

## Chapter 13

Rory's Pov

I ran. I ran from the alpha. I ran and he gave chase. It was a normal and primal action between wolves, especially an alpha and his mate.

I heard his growls and his pacing even beneath the blankets in my nest. It wasn't long before I heard the bang on the door before the thundering footsteps got quieter and quieter. He had left. He gave up. My wolf whimpered within me, not liking how her mate didn't pursue her.

I know doll, I know. I know I said I wanted him to leave me alone. I was so confused. That's what I wanted but why does it hurt so bad that he actually did? Because you want to be wanted, you big dummy.

My eyes cracked open and the first morning rays of the sunrise lled the room. I sighed as I laid my head back on the pillow.

Would I venture out of my room today? Would I continue to hide away? What would I even do if I left the room? What was my purpose here? Was it bad to say I kind of missed my life at the zoo? I love my rooms. I love the comfort. I love the security that I feel in my room. I feel safe here. But what if there was more out there? What if there was more for me to do?

I looked around at the next I built here on my bed and smiled. It was perfect. Comfortable, uffy.

My stomach growled, showcasing how hungry I was. I remembered Samantha had said that the pack usually ate a large breakfast together. I remembered meal times back at the Yellowstone Pack. They were loud, rambunctious, and fun. That pack was my home. My family and I missed them terribly.

You've hidden enough, Rory. Be the brave girl your mother taught you to be.

I sighed, hopped out of the bed and went to the wardrobe. Samantha and Julianna had dropped off a few shopping bags full of clothes since I had been too afraid to leave my room when they went shopping. I missed shopping though. I remember my mother used to always take me and when we were done I would get an ice cream cone and we would see who got a brain freeze first.

The air was a little cold this morning, the snow still covering the ground. I lifted a soft white sweater that reminded me of my fur. I paired it with a pair of leggings that felt like silk against my skin.

Did I need shoes for breakfast? I looked down at the few pairs that were in there. There were tennis shoes, boots, booties, and slippers. There were even a few pairs of heels in there that I was dying to try on. Saving that tidbit for later, I reached for the booties and slipped them onto my feet.

It was a little scary how they got my exact size right. Everything t like it was tailor made for me.

My reection in the mirror made me cringe. I was never a graceful sleeper, even as a child. My copper hair was wild and tangled. It looked like I had been electrocuted. I ran the brush through my hair and splashed some water on my face. My cheeks were naturally rosy with freckles speckled across my face. My eyes were bright and blue like the sky outside.

I found a pouch that Julianna said had makeup in it. I had never really been taught how to put on a full face but I remember playing in my mom's makeup. She would teach me how to swipe on some mascara or play in her gloss or lipstick. Maybe I could bother Samantha to teach me something? Was that a childish whim?

Shaking my head, I grabbed the mascara and coated my lashes and nodded at my reection. It would have to do. I felt pretty. I looked more and more like my mother the longer I studied my reection.

The halls were empty but there was a delicious smell in the air. Sausages, syrup, and so many scents led me to my destination. I was outside the doors that I knew opened up into the massive dining room. There was a rumble of voices inside. So many that I couldn't decipher just how many wolves were in there.

Was I walking into a deathtrap? Was I making a mistake?

A part of me begged to go back to my rooms and consider hiding but an even bigger side told me to woman up. Be the proud omega that you know you can be and show them that you're a wolf worth protecting, a wolf worth keeping in the pack. No one is irreplaceable and it's time that I showed that I am valuable besides what was between my legs.

I took a deep breath and slowly opened the doors. The hinges squeaked a little bit and the voices immediately ceased when I walked in.

So much for that bravado, Rory.

I felt my cheeks ush as I looked around. Everyone was looking at me. There were so many people here. I noticed a higher number of males than there were females and that fact never ceases to make my heart hurt.

I spotted Julianna eating and she threw me a large smile. The twins, James and Jeremy, I think we're their names, looked at me. James was smiling. The broody one, the one who looked like he could break me with just a look, was staring at me with an expressionless look on his face. Samantha and her mate, Kasen were looking at me with proud looks on their faces and she nodded at me when she noticed me. Caroline, one of the pack doctors, stood up to greet me and walked over and grabbed my hand.

"Come, sit with us." she said.

My eyes searched the room until they landed on golden irises. He was staring at me. His st was clenched and his jaw was tight. He had a bit of stubble on his face, his golden hair had that effortless lazy look to it. He probably rolled out of bed being perfect. I wanted to roll my eyes. My attitude needed some work. Shawn stood and looked at the pack before clearing his throat.

"Listen up." he shouted and even if it wasn't already silent due to my entrance, I have a feeling it would have been enough to silence the world.

"This is Rory. She will be partaking in the initiation ceremony later this week. She is to be treated with respect. The same we do with every female. So, without drawing this out, let us welcome our newest pack member. Welcome Rory." he said.

His voice rumbled through the air and brought tingles through my skin. I suppressed a shiver and his lips twitched as he noticed.

There were whispers around. Most of them were: who is she? Where did she come from? She's unmated! There's no mate mark! She's an omega, I can scent her! There were so many that it was starting to become uncomfortable. Caroline noticed and squeezed my hand.

"It's okay, Ror. They won't hurt you. They're just excited. It's been so long since we've had any new pack members, let alone a female. You hold the power here. You're in charge. No one will make a move unless you allow it. For now, ignore them. Focus on healing your heart and becoming acclimated to your surroundings." she said as she led me to my seat.

Unsurprisingly she sat me next to her brother who was at the head of the table. Their parents sat across from me and they smiled and offered a small hello. Their dad, Kasen, gathered some food from the buffet spread out on the table in front of us and set the plate in front of me. He was being kind to me. He reminded me so much of my own dad.

I smiled and bowed my head in thanks both because he was treating me well and because he was the previous King. he deserved the respect. He shrugged me off and grabbed his mate's hand and brought it to his mouth for a kiss. I looked at them with stars in my eyes. I wanted that.

A throat cleared before I snapped my attention away. I refused to look at him. The tender way he touched me last night, the gentleness in his hands as he bandaged my knees soared through my memories. I felt a tinge of pain on my knees as I remembered the incident but they had healed for the most part.

"Enjoy your breakfast." he whispered and as soon as he picked up his silverware the rest of the dining room followed suit.

"Rory, I would like to have you shift today." Caroline said and my heart sped up.

"W-what?" I stuttered before steeling myself. I remembered what Shawn said the last time I stuttered and I tried to shove that feeling down deep where it wouldn't hurt.

"What if I get stuck again? What if I can't change back? What if this is a terrible Idea? I don't think we should do this. I'm not ready."

The rapid thoughts just kept coming and coming and I could feel the room closing in on me. There was a loud purring in my ear and the anxiety cleared, the haze and fog lifted.

I looked around and saw the sound was rumbling from Shawn's chest. I shook my head, breaking eye contact and looked to Caroline. She had a look of sympathy on her face but smiled and placed her hand on mine.

"You will be ne. I want to make sure you are able to shift without any issues. I don't suspect there will be but it's good to check. Julianna will be with us as well. You are safe. I promise."

Safe. I was safe. Maybe if I repeated it enough, I would believe it.