

The Alpha's Slave Mate Chapter 23

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Daphne's Point of View °

Caleb pulls me into his side as we walk into the ball. He is so warm and feeling his hand around my waist is sparking a fire within me. I do not get to dwell on the feeling too long because I am too distracted by everything, I see walking in. There are people everywhere, some I recognize but most I have no idea who they are. Women are parading everywhere in dresses made of every color in the rainbow. Hair pins, jewelry, and beads catch the multitude of lights around the room casting their own glow across the floor. The men are just as colorful as well in suits, looking dapper. People are talking in small crowds, some are dancing, some are eating but everyone seems happy. Thankfully, I do not see my father or mother, and that puts me at ease a little. –

The decorations around the meeting hall are beautiful. Soft autumn touches celebrating the harvest. The music is beautiful, consisting of low melodies met for lovers. I simply can not stop looking around and taking it all in. It is almost like I fell into a portal to another dimension. My eyes find the buffet table, and my stomach lets out a growl. I am a little embarrassed by my body betraying me, and I do not even have to look at Caleb to know that he heard it. I am relieved that he asks if I would like to eat before we try dancing.

As we are waiting in line for food, I notice a large man making his way towards Caleb and me. The man is tall, taller than Caleb with unruly dark brown hair. I notice a scar by his left eye, and it makes him appear intimidating. He strides right up to Caleb and flashes him a smile. In truth this man scares me a little bit. Although he is now smiling, he is very intimidating. Just like Caleb he is very muscular, and as he got closer, I can see that he has a scar on his hand as well.

Clearly this is a man that does not back down from a fight. Caleb introduces the man as Marcus, the Alpha of the Crest Line pack. I had never heard of the Crest Line pack before, but I could tell that Marcus and Caleb are good friends. ' When Caleb introduces me to Marcus, he says that I am his mate. I look up at him stunned. I knew that Caleb believed that I was his mate, but I did not expect him to really announce it to anyone tonight. How is everyone going to react knowing that he is an Alpha and I am or at least was a slave? Marcus grasps my hand and places a kiss on my knuckles, and Caleb growls deep in his chest.

I am worried that they are going to start brawling here in the ball, but instead Marcus just laughs it off. I am still nervous. Marcus invites us over to his table, and Caleb readily agrees. I knew before coming here tonight that Caleb would know a lot of the

people here, I just did not expect the first person we meet to be another Alpha. My anxiety kicks it up a notch because I am worried that I will say or do the wrong thing and embarrass Caleb.

As we are going through the line for food Caleb explains to me what normally happens when mates find each other. I have heard of the mark before, but I did not really understand the point behind it. I am thankful that Caleb is explaining it to me. I understand the way he felt when Marcus kissed my hand, because I felt that same kind of unexplained anger when Heather was trying to touch him. I can tell that he is a little embarrassed by it happening, but I find it sweet and enduring. It is nice to know that he is new to experiencing these kinds of feelings like I am.

I feel a little better as we make our way to Marcus's table. Shortly after setting our plates down a very attractive woman approaches the table. She is tall with jet black hair, and dark blue eyes.

She has very high cheek bones, tan skin, and a narrow straight nose with a diamond stud in it. She comes and wraps her arms around Marcus's neck, he pats her arm and then stands and introduces us to his mate Lola.

Lola is truly stunning. She is tall, and wearing a black crushed velvet dress, with small crystals embellishing the neckline. She has a diamond studded choker necklace on, and tear drop earrings in her ears. Her entire ensemble is flawless, and she radiates a natural confidence that I wish I had.

As we all settle in and begin to eat our dinner Caleb asks how they met. Lola is animated and talks with her hands as she explains the story. It is very humorous thinking about Marcus jumping over a counter and trying to carry Lola like a caveman. Lola's bubbly personality is infectious, and she puts me at ease. It is easy to see the love between the two of them, and I wonder if Caleb and I will ever be this way.

