breasts farther into me. She takes me by surprise though when she rocks backwards and launches gracefully to her feet.

Involuntarily I whimper at the loss of contact with her body. I settled down when I realized she stood to remove the small pair of shorts she had worn to bed. My beautiful mate was standing on our bed over me, as bare as the day she was born. Her beauty is remarkable, indescribable in words. There was a fire in her eyes it held me captive. I moved to remove my own shorts and she swooped down and stopped me. Instead she pushed my hands away and removed them herself.

Her boldness, and dominance are a welcome change in her tonight. She skillfully arches above me like a cat in heat, pushing against me allowing me to feel how wet and ready she is already. Her demeanor has me captive. She carefully presses into me trailing kisses down my throat, along my collarbone. I can not stop myself from moaning as she continues lower down my chest. Pressing her soft lips into my heated flesh. She takes her time kissing her way down my chest, swirling her tongue in certain spots. Her hair brushes against my hips as she continues her onslaught downward.

She giggles a little because my hips involuntarily jerk upward. The sensations on her lips and hair tickle, but in a thrilling way. I groan, praying that she does not stop. To my pleasure she does not stop. Daphne continues kissing me on my lower abdomen, across my hips. I am tense with anticipation, my cock stands hard and throbbing begging for her lips to caress him too.

I am gasping for breath when she does not just kiss my begging member, instead she pulls me fully into her mouth. I instinctively wrap my hand in her hair. Feeling her soft lips, and tongue caressing me softly. I almost lose myself completely. I moan in appreciation of her efforts as she slowly strokes me with her warm wet mouth. The Moon Goddess has blessed my love with a very skillful mouth. I love feeling her swirl her tongue around the head of my cock before sucking me deeper into her throat.

“Baby that feels so damn good.” I want her to know how much I love feeling her mouth wrapped around me. She moans in response and the vibrations on my cock almost send me over the edge again. I try to pull her up, but she resists.

“Daphne, oh yes. Baby if you do not come up here soon, I am going to explode in your mouth love.” I had to warn her. I was getting too close to the edge too many times for me not to tell her. Still she continues sliding her head up and down my shaft. Just when I think I am going to cum down her throat, she stops sucking me and instead climbs up my body. I am ready and eager to slide deep inside of her.

“You are my mate, you may be my Alpha, but tonight you are simply mine.” Daphne is commanding in her tone. Truthfully in a way she almost frightens me with the primal rasp of her voice. I can tell that some of her wolf is empowering her tonight, and the combination is sexy as all get out. I do not protest or deny any of her claims. If she needs to be in control tonight, then I will gladly submit to whatever she needs.

My hands grip the sheets tightly as she finally rubs her warm wet folds over my bulging cock. She sits above me toying with me, rubbing her juices over me but not allowing me inside of her. She grabs my left hand and places it on her breast. I gladly comply with her request, teasing and kneading her taunt nipple. I love hearing her moan of pleasure as she continues to rub herself over me.

Finally, she lets the tip of my cock enter her. I moan at the intense pleasure of feeling her slick sheath slowly cover me. She teases me and only slides a little bit; I want to bury myself in her. I exercise every last strand of self-control that I have to not slam deep inside of her. It feels like a lifetime before she slides down a little farther, I moan loving every second of this sweet new torture that she has devised. With no warning she firmly slams down taking every inch of me deep inside of her. She then moves forward and backwards a little, grinding her clit into my pelvic bone. I am so deep that I can feel her ass cheeks on my balls. Daphne moans in pleasure at her movements.

Even though she is in control, seeing how much she is enjoying this I take my other hand and move it into position to help massage her clit. The sight of her taking control and finding her own pleasure using my body is a new form of pleasure for me. She moans out louder as my movements turn quicker. Too soon she arches her back, and I feel her grip around me as she finds herself in the throes of her orgasm. I love feeling the rush of her warm juices pulsate around my cock. Daphne slumps over me spent, and tired from the orgasm that had ripped through her body.

“Are you happy my love?” I cannot help but ask her as I move her hair and kiss her forehead. She moans in response. “You are so beautiful, and I loved watching you up there. Now I am going to make you cum again though.” Daphne raises her head and looks at me, I can see the doubt in her eyes. I take it as a personal challenge. I slide out from under her, my cock aches at leaving her wet folds.

I move Daphne so that she is laying on her stomach and push her knees up so that her perky ass is in the air. I now have the perfect view of her ass, and her dripping wet vagina. I catch a drop of her juices on my finger and bring it up to my lips savoring the sweet musky scent and taste of her. She groaned at the touch of my finger. I carefully slide a finger deep inside of her locating her g spot and move just enough to reignite her pleasure. It does not take long for her to start moaning into the bed, rocking her hips back taking more of my finger inside of her. I withdraw my finger and give her ass a small slap.

“Who is being impatient now?” I tease her, enjoying this cat and mouse game that she started. She whimpers in response, and I dutifully comply with her request. This time I skillfully grip her hips and slide her backwards, letting her slick folds slide along my throbbing cock. I desire to be deep inside of her, but I am intrigued with this new game of sorts. I continue with my teasing as I watch her gripping the sheets. I slide my hands backwards, massaging her tight ass, as I continue playfully thrusting slowly alongside the outside of her vagina. Seeing her turned on like this, losing herself in this primal dance of passion is a complete turn on.

She whimpers as I move back a little bit. My cock is gleaming, slick with precum and her juices. I slide it upwards, rubbing it skillfully just outside the opening of her ass. I love seeing my member in between the perfect cheeks of her gorgeous ass.

