

## Chapter 95

As the first rays of morning sunlight filtered through the curtains, Nicole gradually opened her eyes, greeted by the warm glow of a cosy home. The scent of freshly brewed coffee and delicious food filled the air, teasing her senses and awakening her appetite.

To her surprise, she found the young girl, Emily, sitting by her bedside, watching her with curious eyes. Nicole offered a weak smile, still feeling a sense of unease about her own identity.

"Good morning," Emily chirped, her voice filled with innocence. "I'm glad you're awake. What's your name?"

Caught off guard, Nicole hesitated for a moment. She didn't want to reveal her true name, fearing the repercussions it might bring. Instead, she decided to offer a different name, one she conjured on the spot.

"My name is Charlene," Nicole replied, her voice gentle yet tinged with a hint of uncertainty.

Emily's eyes widened in fascination. "Charlene! That's a pretty name. I'm Emily, and this is my family. We saved you."

Nicole's heart swelled with gratitude as Emily led her to the dining area, where the rest of the family eagerly awaited her arrival. The parents, Sarah and David greeted her with warm smiles, while Lucas, Emily's older brother, offered a shy nod.

"Good morning, Charlene," Sarah said kindly. "We're so glad you're feeling better. Please, have a seat."

The table was adorned with a delicious spread of breakfast dishes, steaming plates of pancakes, crispy bacon, and scrambled eggs.

The mouthwatering aroma filled the room, making Nicole's stomach growl with hunger. She took a seat, feeling a mixture of comfort and apprehension.

"Thank you all so much for helping me," Nicole expressed sincerely, her voice filled with gratitude. "I can't express how grateful I am."

David smiled warmly. "It was the right thing to do. We couldn't leave you there in such a vulnerable state. Besides, our pack is known for its hospitality and compassion."

Nicole nodded appreciatively. "Which pack is this? I'm not familiar with the area."

Sarah exchanged a brief glance with David, a hint of caution in her eyes before she spoke. "We belong to the Silverwood Pack. We're a close-knit community that looks out for one another. But forgive us if we seem a little cautious. We have to be careful, especially with strangers."

Nicole understood their hesitation, given her own mysterious circumstances. She decided to share a version of her story that wouldn't reveal too much, concealing the pain of her past that still lurked in the recesses of her mind.

"I... I was attacked by a group of rogues," she began, her voice tinged with vulnerability. "I lost my way in the forest while trying to escape. I can't remember much about who I am or where I come from."

Sarah's eyes softened with empathy. "That must have been terrifying. But you're safe now. We'll do everything we can to help you."

Lucas, who had remained quiet until now, spoke up, his voice filled with curiosity. "Do you remember anything at all? Your family or friends?"

Nicole cast her gaze downward, her heart heavy with the burden of her forgotten memories. "I'm afraid none at all. It's all a foggy haze in my mind. I wish I could remember, but perhaps it's for the best. Maybe it's a chance for a fresh start."

Emily reached out and placed a small hand on Nicole's, her eyes sparkling with innocence. "Don't worry, Charlene. We'll be your family now. You're not alone anymore."

Tears welled up in Nicole's eyes as she looked at the genuine warmth and acceptance radiating from the family before her. She couldn't help but feel a glimmer of hope and a renewed sense of belonging.

"Thank you," she whispered, her voice filled with sincere emotion. "I'm grateful to have all of you."

Throughout the meal, the family engaged in light-hearted conversation, sharing stories of pack traditions, their adventures in the surrounding forest, and the beauty of their home. Nicole found herself immersed in their warmth, a sense of belonging settling within her.

Nicole's heart swelled with gratitude as she observed the closeness of the family. Their love and acceptance touched her deeply, creating a sense of belonging she had never experienced before. As the meal came to an end, she offered to help clear the tables, wanting to contribute in some way.

But Sarah, ever the nurturing mother figure, gently shook her head. "No, Charlene. You've been through so much. Please, take this time to rest and recover. We'll take care of everything."

Nicole hesitated, gratitude and a twinge of guilt warring within her. "Are you sure? I don't want to impose."

David smiled kindly. "It's not an imposition at all. Rest is important, especially for someone who's been through what you have. We're happy to take care of you."

Reluctantly, Nicole acquiesced, giving them a grateful nod. She made her way to a comfortable chair in the living room, sinking into its embrace, her thoughts swirling with a mix of appreciation and curiosity about what lay ahead.

Just as she began to relax, her tranquillity was shattered by the abrupt entrance of two guards and several warriors, their presence filling the room with tension. Nicole's breath caught in her throat, her heart pounding with a mixture of fear and uncertainty.

The leader of the group, a stern-looking man with piercing eyes, fixed his gaze on Nicole. "You there! You are needed by the Alpha. He has ordered that you should come see him immediately. Come with us."

Nicole's voice quivered as she managed to speak, her voice laced with trepidation. "W-Why? What does the Alpha want from me?"

The guards exchanged a quick glance before one of them responded in a stoic tone. "We were given specific orders to bring you to the Alpha. They didn't disclose the reasons, but it's important."

Sarah and David exchanged concerned glances, their protective instincts kicking in. Sarah stepped forward, her voice filled with apprehension. "Is everything alright? Why does the Alpha want to see her?"

The guard's expression remained impassive. "I don't have the answers. It's not my place to ask. We're just following orders."

Nicole's heart raced as she contemplated the options before her. She could refuse, but that might only escalate the situation. Reluctantly, she made her decision, her voice barely above a whisper. "Okay, I'll go with you."