Lola then asks how Caleb and I met, and just like that my anxiety flares up and I cannot speak. Thankfully, Caleb takes over and explains that we just met today. He does not tell them that I was a Slave, and I am thankful for that. Even if it only lasts for tonight, I would like to pretend that I am normal. I realize that Caleb has taken my hand, and I love the feeling of his thumb caressing the back of my hand. It is comforting, as if he is saying I understand without words.

Throughout the rest of dinner, the conversation is easy. Marcus and Caleb talk about far away places that I have never experienced, but now I hope to be able to see some day. Lola talked about her café and living in Eugene. I really enjoyed listening to their stories, and it helped ease my anxiety. I even found myself laughing a few times. Lola drags Marcus away to dance.

Caleb asks me if I want to dance. I look out at the other couples on the floor and they all look like they are having fun. The lights are dimmer around the dancers, giving it a more

romantic feeling. I am still nervous, and I am afraid that I am going to step on Caleb or fall.

Caleb does not seem to care though, and I do want to experience dancing at least once. Caleb stands and takes my hand and leads me out onto the floor. Caleb finds an empty spot and pulls me into his arms. His hands go around my waist and he leans down and tells me to put my arms around his neck. ‘

“Good, now just follow my lead love. Close your eyes, forget anyone else is in the room, and just feel the beat of the music.” Caleb’s words whisper in my ear. I do as he says and close my eyes. The tone is slow, sultry almost. I feel Caleb shift a little to the left and I follow suit. He pulls me in closer to his chest, and I feel a new heat starting to grow within me. Our feet are shuffling slowly in time to the music. Warmth is spreading through my hips where Caleb’s hands are, and almost against my own will I lay my head on his chest. His heartbeat is strong in my ear, and I can feel his muscles twitch slightly. He places a kiss on the top of my head, and I find myself smiling. Caleb’s arms move farther across my lower back and he pulls me into him closer, and I find my breathing getting faster. :

The warmth from his hands is spreading and causing a fire within me. I am pressed up against his chest, inhaling his scent has my nipples straining outwards. The wetness that has developed between my thighs is becoming more familiar. I look up into

Caleb’s eyes to see if he is experiencing anything like what I am going through.

He is staring straight down at me, and I can see him fighting internally with his wolf. I bite my lower lip, unsure if he is feeling everything that I am feeling. °

“You have to stop biting your lip sweetheart or I will not be able to help myself.” Caleb’s voice is husky, barely above a whisper. I can not tear my eyes from his eyes. It seems he is having a little trouble breathing too. “Daphne I really want to kiss you right now.”

Caleb’s words spark a boldness in me that I did not expect. “I am not stopping you.” The words were out before I could even stop them. The fire within me has turned into a raging inferno. Caleb dips his head down to mine and captures my lips. I did not think that I could burn any hotter but the touch of his lips on mine has sent my body into a super nova. Caleb groans as he is kissing me, and my arms wind tighter around his neck pulling him in for more. I can taste the wine he had with dinner on his lips. Caleb is gentle at first, but then turns more demanding. He gently nips at my lower lip and I gasp in surprise. He takes advantage of it and slips his tongue into my mouth. Slowly his tongue dances with mine and I moan a little. «

“If you two do not stop now! I am going to hose you down with a fire extinguisher.” Theo’s words break the trance we are in and I pull back out of Caleb’s embrace. Suddenly it floods back to me that we are in the middle of a ball, on a crowded dance floor in front of everyone. I feel the heat in my face as it flames in embarrassment. If Theo had not

come over, I do not think that I would have stopped. Glancing at Caleb I can see that he is trying his best to collect himself as well. His breathing is still heavy, and he kind of looks like he wants to throttle Theo. Then I notice right behind Theo is Hannah and my embarrassment doubles. ‘

“You two look amazing together.” Hannah’s bubbly personality is helping to ease the tension a little bit. Hannah goes on about how she was watching us dance and that we did a great job. ‘ Caleb’s breathing has slowed a bit as he talks with Theo and Hannah for a moment. I gently tap Caleb on the arm and let him know that I need to use the bathroom. Hannah volunteers to come with me.

Once we are out of hearing range, Hannah all but explodes in her excitement. She is rattling off questions about when we were going to mark each other, can she be a part of our official ceremony, do we want kids right away.

