

# The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 81

## The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 80

\*\*\*Trigger Warning: Child abuse and assault depicted\*\*\*

\*\*\*Christian\*\*\*

“You’re not my daddy!” Dakota shouts angrily, his little nose scrunched up in fury.

Jack’s heart rate rises, his fingers tightly gripping the steering wheel.

He’s just a kid. He doesn’t know any better, I explain. Natalia probably never told him about us

This is all your fault! Jack snarls in return. If I had only taken control earlier, our son would know who his father

“Dakota,” Jack says through a forced smile. “Dakota, I am your daddy. Your mommy and I got married-”

“No!” Dakota refuses, shaking his head with conviction. “No, Zane is my daddy. Only daddies kiss mommies and

Zane kisses mommy all the time and they play games like Horsey in the Desert and they sleep together even when mommy farts on the bed and makes it all stinky. And-and my daddy is a superhero fighting bad guys. I wanna be just like my daddy.

Who in the f\*\*k is Zane!?! I snarl, Jack straining to control his anger.

Jack looks back at Dakota, a very tight smile on his lips as he asks through gritted teeth, “Who is Zane?”

“My daddy,” Dakota snaps, tapping his thumb against his forehead.

“And who is your Daddy?” Jack asks, barely hanging on to his patience.

“Zane,” Dakota huffs Knowing Jack is about to explode, I remind him that our son is only four to calm him down. “Tell me more about Zane,” he says with forced enthusiasm.

SO

“No!” Kota snaps, pulling his hands towards himself and bending his fingers. He then taps on his thumb to his forehead. “I want my daddy! I want my daddy right now!”

“ZANE IS NOT YOUR DADDY! I AM!” Jack roars.

“NOOOOO!” Kota screams, kicking his legs and swinging his hands violently. “ZANE IS MY DADDY.”

“I’M YOUR DADDY!” Jack growls, his foot stepping on the gas pedal. “He’s not your daddy! I am! I am your only

daddy and you are going to stay with me forever! We are going to be the family we were meant to be and you are never going to see Zane again!”

“NO!” Dakota says before suddenly howling at the top of his lungs.

“SHUT UP!” Jack snarls but Dakota continues to howl with rage.

“My daddy is a wolf!,” he cries. “And he’s going to eat you!”

Having lost all of his patience, Jack pulls the car over down a secluded road, stepping out of the car and storming over to Kota’s side. He pulls at the car door but it appears Dakota has locked the door.

“Open the door!” Jack snarls, Dakota wiping his nose and shaking his head. “I’m going to count to three and you

better f\*\*\*\*\*g open this door!”

Dakota bursts into tears once more and screeches at the top of his lungs as Jack counts down.

“One....Two...”

Before Jack gets to three, he unlocks the door with the car fob and slams it open, Dakota attempting to crawl away. Enraged, Jack grabs him by the ankles and drags him back to the edge of the seat, flipping him over on his

back. Dakota thrashes violently as Jack lifts him up by the collar of his shirt.

“Listen to me, you little s\*\*t. Listen to me!” Jack snarls, giving Kota a good shake so that boy stares back at us in fright. “Lam going to kill that little Daddy of yours so you better get used to never seeing him again! You are my pup

and that’s .”

He stops dead in his tracks when Dakota’s shorts suddenly darken and a stream of warm urine trickles down his legs and onto my jeans and shoes. There is a defiant pout on Dakota’s face, angry tears rolling down his cheeks as he

growls back at us.

All Jack sees is red as he sets the kid down on the seat and he begins to frantically remove my belt, folding it in

half and gripping it tightly in one hand. Sensing danger, Dakota tries to scramble away but he is no match for Jack who grabs him by the wrists. The little boy tries to wriggle free but Jack only tightens his grips and begins to slap the back of Dakota's legs with the leather belt. Dakota yelps and writhes with every lick, crying for his daddy to come save

him.

"Mommy!" he screams, his cries growing desperate with the sting of the belt. "Daddy help me!"

"I'm your daddy! Do you hear me?!" Jack snarls, beating his legs until his hand begins to hurt. "I'm your daddy!"

Having taken out his frustration on the child after a few licks, Jack removes Dakota's wet shorts, revealing red welts around his butt cheeks and the back of his thighs. Leaving him only in his underwear, Jack forces Dakota into the seat and buckles him in.

By the time Jack is finished and he settles back behind the wheel, beads of sweat slither down the sides of my face and his angered breath is labored. In the back seat, Dakota continues to cry softly to himself, wiping his small tears with his shirt.

"Are you done?" Jack snarls, Dakota saying nothing and looking out the window as he hiccups.

Putting the car in drive, Jack races down the road. Kota whimpers the faster we travel but Jack ignores him, having had enough of the pup for the day.

Where are you going? I ask him when we drive past the pack territory entrance.

To the old cabin, Jack replies. Your father is still looking for your mother and the last thing I need right now is to

be questioned about the kid I just brought home.

So what is the plan? I ask, Jack pulling out my phone.

We ensure Natalia knows I have our pup, he replies, searching up Brody's number in his contacts. Brody's phone has been sending me its location since he left. The phone reads California and a satisfied smile curls on my lips. Brody is currently in California which can only mean Jordan is with Natalia and is hiding her from me.

He dials Jordan's number, his fingers impatiently tapping on the steering wheel as the phone rings on the other end. After a few moments, Jordan picks up.

"Bring me my Tiny," Jack snarls into the phone. "And don't you dare lie to me. I know you're with her," he growls, the sound of shuffling on the other side.

"If you hurt him," Natalia warns, the sound of her voice making my heart skip a beat. "If you hurt my baby, I'll ki

"I won't," Jack says, softening his voice. "Just come home. Please. I promise, we'll be a family again."

There is a long pause on the other side and I check my phone to make sure I still have service when Natalia's

voice comes through,

"I want to hear his voice," Natalia says, her voice stern and unyielding.

I look over my shoulder at the pup lulling himself to sleep.

"He's sleeping," I shake my head. "I don't care! Let me hear his voice!"

"Fine!" Jack snaps, the sound of his anger startling the pup. Jack puts the phone on speaker and holds the phone behind him while keeping his eyes on the road. "Dakota, your mom is on the phone."

"Kota?" Natalia cries. "Kota, baby, are you okay? Are you hurt?"

"Mommy!" Dakota shouts, bursting into tears. "Mommy I want to go home!"

"I know baby! I'm coming to get you! Just be a good boy. Be a strong boy for mommy," Natalia whimpers. "Kota, I love you! Mommy loves yo."

I take the phone away from the boy and he begins to cry

"Now, look what you've done!" Jack growls impatiently as the boy wails. "Please, don't hurt him! He's just a baby," Natalia pleads. "He-He's scared! He doesn't know any better-"

"I expect you home by morning, Natalia," Jack instructs. "The Pack house. Meet me at the Pack house. I'll have everything ready by then."

Jack doesn't give her a chance to argue, ending the call before she can say another word. Glaring at Dakota through the rearview mirror, Jack snarls a warning.

