

Game of Destiny - Chapter 4 Chapter 4

Chapter 4

I looked in the rear-view mirror and saw how exhausted and sad I looked. I tried to brighten up as I got close to the pack border. The wolves manning the booth knew my car by sight and just gave me a little wave as I drove by. No doubt they had seen or heard what had happened, I thought. Usually when I left the pack territory I got a feeling of longing. It was a physical reaction that let you know you were leaving your pack. This time, I felt lighter as the miles between me and the pack steadily increased. I headed into the closest town that had everything I needed. First stop was the bank. I was eighteen now and I withdrew all my savings I had earned from working in the pack's sawmill, all the birthday money I had saved over the years and, with a heavy heart, the savings account my parents had started when I was born. All in all it gave me a good sum of money. Enough to let me stay on the road for as long as I had planned and still have some over for a clean start somewhere else. The next stop was the car dealership. The car I had was a gift from my parents when I got my driver licence. It was a little over a year old and had rarely been driven. But it was an electric car, not ideal for long, cross country road trips. I traded it in for a Volvo that was a little older, but looked to be in good condition. I transferred all my belongings into my new car and got back on the road. I wasn't trying to hide, or to disappear, but on the other hand I wasn't going to announce to the world where I was going either. That could be because I had no clue. My plan was to get as far away from Virginia as I could.

I had been driving for most of the day and I felt the exhaustion in my bones. I hadn't slept since the previous night and I knew I would soon be a danger to myself and others on the road. I found a small gravel road leading into a dead end in the middle of a dense forest. I stopped there, warmed a can of soup and forced myself to eat it even though I had no appetite. I then shut myself in the car, made myself as comfortable as I possibly could with my blanket wrapped around me. My family would have found the note hours ago, and I wondered what they were doing. I cried myself to sleep.

The days were all the same. I drove as far as I could. I stopped to get gas, food and use the bathroom. Once in a while, I slept in cheap motels so I could shower. But most of the time, I slept in my car or outside under the stars. The only thing changing in my routine was the landscape outside the car. From lush forests to grasslands, to deserts and finally I found myself on the other side of the country. I parked my car by the side of the road and stepped out, ending up in the middle of a grass field of flowers. On the other end of the field there was a dense forest, and far in the distance tall mountains stretched up towards a summer blue sky. I drew in a deep breath and some of the tension I had carried with me for almost two weeks left me. Somewhere along the way, I had come up with a goal: Oregon. There was only one pack in the state and they had their territory on the border to Nevada. If I stayed in the northern parts of the state, I would most likely never run into a werewolf. I was going lone wolf. It was the best thing for someone like me, I had decided. Since I didn't have a wolf, I had no urge to shift. I

could blend into the human society without too much trouble. That would also minimise the risk of running into other wolves. They tended to keep away from humans if at all possible. I needed to find a job and some place to live, preferably before winter. But that gave me at least two months. I could do it. It would get my mind off the throbbing ache in my chest. It wasn't as sharp of a pain as it had been the first couple of days, but it didn't go away. It was just a constant reminder of what I had lost and why I now needed to prepare for a life as a lone wolf. A lone wolf was not the same as a rogue. The werewolf society had shunned a rogue. Often because of a crime they had committed. A rogue could be killed by anyone, anytime. A lone wolf was a werewolf who had decided not to live in a pack. They still lived by the laws of the werewolf world and if they came across other wolves, they respected the built in hierarchy. It was just as bad to kill a lone wolf without cause as a member of a pack. But finding someone who cared enough to call someone out for doing it, on the other hand, would be difficult. A lone wolf could also re-enter the pack life without permissions from anyone other than the pack that accepted them in. A rogue could only become a member of a pack if they had the permission from the council or from the pack that made them rogue. I took out my new phone, I had sent my old phone back to my parents as it was on their plan. Now I had a new, cheaper one with a prepaid SIM-card. I pulled up a map of the state and started scrolling over it. I decided to head north-west and see where it would take me.

Two days later it took me into a sleepy little town. It looked to be the backdrop for one of those Hallmark-movies my mother loved. The main street was lined with two-story buildings with shops on the bottom floor. The town was located where the plains met the forest and had the towering mountains in the background. The air was clear and the town seemed filled with happiness and joy. This was a place where I could heal, I thought. As if faith and the gods agreed with me, I saw a sign for help wanted in the window of the local diner. I walked inside and could smell the mouthwatering combination of the different traditional diner meals.

"Hey miss, can I get you something?" an older lady asked me as I got close to the counter.

"Hi, yes, I saw the sign in the window and wondered if you are still looking for someone?" I asked. The woman stopped what she was doing and looked at me.

"Are you over eighteen?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Run away from home?"

"No ma'am," I lied.

"Graduated high school?" she asked. This wasn't going the way I had hoped.

"No, ma'am. But not far off. There was this thing that happened and my family..." I stopped talking and looked down at my hands.

"I'm sorry dear," she said with a heavy sigh, and I realised she had got the wrong impression. But I didn't correct her. "I'll give you a trial period of a month. If it works out, I'll give you permanent employment. But, if you work here I want you to study for a GED. That's not negotiable," she said.

"Yes, ma'am. Thank you. I will make sure to work and study hard," I told her. She chuckled.

"That's good dear. Call me Mrs Jones, everyone around here does. What is your name?" she asked.

"I'm Amie Sage, nice to meet you," I said, using my nickname and my mother's maiden name.

"Well Amie, if you are planning on sticking around, do you have a place to live?" she asked.

"Not yet. I saw a motel on the outskirts of the town. I was thinking of staying there until I found something."

"Don't do that. It's not in the best condition. Tell you what. My sister owns the bakery a couple of houses down. She owns the apartment on top of it as well. Her last tenant just moved out because she got married and my sister hasn't been able to find anyone new to rent to yet. How about the two of us walk over and I'll introduce the two of you," Mrs Jones said.

"Thank you. That is so nice of you," I said. This was turning out better than I expected.

Two days later, I was moving into the apartment. It didn't have much in the ways of furniture. But Mrs Andresen, Mrs Jones' sister, gave me a tip on two good second hand stores in the area. I had started my job as a waitress in the diner the day before. Everyone has been so nice to me. It almost felt like being part of a new pack. The diner mostly had local guests, patrons that came in regularly to order the same food and to exchange gossip. Mrs Jones explained they got tourists during peak season. It was everything I had dreamed of and needed.

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