

The Broken Warrior's Daughter

Chapter 1: Cara

As I walk through the halls of my high school in between classes, my fellow warriors call out to me. I wave and acknowledge them in response. Jason, my best friend, jogs to catch up to me. “Hey Little Badass, what are you doing after school?”

“Jason, don’t call me that. I hate that name.”

“Well, I’ve got news for you, the whole squad is calling you little badass after that stunt you pulled yesterday, so you better get used to it.”

I stop in my tracks and look at Jason. “Tell me you’re joking!” By the look on his face, I see he’s not joking. Well shit!

“Anyway,” he continues, “after school?”

“Oh right. I’m doing my usual, hanging out with dad.”

“And by ‘hanging out’ you mean training? That’s your secret right, you get to train with the biggest badass that this pack has ever known?”

I stop and look at my long-time friend. Out of the corner of my eye, I see Alpha Rik with his entourage of females. “I see the harem continues to grow,” I nod my chin in Alpha Rik’s direction, ignoring Jason’s question about training with my dad.

He’s right, I do train with my father. Every day. I know my path, it’s been set for me since the day I was born. My job is to be the strongest, fastest, most powerful warrior in the pack, better even than my mom and dad. My legacy is to one day protect the Alpha, just as my father did.

My only problem with that is our future alpha doesn’t even know who I am. What kind of alpha doesn’t know the daughter of the man and woman that are the sole reason that he and his family are alive? My parents’ sacrifices are the reason he is able to be the man where he chooses to be. And lucky me, one day I get to protect that piece of...an alpha.

Don't get me wrong, I understand the alpha's desire to show off how great he is. It's what alphas do. And if I'm being honest, Alpha Rik has it all. Midnight black hair that he wears nearly to his shoulders. His full beard and mustache trimmed in a long stubble. And those eyes, a startling color of blue, like a glacier, that stand out in his tanned skin. His broad, muscular arms and shoulders sit well on his 6'4" frame which slides into a sharp V at his waist, sliding into narrow hips, rounded out by strong, muscular legs that pants and jeans can't hide. Every unmated female of age in our pack and every other nearby pack hopes that they have a chance to be our future Luna. And if not the future Luna, at least to have the possibility of becoming the gorgeous alpha's girlfriend and maybe being taken as a chosen mate, hence the harem.

I watch as he stands among his members, showing nothing but arrogance and strength. Even his name means brave. Strong and brave. It's a thing with our alpha family. The men are all named based on origins meaning courageous or brave. And, so far, it's true. Our pack is strong, one of the largest and definitely the strongest in the country. Our Alpha is a powerful force, leading by example. But he's also kind and fair, exactly what you want in the leader of your pack. Our future alpha, however, well, let's just say the jury is still out on that one. He's definitely strong. I've watched him train, he's a beast. Alpha genes will do that for you. Unlike me, I have to be smarter and work harder than any alpha if I'm going to be his protector. Not only that, but I'm a relatively small female in my slight, fit 5'4" frame. But that just means that my opponents tend to underestimate me. My fellow warriors have learned that I'm not an easy target. I've defeated all of them at one time or another. I've earned their respect, along with Alpha Anders'. He provides our training in the morning before school, which is when I attend. The afternoons, when the other warriors train with Alpha Rik, I train with my father.

I, however, refuse to be one of Rik's crowd of admirers. Maybe it's my own arrogance, but I will most likely be his guardian someday. I have no wish to be just another mark on his bedpost. And really, have some respect, if not for yourself, at least for your future mate. We all have a mate out there. And I have no intention of offending my future mate by being in a long line of short relationships or worse a long-term, serious relationship with someone else. I've chosen my fated mate before I've even met him.

'It's a good thing we're in agreement on this one' my wolf Artemis says, 'I wouldn't forgive you if you offended our mate. I can't wait to turn 18 so we can find him.' My wolf is much more excited about finding our mate than I am.

Once I turn 18 and step up as guardian, I will have to spend an inordinate amount of time in Rik's presence. Unless, and this is key, I meet my mate and he is from another pack. Then my allegiance moves to that alpha. It's because of this, that I know Alpha Anders really hopes that my mate is from our pack. My father and I are the biggest reason that our pack is the strongest in the country. However, I've been flirting with the Alpha of the Shadow Falls pack, Alpha Liam, for nearly a year now. He is a bit older than I am, at 24. He hasn't met his mate yet and he knows that I'm waiting for mine. He's been respectful of my decision, but persistent in his attention.

I realize I've zoned out and Jason is still talking to me while I've been staring at Alpha Rik. Suddenly, he must feel my eyes on him as he looks right at me, his ice blue eyes staring holes into my soul. It's like a buzz of electricity. What the...what was that?

I feel Artemis purring in my head.

'Artemis?? What the hell?'

'I honestly don't know, maybe it's because he's an alpha?'

'Seriously? Not you too?!'

'It's instinct, I can't help it.'

I shut her out and drag my eyes away from the magnetic pull that is Alpha Rik to turn my attention back to Jason, 'I'm sorry, what was that?'

"Cara, are you even paying attention to me?? I said, yes, the harem continues to increase in size as Alpha Rik gets closer to his 18th birthday, you know they are all hoping they will be his mate."

"Yes, but 'there can be only one'" I say, giving him my best highlander impression. Jason is a sucker for old school Highlander movies.

"Good one", he says, wrapping his arm around my neck and dragging me off to my next class, which is also his class.

We pass a couple other pack mates who all call me little badass. Great, Jason wasn't kidding.

“Just accept it Cara. If the nickname fits...”

“Yeah, fine, not like I have much of a choice anyway.”

“That’s the spirit. So, anyway, back to my original question.”

“Which was...” I ask, dragging out the ‘was’.

“Seriously Car? I asked what you are doing after school.”

“Oh right, sorry. Well, it’s Thursday. You know Alpha Anders always comes and has dinner with my dad and I on Thursdays. So, after training, I’ll be making dinner, then homework.”

Ever since I can remember, Alpha Anders comes to have dinner with my father on Thursdays. I think it’s his way of showing his appreciation for my father’s sacrifice. Honestly, it’s gone a long way to helping my father stay connected to the pack. After my mother died and dad lost the use of his legs, he asked Alpha Anders if we could leave the pack. I think he wanted to try to live among humans. Instead of agreeing to let us leave, Alpha Anders had a house built on the edge of the pack territory. That way, we’re still pack members, but dad doesn’t have to be involved in all of the pack activities, see the warriors training or wolves running in the woods surrounding our pack lands. We are still under the protection of the pack and we help to monitor our portion of the northern boundary. It gives my dad a sense of purpose within the pack, or at least I think it does.

“I forgot it was Thursday” Jason replies. “Well, are we still set for clubbing tomorrow night?”

“Yep, always ready to blow off some steam.”

“Excellent!”

I sigh as we walk into class.