“You better stop that crying before I come back there and shut you up myself,” he snarls, the little boy wiping his tears and trembling in fear.

He’s had enough, I snap, Jack laughing coldly in response.

He’s an Alpha, Jack mutters. He should start acting like one.

We arrive at the cabin and Jack warns the kid to behave as he opens the car. Dakota says nothing, too tired and

afraid to throw another tantrum. The little boy trembles when Jack goes to unbuckle him, holding his breath until

Jack tells him to get out of the car.

He climbs down by himself, staring up at our towering figure with large tear-filled eyes.

“Your mommy comes home tomorrow,” Jack explains, dragging the little boy towards the cabin. “And you will behave until she gets home, do you understand?”

The little boy says nothing, enraging Jack as he pushes the door open, but not as much as the familiar scent he smells as we enter the cabin.

“Hey, did you forget something?” Vanessa calls out from the kitchen with a giggle. She steps out into the living area with a wooden spoon in her hand, her face paling when she sees me with the kid.

“Christian!” She gasps, immediately hiding the spoon behind her back.

“What are you doing here?” Jack snarls, Vanessa stammering an explanation neither Jack or I can decipher.

She gets down on her knees and begs for forgiveness.

“Please don’t hurt me,” she cries, hanging her head in shame, “I promise, I’ll leave you alone. I’ll give you a divorce and-and you don’t – you don’t even have to pay me for anything. You can keep all your money and I’ll disappear for good. I won’t stand in the way of you or Natalia’s life. Please just let me go,” she weeps, almost

incoherently. “Please, please, let me go. I just want to go.”

Jack and I stare at the crying woman and then glance at the weeping child in my hand, our annoyance growing by the second. Taking the kid, Jack storms up to Vanessa and hands the kid over to her, Vanessa staring up at us in confusion.

“Wash and feed the kid,” Jack snaps, turning on my heel to leave when Vanessa calls out.

“Wait, Christian, who is he?” Vanessa asks, shrinking back when Jack gives her a warning glare.

\*You don’t get to ask questions,” he snarls, Vanessa flinching at the harshness of my voice and placing a protective hand over her belly. My eyes narrow to slits when I realize Derek didn’t take care of the problem like I told him too.

“You haven’t gotten rid of it?” Jack snaps, the color draining from Vanessa’s face.

“I-I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

My fist meets her jaw, Vanessa collapsing on the ground from the force of the punch. Dakota screams in fear, his eyes wide as he looks at his aunt groaning in pain on the floor.

“You were supposed to get rid of it!” Jack mutters under his breath, swinging his leg back. “I thought I made myself clear to Derek! The last thing I need is a baby interfering with my marriage with my mate!”

Jack swings his leg forward, kicking Vanessa’s still flat belly, her breath hitching from the blow. She coughs and gasps for air, attempting to string together an explanation but Jack only kicks her again for speaking out of turn. Vanessa curls into herself, sobbing profusely and begging for her baby’s life.

“I-I swear... I-It’s not yours,” she pleads, “It’s not yours!”

Jack and I only become enraged by her confession, kicking yet again for her infidelity.

“You think that’s going to save you?” Jack snarls, crouching down on his knees and yanking Vanessa up by her hair. “You are my wife!” he snaps, shaking her harshly in his hand. “You’ve made a fool out of me by being impregnated by another man and for that you will pay dearly.”

“Please!” Vanessa cries. “Please, don’t hurt my baby!”

“You should have thought of that before whoring around, you insignificant, little b\*\*\*h!”

“That’s a bad word!” Dakota growls, charging at me and slapping the side of my head. “Daddy says that’s a bad word, you bully!” He cries.

Jack shoves him away, the little boy crashing on the floor with a groan as Jack drags Vanessa by the hair towards the bathroom.

She screams and writhes in my hand when suddenly the door to the cabin bursts open, Derek's wolf

storming in.

Let her go, Jack. It's not your kid, Derek mindlinks me, his wolf snarling at me.

You're going to tell me what to do with my wife? Jack scoffs, an amused grin on his face.

No, Derek replies with a menacing growl. But you will leave my mate alone!

Mate? Jack and I reply in unison, looking between my beta and my wife. You two are mates?

Put her down, Jack, Derek snaps, ignoring Jack's question. His ears go low to his head and he bares his teeth at me. I won't ask again.

Jack raises his brows in amusement and laughs as he drops Vanessa onto the floor and kicks her out of his way without a second thought. Derek once again snarls but Jack only laughs as he circles around our beta, his eyes scanning Derek for a weakness in his stance.

Are you really challenging me right now over that slut? Come on Derek, Jack laughs. She's not worth losing your life.

His eyes flicker to Vanessa who sobs quietly to herself, crawling towards my son and helping him up on his feet.

Derek's determination does not waver, however, his wolf standing tall to defend his whore.

As you wish, Jack sighs in annoyance to himself before activating his Alpha voice, a sinister smirk curling on his lips as he crouches down on all fours to shift. My bones crack and rearrange until my wolf comes face to face with Derek's.

I see the fear flicker in his eyes as Jack towers over him and he lowers his head in respect to his Alpha

Yield, Jack demands, Derek fighting the urge to give in to Jack's Alpha voice.

Derek whines and whimpers when Jack bares his teeth threateningly at him, instinctively crouching low and sticking his neck out for his Alpha.

Come on, Derek. Just yield and I'll pretend nothing happened, Jack coerces, but Derek only shakes his head, desperately trying to fight off the command.

I'm sorry Alpha, Derek replies through gritted teeth. But you would do anything for your mate. As would I.

Yes... you're right... Jack replies with a content smile on his face, circling the Beta like prey. After making a full revolution, Jack gets close to his face and snarls in his ear. But I am an Alpha.

Jack pounces on Derek before he can flinch, clamping his jaws on Derek's throat and holding him down with his paws. Derek kicks and tries to free himself but all it takes is a twist of Jack's head before a loud crack silences Derek's

wolf forever.

"Derek!!!!!" Vanessa shrieks, Jack shaking his fur and turning back to face the screaming woman and our crying pup without an ounce of regret.

And Alphas always win.

A/N: I have safely arrived in Liverpool!

## The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 82

### Chapter 82

Read The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 82 – Pups

\*\*\*Trigger Warning: this chapter depicts a miscarriage\*\*\*

\*\*\*Vanessa\*\*\*

It feels as though my soul has shattered into small insignificant little pieces scattered across the cabin floor. Blood trickles from my bruised nose and lips and my stomach feels as though it is being torn apart, but the numbness in my heart drowns out the pain. Jack does not allow me to say goodbye to my mate, dragging his body away to dispose of it despite my pleas.

"Stay here and watch the kid," Jack snarls as he moves to close the door. "And don't even think about leaving. A beating is nothing compared to what I'll do to you if you disobey me."

