

Prologue

Rory's Pov

15 years ago

My fur rubbed against my mother's soft skin. I kept whimpering, scenting her blood in the air. It made my wolf shiver, it frightened me. I wasn't like the other children from my pack. I had gotten my wolf when I turned 10 and my parents feared the worst for me.

With the way the world changed after the start of the war, any little thing perceived as different, dangerous, or out of the norm was usually hunted down, locked away, or killed. Even I knew that at 10 years old.

The war started when I was a toddler. Still a pup but not old enough to understand what was going on in the world. It wasn't long after the bears were defeated, the supernatural council disbanded that the Dark Witches made their first attacks.

It started off slow. Wolves disappearing in the middle of the night. Then the infertility wave hit. No one knew what was happening or who was responsible. Then came the plague. They call it the Lupine Plague and it only affects our females. None of the pack doctors could figure out why it was only females, or why there was a 100% mortality rate but if you caught it, it was a death sentence.

The once plentiful werewolf population went from flourishing to damn near extinct. There were hardly any females left and the ones that were born were protected, cherished in most cases. But then you have those who were greedy to have a female of their own. They were coveted. They were stolen.

Being a female in this day and age was dangerous. I was luckily born into a pack that cherished me, cherished my mother. Valued us, protected us.

The wolves who suffered the most from this attack were Alphas. The Dark witches thought they were too powerful, too plentiful. So along with the infertility, they changed the biology of alphas. Still, no one knows how they did it but Alphas can now only mate with Omegas. They can only procreate with Omegas. Sure they can f**k and play with any ranking wolf but if they wanted heirs, if they wanted pups of their own it had to be with an omega.

With females already being in high demand, it brought even more danger on omegas. They were hunted by alphas, packs, traders and collectors, and even the witches took it upon themselves to hunt omegas down to prevent alpha procreation. The ones who were captured were either enslaved, killed, or sold to the highest bidder. It wasn't a glamorous life. Being an omega was just as bad as being different now.

It wasn't long after the Plague started that the witches came forward and made their demands. They started the Plague. They started the female infertility. They wiped out nearly all female werewolves with just a wave of their hands. No one knew how they did it but we did understand that it was extremely powerful magic. Dark magic.

We gathered up the Light witches we could trust, when I say we I mean the royal family. They weren't able to reverse the curse. They weren't even able to reverse the infertility plague. Witches were therefore hated by most wolves, those light witches that could be trusted were shunned, wolves were wary of them.

The royal family, in an attempt to protect the packs, assigned a loyal Light Witch to each and every pack in the world. They protected the packs against any further damage, any new curses, and helped with pack defenses against the dark witches.

Our pack's light witch was strong. She was the most powerful person that I knew. She was kind and gentle to us, especially to me.

I was the only omega born in my pack in years and my pack took their duty to protect me seriously. So when the hoard of witches who found out about me came knocking they fought. So many were slaughtered from both sides that day. Our alpha, his mate, warriors, all killed. Witches too. They weren't coming out of that unscathed. My father, who had been my idol, perished that night too. He hugged me tight before tossing me into my mother's arms and forcing us to run. I felt it when he died. My wolf whimpered and cried.

We almost died that night too. They had us surrounded until Perla, our Light Witch sacrificed herself to save us. To save me. My mother, bloodied, and wounded, commanded me to shift.

We walked for miles, days even. It had been a week since the attack on our pack. The Yellowstone pack. My mother even shifted for a bit to speed up her healing. We stayed hidden. We stayed in the woods, away from roads, people. We didn't want to risk being found by the witches. Most of the journey we walked on our paws, trying to blend in with nature.

I didn't know where we were headed but every time I asked my mother hushed me. When I refused she would pick me up by my scruff and carry me that way.

My coat, that had once been white, looked nearly gray or brown with all of the dirt and mud caked onto it. I hadn't been released from the command to shift and I didn't have the desire to be in my human form.

"There is a creek ahead. We will find shelter for the night." my mother said through our family link into my mind. My wolf, the size of a younger pup, huffed in response. She licked my muzzle and closed her eyes as she pressed her head to me.

"Come now, Rory. Just a little further."

My bones ache, and my little body is sore from walking for so long. How far had we traveled? How much further did we need to go?

Once we got to the creek we drank our fill, mother hunted a doe for us to feast on and she found shelter in a small cave. There were large rocks everywhere and so many new scents I had never smelled before. I knew based on the geography of the land around us we had to be somewhere in the mountains.

"Momma, where are we?" I asked through the link as I laid my body on the ground and wrapped my fluffy white tail around me to keep me warm.

It was fall and the leaves were starting to change to beautiful reds, oranges, and browns.

"We are in Colorado." she stated looking out into the distance.