Laughing I stop Hannah as we near the bathroom. “Hannah stop it was just a kiss, my first one actually.” As I say this Hannah acts shocked.

“Wait you have never kissed anyone before that?”

“No Hannah, that was my first kiss ever.” Hannah lets out this high-pitched squeal and talks about how it is so romantic that my first kiss was with my mate. I am feeling light and bouncy as I process her words and realize that it is kind of sweet that Caleb is my first.

As the bathroom door opens my stomach drops to my feet. Coming out is my mother, and Melissa. As usual my mother is dressed up like a queen. She has a full ball gown on with enough tulle in it to cover the forest floor. Although she is beautiful, she always wears a little too much makeup and, in my opinion, it makes her look almost like a clown.

She stops when she sees me and Hannah, causing Melissa to stop as well. “What the hell are you doing here, and where did you steal that dress?” Her words are dripping with venom, and my stomach plummets.

“She did not steal that dress; I gave it to her.” Hannah replies to my mother, and all I want to do is run away from here. I know this is not going to end well. I glance over at Hannah, but she is staring my mother down. Hannah has her hands on her hips, and disgust is written all over her face. I know I must intervene before Hannah gets in trouble. ° “I am sorry Luna; I was purchased this afternoon by the Blue Mountain pack. I was asked to attend tonight.” My voice is shaking, and I can not look my mother in the eyes.

“Why in the world would they want you?” Melissa’s words only cue my mother to go on.

My mother's voice is rising higher and higher. "Well I am the Luna of this pack, and I do not want murderous trash like you in here stinking up the place." She is snarling and I can tell that we have attracted a small crowd. I am looking for the easiest way to escape, but now there are people surrounding us. I am frantically looking around trying to find a way out. I did not see Caleb come up behind me.

"Is there are reason your harassing my mate." Caleb's words are booming. I can hear his rage bubbling on the surface. He comes up from behind me and places his hand on my back, before tugging me physically behind him. Caleb looks like he is ready to shift and tear this place apart. '

"Your mate, is this a freaking joke?" My mother's words are scathing. "Who would want her as a mate? Do you realize she is nothing but a murderous tramp?" My face is flaming bright with embarrassment as my mother continues. Eighteen years of hate and anger are pouring out of her like a waterfall.

"Shut up." Caleb is demanding. I see a few people shrink back. My mother even shuts her mouth and looks at Caleb as if she is seeing him for the first time. "I want her, she is mine. You should hold your tongue, before I rip it out of your mouth. I am aware that Daphne was a twin. I am also aware that you blamed her for your son's death, although we both know that Daphne did nothing wrong. In your grief you enslaved your daughter and failed to see the amazing gorgeous woman that she became." I touch Caleb's back, in part as a way of thanking him but also because as he was talking to her, he kept stepping closer to her. '

As much as I do not like my mother, I do not want Caleb to hurt her. The anger is literally pooling off him, like some primordial ooze. The air is thick with tension, and I can see my father making his way to my mother's side.

"Alpha Caleb I am sorry for any disrespect my wife caused you." I am surprised by my father's words, as is my mother. The look on her face is like he just slapped her.

Caleb does not even acknowledge my father's words. "Let it be known here and now, Daphne is my mate as I am hers. If anyone disrespects or harms her in any way, they will have to deal with me, and I will not take the offense lightly. She belongs to my pack now, and I will defend her till my last breath." Caleb's words echo through the hall, and I just now realized that the music has stopped. As I look around the hall, I realize that everyone's attention is on us, and I wish I were invisible. ' I am not used to attention. I just want to escape. I can not stop the tears that are pooling in my eyes. What started as a magical night has turned into a disaster.

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Caleb's Point of View

Although I did not want to stop kissing Daphne, I was appreciative that Theo reminded us that we were in the middle of a large social gathering. Daphne's boldness when I told her that I wanted to kiss her was a pleasant surprise. I tried to be gentle, but the moment I touched her lips an inferno erupted in my core. Everyone melted away and it was as if Daphne and I were on our own private island. Her lips tasted of honey, sweet delectable and they were so soft. I tried to be gentle kissing her, I knew it was probably her first kiss. The moment she moaned in my mouth though I was lost. I could not help slipping my tongue into her mouth to explore her farther. Her tongue dancing with mine was pure ecstasy. '

"So, has she accepted that you two are mates now?" Theo's question snaps me back into reality.

