

## Chapter 3

Rory's Pov

I couldn't help myself or my instincts. My belly hit the ground and I whined extending my neck in submission. It was degrading and I hated it but his dominance was overwhelming.

"I won't hurt you little one." he said, crouching down and running his fingers through my fur.

My shaking ceased and my anxiety faded away. I felt calm. I felt safe, which was surprising since there was a male stroking my fur that I had never met. My mother had said to avoid males. They would only hunt females down and the price for an omega was twice as high but something in my gut told me this male was safe. He wouldn't hurt me. He had the opportunity to do so when he walked in here and cornered me. He could have taken me for himself, he could have hurt me, abused me, there were so many possibilities but instead, he was petting me, calming me, talking to me like I was a spooked animal who needed to be rescued.

I guess he could still sell me, take me to an auction for omegas but my wolf trusted this man, my wolf was all I had left in this world and I trusted her completely.

"Good girl." he whispered as I submitted under his demands.

"Charlotte, go and talk to your worker. I will handle the omega from here." he ordered and the woman nodded her head in what looked like a bow and walked off.

My eyes tracked her movements before she and my keeper left the enclosure. I wanted to ask where he was going to take me, what was going to happen to me but all I could do was whine and bark.

"I won't use a leash but you will follow me. Do you understand?" he said instead of asking.

I blinked my eyes and he rewarded me with a smile. He was a beautiful man. His jet black hair and his blue eyes were such stark differences that worked well with his face. He had a coating of stubble along his jaw and a swimmers build. He was tall, lean, and muscular enough to show his strength but not overly bulky like some of the men I had seen prowl through the zoo on a daily basis.

"I don't know why you can't shift, little one, but we'll figure it out. Let's go home." he said standing and walking to the entrance expecting me to follow.

I was a few feet behind him when I felt a nip at my tail. I turned and saw Rosa. She was trying to pull me back to the den while keeping an eye on the mystery man. I saw Alpha standing at the entrance to the den growling at the man. He had his teeth bared and venom in his gaze. Between him comforting me earlier, and now his show of aggression and challenge, it warmed my heart. I was a part of this pack. He was protecting me.

The man turned and bared his teeth back at Alpha. I worried there would be a fight. I worried Alpha would charge at him knowing that a normal wolf stood no chance against a werewolf. I trotted to him and licked his snout. He looked at me and then back at the man and huffed.

"She doesn't belong here." he said, never once taking his eyes off the growling predator in front of him. "I am taking her home. Thank you for protecting her. She is more important than anyone could ever imagine."

My mind raced at his thoughts but Alpha lowered his head before yipping at Rosa. She whimpered towards me but raced to the den.

I promised myself this wouldn't be the last time I saw them. Granted they were only animals but I was part of them. I would miss them. I love them like they are my own family.

"Come." the man said and started walking without looking back.

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I was curled up in the passenger seat of a rather large SUV. He had the heat on and the seats radiated warmth too. He made sure to drive carefully but he never restricted my view. He wanted me to see where we were going.

We had left the zoo an hour ago and were still driving. How far away was his pack? Did he have a pack?

There was a loud buzzing that made my ears twitch before he picked up his phone and answered it.

"Alpha." he said in greeting and I heard a snort on the other line. I couldn't make out what was said other than a few words here and there but the man beside me kept looking at me.

"It's more than we thought." he paused, listening to the voice on the other line. He was clearly speaking to his alpha. I perked up at hearing the voice again. "Are you sure you want this information over the phone? I worry about this news getting out. It's big Shawn. It's...Make sure Juliana, Caroline, Jeremy and your parents are there. No one else. Yes it's that serious"

He looked at me and my ears laid back at his expression. He looked upset and I worried it was towards me. Omegas needed to be praised, they craved it.

He rubbed his hand on my head, smoothing my white fur down before correcting his gaze to the road.

"I don't know who she is. It's too much to explain on an unsecure line. I will be home in 15." he said before hanging up and tossing his phone onto the dashboard.

"I'm not mad at you." he whispered while staring at the road in front of us. We left the highway miles ago. There was nothing but fields, mountains and trees surrounding us.

"There's just so much riding on us finding you. So many females have gone missing, or..." he started before shaking his head.