I blink at him, time slowing down as I struggle to register what he says. Jack slams the door shut, a silent sob escaping my throat when I feel pain rip through my belly. Beside me, the mysterious little boy Jack brought seems distraught but upon seeing the tears rolling down my cheeks, he stops his crying to soothe me.

"Don't cry, lady," the little boy says as he wipes my tears with his small hands. "It's gonna be okay, okay? My mommy is coming. She promised!"

My wolf whines and whimpers at the loss of her mate but the little boy's soft voice helps her calm down.

He points to the blood on my chin "Uh-oh! You have red water on your chin!" He cries, lifting his shirt over his head and wiping it away for me. "Does it hurt, lady?"

I fight the urge to burst into tears at his kindness and shake my head at him.

"Thank you," I say with a sheepish smile and kiss his hand. "I-I'm Vanessa. What is... what is your name?" I ask with a forced smile, resting my hand on my belly when I feel a severe cramp ripple down my abdomen.

The little boy seems hesitant to reply but he reluctantly answers, "Kota," with his thumb in his mouth.

"That's a lovely name," I murmur, the little boy grinning from ear to ear. "Are you hungry, Kota?" I ask, Kota nodding his head.

He helps me to my feet, pulling me with all his little might and I take him into the kitchen where I was preparing pupusas (Salvadoran dish) before Christian showed up.

Kota stands on a stool to watch me roll a ball of masa (dough) in my hands and then stuff it with a meat and cheese paste I had already prepared. I then dip my fingers in olive oil and press the dough and paste into a flat tortilla shape and begin to cook it on a pan.

"Do you know what pupusas are?" I ask the little boy and he nods gingerly at me. "Mmmhmm," he says. "My mommy makes them all the time."

"What's your mommy's name?" I ask and he shrugs innocently at me.

"Her name is mommy," he replies. "But sometimes, daddy calls her Ta-Talia."

My smile widens as I realize I'm speaking to my own nephew and I study his features to memorize them.

His nose is just like Talia's and mine, narrow and a little lifted towards the tip. He has thick lashes shading blue and brown eyes and his toothy grin reminds me a lot of my little sister.

"You have your mommy's nose," I tell him, and he smiles happily.

Tignore the pain in my abdomen, slowly coming to terms with what is happening to my body and focusing on saving Natalia's pup from Jack.

Flipping Kota's pupusa, I serve it to him on a plate when it's ready. I notice the welts on the backs of his bare thighs and he winces with every step as he walks to the table. Tears spring to his eyes when he tries to sit down.

"It hurts," he hiccups as he gently taps his butt.

"Come on," I say, leading him to the bathroom so I can inspect his wounds more carefully.

I instruct him to turn around and slowly pull down his underwear and gasp when I see that his cheeks are bruised and swollen in belt-shaped welts. To my relief, there is no broken skin or blood but it seems his underwear is soiled.

Christian didn't bring any clothes for the little boy so I quickly handwash his underwear and wring it out as best I can before blow drying it with a hair dryer.

Searching the cabinets for any medicine and grabbing some ice and paper towels from the kitchen, lay Kota on my lap and gently rub the ice wrapped in a towel on his welts.

He begins to cry in pain but I squeeze his little hand to let him know he's not alone and he calms down enough for me to work. I find some ointment and rub it on his wounds before carefully wrapping his legs with some gauze and bandages and putting on his now clean underwear.

"You're going to be okay," I murmur as I finish up, my wolf howling in pain when I feel something trickle down my inner thigh. "I have to pee. Do you mind waiting in the kitchen for me?" I ask the little boy.

He walks away and I hover over the toilet for a moment, refusing to shed any tears as I feel the life inside me slip away. I can't bring myself to look into the toilet bowl, unwilling to see the damage that monster did to me, but I stay there for a few moments to grieve in silence.

My little wolf sobs to herself and it brings me comfort to know I am not alone in my pain. When I finally find the courage to look into the bowl, all I see is a pool of blood, a bitter rage filling my heart that my one shot at happiness is now quite literally down the toilet.

Changing my clothes and throwing out my soiled panties, I head back into the kitchen to find Kota standing by the table, too afraid to sit down.

I find a cushion and help Kota into his seat so that his legs don't hurt as much while he eats. He takes big mouthfuls, chewing happily and nodding in approval of my cooking. I haven't made pupusas in so long, so it's nice to share them with a little friend.

Despite his wounds, Kota is quite chatty, willing to talk about almost anything if I asked.

“What’s your mommy like? Is she happy?” I ask, Kota nodding between mouthfuls. “My mommy is a princess. She is the most beautiful princess in the whole wide world. And Daddy is her prince like Aladdin! Do you like Aladdin?” He asks.

I smile at the little boy, grateful to know that despite everything I did, Natalia is happy and loved. “It’s my favorite,” I reply. “So who is your daddy?” Kota’s eyes light up with admiration. “He’s a superhero!”

“Oh,” I laugh. “And what does he do that makes him a superhero?”

“My daddy is a wolf and he fights bad guys and he loves my mommy and Eggness and Nonna and me!” He cries excitedly.

“Are they all your family?” I ask, Kota nodding proudly.

“Zane is my daddy,” he says, tapping his thumb to his forehead. “And then there’s my mommy,” he adds, tapping his thumb to his chin.

“What is that?” I ask, mimicking his tapping.

“Oh, it’s called A–L–meno–S. Eggness is dead,” he shrugs, my eyes widening in shock before he continues. “She talks with her hands.

Daddy taught me,” he replies, tapping his thumb again on his forehead. He suddenly begins to pout with sadness and his large eyes fill with tears. “I miss Eggness, and Nonna and Mommy and Daddy. Can I go home now?”

My heart breaks with his distress and I pull him into my lap, wrapping my arms around his back to hold him tightly.

“I’m gonna get you home to your mommy,” I whisper, “I promise.”

Still holding him, I get up and carry Kota to the living room, curling up on the couch with him. In his exhausted state, Kota immediately falls asleep on my lap as I comb his hair with my fingers.

A bitter hatred fills my heart as the cramps in my belly continue, the potential to have my own little Kota in my arms now gone.

Angry tears spill onto my cheeks as I realize I’ve been robbed of my happiness by my own actions. Had I never taken Christian from Natalia, perhaps Moon Goddess would have spared my mate and my pup.

The thought of Derek fills me with numbness, and my wolf begins to howl a song of loneliness and misery. We hadn't been mates very long but I know he would have been gentle. He refused to mate with me, wanting to do things differently, slowly, and when we were both free to love each other.

I'll never know now what it feels like to have his skin pressed against mine, to have his lips worship my body, to have my soul tied to his. I'll never know... and that angers me.

Tam going to make Christian pay for what he did to me and Natalia, snarl, my wolf's cries turning to violent growls of agreement. Even if it kills me.

As I plot my revenge, Kota begins to stir and he suddenly sits up and stares at me for a moment. I remain still, unsure what to make of his silent gaze. His lips suddenly turn up into a smile and he points at my head.