"I think that she is considering the possibility of it. Her life has changed so much in less than twenty-four hours, I think she is just trying to adjust to it all. We got caught up in the dancing and music and I could not help but kiss her. I know that she feels a pull towards me though, and she may not want to admit it yet but she has a possessive streak in her." Theo raises an eyebrow at my words questioning how I came into this knowledge.

As I am retelling the incident that occurred in the room before the ball, we hear a commotion from the other side of the room. Theo and I both start walking that way because Daphne and Hannah had walked that way to use the powder room. Drawing closer I can see Hannah with her hands on her hips looking like a raging bull with a bright shiny target in front of her. A small crowd has gathered around them, and I can only see Daphne's back. I quicken my pace when I see that her head is bowed, and my anger is already starting to flare out. '

Quickly trying to analyze the scene, I see Luna Amanda standing in front of Daphne practically screaming in her face. There is another woman with Amanda that seems to be encouraging the foul words falling from the Luna's mouth. Theo reaches for my arm, but no one will stop me from protecting my mate.

Stepping forward I touch Daphne's back to let her know that it is me, before pulling her slight behind me. I confront the Luna directly asking her why she is harassing my mate. I know that my voice is loud, it is not often that I must use the power of being Alpha but seeing my mate look so broken has released a cold anger in me. '

Upon the announcement that Daphne is my mate, her mother releases a pile of venomous words. I can feel the anguish coming from my mate and it feeds my anger. I have lost the ability to be political at this moment. Facing Luna Amanda, I release all my own pent up frustrations about her actions towards her own daughter. I can see some of

the other members of the visiting packs were not aware that Daphne was in fact Luna Amanda's daughter. Well now her disgusting secret is out.

In my peripheral vision I can see Theo and a few other of my warriors ensuring that if this altercation turns physical, I am protected. Daphne is safe behind me, and I see that Theo has moved Hannah out of the way so that she will not be harmed. I can see Alpha Jason moving towards us quickly, and Alpha Marcus is moving to cover my back.

As Alpha Jason approaches, he apologizes for his wife's behavior. His words mean nothing to me, I still want to kill most of the people in this room for the hell that they put Daphne through growing up. Standing tall I make it known to everyone that Daphne is mine. I will protect her life with my own, and that I will not tolerate any disrespect towards her. Jason is trying to pull Amanda away, but she struggles a little. I think she is still in shock that her husband did not side with her. Perhaps she does not understand that my pack could easily destroy her entire pack, and if I give the order they would readily comply.

As the crowd begins to disperse, I turn all my attention to Daphne. I wanted this night to be magical for her, and now the fairy tale has turned into a nightmare. Her head is still bowed, and I think I see a tear escape her eye and run down her delicate face. I pull her in my arms, and she buries her head in my chest. I lower my head to her ear and let her know it is ok I am here.

Hannah comes up and puts her hand on Daphne's back. Theo is standing close behind Hannah, still ready for any kind of attack that could occur. Marcus and his mate come up on the side. I can see that Alpha Jerome is attempting to make his way towards us as well.

"Caleb, I am sorry that your mate had to go through that. I was not aware that Alpha Jason had another child besides Scarlet. Daphne, I apologize immensely for not being aware." Marcus offers an apology to my mate. I let him know that it is ok, after all I should have told him in private after I introduced him. I was trying to shield my mate from embarrassment.