“Tell me what you want my love. I told you that tonight I am yours. Tell me where you want me, how you want me.” I love hearing her tell me how she wants me to love her body.

“Please, Caleb I need you deep inside me.” I grin at her answer.

“Where do you want me inside of you love?” I ask her as I take my penis and go back to teasing her vagina.” Do you want me here?” She moans in response but does not answer my question. I pull away again, switching my position slightly so that I can rub against her ass. “Or do you want me here?” Again, she moans but does not answer me. Using my finger, I flick her clit slightly, eliciting a loud moan from her as I continue to rub my cock on her ass. “I need your answer baby girl, then I can give you what you want.” I continue to coax her, ready for whatever answer she has for me.

“Caleb my pussy, I need you deep in my pussy.”

I slap her ass softly before positing myself again so that I can enter her fully. “Your wish is my command dear.” I love hearing her soft gasp as I slide my dick into her slowly. Gripping her hips and positioning her so that as I move, I know I am deep within her. I start thrusting slowly loving the way she tightens up around me. I watch her moan and grip the sheets. I know that she is going to cum soon. I speed up my movements, excited that she is now moving her hips in time with mine. Daphne cries out as another orgasm rips through her body. Her pussy clenches down on me and I am buried as

deep as I can be with in her. While she is orgasming, I find my own release, spilling every drop deep.

Finally, we collapse into each other's arms. I wrap her up close to me, loving the way her body fits so comfortably within mine. It does not take long before I feel her breathing evening out, and I know that she has found her way into a deep sleep. I am satisfied that for now her nightmares will stay at bay. Wrapping my arms around her tighter, I finally succumb to sleep myself.

The next time I awaken dawn is slowly breaking over the horizon. I look down at my beautiful mate still pressed tightly into me. She is truly beautiful. I watch the sun traces rays down her silky-smooth skin. Looking at her naked body pressed into me, I am rock hard. My fingers seem to have a mind of their own as they trace the planes of her thigh, before dipping into the crevice of her pussy. I slowly start circling her clitoris, loving that she responds to my touch. Moaning she slowly opens her eyes and looks at me questioning. I quickly slide a finger inside her and capture her lips with my own. I rock my hips slightly, making her aware that every part of me is awake.

I push her onto her back softly and find my way on top of her barely breaking the kiss as I do so. I slide my tongue along her lower lip before nipping it softly. She moans into my mouth and I take advantage and slip my tongue inside. This morning is different than last night. By mornings light neither of us has the energy to be as dominate. I waste no time in sliding slowly into her.

Daphne wraps her legs around me, pulling me deeper inside of her. I continue to kiss her as I thrust slowly, allowing her passion to fully wake up as I enjoy being inside of her wet folds. I move my hand to softly tease her nipples, making her whimper in pleasure at the feel of my hands. I thrust a little faster, already feeling the build up of an orgasm. Surprisingly, Daphne is right there with me, and I feel her body clench, as her juices flow against me. Suddenly I have an idea. I wait for her orgasm to subside before I wrap my arms around her and drag her to the side of the bed. I position us so that she is sitting in my lap, her legs sprawled behind us on the bed, and I am now sitting with my feet on the floor.

I do not give her much time before I lift her lithe body off of my cock. She whimpers at the loss of contact. Her eyes go wide as she feels me position her, the head of my hard cock pressed firmly against her ass. I quickly capture one her nipples in my mouth, using my tongue to massage her. It takes her a moment to relax, but soon she is arching into my mouth.

Once I know that she is enjoying this, I start to lower her gently onto my cock. I make sure that there is enough of her juices on me to provide enough lubricant. She stiffens as the head of my cock starts to enter her back side. I start massaging her other nipple, helping her relax. Once she has relaxed, I slide deeper inside of her. I lean backwards slightly and maneuver my hand between us seeking her clit. Soon my cock is in her ass. The tight hole makes me want to blow my load already. I suckle her breast without

mercy, as I flick her clit. Hearing her moan, I start rocking my hips sliding in and out of her slightly, I can not help myself from releasing inside of her.

Spent I lay back on the bed. I swear I have nothing else to give. This was the perfect way to start the day with my mate. Daphne carefully moves and slides off me. She lays next to me for a moment.

“We need to shower. There is a lot happening today.” Her voice is almost sad, and I look over at her wondering what has caused her to be upset.

“What is wrong my love?” Her eyes do not meet mine as she shakes her head. “No Daphne something is wrong, and I would like to know what has you upset.” I softly tilt her chin till she is looking me in the eyes.

“Fine, I am worried that Scarlet and Theo will not come back, or that they will get hurt.” She finally admits to me in a soft voice. It dawns on me again that Daphne has lost a large part of her family very quickly. Even though most of them did not treat her right, it still had to impact her greatly.

“That is a perfectly normal fear, thank you for sharing that with me. I want you to know that they are not going alone. I am sending some very special warriors with them, most of them are a part of my elite squad. I will also make sure that Scarlet has all of our cell phone numbers so that she can reach you anytime.” I reassure her softly. She nods in response, but I know that today is going to be a difficult day for her. I pull her closer to me and press a kiss to her forehead.

“Alright my love, we need to get moving. Let’s go hop in the shower and meet this day head on.” I encourage her as I hop off the bed. I reach down and grab her hand, earning a groan of protest from her. None the less I pull her up, swat her on the butt, and usher us both into the shower.