"Where is your crown, Nanessa?" He asks, pointing to the top of my head. I don't know how to respond but he doesn't seem to mind, placing his little hand on my belly. "Don't be sad. The pretty lady says there's a dragon who needs you."

I raise an eyebrow at the little boy. "What pretty lady?"

"I'm tired," the little boy yawns, curling up into a ball on my lap again. "Bye bye."

He's lightly snoring before I even have time to process what he said to me but I don't dwell on it too long, chalking up his words to his sleepiness. Instead, I pull out my phone and call the only person I know who might be willing to help Natalia get her pup back.

\*\*\*Natalia\*\*\*

Come on, Zane, pick up the phone! I snap anxiously as I call my mate for the 20th time with no luck, his voicemail box quickly filling up with my messages of desperation.

"Zane, it's me again. Please! Answer the f\*\*\*\*\*g phone! Christian took Kota! He took our baby! For f\*\*\*'s sake, answer the phone!" I cry into the phone, Rionna tapping on my shoulder to calm me down as we enter the airport.

"He's likely in the field, sweetie. Soldiers don't take their phones into the battlefield. They are a distraction or could get them caught if they're on a mission," she explains. "Just relax. He'll call as soon as he can. Let's just get to Silver Crest and bring back our little boy."

Inod, forcing back my tears and making sure I have everything I need to travel. Celina was kind enough to teleport us to Maine but she could only take us to a place she has traveled to herself. As a kid, she had gone to the tip of the state for her first shift. Unfortunately, Silver Crest is located in the South near the shoreline.

Christian did not expect us until morning, so we would have the element of surprise to give us the advantage.

As we walk toward the TSA agents, Jordan's phone begins to ring.

"Hello?" He asks, his eyebrows raising when a familiar voice answers on the other side. "Vanessa?" He puts the phone on speaker for all of us to hear.

"Jordan, h—have you found Natalia?" She whispers into the phone. I haven't heard my sister's voice in over four years and just the sound of it makes my blood boil with anger.

I snatch the phone from Jordan and snarl into the phone. "Do you have my baby?" I growl, Vanessa replying with a small yes. "If you hurt him, I will hunt you down and"

"Just shut up and listen for a minute, please!" she warns in a hushed tone. "I don't have time for your mental breakdown right now!" Vanessa mutters, my lips pursing with disgust. "Kota is for the most part, fine. I fed him and changed him as best I could. He's sleeping on my lap now and I've done everything I can on his legs—"

"His legs?" I ask, my heart sinking to the pit of my stomach. "What's wrong with his legs?"

"I don't know. Christian brought him in like this but I assume he hit him with a belt," Vanessa explains.

"His butt and legs are bruised and covered in welts. He can't even sit properly without crying. I've put ice on them to bring down the swelling and wrapped his legs in some ointments I found in the bathroom." : "Can I see?" I plead, pulling the phone away from my ear to look at the screen.

Vanessa switches to facetime and pans the camera to her lap where I see Kota curled up beside her, his body naked except for a pair of underwear and the gauze wrapped around his legs. My eyes fill with tears at the horrible sight. I have never spanked Kota in his life, much less used a belt for discipline.

"He's going to be okay. With any luck, he won't remember," Vanessa says with an awkward laugh.

She flips the camera to herself and I audibly gasp as I look at my sister for the first time in years.

Vanessa is much thinner than I remember, her cheeks hollow with bags clinging to her under her eyes. There is dried blood on her nose and lips and there are a number of bruises still healing all over her face.

She grows self-conscious about my silence and quickly wipes the blood on her lips and lets her hair fall over her face to hide the bruises.

“C-Christian is out at the moment, but he’ll be back any minute,” she says after clearing her throat.

We don’t have a lot of time to figure things out.”

“Wait... You’re going to help me?” I ask, growing suspicious that this may all be a trap set up by Christian. “How do I even know I can trust you?”

“Because right now I’m your only hope!” Vanessa snaps, tears spilling onto her cheeks. “Christian wants you and Kota to be his family again. He always has.” Her voice suddenly grows small and there’s a tremor in her lip as she talks.

“I never meant anything to him,” she says quietly. “And I never will. I know it doesn’t matter to you much now, but I am sorry.” she whispers. “I am very sorry. I—”

She suddenly gasps and shoves the phone between the sofa cushions, the screen turning black but the sound barely audible.

“Y—you’re back,” Vanessa stutters, fear hanging in every word.

I hold my breath as I strain to hear the heavy footsteps stomping towards Vanessa, silently counting each one as they approach.

“I fed him and put him to bed like you told me to,” Vanessa whimpers. “Just let him sleep. He’s scared.

“And the baby?” Christian asks. All I hear is a whimper and a laugh of satisfaction.

“Good, Christian replies. “I have the divorce papers for you to sign. I want them signed and I want you gone by morning,”

“But what about Kota?” Vanessa asks. “He’s alone and scared. You can’t leave him here.” “I’m not,” Christian replies. “My mate comes home in the morning. She’ll take care of him from now on,”

“I-1 see,” Vanessa says quietly. “Well, just give me the papers now. I can sign them.” “You’re not going to beg for me to give you a second chance?” he asks cynically. “Why beg?” Vanessa laughs dryly. “You already took everything from me.”

“Aww, poor little Nessa,” Christian laughs. “All alone in the world. No sister, No mate. No baby. How tragic. Perhaps now you know what I felt when you took Natalia from me,” he sneers. “Sign those papers and give me the kid.”

“No Jack, he’s sleeping.” Vanessa refuses, the panic obvious in her voice.

“Did I ask?” Jack snarls.

There’s a long pause and for a moment, I fear the call may have cut off.

“I just thought you might prefer someone else take care of him until his mother gets here. That way he won’t bother you and he can just rest until his legs heal,” Vanessa suggests. “He’ll be cranky when he wakes up. Kids are always cranky when you wake them from a nap. I can watch him and leave at daybreak.

Jack mutters inaudibly and grunts his approval. “Can you bring him some clothes?” Vanessa asks. “He only has his underwear.” “Anything else?” Jack grunts in annoyance. “Some blankets for him to sleep more comfortably. It gets cold here at night,” Vanessa adds.

The sound of footsteps echo in the background of the phone call and I hear Vanessa count to herself quietly before finally letting out a big breath. There is more shuffling before Vanessa’s face comes into view.

“Kota and I will be at the old cabin,” Vanessa explains in hushed tones. “Please hurry. Jack’s in control

and I don’t think I’ll be able to hold him off for long.”

“Nessa, what did he mean about a baby?” I ask, a look of sorrow washing over Vanessa’s eyes. “Please hurry,” she whispers before hanging up the phone.

A/N: Thank you everyone for your patience. I have finally returned home from my trip and you can expect updates to resume as normal. I estimate we have less than 10 chapters left in the story.