Daphne still has not raised her head from chest, its almost as if she is trying to merge herself into me. I notice that she has started shivering slightly. I make the decision that if my mate wishes to leave, I will take her from here. ¢

"Daphne would you like to leave?" I ask her softly. She mumbles something into my chest, but it is too soft for me to catch. "What was that sweetheart?" Finally, she raises her head slightly, peering in her eyes my rage explodes again as I can see that she did indeed cry a little. Her beautiful eyes are slightly puffy, and red. Her cheeks are still stained pink with embarrassment. "Can we leave? Like will people get mad if you leave?" Her voice is so soft with her questions. Even upset my mate is absolutely astounding. °

“Sweetheart I am the Alpha of one of the most powerful packs, there is not much that I can not do. If you would like to retire back to the room than that is what we shall do. If you want to stay and eat and drink and dance than we shall do that. Your wish is my command and I will make it happen.” I smile down at her, hoping that she can read in my eyes that she is the most important person in the world to me. Daphne is more important than air in my world.

“I don’t want to cause you anymore problems Caleb.” I hate that she shifts her eyes downward when speaking, and I hate even more that her voice is getting softer.

“Theo, my mate and I will be retiring for the evening, if you need anything feel free to mind link me or call. Hannah thank you for everything. Marcus and Lola, it was a pleasure getting to see you two tonight. I hope that we can catch up more soon.” I sweep my mate up in my arms, carrying her as I did when I took her out of the front door of the manor house. I do not put her down again until we are back in the room. : Placing her softly back on her feet I wipe away the traces of any tears from her eyes. “I am sorry love, I wanted you to have a truly magical night, and I apologize for not being right by your side when it started.”

Daphne is staring in my eyes as! speak, her mouth is slightly ajar as if she is surprised that I am apologizing to her.

All at once Daphne finds her voice and words come tumbling out almost faster than I can understand. “Caleb you have no reason to apologize, I should be the one apologizing. No one has ever stood up for me, and you charged in like a white knight ready to slay a dragon. I don’t even know how to thank you and Hannah and everyone for tonight. I mean I never even seen a dance before, and you and all your friends made that happen.” I am not sure if I should stop her or just continue to let her get it all out. She seems to be picking up speed as she pours all of her emotions out, and she is starting to use her hands like Lola when she talks. :

“Hannah and the girls made me feel like a princess, and you took me dancing. I am sorry about my mother, she has never like me, and I know that she blames me for my brother’s death. I have wished more times in my life than I can count that it would have been me that died instead of him.” Tears are now softly falling from her eyes as she continues to pour her heart out. I want to reach out, I want to pull her into my arms. I wish that I could take this pain away from her. I am afraid that if I touch her that I will break the trance that she seems to be in, and I know that she needs to get this all out. She needs to be able to release it all in order to move forward with her life. = “I tried to be good. I tried to do everything they commanded. When I figured out that they would not love me I figured maybe just maybe one day they would at least look at me like I was better than trash.” By now Daphne is not crying softly, she is sobbing. Tears are gushing down her face, and her breathing is becoming erratic. She has wrapped her arms around her stomach almost as if she is trying to stop her body from breaking apart. My heart feels like it is being ripped from my chest. If I could build a time machine and rescue my mate long before now, I would in a heartbeat.

“What is so wrong with me, even my own parents hate me.” Daphne is staring me right in my eyes, I can not stop myself from finally grabbing her and wrapping my arms around her. I slowly lower us to the floor and hold her in my lap, rocking softly back and forth as she sobs on my shoulder. Even though I know that she needs to get this pain out, it kills me that I can not take it from her.

Finally, Daphne’s sobs seem to subside slightly, I gently place my fingers under her chin and turn her face so that she is looking up into my eyes. “Daphne there is nothing wrong with you, other than you grew up in a toxic household. You are not a monster, and you most certainly did not kill your brother.

Childbearing can be dangerous, especially if there are multiple fetuses.

Your parents let their grief turn into an unimaginable disgusting rage that they then focused on you. It was toxic and not right. I am sorry I did not find you sooner my love. You are so much stronger than I think even you know.” I softly kiss the top of her head. I hope she believes my words. ‘

I gently pick us both up from the floor.

