

THE ALPHA'S BRIDE

Chapter 810: The heat is over (2)

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Talia liked Amelia already. She was bubbly and loud, and somehow it made Talia miss Dawn.

Talia asked Cornelia about Dawn and George. Cornelia said that Dawn was doing well. George was busy most of the day, but Dawn had Estelle and a few other Omegas to keep her company. Dawn would spend a lot of time in the kitchen, cooking and baking, and Cornelia was sure that George had gained some weight.

"Do you think we can visit Dawn?" It was Zina who asked.

At first, Dawn would come to the Dark Howlers pack during the day with Cornelia, but as Dawn was getting more comfortable in her new home, Dawn's visits thinned.

THE ALPHA'S BRIDE

Chapter 811: The heat is over (3)

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BATCH UNLOCK CHAPTERS

Chapter 811: The heat is over (3)

Damon, Talia, Maya, and Caden were not sure what outcome regarding Stephanie they should hope for. If Stephanie was aware she was giving information to rogues, that would be treason. But if Stephanie didn't know that Lisa was mated to a rogue, she would be devastated that Lisa used her. Or maybe they were completely wrong, and the information leak didn't come from Stephanie at all, but from somewhere else. 0 However, everything pointed in that direction. Out of a few people who knew about Talia accompanying Damon to the Blue River pack, Zina didn't have contacts outside of the Dark Howlers pack, except for Dawn. There were Rose, Cornelia, Maya, Caden, and Travis, but none of them were close to Lisa, so it was normal to label Stephanie as a suspect.° In the Midnight Guardians pack, Axel, Yasmin, Meg, Kai, Tyler, and Sandy also knew, but the chances of them sharing that with rogues were close to nil. Not because they were more trustworthy, but because they were isolated in their realm, and only a few had the ability to communicate with the human realm.

"Does Zina feel bad?" Talia asked Maya. Maya confirmed. While Talia and Damon were enjoying their solitude, Maya asked Zina and Rose if Stephanie had stopped by, and the two said she did. Every few days, Stephanie would come with Richard, who loved spending time in the packhouse garden. Stephanie used that time to catch up with the girls. Of course, they talked

about anything and everything, Damon and Tana included. Zina didn't remember exactly saying that Talia went with Damon to Tatiana's Luna ceremony, but it wouldn't be unusual if she said it. Dawn and Zina worked under Stephanie for years, she was their superior, and they trusted her. How was Zina supposed to know that Lisa was mated to a rogue and that their friendly chatter would end up hurting others? "Zina feels horrible," Maya said. "I told her we are just investigating, and nothing is confirmed. However, Zina knows that if it's true, it means that Zina was indirectly responsible for the rogues' attack and Lulu's death." And it was not just Lulu. Many others perished, Marcy included. No one liked Marcy, but they didn't wish her to die. Talia's mood dropped. How can that be Zina's fault when it was obviously Talia's? Talia was the target, and Lulu died while protecting her. "I will talk to Zina," Talia said. Maybe they could have a joint crying session to relieve some grief. Damon sensed that Talia's emotions were fluctuating, and he wanted to change the topic "Do we have information from the Red Moon pack?" Caden responded. "James is keeping an eye on Alpha Edward and Cornelia is providing daily updates. James also suspects that his father was working with rogues, but he has no proof. And while we are on the topic of Camelia..." Caden got a folder he had prepared previously and put it on the desk for Damon and Talia to see. "Her tracking spell on the Guardian you found in the Midnight Guardians pack is steady." Damon quickly opened the folder and saw a printed map with an X on it, and there were coordinates. "How long is he there?" Talia asked. "Cornelia and Amelia are checking it at least twice a day. He didn't move from there for about eight days." "Do we know what's there?" Damon asked Caden. "Forest. There are no cities for miles." "How far is this from here?" Talia asked. She was unfamiliar with the maps and states. Caden was not sure, so he guessed. "About a thousand miles? Maybe more?"

"That's at least two thousand miles." Maya chimed in. "You can't look at it like a straight line unless you can fly there directly." Damon saw that Talia was confused, so he explained, "It would take days to get there if you are driving, but considering they are Guardians, we can assume they have some faster ways to cross that distance." Like teleportation, or maybe they could fly. "Do you want us to send scouts?" Talia didn't think that was a good idea. "If that's their base, we will be walking into a trap." The guardian moved through the territory of the Blue River pack like it was his backyard. Who knows what they have set up there? "Do we have someone who can hack into military satellites to see what's going on?" Damon asked.