"Finding you is a miracle. One we weren't expecting but you're in danger. All females are. I take my job very seriously. I feel protective of you. More so than most. No one has seen a female omega that hasn't been claimed in over 10 years. Most have been hunted, auctioned, claimed or missing. You are basically an endangered species on your own. How did you end up in the zoo, little one?" he asked before realizing I was still in my wolf's skin.

"You are a pretty wolf though, Shawn will like you." he spoke of his alpha so casually. They must be close. What was his rank?

Alphas could be kind and gentle like my alpha from the Yellowstone pack but that did not negate the fact that more and more were driven mad because of the witches, the lupine plague and the war. Some alphas were mean, some were downright cruel. Some you couldn't be near because they were like rabid animals waiting for the proper moment to rip out your throat. I whimpered at the thought.

"Shawn is good. He's troubled, hurt, and has been through more than anyone could ever imagine but he is good. He won't hurt you. None of us will. You are safe, little one."

He slowed before turning off the road onto a dirt path. The road was lined with large magnolia trees. There were so many of them you could hardly see anything but the road in front of you.

I stood on my paws as best as I could in a moving vehicle. I looked at my surroundings. At the white blossoms on the magnolia trees. They were beautiful. Ironically he rolled down the window sensing that I wanted to observe without the glass between me and them. He chuckled as I sniffed and scented the air.

"Welcome home." he said as we broke through the treeline.

My jaw dropped as I dropped into a sitting position. The home he spoke of was huge. It was like a modern day mansion. It looked to be about 3 or 4 stories high and made out of stone. It had to have hundreds of rooms in there!

There were guards and sentries everywhere. There were statues and a large water fountain but what shocked me the most was the crest of the Royal Family engraved into the stone on the house and on the signs around the home. This wasn't just a pack. This was the Royal family. This was the Royal Pack. This was where mother was taking me before deciding to leave me at the Zoo. Did that mean that my gut was wrong? Did that mean that these wolves couldn't be trusted?

My heart rate was rising and my nerves were going haywire. The man, I still didn't know his name, tried to calm me but I was beyond comfort.

He got out of the vehicle before making his way towards my side when I noticed the front door opened and a group of people were standing there staring at me. There was a tall man and woman with their hands clasped and concerned looks on their faces. There was a woman who looked to be in her late 20s, maybe early 30s with her arms wrapped around her middle and a blanket draped on her shoulders.

There was a large man standing beside her. He had bulky muscles and I couldn't help but notice he was a perfect clone of the man who had picked me up. Twins. They were twins! I could sense his aura from here. He was pure unadulterated aggression. He must be a warrior.

My eyes trailed down the line before they froze on one man. If I thought the twins were large, then this man was a mammoth. He had blonde hair that was cut close to his scalp but long enough to run his fingers through and tangle in. He had brown eyes that reminded me of the earth and land around us. He had a chiseled jaw and sharp cheekbones. He was handsome. He was easily the most beautiful man I had ever seen.

A pang hit my stomach and a severe case of longing hit my heart. I wanted to be close to this man.

My door was opened and I jumped out of the SUV landing on my paws as gracefully as I could after such a long drive. I scented the air but the only one I could pick out was the man that I was drawn to. Cinnamon, and a musky smell. I loved it. I wanted to smell nothing but that for the rest of my life.

I trotted closer, the man who picked me up keeping pace with me. Everyone was looking at me. Their stares made me uncomfortable but none of them seemed to be malicious. I didn't smell ill intent in the air. Their scents screamed curiosity to me.

The beautiful man's nostrils flared before he stiffened. His body locked up tight before he looked at me with a face of sadness and regret and then anger.

"No" was all he said before turning around abruptly and marching into the house. The door slammed and my body jolted and I whimpered.

What just happened?

I looked at the man who I had spent the last few hours with and he was looking at the front door in shock. I backed up a step, then another, and another. Before I knew it my rear hit the cold metal of the SUV before I crouched low and hid under it.

I curled into a ball and wrapped my tail around my body and draped it over my nose. I didn't know what just happened but I knew it wouldn't be good. I knew that it wasn't good for me at all.

My heart felt heavy and I didn't know why. My soul felt crushed. My wolf whimpered and I allowed it.