## **The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 83**

### **Chapter 83**

Read The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 83 – Plans in Motion

\*\*\*Zane\*\*\*

“S–Scarlett Haven dies with S–Sebastian White,” I murmur, turning to look at my father’s corpse. “My f–father never thought I–I could be y–your Alpha and none of y–you bestowed upon me an ounce of ki–kindness despite my i–innocence. As such, 1–I cannot trust y–you all will follow or re–respect me as y–your Alpha and I–I refuse to lead y–you,” I say, shaking my head at the Scarlett wolves. “I–I will renounce the alliance

with Crescent Mane and will f—formally hand y—you over to Onyx Stone. They will decide y—your fate.”

There are murmurs amongst the crowd of Scarlett wolves but they all seem to fade away when I again feel a pain in my chest. Talia... Grayson whines. She needs us. As I turn to leave, however, the Ravenstone wolves begin to ask their own questions.

“Alpha, what would you like us to do now ?” Tylene asks, his eyes glaring at the Scarlett Wolves. “Do we take them as prisoners? Do we take their weapons and detain them? ”

I look around at all the faces now turning to me for guidance and I desperately try to sort out my thoughts and my worry for Talia.

“I know it’s overwhelming, but just take it one step at a time,”

“Toran mind—links me. “Look around you. What is the most pressing matter at the moment? What needs to be done first?”

Taking his advice, I scan the area and find the first few issues.

“I need volunteers to collect the bodies of our fallen soldiers. They deserve to be put to rest with the utmost respect for their sacrifice. Someone should also search for General Taryn’s body in the water.

I’d like to give her a proper burial,” I add quietly, noticing Toran shield his face from the prying eyes of his pack for a moment. “We will hold a Moon Ceremony sometime this week for everyone.”

Three young men immediately step forward.

“We volunteer to find the general ,” one of them says, the young wolf bowing his head in respect to Toran.

“Thank you,” I reply.“ Someone, please check on the bunkers and make sure everyone is accounted for.

I’ll also need a few of you to survey the islands and create a full report on the damages we endured and what repairs need to take place immediately.

As for the Scarlett wolves, take their weapons, gather them all together and take them to receive medical treatment.”

There are a number of disgruntled growls in the crowd but Grayson puts his foot down and glares at

them for their disobedience until the wolves fall silent.

“The war is over and we are not Scarlett Haven,” I snap, the wolves lowering their gaze in shame.” We will treat these wolves with respect because we are Ravenstone and we are not cowards who harm those who are already down.

They are to receive medical treatment, food, and will be left unbothered while arrange a meeting with their King. Whatever grudges you hold against them, bury them now. Am/ clear?”

“Yes. Alpha.” they reply in unison, though I can tell not all are not pleased with my decision.

“Good, let’s get to work then,” I reply, the wolves dispersing to complete their tasks.

I stay a while to oversee their work and give orders whenever necessary. At first, it’s awkward, but I quickly find a rhythm as a leader and grow comfortable handing out tasks.

“I have a few contacts with neutral packs that can arrange a meeting with King Arthur and Alpha Richard for the transfer of power,” Toran offers. “We can have this settled as early as tomorrow morning and get you home to your mate in time for her first shift.”

“Thank you,” I sign, Toran puffing out his chest with pride.

“My pleasure,” he says via mind-link. “You’re doing well, by the way. Keep it up and you might just build your own mother pack in no time.”

I shake my head at him, the fear of Talia’s reaction to my new title filling my thoughts.

“You fear your mate may be angry with you for accepting my title,” Toran observes, leading me towards the pack house.

“T—Talia has already been Luna and she w—was unhappy in h—her role,” I say quietly.

“And you believe she will be unhappy by your side?” Toran asks and I nod silently. He takes a deep breath and we walk in silence for a moment.

“Being a female leader in a male-dominated society is a challenge many fail to see,” he finally says. “Their voices are often drowned out by Alphas who talk over each other to see who is loudest.

They are easily overlooked and often degraded simply because they are women and men know what's best for their pack," he sighs. "But failing to acknowledge a Luna's power and importance more often than not leads to the downfall of a pack.

I assume Talia's experience as a Luna was soured by the lack of respect her Alpha had for her?" He asks and I nod. "Then never forget to respect her.

Listen to her opinions, take her advice when needed, give her a voice because the world will be hell bent on silencing hers. Make her your equal and you will always have a Luna willing to stand by your side.

"Rionna and I were a partnership. I never moved a finger without first consulting her and she reciprocated that trust. When there is mutual respect and shared responsibility, your pack grows stronger.

Respect Talia and she will be proud to be your Luna."

"Perhaps you should take your own advice," Grayson says, taking over momentarily. Toran raises an eyebrow in confusion at me. "Aren't you the man who handed his wife divorce papers based on an assumption?"

A sheepish smile spreads across Toran's face and he looks ahead as we approach the pack house.

"I guess I am," Toran chuckles.

"So perhaps you should listen to your wife before you make decisions for her," Grayson says smugly. "Maybe then you'd realize she's more willing to forgive than you think."

Toran doesn't reply but I can see the cogs turning in his head as he rethinks his divorce. As we arrive at the meeting room, a soldier runs in with our clothes and hands me my phone.

"Your phone has been ringing nonstop, sir," he says before running off to finish his other duties.

There are over twenty missed calls and at least thirty text messages from Talia. I hurriedly call her back and at the first ring, she picks up, a sob immediately escaping her throat.

"Zane?" She whimpers. "Zane, are you alright? Are you hurt?"

"I-It's okay, I-I'm fine," I reply, hearing a small sigh of relief from her. "Wh-what's wrong? Are y-you and K-Kota okay?"

"No, I'm not! Christian took Kota!" Talia cries, my breath hitching as my world suddenly goes very still.

"Wh-what?" I stammer, unsure if I heard her correctly. Hearing the concern in my voice, Toran stops changing to listen.

"We were at the mall and he was playing at the play center. It was only a second and he took him!" Talia sobs. "He took our baby!" she cries angrily. "I can't breathe, Zane, he took my baby! He took my baby and he hurt him!"

A terrifying snarl ripples through my chest when her last words register in my ears. He dared touch my son? Grayson roars, his fur bristling as he trembles with rage.

"W-what did he do?" I ask through gritted teeth, desperately fighting to contain the hatred coursing through my veins while combating the urge to strangle someone.

"There's no time for that," Talia says. "I'm on my way now—"

"Y-you're what?"

"I'm in Maine already," she explains. "Celina teleported me here and I am on my way to Silver Crest now to get our son back."

"Ta-talia, no," I say, shaking my head despite her being unable to see me. "I-it's too dangerous to go there on y-your own. Wh-what if it's a trap and he h-hurts y-you."

"I'm not alone," Talia retorts. "Rionna and Jordan are with me."

"Y-you took my mother with y-you?" I snap, Toran equally upset that his wife has been put in danger.

"You went to war." Talia snaps, a bit of resentment in her voice. "You don't get to pull the danger card on me. I didn't know what else to do and I couldn't sit around waiting for you to answer your phone! Kota is scared and alone with a man who's completely lost his mind. I'm not going to sit here and wait for Christian to hurt him again."