Maya responded, "We can ask around." "I might know someone," Talia said mysteriously. She knew that Tyler was skilled with electronics. Since time passed differently in that realm, members of the Midnight Guardians pack had plenty of time to master various skills compared to those who stayed in the human realm. Many were unmated, so they spent time learning new things to keep busy.°

Grady and Varya didn't understand what's the hype about the Midnight Guardians pack Grady grew up among humans and Varya in Europe. The importance of the mysterious pack didn't seem like a big deal because they thought every pack was different and the whole community-style living was novel.

But they liked the news that their wait was over, and they were eager to do the formalities so they could indulge in mating. Grady and Varya didn't have many things to pack, so they met Talia and Damon in the living room for chatter while waiting for others to gather. Cornelia and Amelia were making sure that the teleportation diagram was big enough for everyone.

Other than them, also going were Liam, Keith, Caleb, Pierce, and Daria. Liam was Amelia's mate, and Talia's guard, while Keith, Caleb, and Pierce went as Talia's guards. Daria was curious about this mysterious pack that her sister

will join, and she wanted to ensure that Varya won't be mistreated. "Will you be alright leaving things in Europe?" Talia asked Varya. "This is not a vacation. It's forever." Varya looked at Grady and smiled. He was her forever. "I knew I won't have access to my assets for some time. I instructed Kalina and Tatiana to take care of important things." Money and assets were not much, but she had a few friends she wanted to notify that she fell in love and got married so that they don't worry and file a police report in search of her body. "Do the same conditions apply to joining your pack?" Varya asked Talia. "Conditions?" "Alpha Damon said that we need to stay in his pack for at most two years, and if we want to leave then, he will let us go."

Talia was unaware of such a condition, but she didn't think it would be a problem. "Sure. When two years pass in this realm, I will ask you." With every hour here being a full day there, Talia calculated that Varya and Grady will spend there about sixty years. That's a lot of time to change their minds. "What do you mean by, in this realm?" Varya noticed that strange condition. Talia's eyes lit up. "You are observant. With the right training, you could become a high-ranking member." Talia turned to Damon. "What do you think?"

"It's your pack, kitten. If you say she is worthy, then she is." Varya was not sure what Talia had on her mind, but being a high-ranking member sounded important. She liked that.

Chapter 812: Control vs loyalty

After hearing Talia so easily mention a high-ranking position to Varya, Damon had to say something.

'High-ranking people should be the ones you can trust,' Damon's voice sounded in Talia's head. 'No matter what their skills are, if you give them power, they could use it against you. The more skilled they are, the more dangerous they will become. It's a double-edged sword.'

Talia looked at Damon sadly. 'Is there anyone I can trust other than you?'

Damon pressed his lips into a line. How can he say that there are people she can trust when earlier that day, they discussed Stephanie as a potential traitor?

Damon was distressed at the possibility of Stephanie working against the pack. If it ended up being true, Damon would suffer a huge blow. Stephanie was always by his side, encouraging him to keep going and filling the gap his parents left behind. She was his emotional support.

If Stephanie was working with rogues, Damon wondered how far it went. Did she start because Lisa was mated to a rogue? Or did it start before? Did Stephanie have anything to do with his parent's death? Damon didn't want to think about it, but a small worm of doubt was already in his heart, and he was unsure if he would ever look at Stephanie as someone he could rely on.

Talia could sense Damon's mood dropping. 'Don't worry, Damon. We have each other.'

Damon wrapped his arms around Talia and hugged her tightly. 'I'm glad I have you, kitten.'

'And I am glad I have you.'

'Why are you talking like it's just the two of you? What about me!?' Liseli shouted in Talia's mind. 'You know I won't betray you because if you die, I'm a goner also. I just met Sapa, and I have no intention of parting from him.'

Talia smiled. 'OK. OK. I get it. I have you and Damon.'

'And Sapa. He won't betray you either because betraying you is betraying me. See? That's three people already. Don't be a sourpuss.'

Talia giggled, and she had to share with Damon, 'Liseli reprimanded me that we forgot about her and Sapa. And she called me a sourpuss.'

Damon looked at Talia. 'Sourpuss?'

His lips twitched, and then they both laughed.

