

## Ch 7

Jay-la POV

Nathan had decided to join her and the children on their walk around the pack. He slipped his hand into hers as she took that first step towards leaving his side. Jay-la didn't stop him from holding her hand. But it didn't stop her thoughts from earlier either. He wanted to spend time with the triplets, to bond with them. Hadn't stated he wanted to spend any time with her, just the children.

The playground outside was a no go, it was covered in snow and was likely going to stay that way as well for many days. However, there was plenty for the triplets to do inside the pack-house. Over in the entertainment zone on the ground floor on the southwestern side.

There she found a lot of children playing in there, the weather outside was harsh at times, and it was likely that school had been cancelled today.

Jay-la saw many of the children turn and smile up at their Alpha, heard him clear his throat over a few of them calling him Alpha, didn't really understand that, should be the normal. She watched him introducing the girls and Nate to several of the children who looked to be their age. Jay-la encouraged them to go and play, to make some new friends. That would be good for them.

She saw the girls sitting down to play a board game with some of the children and Nate simply stood behind them to watch. He didn't know any of the children here, was likely worried that someone might run into or knock over one of his sisters.

"Does he always do that?" Nathan asked her.

"Yes," Jay-la nodded "He has always looked out for the girls. They are smaller than him."

"Very protective, it's very much an Alpha thing to do." He commented as he leaned up against the wall, and then tugged her back towards him. Found his arms around her waist, she wondered if these children knew who she was, had not heard him announce her to the pack. He might not, she thought absently. He was more concerned about bonding with his children.

She moved her eyes to Rae-Rae when she heard her chuckle, and saw her eyes light up. When Michael walked into the room, he excused them to go off who knew where. Likely just to spend private time together. She did look very happy with him.

"I need to start working on her prenup this evening."

"Do they really need one?"

"Yes." Jay-la stated atly, the girl was human and from an extremely wealthy family, regardless of how much money this pack had a prenup was expected. She would attend it with everything in favour of Rae-Rae as was expected of her, seeing as she was the girl's lawyer.

"I don't think it's necessary," he commented.

"I don't really care, that's what Lauren and Tony and her grandfather want, so she'll get one."

"Jay-la."

"Nathan." She mimicked him, and he dropped the subject.

Jay-la returned her eyes to her children, to find Nate watching them. He was close enough to hear what they were talking about and her tone. He was also not smiling at all, even here amongst the other children with a lot of things to do. Or other kids to get to know, he was still just standing right behind the girls. She felt Kora huff 'he's unhappy.'

'I know, he wants to know why his father was never around.' Jay-la agreed with her.

'And is now here all of a sudden.' Kora was watching her son as much as Jay-la was.

'Yes, he doesn't understand.' Jay-la knew that the only way to resolve this issue was going to be to tell him why and what happened. There was only one problem with that. It was also likely going to further alienate the boy from his father. Nate, she knew, did like having a room full of things, but at the same time. He didn't understand it, seeing as he'd never had a father.

Just how he could have a room full of things waiting for him, and not only for him but also for his sisters as well. Likely he was curious about how they could have that, and why they had that, seeing as Nathan was never around.

She tried to step away from Nathan only to have him pull her once more back against him, turned and frowned up at him "Why do I get the feeling. You're not comfortable with me holding you like this around the children?" he asked her as he looked down at her, kept his voice soft.

"They're not used to seeing it." Jay-la answered simply. She knew they weren't. The only person they'd ever seen her sit with in any way like this, was Tim.

"Then they need to get used to seeing it. I want to be able to hold you when I want to. I like it. So does Havoc, for that matter."

"It is too soon, is all. They don't know you." She shrugged, she also didn't really know him anymore. Found herself conflicted as well. Sometimes she liked it. Other times she didn't understand the reason behind it. Didn't trust him, she realised. Was mated to a man she didn't wholly trust. That could be bad at some point.

She went back to watching the children, watched as the girls got up to go with the other children to play another game further into the room, as Nate followed them as well.

"The girls are okay with me. Why is Nate not?" Nathan asked.

"I'd ask him that." Jay-la answered "Probably has questions he wants answers to."

Heard him sigh on the heavy side "He asked me again, where I was. I don't exactly know how to answer that question."

"I would advise you do it truthfully." Jay-la shrugged, it was likely the only thing that Nate would accept as well.

"I don't think, that would help me to bond with him." He murmured, sounded a little annoyed to her.

"Probably not, but lying to him won't go down so well either, now will it?"

"Jay-la...we need to talk about this, and a reasonable compromise, something that won't see blame laid on either of us."

She turned and looked at him now. "Blame either of us? Are you thinking of telling him it's my fault?" even she heard the hard edge and the slightest of Kora's gravel in her statement, he was the one who had banished them. Kora didn't like that thought anymore than she did herself, was letting him know it by adding herself to her words.