"Ta-Talia, p-please just wait a few hours," I say back, hoping there's a chance she may rethink this. "I'll be on the first plane to Maine and go with y-you. P-please, just stay put." —

"I promise I'll be careful," Talia replies. "But Kota needs me now. I'm not waiting for you. Please understand."

"Ta-Talia—"

"I love you, Zane," she murmurs, hanging up the phone.

I ring her back, but Talia doesn't answer, my distress soaring as I think of what that man will do to her when she inevitably breaks his delusion and he sees that she now belongs to me.

"I—I need to get on the f—first f—flight to Maine," I say, Toran sensing the urgency. "I'll get the jet ready for us."

\*\*\*Vanessa\*\*\*

Kota wakes up by the time I finish signing the paperwork and he helps me clean up the mess in the kitchen. We make bubbles in the sink and have a dance party after finishing each chore to keep the cleaning fun. In the bedroom, we play Simon Says and have a pillow fight where I let Kota defeat me in battle. The little boy asks to build a fort and we gather our supplies from the bedroom to construct it in the living room.

As we drape the blankets over our framework, the door knob jingles. My heart rate soars as Jack steps into the house, a scowl on his face when he sees our mess. Sensing my fear, little Kota stands in front of me, puffing out his chest and spreading out his little arms to shield me from Jack's wrath.

"No! Go away, you bully!" Kota growls. "I don't like you!"

Jack smiles with amusement. "You know you are really starting to get on my nerves, little man. I blame your mother for spoiling you."

Kota huffs angrily, flaring his little nostrils at Jack. Jack pulls out a picture from his wallet of his

wedding with Talia and holds it out to the little boy.

"You still think I'm not your daddy?" He asks.

"Jack, please," I beg him, pulling Kota behind me to shield him from his father. "He's just a little boy. He won't understand your relationship with Natalia. He grew up without you. You can't expect him to love you right away when there's another father figure in his life."

"Natalia should have told him about me!" Jack snarls.

"But she didn't," I retort. "In Kota's mind, you're just a stranger with a picture. Try to understand that he already has someone he calls daddy."

Anger burns through Jack's green eyes as he glares at the little boy, but a sinister smile curls on his

lips that sends shivers down my spine.

“He’ll call me daddy soon enough,” he smirks. “Once I marry Natalia, everything will sort itself out.”

I don’t respond for fear of what he might do to that pup, but the extent of his delusion worries me. I just hope Talia is prepared for what’s to come.

“Are the papers signed?” Jack asks as he turns to search for them. “On the kitchen table,” I nod, Jack laughing with satisfaction as he snatches them from the table.

“Good,” he snickers, flicking through the pages to make sure they are all signed. “If it’s any solace,” he says as he looks up at me. “You were a good f\*\*k,” he adds with a smirk. “But nothing compared to Natalia.”

I cannot help the tears that spring to my eyes, and I am ashamed that his stupid comment hurts me so much.

“You can wipe those crocodile tears, I’m not falling for your s\*\*t,” he snaps and I quickly wipe them away. “You can’t honestly tell me you didn’t know you were nothing compared to her.”

You are an utter failure, Nessa. As my Luna, as my wife, as a daughter, as a sister, as a f\*\*\*\*\*g woman, you were a disappointment and no matter how hard you try, you will always be a disappointment. Just look at you.

You turned, got pregnant, and were still too weak to protect your own pup, meanwhile your sister was rejected, demoted, and still managed to give me an heir.”

“Stop,” I whimper, unable to bear his assault any longer.

“Why?” he asks. “Why hide from the truth? Why not face the fact that you are a waste of space?”

“Okay, I get it,” I murmur. “I’m nothing.”

“And you should never forget your place in this world, Nessa,” Jack sneers. “This way, you’ll never ruin someone else’s life.” He tosses a bag of clothes at my feet and the blanket I requested. “Here’s the s\*\*t you wanted. Get him dressed and put him to bed.”

I hold back my tears as he storms away, finally collapsing on my knees when he slams the door shut behind him and leaves. Kota runs up behind me and hugs my head to comfort me.

“Don’t cry, Nanessa,” he whispers, patting my hair with his small hands. “He’s just a meanie. I like you,” he says with a smile.

“I like you too,” I murmur.

\*\*\*Natalia\*\*\*

The plane ride to the south goes off without a hitch, though my guilt eats at me as I ignore Zane's calls.

"So what's the plan?" I ask, hoping to take my mind off Zane.

"Well," Jordan sighs. "Vanessa has Kota at the cabin. Christian doesn't expect you until morning, so say we head to the cabin now and you and Rionna take Kota home. I'll deal with Christian."

There's no way we're letting the Gamma handle this, Devina snaps. I want to bathe in Christian's blood for what he's done to our pup.

"No." I shake my head. "No, I'm finishing this once and for all. I want to look Christian in the eye and make him pay for everything he's done to me and Kota. I'm coming with you to face Christian."

"Nat, I don't think that's a good idea."

"He'll never leave me alone unless he sees me," I retort. "I need him to see that despite everything he put me through, I'm better off without him. That I'm finally happy in a way I never was with him and that he will never live another day to touch my son again."

I turn to the back seat. "Rionna will go to the cabin to retrieve Kota. Micah and Nikki will keep an eye on Brody here and make sure the path is clear for Rionna to get Kota safely out of this miserable place," I instruct and point to Jordan. "You and I will go meet Christian at the pack house and finish this."

I see the uneasiness in Jordan's eyes but my mind is already made up. I cannot live in peace knowing Christian still breathes after tonight.

With everyone's role sorted out, Jordan drops off Micah and Nikki near the edge of the forest just outside of Silver Crest's territory, Nikki immediately shifting to patrol the area while Micah ties Brody to a tree.

We drive onward, Rionna and I hiding in the truck bed under some tarps in case any Silver Crest guards spot Jordan's truck as we make our way to the cabin.

"S\*\*t, there's a lot of guards around here," Jordan mutters under his breath as we approach the pack territory. A few moments later, he begins to curse. "There's a checkpoint up ahead. I need you both to not

make a damn sound while I figure out what the f\*\*k is going on here," he hisses, slowing down the truck as we approach the check point.

“Jordan, you’re back!” The guard says as Jordan pulls up to the guard post. “Where you been, man?”

“Washington on another wild goose chase in search of Christian’s missing Luna,” Jordan laughs.

“Ah well, like father like son,” the guard jokes. “Alpha Christopher appears to have lost his wife. Can’t seem to find her and he’s got all of us searching high and low for her. Not to mention, Luna Vanessa is also missing. Not that we miss her... but you know. She is Luna.”

“Damn, I leave for a week and y’all lose all the Lunas,” Jordan chuckles. “Yup,” the guard laughs. “Well, if you don’t mind, I have to check the back.” My heart pounds in my chest when he says that, both Rionna and I looking at each other and holding our breaths.

“Be my guest, but it’s kind of a mess right now. I’ve been sleeping there all week,” Jordan says with a nervous laugh.