Varya and Grady looked at Damon and Talia strangely. How Varya and Grady saw this, four of them were talking about the Midnight Guardians pack, and then Damon and Talia hugged, and now they were laughing. To call it strange would be an understatement.

~ the Midnight Guardians pack ~

Talia and Damon walked first into the living room, where they were greeted by Axel, Yasmin, Meg, Kai, Sandy, and Tyler.

Axel was ecstatic to see that Talia came, and this time they brought more company.

After new faces exchanged names and old acquaintances greeted each other, Yasmin moved to the sofa to chatter with Cornelia and Amelia.

When they decided to bring Grady and Varya to the Midnight Guardians pack, Talia called Axel, asking him to alert Cassandra that she would need to conduct ceremonies, and she also asked him to prepare living quarters to be arranged for one mated couple (aka Grady and Varya).

It was just over one hour heads-up for Talia, but that gave Axel a full day to prepare.

Axel was curious about Grady and Varya, and Talia explained their unique situation.

The more Axel heard, the more his brows came together. "A rogue?" Axel said while eyeing Grady.

"They are good people, Axel," Talia assured him and continued through their pack mind-link. 'I trust they won't do anything reckless, but just in case, we blindfolded them during the trip. They don't know how to get here or how to leave. Have a few people to keep an eye on them, with a pretense that they are helping newcomers.'

Axel agreed. 'It's always good to be cautious.' He continued with a normal voice, for everyone to hear, "I am not questioning your decision, Alpha. However," He turned to look at Grady and Varya. "You probably don't want to mention that you had any connections with rogues. Many of our people perished because of rogues, and there is a lot of bad blood. If anyone asks you from where you are, say that you are wanderers who ended up in the Dark Howlers pack, and that's where you met Alpha Talia."

Grady and Varya both nodded in agreement. They heard that already. No matter with whom they interacted, rogues were treated like something dirty that should be avoided at any cost.

"Alright," Talia said to break the tension. "Where is Cassandra? I'm sure that Grady and Varya are eager to go through with ceremonies and see their living quarters."

Axel cleared his throat. Talia told him they were mates and still waiting to engage in activities. He remembered his first time with Yasmin in the Silver Flame Coven. It was magical, and for more than just Yasmin being a witch.

"Of course. Just a moment..." Axel's eyes lost focus, and then he said, "The Oracle is ready in the garden. After the ceremonies, we prepared a small feast to celebrate."

Grady and Varya were already on their feet.

"I think they are not interested in food. Maybe we can have something delivered in front of their door." Talia said to Axel and then gestured toward the hallway that led to the garden. "That way."

They all gathered on the terrace in the garden. Cassandra was there with Calla, Remi, and several other healers.

Since Cassandra returned from the realm of witches, she didn't participate in ceremonies, leaving those tasks to Calla and Remi. Now that the Oracle herself was about to perform the ceremony, healers came to watch and learn.

They decided to go with the blood oath first, and Damon handed a paper to Cassandra. "Use these words exactly." He had this prepared in advance. No mishaps will happen this time. He turned to Talia and spoke through their mind link, 'Don't you dare make an oath in return.'

'I will just say thank you.' Talia responded.

'You don't need to say anything,' Damon snapped. 'Just nod in acknowledgment of their oath.'

'OK. I got it. It's starting...'

Cassandra was chanting, and Talia could feel the energies gathering.

'It's nostalgic,' Liseli spoke in Talia's mind, and Talia knew that Liseli was talking about the silvery threads that appeared all around Talia, shooting in different directions, connecting her with the members of the Midnight Guardians pack.

There was even one thread that connected Cassandra and Talia, and Talia wondered if that was a sign of Cassandra's loyalty.

'Maybe it's not about loyalty,' Liseli shared her thoughts.

'What could it be?'

'Control. Alphas have control over their pack members. You can feel their emotions and force mind-link. Your aura has a stronger effect on members of your pack.'

Talia thought that it made sense. Talia and Cassandra shared many moments together, but considering their rough start, Talia didn't think it was likely that Cassandra was loyal to her. The Oracle was probably clinging to the possibility of Talia returning her ability.

But if that's true, then... 'If these threads are about control, doesn't that mean that the Sphere of Power is measuring how many people I can control?'

Liseli sneered, 'Aren't Guardians about power and controlling others?'

Well, Talia had to agree with that one.
