

## Alpha's Rejected 12

### Chapter 12 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Amber POV

The next day couldn't come fast enough for me. I spent the whole day in a daze, using my free period to type up a resume. The second the final bell rang, I was out of my seat and flying to my locker, ignoring the disgusted looks sent my way. I was so used to them by now, that it didn't bother me. I slammed my books into the locker, grabbed my bag and resume, and trotted off home to get changed into what I liked to call, my professional clothes.

Thank god Sophie hadn't come home. I wasn't in the mood for more of her mocking or taunts. She must have gone off with her friends somewhere. Good. I quickly darted into the shower and rinsed off, washing myself in a hurry and then getting back out. Then I dressed and put on some casual makeup, not wanting anything too heavy. I was just dropping off a resume after all, not going to a job interview. But I had high hopes of getting this job, even if I was in a sea of applicants. I had experience, even if it was at a diner, while other young shifters, couldn't very well say the same.

I hurriedly skipped down the stairs, resume in hand, Maria pausing in her dusting to observe me. She gives me a tight smile.

"Wish me luck Maria," I tell her excitedly, "I'm off to apply for another job."

"Another one" Maria repeats "aren't you tired from working at the diner?"

I move closer to her. "I need to get some money together before I'm married off to some spoilt rich kid who wants a trophy wife" I confess in a whisper "mother and father are insistent I start dating and get myself gone."

Maria looks angry now. Then her expression turns sad. "If I could take you with me child I would, but your mother and father would fire me and I would have nothing," she says quietly "and I have my other children to think about." She shakes her head "your mother and father. . ." she starts to say indignantly and then stops.

I rush to reassure her. "It's alright Maria, once I have enough money I'm gone. Don't worry about me, worry about your little ones. I'm going to be fine."

She doesn't look convinced but offers me good luck anyway on my way out. I wave goodbye, feeling sad for her. Maria has been my absolute rock, taking care of me and Sophie since we were born. She's like the mother I wish I had. But she was right. She would be ostracised if she took me in and out of work. My father would ensure she never worked again and she needed to take care of her babies. I would never let her try to help me in that way, not when it put her and her family in danger.

I walk briskly, grateful for the cool breeze. I really need a car, but that's on the list of expenses I've made a list of. Right now, I could use my legs and walk to school and work, it wasn't too far. Besides, if I bought a car, my parents would get suspicious or realize I had a way of escaping. It was the last thing I would buy, just before leaving.

All too soon I reach the bookstore. To my relief, the sign still reads 'Help Wanted' in the window and I open the door and step in, inhaling the smell of fresh books and the utter cleanliness of the store. The old man behind the counter eyes me, a bewildered expression on his face. His name tag reads 'DOUG' and I give him my friendliest smile.

"Can I help you miss?" he asks quickly.

I put my resume on the counter. "Actually, I saw the help wanted sign in the window and wanted to apply for the position. That is if it's still available."

He smiles and takes the resume, perusing it carefully. "It's still available, so far you're the only one who's come forward with a resume. But are you sure that you can handle two jobs at once?"

I choose my words carefully. "I would be fully committed to both jobs and would make it work. I could really use the money and I love this bookstore. I used to come here all the time."

He nods. "Well you have experience with a register, so I'm assuming I only need to give you a basic once over with it. There's no need for a uniform but what you are wearing is preferred. When can you start?" he asks rather eagerly.

I stare for a moment, unable to digest his words, thinking maybe that I'm daydreaming. But it's real. My mouth opens of its own accord and the words come out "I could start now if you wanted me to."

He gives a low whistle. "Now that is enthusiasm. Alright then, come behind the counter and I'll show you how to work the register. I have a contract for you to sign as well" he said, "this place needs some young blood."

Fifteen minutes later and I was behind the register, a name tag on my blouse and a contract signed and dated in my small handbag. Doug was nearby watching and I began to grab the duster, dusting some nearby shelves while keeping an eye out for customers. I also began to tidy them, making sure they were in the correct order and that the authors' names were alphabetical under each category. Doug was impressed. "Thanks, that's multi-tasking, and good of you. I don't often get to tidy the shelves unless I'm putting up new inventory" he admits "and even then it's just the one or two shelves at a time. Listen, do you think you could handle things for an hour or so while I go out the back and check on my stock? You can always come to get me if there's a problem."

"Sure, I'm more than happy to."

