

The Broken Warrior's Daughter

Chapter 6: Rik

Mom and I arrive at the memorial for Lily Nelson. It's not the only one here, we memorialize all of our warriors and pack members that give their lives for the pack. However, Lily's is the largest. Mom had them create a stone statue of a woman with angel wings keeping watch over her wolfpack.

Each week, we bring several different types of flowers and plants to the memorial site. This week we have some poinsettias, winter jasmine, winter aconite and snowdrops. As always, mom walks up to the statue and places her hand on the joined hands of the statue and quietly says, "Thank you Lily for your sacrifice. I told you I'd never forget and I never will."

We begin quietly working around the area, removing snow, pulling out the plants that are dead or dying and replacing them with the new ones that we've brought.

"Mom, have you ever met the Nelson's daughter?" I ask.

"Cara? Sure honey, haven't you?"

I look over at her and shake my head, "I don't think so. I know I've never been introduced to her. What's she like?"

My mom continues her work as she answers my question. "She's a sweet girl, quiet, and smart." She stops and looks up at the statue, "She looks like her mother, but has her father's eyes. Lily was a strong and beautiful woman." A soft smile plays on her lips, her eyes seeing a distant memory. "She didn't take crap from anyone, including your father."

I stop and look at her, "What??" This was news to me.

Mom chuckles as she resumes her work. "I remember this one day, your father needed some warriors to go with him to another pack that was making threats to ours. He planned to give the pack one last chance to change their mind about going to war by reminding them of the strength of our warriors. Lily was pregnant with Cara at the time and so your father thought it best if she remained behind." She starts laughing and presses her hand to her stomach as she continues, "She told your father that being pregnant didn't make her any less of a Guardian

and if he thought that he would be leaving her behind when they were giving a show of strength, then he had another thing coming. He tried to give her his alpha command which didn't work, so she challenged your father to a battle, saying that if he won, she'd stay but if she won, he'd stop this and let her go."

My mom had started staring off into space again, lost in the memory. I interrupted her silence, "So, I'm guessing that he didn't win?"

My mom started laughing again, "Didn't win? Lily had your dad pinned in under 15 minutes. I'd never seen anything like it, before or since. Your father was so strong and sure of himself that he couldn't believe it. Clint just sat back proudly and watched his wife take your father down like it was nothing. So, they went to the other pack, Lily included, showing that we not only had a strong alpha, but also two Guardians at full strength, and the other pack's alpha backed down.

When they got back, your father assigned her to me and later to me and you as our Guardians."

"What happened to the other pack?," I asked.

"The alpha was greedy but not smart and definitely not as strong as he thought he was. Soon thereafter, he challenged Alpha Leander knowing that the pack didn't have any Guardians and thought that made them weak. Alpha Leander won, the other Alpha was killed and the pack and lands were absorbed by the Shadow Falls Pack."

I look at my mother. How had I never heard this story before? "Wait, Alpha Liam's father defeated the alpha of the pack that wanted to attack us? Why didn't dad just fight him and take over the pack?"

"Your father didn't want a war, as I was pregnant with you at the time. He was afraid that something might happen to me, you, or both of us and it was not a risk that he was willing to take, and he didn't need to. At the time, our pack was the largest and strongest in the country. That war with the Shadow Falls pack and the subsequent absorption of the warring pack is what allowed Shadow Falls to become the largest in the country, but we've remained the strongest. They paid a heavy price though. That was when they lost Leander's mate and Liam's mother, Luna Estella. He was only 6 years old at the time. Leander was never the same after he lost his mate. He held on as long as he could, but when Liam turned 16, he finally gave up and let the Goddess take him."

"Liam has had a hard road and took over as Alpha at a very young age. It's a lot for a young man to take on, but he has handled himself and his pack very well. Your father offered to mentor him and he was and is agreeable. It's why we have such a strong alliance with them even today."

I couldn't imagine being the Alpha of my pack for two years already. My life has been relatively easy compared to Alpha Liam's. I'd never given much thought to when he became alpha. I remember hearing of his father's passing and him taking over as alpha, but I was only 10 years old then and didn't think much of it. Now, I couldn't imagine taking over my pack while mourning the loss of my father, having already lost my mother.

I mull all this over while we walk back to the packhouse. When we return, mom asks me to join her in her office. This is not good, since that is where I get all my 'talks'.

We enter her office and she goes to the side board and pours us both a glass of wine. "Have a seat son."

I take a sip of wine and look at my mother. "Have I done something to upset you mother?" I ask.

Instead of sitting, she stands at her window overlooking the back of the packhouse and the surrounding forest. "I know about the girls Rik," she states but still doesn't look at me.

Shit! I thought I was being careful, how did she know?

Before I can come up with a response, she turns to look at me. "Surprised? I am the Luna of this pack. What kind of Luna would I be if I didn't even know what was going on right under my nose?"

A smile briefly touches her lips before it's gone again. "Honey, you're going to be the Alpha of this pack soon. Hopefully, on your birthday, you'll find your mate and you can finally settle down. But, as a woman, I can tell you that you are setting yourself and your mate up for a rough road if you continue to have a rotating door of females from this pack in your bed. Take it from me, the role of Luna is hard enough without having to deal with jealous, spiteful females in your pack trying to find ways to make you look or feel inadequate. I understand you are a young alpha male, but if you're going to continue with this, at least consider

females from outside the pack, so your future Luna doesn't have to see your previous lovers daily or worse, hear all about your time with them."

This had to be the most uncomfortable conversation I've ever had. I look at my mom, a woman who is kind, loving, gracious and fiercely protective and loyal to her pack. She is everything a Luna should be and exactly what I hope my mate is.

I reply the only way I can. "I hear you mother, and I understand what you are saying. You are right, as always. I want my mate to be happy here and I certainly do not want us starting our life together with any misunderstandings or concern for my previous behavior."

She smiles at me as she walks over to give me a hug. "I love you, my sweet boy. And yes, you will always be my sweet boy." I smile and hug her back. "I love you too mom."

Before she lets me go, she has one more parting comment for me. "And please, as much as I want grandbabies, I want them when the time is right, not with some passing fling. Keep it wrapped up."

"Mom," I reply, letting all my uncomfortable irritation from this conversation enter my tone, "you didn't raise me to be a dummy. And might I remind you that I'm almost an adult, I know how to wear a condom and do, every time."

Mom pulls back slightly and looks at me, "Ok honey. Sleep well."

"You too mom." I make my escape before she can say anything else to make me uncomfortable.