

Chapter 8: One Way

I didn't know where to go at first. I couldn't stay with the other Packs around the area because not only will it still be much too close to River and the White Howlers, but they will also likely not be so welcoming towards me.

So that's how I ended up here.

The airport.

Various humans gathered in the area, hustling and bustling to go to wherever their ticket said their destination was. It's been a while since I've been around mostly humans, but it wasn't anything new to me.

Earlier I looked out of place with two large bags, this time I looked just like everyone else. Some even had more.

"Hi, where is your destination?" The lady with a wide smile asked just after she finished typing something.

I blinked at her unsure. Maybe I should have figured out where I was going before I went to buy a ticket.

Chapter 8: One Way

Stupid.

“Um...” My thoughts scrambled in my head thinking of another country and I looked up front, where posters of different continents were plastered on the walls.

Asia. Africa. North America. South America. Europe. Antarctica. Australia.

I've never been to another city besides Tromsø here in Norway, let alone to another country, but I've seen other places on television and on the internet.

And then I saw the USA and my mind wandered off. They call it land of the free. I don't know a lot about it, but since I already spoke English then it might be my best and most comfortable option.

“What are the warmest countries in the USA?” I asked the lady and she didn't even look slightly confused at my odd question.

I guess here, people unsure of where they wanted to go weren't so new. Thankfully.

“There's Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Texas...” She began to enumerate cities I've never heard of in my life.

Chapter 8: One Way

“Arizona—”

“Arizona,” I repeated. I don’t know why, but out of all the other places she mentioned, that one somewhat stuck to me. “One ticket to Arizona, please.”

“Will that be a returning ticket or just one way?” She asked.

“I...” I paused as I thought about it.

“One way,” I told her with a sure smile and she nodded her head.

A few minutes later, I was already holding on to a ticket and was seated in the waiting area.

It was then that it started to hit me. I was leaving.

I never planned on going anywhere as I felt comfortable here, but because most wolves are likely to travel outside of their respective woods at some point due to a national or international affair, I had all my documents ready. I didn’t know how handy that would become to me one day.

I tightened my hold on my ticket and my passport, but managed to snap out of it before ending up

Chapter 8: One Way

tearing one of them. Things were changing so fast that I could barely keep up. My emotions were on a high and my mind was boggling with uncertainties.

Suddenly, my stomach grumbled, and that made me remember I hadn't eaten since breakfast this morning.

Fortunately, I spotted a small stall that was selling pastries and coffee. That would really hit the spot right now as I doubt I'd be getting any sleep any time soon.

As I stood in line, I pulled out a small wallet where all my money was and a disheartening realization dawned on me.

I can't afford to spend on other things. I mean, I still had money, but considering the fact that I'd have to find a place to stay when I get there and get myself sorted out before being able to earn money, I needed every penny I had.

I took all of the money I earned in the Pack and hoped that it would be enough for me to at least get a headstart for a few months and because of that, I needed to prioritize my spendings.

My stomach grumbled even louder and I hoped to

Chapter 8: One Way

the goddess no one heard it. Sighing in defeat, I was about to walk out of the line when a woman came up to me.

She had a warm smile and an even warmer look in her green eyes. She was much older than me, probably around her mid-forties, but she still had a youthful glow. Her hair was a dark red giving her a somewhat fierce look, but she didn't look intimidating. In fact, she had more of a motherly expression that reminded me of Syvne's. At least, before the incident.

"What would you like, sweetie?" She asked and I tilted my head at her confused.

"The food. I saw you were in line, but you went away."

I shook my head. "Oh, no, no. It's okay. I, um, I'm not buying anymore. I'm not really hungry." I was embarrassed that I couldn't buy anymore so I tried to act as if it wasn't because of money problems.

She looked at me with a small smile as if she knew that wasn't the case. "You're not buying anything because I am. So, what will it be?"

I looked at her shocked and kept telling her that

Chapter 8: One Way

there was no need for her to do that, but she was much more persistent. Naturally, I ended up giving in.

With an apple pie and an americano in hand, we found a spot to sit together.

"I really appreciate this, Miss, um..."

"Doctor Elisha Silverstone," she said with such effervescence. She was a doctor. No wonder she carried herself with so much knowledge and grace.

"But you can just call me Elisha, and the pleasure is all mine. Tell me..." She paused as if waiting for me to give my name.

"Keira," I told her with a timid smile.

"Keira, beautiful name." She said which made me blush instantly.

"Tell me, Keira, where are you headed?"

Something about the way she asked the question made me wonder if she meant to ask my literal destination or something else, something deeper.

I decided to give her the literal answer, anyway.

Chapter 8: One Way

"Arizona. I don't know exactly where, but just there." I told her honestly and her eyes brightened at my answer.

As it turns out, she was headed to the same place and to top it off, she actually lived there. The coincidence was surprising indeed, but equal parts comforting because in such an unfamiliar place, I think I may have found a friend.

Elisha and I talked more, like a lot more. How Arizona was and everything about her life there. She was very talkative and open about her whole life story. In my case, I tried my best to tell her about who I was but sparing the wolf details, of course.

"Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry you had to experience that, sweetie." She took my hands and stared at me in comfort after I told her about River. At least, bits of it. I took out the parts about the abuse.

I translated the story into one where he fell in love with somebody else after our years together and in order to start anew and leave all of that behind, I chose to leave the country.

Chapter 8: One Way

"I'm sure he'll regret it. You seem like the most wonderful young lady and I'm really glad I met you," Elisha said as her eyes twinkled with gratitude.

"Oh I should be saying that! You've been so incredibly kind. If everyone in Arizona were like you, I'm so happy I chose the place." My smile widened.