“No worries,” the guard says as he opens the tailgate of the truck bed.

In my nervousness, I feel the urge to sneeze, my eyes widening as I hold my breath. We hear the guard’s footsteps walking around us and see the bright light of his flashlight scan the area. Beads of sweat gather on my forehead as he moves the tarp a little and pokes around with his baton.

“Ahem,” Jordan clears his throat. “All clear?”

“Yup,” the guard says, walking away from the truck bed. “You’re good to go, Gamma.”

“Thanks,” Jordan replies, putting the car in drive.

I count to twenty seconds and finally sneeze when I feel the car take a sharp turn and the road becomes bumpier before pushing away the tarp for fresh air.

“That was close,” Rionna sighs.

We remain in the truck bed in case of any further checkpoints and only peek when we feel the car come to halt.

“We’re here,” Jordan calls out, opening the tailgate for us to climb out.

My heart races anxiously as I stare at the lonely cabin in the woods and I rush to the door, nearly bursting into tears when I find it locked.

“Kota?” I shout, knocking on the door. “Kota, it’s mommy! Kota, I’m here! Mommy’s here!” I cry, desperately trying to open the door. “Kota—”

The door suddenly swings open and I stumble into the cabin, crashing into something hard.

“Hello, Natalia.”

## The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 84

Read The Silent Alpha by Stephanie Light Chapter 84 – Former Lunas

\*\*\*Natalia\*\*\*

“Hello Natalia,” a familiar voice whispers timidly. Gathering my bearings, I realize I’ve run right into Vanessa and knocked her over, a sheepish smile on her face as I help her to her feet. “Where is Kota?” I ask, looking around the living room in search of my son. “Here I am, Mommy!” Kota squeals with his arms raised in the air, peering from the balcony of the stairs.

My heart skips a beat when I see his beautiful eyes looking back at me and I rush up the steps to hold him. “Mommy!” Kota cries, wrapping his arms around my neck in a tight embrace.

“Kota!” I sob into his hair, rocking him from side to side in my arms and showering him with kisses. “Oh, my beautiful little bean! My sweet frijolito! I’m here. Mommy’s here and I’m never letting you go,” I weep, unable to contain my joy of holding him in my arms again.

“Are you okay? Are you hurt?” I ask, pulling away to inspect his beautiful face.

“My butt hurts,” he shakes his head at me, pointing to his legs and his butt. He wears a little pajama set and I pull back his bottoms to check his wounds.

“Ouchie,” I gasp, Kota nodding in agreement. I gently pat his butt, murmuring the age old Spanish chant to heal all wounds. “Sana. Sana. Colita de rana. Hechate un pedo para ti y para tu hermana. {Heal, heal, little frog tail.

Fart for you and your sister).” (A/N: It actually makes no sense but it’s a Spanish rhyme with a twist for whenever a child gets hurt to make them feel better.]

Kota bursts into laughter and a tiny stench reaches my nostrils. “Did you fart?” I ask as he plays with his fingers. “Yeah,” he giggles, the sound breathing life into me. He’s okay. My baby is okay.

"You still use that?" Vanessa chuckles softly. "I remember mom used to say that all the time to us to get us to stop crying."

I grab Kota and turn to look at my older sister, taking in her appearance. She's showered since I last saw her on the phone but there is still a little bruising on her face and neck. She shifts uncomfortably on her feet, and her eyes keep flickering around in search of danger.

Vanessa and I may be at odds, but I have never wished her any ill, even if she does deserve it.

She has a wolf, Devina whispers. It's small but I can sense it. There's a wall between them.

"You have a wolf," Vanessa whispers, a little flicker of delight in her eyes. "And you're marked!" she adds with a soft smile. "Th—that's great. I'm so happy you moved on!"

An awkward silence forms between us as she musters up the courage to keep speaking. I, however, have nothing much to say to her.

"You have a very beautiful son," she says quietly. "Very beautiful." "Thanks," I reply after clearing my throat. "Thank you for... taking care of him."

"Mommy, can we take Nanessa home with us?" Kota asks, Vanessa smiling at the little boy, though the light never reaches her eyes. "She's my friend."

She already knows my answer.

"I'm sorry Kota," I whisper, Vanessa's smile faltering slightly. "But your friend has her own path to take. Right, Nanessa?"

I feel heartless, but I had given Vanessa a home once and she betrayed me. I will not make the same mistake twice, even if she did protect my pup.

"Right," she answers quietly before forcing her voice to be high and happy. "But it's okay, Kota. Maybe one day, you can come visit me and we can have pillow fights."

"Or you can come visit us!" Kota cries with excitement. "You can meet my Daddy!"

"No!" I snap, Kota and Vanessa both jumping in fright at the harshness of my voice.

"No," I repeat softly, shaking my head as I push past Vanessa. "No, I'm sorry Kota, but Nanessa is going to be very busy living her own life so she can't meet Daddy."

"But why not?" Kota whines, small tears springing to his eyes.

I resist the urge to groan and am grateful when Rionna appears around the corner.

“Look, Kota! Nonna!” | squeal with forced excitement, Kota turning in Rionna’s direction.

“Nonna!” he cries, stretching out his arms to greet her.

“Oh my Goddess, Kota!” Rionna replies, taking Kota from my arms and peppering his cheeks with kisses. “I’m so glad you’re safe now. I’m so sorry I lost you!”

Tears of relief roll down her cheeks and Kota wipes them all away.

“It’s okay, Nonna,” he whispers. “It’s okay.”

Relieved that we are now all together, I lead everyone downstairs to discuss a plan of attack and hope Kota doesn’t bring up Vanessa again.

“So this cabin was once an old meeting place?” I ask as we gather in the living room.

“Yes,” Jordan replies as I look around the cabin and notice a lot of windows and glass doors. “Not a lot of coverage,” I observe.

“Yes, the cabin was designed to look unassuming.” Jordan says. “But downstairs in the cellar is where

the old meeting room used to be. Alphas from the neighboring areas would gather here for business and to settle disputes. There’s a secret entrance to the cellar from the surrounding woods,” he adds. “It was meant to allow Alphas to remain anonymous if they wanted to hold private meetings. Here, I’ll show you.”

He leads us down to the old cellar, the steps narrow and creaky. The meeting room is dark but well kept, with a gorgeous antique chandelier hanging from the ceiling. In the middle of the room is a long table with handcrafted wooden chairs and velvet blue cushions. There are built in shelves lining the cellar

walls with hundreds of books on war and political strategies, business practices and laws, religions, and even martial art disciplines.

The shelves are also adorned with beautiful wolf carvings and figurines. Jordan walks up to a howling wolf figurine on one of the shelves and tilts it up. A hidden door opens from behind a shelf on the opposite side of the room, a cloud of dust rising as it opens to reveal a dark tunnel.

“Do you know where exactly that tunnel leads to and if it’s still usable?” I ask through a cough, swatting my hand to get the dust away from me.