Daphne’s emotional break has exhausted her, and she sways slightly as I place her on her feet. Keeping one hand on her always I turn her around so that I can unzip her dress. There is nothing sexual in my movements even though seeing her bare skin sparks a fire deep within me. I reach behind me and grab one of my tee-shirts for her to put over her head. I let her know that I am going to turn around to give her a moment of privacy so that she can slip out of the dress fully and put the shirt on. She places her hand on my back when she is finished. ‘ Turning back around my mate looks adorable. She is trying to rub the sleep from her eye, and my shirt hangs loosely around her. I gently take her hair out of the clips so that it falls loose down her back. I sit her on the bed and remove her shoes. Finally, I tuck her in under the covers and rub her back softly. I can tell that she is taking comfort in my touch because she presses her back farther into me. Eventually I hear that her breathing has evened out, and that she has slipped into a sleep created from exhaustion. I gently get out of bed. I want to stay with my mate more than anything, but after the dramatics tonight there are a few things that I must take care of. I mind link Theo and inform him that we need to talk. He informs me that he has already ensured that Hannah and the rest of our females are safe and gives me his location. Looking back at my mate resting, I sigh and head out of the room.

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Caleb’s Point of View –

I really hated leaving my mate. She was vulnerable right now and I wanted to stay and comfort her some more. I know that she is going to sleep for a while, she unloaded a lot of emotional baggage that she has kept locked away for a long time. That kind of emotional release tends to be exhausting both physically and mentally. I made sure that she was secure in the bed before I headed out to assess the damage of tonight. ~

Theo let me know that he is outside the manor house by the back door. I take the back stairs down, retracing my steps from this morning. Thinking about this morning makes me realize just how much my life has also changed in such a short period of time. Heading towards the woods this morning I was fearful of becoming a feral wolf, almost sure that the Moon Goddess had forgotten to create a mate for me. Now here I am with my mate upstairs, ready to wage war on those that have hurt her.

Stepping outside I take a deep inhale of the night air. I love the cool crisp smell of the dirt, pine needles, and fall scents. Theo is standing close to the door and I see that Marcus is with him.

“How was the rest of the ball?” I cannot stop myself from being slightly quirky, hoping that it will lift some of the tension.

“The ball was fine, although Hannah is ready to go to war with this pack. I think she really cares for Daphne. After you two left, things did settle down. There was a slight mishap between one of our warriors and a male from the Mission pack over a female, but it was handled peacefully. I ensured that everyone in our pack was safe, and they know to mind link if anything is wrong. Alpha Jason has requested an audience with you in the morning.” Theo finished his report with a sigh.

“I will meet with him in the morning then. I want it to be early. I would like our pack ready to move out no later than noon tomorrow. I believe that staying here will soon turn hostile, and I am excited to get Daphne home and settled. I want her to experience some normalcy, and she will not get that here.” Theo understands more than anyone what I mean.

“Caleb, I have to ask you why you did not inform me of your mate’s circumstances?” I knew that Marcus would eventually ask, and I could hear the hurt in his voice.

“I had planned to tell you privately after the ball. Daphne had never been allowed to go to any dance, or social function and I was hoping that tonight would be magical for her. I did not say anything about her upbringing when your mate asked about how we met because I was not sure if it would embarrass her.” Just like when I am speaking with Theo, I can be honest and open with Marcus as well. I know that he will have some understanding.

“I feel like a fool really, I never considered her mother to be a real threat to her before tonight. Perhaps it was my male ego at play but when I discovered her station in life, I placed most of the blame on her father. I made it clear to him this afternoon when he

signed the contracts that she was mine, and that no one was to harm her. Evidently he failed to pass along the information to his pack." It is hard admitting the truth to my friends. As an Alpha I am supposed to think three steps ahead of everyone. Strategize how to keep my pack safe. Tonight, I failed.

"Your mate is very strong my friend. I am sure that with time, and distance from this place she will become a great Luna. Lola adores her already and is looking forward to coming to your mating ceremony. I had hoped to invite you to ours as well, but we have not set a date yet." Marcus, Theo, and I have started walking at a lazy pace, not really headed anywhere but too full of energy tonight to stand still. :

"I would be honored to be at your mating ceremony, and I am sure Daphne would love to be there as well. If you do not mind me asking why have you not set a date yet? I do not mean to pry, but your mate seems to love you as much as you love her." I am hoping that Marcus does not take offense to my questions.