He nods and disappears through the back, leaving me in charge. I happily continue to clean and sort books, greeting the odd customer or two that come in.

When the doorbell pings again, I turn around, duster in hand, a smile on my face, ready to greet the next customer, fully expecting it to be a woman like the last few have been. I couldn't have been more wrong. Instead, my mouth opens, but no words come out for a minute as I survey the hunk in front of me like he's my last meal on earth. My mouth is salivating and I'm fairly certain I'm drooling at the man. This is shocking because he's the most intimidating man I've ever seen.

He's a god, was all I could think as I stared dumbly at him. He had the blackest hair, with tiny silver strands in the front, the most piercing dark brown eyes, and was tall, with muscled arms that were clear to see, even under his business jacket. He had tiny scars across one cheek and he smelt divine. I briefly wondered what kind of cologne he was wearing, to have that sort of effect on me. I felt drawn to the man, for reasons I couldn't explain, my eyes raking over him with something akin to lust. It took a minute before my mouth finally started working.

"Welcome, is there anything I can help you with" I stammer and want to facepalm myself in embarrassment.

Smooth, real smooth Amber.

He gives me a genuine smile, his eyes twinkling slightly, looking a bit bewildered. "To be honest, I actually came here to pick a book up for my niece. She loves to read but I wouldn't know where to begin."

"Okay," I say with a dry mouth "how old is she?"

He thinks for a moment. "I believe she's eight" he admits "or maybe nine?"

"What is she into? Does she like fantasy books? Adventure, horror, romance?"

He shudders "not romance. Maybe fantasy or adventure would be more suitable."

I lead him over to the fantasy section and begin to peruse the shelves, hoping that the bookstore has the author I believe may be the perfect option for this man's niece. Aha. It's there. I reach out and grab hold of the book, showing it off to the customer.

"Alanna, The First Adventure by Tamora Pierce" I explain quietly, willing my voice to stop shaking. "I think she'll love this series, I did as a kid growing up. It's about a tomboy who wants to be a knight, but can't be because she's a girl. In the end, she switches places with her twin, who's a boy, and pretends to be him, in order to become one. It's really good" I tell him enthusiastically, reminiscing about when I used to love the books.

He takes the book and examines it, reading the description with a raised eyebrow. Then as I watch, he grabs the rest of the series as well off the shelf. My mouth almost drops open again in shock. He sees the curious look on my face.

"Nothing more annoying than starting a book and then waiting for the next one. Might as well get the lot for her."

I readily agreed. I hated having to wait for the next book in a series, but then I was impatient when it came to reading books and could devour one in a day if I had the time. Unfortunately, due to working in the diner, I hadn't had much of an opportunity to pick one up and start reading it.

I led him back to the counter. "That will be \$249.99," I tell him, flinching a little at the price.

Would he balk at the price? God, I still felt butterflies in my stomach every time I looked at him. What was it about him that made me want to lean over and kiss him, right then and there? Instead, I busy myself as he begins to rifle in his trouser pocket, pulling out his wallet without a fuss and using his card to pay. I package the books up nicely for him.

"I really hope she likes them," I tell him sincerely, wondering if I'll ever get to set eyes on the man again.

"I'm sure she will," he says huskily "thanks a lot for your help."

"You're welcome. Have a good day and we hope to see you again soon" I tell him automatically, blushing bright red as he gives me a wink and then grabs the books, heading out the door.

My nerves are completely shot. I almost sink to the ground in horror. My god, what had the man thought of me? I'd been eyeing him like candy. He probably couldn't wait to get away from me, he was just being polite. My thoughts were whirling around and around in my mind, going a thousand miles a minute. Thankfully Doug hadn't come out of the back to witness his employee drooling all over a male customer. It was so unprofessional. I berated myself fully for a minute, telling myself off in no uncertain terms.

But I also couldn't help but feel disappointed. I was certain he was just passing through on his way to another town, which meant the likelihood of seeing him again was almost nil. I could have cried with frustration. I was distracted though when Doug came back out to help with a sudden influx of customers. I helped him to close up and headed home that night, in the cold, in the dark, my head bowed down against the wind. Nobody was home and I eagerly showered and crawled into bed, completely exhausted, falling asleep the second my head hit the pillow. But my dreams were full of him, both of our bodies entwined together naked, his lips kissing mine as he claimed me. Too bad it wasn't real.