"No." he shook his head slowly "I do not blame you Jay-la. I do understand that this situation is my doing."

"Good, because if you think for one second, you'll be telling my children. I left and never returned of my own accord. I will not hesitate to state the truth to them, exactly what happened. I can guarantee you, that they will take mine and Kora's words over yours."

"That is not what I said. You don't need to get defensive."

"Don't I?" pulled herself right out of his arms and stared hard up at him "It sounds an awful lot like you've thought about stating it is my fault."

"I have not and will not be. Calm down, Jay-la." He was frowning at her now.

"Perhaps I don't want to." She muttered and walked away from him, walked herself right over to stand next to Nate, he still wasn't interacting with anyone other than his sisters, smiled down at him gently "Nate why don't you and I go play that game over there, the girls are ne." She motioned to a gaming console in front of a TV screen. It was showing the latest Sonic game.

He nodded up at her, then leaned down and told his sisters where he would be, and she held out her hand for him to take and walked him over there. She could feel that Nathan's eyes were on her the whole time, hadn't left her from the moment she walked away from him.

She sank down next to Nate. "Now you'll have to help me." She smiled at him.

"It's not that hard mum." He shook his head.

"You'd best go first." Jay-la handed him the remote control. "Show me how to play."

"Alright." Nate nodded, and started a new game for them to play. "We'll play livies."

Jay-la smiled, it was a game they had at home, one the three of them played and shared playing like she was doing now with him. "Are we going to live here now?" Nate asked quietly a few minutes later.

"Yes." Jay-la answered him honestly "It's going to be a big adjustment, I know. I'm sorry about that."

He was quiet for a long while and then said softly "Are you scared...if you try to leave, you'll get hurt again? Is that why we have to be here?"

Looked right at him. "No." she sighed "Why would you ask that?" it was an odd question to come from him.

"I saw the news," he answered, "heard other adults talk about it at school as well."

Jay-la sighed and wondered just how much he had seen, or understood. "It's a bit difficult to explain Nate. I will, but not here. In private, how about after dinner?"

"Okay." He nodded "Will he be there?"

Jay-la turned and looked around the room. Nathan was no longer leaning against the wall, he was sitting with Lilly and Rosalie, with Lilly in his lap actually. Though right at this minute his eyes were on her. He didn't look too happy at all either, he had obviously heard what Nate had just said.

"It is likely." She nodded, turning her eyes back to Nate. "Perhaps he can help explain what happened."

"How badly injured were you really?"

Jay-la hugged him "I wish you didn't have to see that." And it was the truth, she hadn't wanted them to see that, but living in the human world came with its own set of awws, and healing up at wolfen speed was just something you couldn't do. If she'd known back then, what she knew now, she would never have allowed any of them to see her like that. Not even Rae-Rae or Lauren and Tony, no one at all.

Unfortunately, she couldn't take it back. The three of them had seen her injuries, and it sounded to her like Nate was fully aware of where she had been, here, when she had gotten those injuries. Nate he believed Nathan had seen her, though she had not done that to her himself, he had been the one to have her kidnapped and she had sustained those injuries trying to escape the men that had taken her.

Technically, he was responsible for them. She'd only known what he'd yelled that day: 'the worst of the worst.' How could she be expected to know any different? So, of course, she would have fought for her very life, ght to get free. There was no other option, not with what she'd heard him say, and then had woken up after being drugged and was bound by silver being transported back to the pack.

She didn't know if the girls needed to be involved in the conversation that needed to be had. She didn't think so. They seemed ne, more than happy to have a dad and they liked him. Maybe it was just Nate who had seen the news and overheard the adults at his school talking about it.

She had tried to make sure that they didn't see the news, had tried to make sure that they he had seen it. Though he was just 5, if Nathan's name had been said on whatever he was watching, and she was certain that it would have been. He understood exactly who this man was and now knew where her injuries came from.

He clearly thought she was staying here out of fear. That was not going to be a good thing. How was she going to convince him otherwise? Their lives had been turned upside down and she'd been kidnapped, injured and scared, he'd seen her, stressed out, freaked out and then completely broken and was now certain he believed Nathan for all of it.

Explaining it to him was still not going to ease his mind, she didn't think, because it all, did lead right back to his father, even her banishment had been made by that man. Their lives had been quiet and settled, until the day she'd been recalled back to the pack. Then it had just been all turmoil, moving and changing the triplets' school out of the blue. That had just been the start of it.

It was likely that Nate himself was actually scared to be here. She was going to have to find a way to undo that, before there was any chance of him being comfortable here inside this pack, or around his own father for that matter. Was going to have to think about just how to do that.