"Why are we so far from home? Will we not go back? What about the pack?" I asked rapid fire questions. She placed her paw on me and closed her eyes. I could feel the despair and sorrow pouring off of her in waves.

"In another time, in another age, I would have waited to tell you but times have changed. The world isn't the same that I grew up in. I never wanted any of this for you Rory. I wanted so much goodness and happiness for you. But you need to understand something. The world is dangerous. Alpha is dead. Luna is dead. Your father is dead. he's dead. They died to protect you."

"So... it's my fault." I whispered in the link back. Having a conversation in your head always felt so weird but after a while it felt more natural.

"NO! None of this is your fault. Were you a catalyst, possibly but none of this is because of you. This was because of greedy people, ignorant people. People who want what doesn't belong to them. You may be an Omega Rory but you submit to no one, do you understand me. No one but your mate, if you ever find them and I pray that you do. What I'm going to tell you is very important. And I need you to listen to me. I need you to do exactly as I say. Do you understand?" her tone was firm, commanding.

I felt the shivers of authority run over my skin and fur. I nodded my tiny pup head and she let out a breath.

"Tomorrow we will finish our journey. I was supposed to bring you to the Royal Pack in Colorado. The King of all Werewolves would have protected you but I don't know who to trust anymore. It wasn't just witches who attacked us before. There were wolves working with the Dark witches. I've thought long and hard over this. Prayed to the goddess above. I have even prayed to your father. All signs are telling me to hide you. To keep you hidden. At Least for now."

"But why does..."

"Hush. Listen." she started. "Do you know what happens to wolves when they lose their mates? Some can handle it. The stronger the wolf, the more likely they are to pull through but I am not capable. I can feel myself fading. I can feel my time coming to an end."

I stood up on all four paws and whimpered while tucking my tail between my legs. I didn't like this. I didn't like it at all. She's my mother. My best friend. The only family I have left. Now she's saying she's dying? That she's abandoning me too?

"I have enough willpower to see you to safety Rory. Understand that I love you with all of my heart. Your father loved you with every fiber of his being. You were his pride and joy. I am so sorry that I won't be able to be with you for much longer. It's just not in the fates. I will always be with you in your heart and the Goddess is always in your mind. The journey tomorrow is important. I have a plan. It's crazy and I don't know if it will work but I have an idea to keep you safe. There is a zoo, not far from the Royal Pack. I know I know I don't know if we can trust them but if the need ever arises they are right there. I know a zoo sounds crazy but do you remember your school field trips to the zoo back home? There are wolves there. I plan on surrendering you to them. They will take care of you. They will protect you. But you must stay as your wolf. You must not shift. Perla helped me ensure you couldn't shift. She gave me the potion that only another powerful witch could undo. Stay hidden, stay disguised. It's a wild plan but we're wolves. The only difference is our size. With you being an omega your wolf is naturally small. You can blend in. You must. Do you understand?"

Despite my unwillingness to separate from her, I nodded. I didn't want to live like an animal for the rest of my life. But I didn't dare question my mother. I knew times were crazy. I knew it was dangerous to be a female omega. I knew that my life was in danger from the moment I was conceived. I would miss my family, my pack, and my home terribly. I would be broken without my mother and father. There was still so much I didn't know, so much I had to learn. Would I die living as a "Real wolf" living in a zoo? Would I ever get the chance to live, make friends, find my mate, and help stop this war? Only time would tell.

We woke up before the morning light brightened the sky. Dawn was upon us and my mother shifted to her human form. Her skin looked pale, her eyes had large bags under them. I could see the effects the broken mate bond had on her. The effects from having our pack slaughtered had on her body. She was dying. I could sense it, smell it, feel it.

She picked up my furry body and snuggled me close to her chest, running her face against my plush white fur. She looked into my icy blue eyes and smiled sadly with tears in her eyes.

"I love you, Rory." she said out loud and I whimpered. I linked her back to how much I loved her and how I would never break her promise and we left the cave.

We walked for miles before we reached the big sign that said "Cheyenne Mountain Zoo" workers were coming into work, animals were crowing, roaring, and screeching with the first morning activities. It wasn't long before a security guard and workers spotted my mother carrying me. Well, me in wolf form.

"I found this wolf. I got into an accident. I think I hit the mother. I didn't see any other pups. I didn't know what else to do." I could hear the exhaustion in her voice.

"I'll take her. Well, have our staff look her over. Where was the accident? We would like to verify mom is dead and look for any siblings." My mom rattled off a location that didn't make sense to me but she smiled sadly at me.

The guard looked at her with questions in his eyes but he looked at the worker then at me.

"Remember how much I love you, Rory Bug." she whispered in the link and the worker and the guard looked up and gasped.

"Where did she go?" I looked over the worker's shoulder and sure enough, my mom was gone. Likely shifted and sprinted out of there.

I was alone. Truly alone.