"I do believe that Lola loves me, and she has fully accepted me as her mate. We have already marked each other, but we are having some disagreement on living arrangements. There is also the possibility that she may be pregnant." I look at Marcus ready to congratulate him, but the look on his face says that he is not happy about that news. Hanging his head slightly Marcus goes on to tell us that Lola had a boyfriend before him and that there was a possibility that she may be carrying his child. It is not uncommon for wolves to have lovers before they find their mates. After all, in a sense we are animals. Sex is normal in our community. It is unusual though to not be super careful about not producing pups until you find your mate. I have seen a few instances of pups being born out of wedlock, but it is few and far between. If this does happen usually the mate will adopt the pup as if it were their own.

"So, if she is pregnant, do you plan of adopting the baby?" Theo asks the question that was on my mind. : "Probably, I mean it is what is expected. Although I have been hoping and praying that she is not with child. I am blessed beyond a doubt that I found her, unfortunately life has been so hectic that we have not even had time to see a doctor to confirm whether she is or is not pregnant. I know it sounds selfish and childish, but I want our first child to be of my blood." I can tell that Marcus is ashamed of his own words.

"No offense meant, but yes you are being childish." Both Marcus and I snap our heads to look at Theo. Theo is staring up at the sky though and does not see the shock that has registered on my face yet. "You both are so lucky; you have your mates. Yes, there are some complications that come with both, but they are here on Earth with you." Marcus and I did not comment for a moment, instead we took a minuet to reflect on Theo's words. I felt guilty that Marcus and I had been speaking freely of our mates in front of Theo. I know that his mate's death still affects him greatly. :

"Theo you are a genius, and I apologize for speaking without thinking earlier." Marcus is the first to speak.

"I am not a genius Alpha Marcus; truth be told I am just jealous. I can only imagine what it would be like to watch Miranda's belly swell with child." It is not very often that Theo says her name.

"I bet she would have been beautiful."

"I am sure she would have my friend, and I am sorry that she was taken from this world too soon. I have heard rumors though of wolves finding a second mate, is this something you have ever considered?" Marcus is genuinely curious as he asks Theo. °

"I have heard the rumors, but I have never met anyone that found a second mate. I do not know if I am open to it honestly. I do not ever want to live through the pain of losing another mate if I did find one. I am normally content with my life. In a lot of ways, I view Hannah as my daughter, I mean I did help raise and train her. My days are busy with the pack, and I enjoy my work."

Theo shoots us a smile with his words. "I believe I just got overly sentimental watching you two love birds gawk over your mates tonight." Marcus and I both laugh at Theo's words knowing that he is trying to lighten the mood. "Well guys thank you for tonight. I was ready to wage a war earlier, and I feel lighter. Although I am sure that tomorrow morning will bring about another bout of rage." My mind is already shifting back to the meeting tomorrow morning with Alpha Jason. "If you want me to be there, I will accompany you?" Marcus speaks up to let me know that I have his support. "It leaves a sour taste in my mouth to know that Alpha Jason treated his own daughter as a slave."

"Thank you Marcus I have always appreciated your friendship. I do not think that it would hurt to have you there. I may need all the help I can get to not rip his head off. The thought of everything they did to her makes my blood boil." I am seeing red just thinking about everything that Daphne may have been subjected to. My mind goes back to her crumbled form asking me what was wrong with her.

"It would not be difficult to attack this pack. Although their home is placed strategically, their warriors do not seem to be as disciplined as ours. I also happen to know a few of Marcus's warriors, and they are ruthless in battle." Theo has snapped back into his intellectual self, giving the pre-battle synapse void of emotion.

"Let us hope that it does not come to that, although we are ready if it does." Marcus replies to Theo's assessment. Although Theo is right and it would be easy to attack and dismantle this pack, I try not to choose war if I can avoid it. There are always innocent casualties in war, no matter how carefully you plan. I do not take pleasure in hurting people. I will try to remain political tomorrow, but I know that I will protect Daphne with my life. While I am lost in thought we have made our way back to the door leading into the manor house. We bid each other farewell and disperse for the evening.