Just then, an announcement that our flight was boarding echoed in the area.

Elisha and I have only been talking for about half an hour but it felt like months that we've known each other. I hope to be able to bump into her once I've become more settled in Arizona.

"It was really such a pleasure to meet you, Elisha. I'm a little bummed out that we couldn't have more time together, but maybe someday we can meet again."

"You know what?" Elisha spoke as I was gathering my things to head to the plane.

"I just had an idea. I don't usually do this, but I feel like you're my daughter. Granted, I never really had

Chapter 8: One Way

kids, but I've always wanted one and I feel this sort of connection with you." She says and I had no idea where she was going with this but I was equal parts thrilled and curious.

"Keira," she says softly before placing a gentle hand on my shoulder. "Would you like to come live with me in Arizona? I would love to take you in and help you up your feet."

I gasped and stared at her wide-eyed, unable to believe that she had just said that because it just seemed so... surreal.

When I thought my life was ending, it turns out it was just beginning.

"I really don't want to be a bother or impose myself, Elisha..." I told her shyly, but as always, she insisted.

Eventually, we came to an agreement and the next thing I knew, she was changing my ticket to business class and we were seated next to each other.

It's true that when one door closes, another one opens. I was excited.

Chapter 8: One Way

Excited for all the possibilities and the opportunities that were going to come my way.

Elisha had already told me that when we get there, she can sign me up for a nursing course. It wasn't too hard and I can have a part time job on the side. She was willing to sponsor me and in the future, I can give it all back for however much I wanted to give back.

She was like an Angel that came down to Earth.

"Would you like some snacks? We have some pepperkaker (gingerbread cookies) and serinakaker (butter cookies)," the flight attendant asked me.

"Serinakaker, please." I told her, excitement brimming as butter cookies were my favorite.

I remembered Skye again as we used to make them for Christmas every year. This year though, I won't be able to. I sighed as I hoped that Skye would be feeling much better now.

Pushing away the sad thoughts, I opened up the pack and was getting ready to dig in when I inhaled the smell and suddenly felt like puking.

What the fuck? Is it just me or did these biscuits

Chapter 8: One Way

smell like fish? Are there fish flavored butter cookies? Is that a thing?

“Oh, ew...” I pushed it away, but even so, the smell lingered in my nose and was starting to crawl down my throat, the urge to puke getting stronger by the second.

“Keira? Is there something wrong with your cookies?” Elisha turned to me worried.

“I- I don’t know. It kind of smells weird. Would you mind checking if it’s expired maybe?” I passed her the pack and she sniffed it.

When she didn’t show any signs of disgust, I knew that something was off.

“It smells fine to me, sweetie. Why don’t you try it again?” She hands it back and although hesitant, I try it again.

Bad idea.

The smell completely takes over my body and I reject it completely.

“I think I’m going–” I couldn’t even finish my sentence before realizing that I needed to get out of my seat so I unbuckled the belt and sped off to the

Chapter 8: One Way

nearest bathroom.

There, I puked what felt like my guts out. It was awful, but at least the fish smell was gone.

While washing, I heard a knock on the door.

"Sweetie? Is everything alright?" Elisha asked.

"Everything's fine, Elisha! Thank you! I think it's just plane sickness." I told her, but I wasn't really sure.

"Oh honey, I don't think it's just that. Open the door," she said and though I didn't get what she meant, I opened the door and she was standing there with a box in her hand.

"Use this," she said before handing it to me.

"What's- " I looked at it for one second, saw the giant 'pregnancy test' on it, and pushed it back to her.

I shook my head at her in denial. "Oh no no, it's nothing like that. No, no." I kept telling her no, but she just looked back at me with that knowing smile yet again.

"No... It can't be..." I repeated to her, but deep down

Chapter 8: One Way

I was starting to think of the possibility and honestly, it was highly likely.

Two weeks ago my period stopped, but I brushed it off as a normal occurrence. It happens once in a while, I told myself. Wynter and Elura went through the same thing, maybe not as long, but it happened.

Back then, the idea of being pregnant hadn't been the least bit terrifying to me. In fact, I would have accepted it with open arms because who wouldn't want a pup of their own? Especially with the love of your life?

Right now though, after losing everyone I loved and those who I thought loved me back, the knowledge of having a baby all by myself was the most terrifying thing in the world.

"Take the test, sweetie. Just to be sure." Elisha passed me the box again and closed my hand into a fist.

Nervously, I went back into the bathroom.

My feelings were all over the place.

I didn't know if I wanted this for myself because I

Chapter 8: One Way

know deep down that so many others would consider this such a blessing or if wanting this for me was cruel and thoughtless because for someone who grew up without her real parents, why would I let my own child go through something like that even if it's just without a father?

And even then I felt guilty for even thinking that I didn't want the baby that was already likely in my stomach.

Oh my goddess, I didn't know what to do.

Those five minutes seemed like the longest and hardest time of my life as I waited for the pregnancy stick to show the result.

Trembling, shaking, and sweating profusely, when the timer on my phone alerted me that it was time, I slowly opened my eyes to take a peek and that's when I saw it...

A few hours ago, my whole life had transformed into a full 360. I thought I would never find my way back again.

Now, I've found another reason to keep going. The most important one.

Chapter 8: One Way

PREGNANT, the test showed in all capital letters.

I sucked in a lungful of air, closed my eyes, and placed my hand on my belly.

Whatever the future holds for us, little pup, we will get through it together. And I swear to you, with all my life, that I will never let that man come for you or us ever. I'm going to be the greatest mother to you, my baby.

I promise.



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