“It should be. Christian and I used to play in it when we were kids and would throw parties here as teens,” he shrugs. “The tunnel leads to the southern part of the woods and has an exit hidden within an old hollow tree.”

I turn to Rionna and she seems to be thinking the same thing I am.

“Well, we shouldn’t waste anymore time then,” I say, taking Kota in my arms and giving him one last good squeeze. “Nonna and Nanessa are going to take you far away from the cabin to somewhere safe in the trees, okay?” I explain to my little bean, his face filling with worry.

“But what about you, Mommy?” He asks. “Are you coming with us?” “No, baby,” I whisper. “I have to talk to the man who took you and make sure he never does it again.”

A small whimper escapes his lips and I give him another squeeze to soothe him.

“I need you to be a brave little man for me, okay?” I murmur, kissing his chubby cheeks. “You have to protect Nonna and Nanessa. They’re afraid of the dark. Can you take care of them for me? Like a superhero?”

“Like Daddy?” He asks.

“Yes, just like Daddy,” I whisper. “Can you be my little superhero like Daddy?” He nods his little head and I give him one last hug. “I love you so much, Kota. So so much.”

“I love you too, Mommy,” he says as I hand him over to Rionna.

“Please,” I beg her, Rionna draping a blanket over Dakota’s head to shield him from the cold air coming from the tunnel. “Please take care of my baby.”

“With my life,” Rionna says, tucking Kota into the blanket so that he’s nice and snug in her arms.

Please be careful.”

Rionna steps into the tunnel but Vanessa lingers back, tears rolling down her cheeks.

“I—I’m so sorry for everything I’ve done to you,” She whimpers. “I know what I did is unforgivable, and nothing short of cruel!

“You’re right,” I reply coldly. “It was unforgivable.” “I’m sorry,” she says in a small voice.

The bruises on her pale face don’t compare to the broken soul peeking through her eyes, and I feel a lump form in my throat.

“What did Christian mean when he asked about the baby?” I ask quietly.

She casts her eyes to the floor and with a trembling voice, answers with dread, “He wanted to know if he killed my baby.”

I close my eyes to hide tears that spring to my eyes and I look away to gather my bearings. I may have hated my sister, but no mother should ever lose her child.

“And I now understand what it’s like to lose your mate,” she adds quietly. “He killed my mate... He killed my Derek.”

Both Jordan and I stare at her in shock.

“Derek’s dead?” Jordan asks, a crack in his voice.

Vanessa can only nod her head as she bursts into tears. “I’m sorry! I’m very sorry for what I did! didn’t know it hurt this much,” she cries.

She looks so small as she sobs into her hands and I resist the urge to comfort her.

“... I’m glad you realized you f\*\*\*\*d up,” I whisper. “But I’m not ready to forgive you or let you back into my life. I’m sorry, but when this is all over, I don’t want to see you again. I wish you a long, happy life Nessa. I really do. Just not with me in it.”

“I understand,” she replies. “I knew that would be your answer. I just needed you to know that I wanted to change and that I am sorry.”

“Thank you.” I nod, swallowing back my sob. “Now hurry... and good luck to you.” “You too...” she whispers as she wipes her tears.

I nod silently, watching as she disappears into the tunnel before turning to Jordan and heading back upstairs to the living room.

“Please tell me you have at least trained for this stupid challenge you plan on undertaking?” I ask

Jordan once we’re left alone.

“Christian and I have trained our entire lives together,” Jordan sighs.

“That’s not an answer,” I snap as I try to figure out a back-up plan. I had plenty of warrior training when I was Luna and even had sessions with Christian, but as a human, I was no match for an Alpha.

Well, you’re not human anymore... Devina shrugs. And I am an Alpha.

An Alpha who can’t shift, I mutter.

“I’ve trained a little since I was tasked with overthrowing Christian but I’ve been a little busy trying to find you,” Jordan retorts.

“Wait, the challenge wasn’t your idea?” I ask.

“I have been trying to tell you this for over a week now!” he snaps. “Your lovely ex-husband has actually lost his f\*\*\*\*\*g mind! So much so, that Jack has been killing innocent pack members for the past four years every time we failed to find you.

Even his own mother and father believe he is unfit to be Alpha. They called a meeting and asked me to challenge him for the title.”

Achill runs down my spine. Just what exactly am I dealing with?

“Jack has been running the show ever since he discovered you had a son,” he adds. “He’s built this delusion in his head that you will forgive him for what Christian did and take your place by his side

again.”

“What Christian did?” I scoff, anger boiling in my veins as old memories come flooding back. “What about what he did? Jack hit me that day! He rejected me! He did nothing to stop his human!”

“I told you, Jack and Christian... they’re not the same man and wolf you once loved. Jack has it all planned out. Your rooms have all been restored, he has clothes for you and Kota, your Luna ceremony and wedding have already been planned out, and he has your dresses picked out. He even went ring shopping

for you! The only thing he needs now is... Well you.”

I want to scream with disgust but I manage to contain my anger when a thought pops into my head.

I can’t beat him physically and I don’t have any confidence in Jordan’s plan at all.. But what if... what if I play into Jack’s delusion? I once escaped this hell hole just by playing into Christian’s disappointment in me. Perhaps I can do it again.

But we’re marked and turned, Devina reminds me. And how will you explain Kota’s absence? Devina asks. Christian will know something is up when he realizes Kota isn’t here.

Before I can come up with a solution, I hear a commotion outside. Jordan and I both look at each other in confusion and we race to the end of the hall to look out the window onto the driveway. My heart sinks with dread when I see an army of guards in wolf form filling up the driveway. They snarl and growl, warning us that any attempt at escape is futile.

A dark figure rushes through the trees in the surrounding forest, drawing my attention, and my heart sinks to the pit of my stomach as Christian emerges from the trees. Devina snarls with disgust when his handsome face looks up at us, Jack's green eyes gleaming with insanity.

Jack's in control... I observe, making a decision I hope I don't regret.

"Follow my lead," I hiss at Jordan as we step away from the window.

"What do you plan on doing?" he asks, grabbing onto my hands. "Something crazy," I mutter. — I turn the porch light on as I step out onto the porch, counting my steps to keep myself from losing — — — — — my cool when I come face to face with the monster who dared touch my child.

"My love! My Tiny, it's so good to see you here again. I've missed you so much, Tiny," Jack whispers before he suddenly stops at the base of the porch. "Tiny," he gasps. "Y—you have a wolf..."

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My mouth feels very dry as Devina growls in response, but I remind myself now is not the time to lose mys\*\*t.

"Y—yes," I nod, forcing a smile on my face. "Y—yes I do."

He rushes up the steps until he stands only a few feet away from me and I do my best to stand still and not tremble with rage in his presence.

"That's wonderful!" he says as he towers over me. "You could not be more perfect now," he adds with excitement. "I've dreamed of this moment for so long, it feels unreal to—" His smile drops from his face, his hands shaking at his sides as he glares at my neck. "Tiny," he snarls through gritted teeth. "Who marked you!?"