

Game of Destiny – A Thrilling Tale of Power, Love & Fate

Chapter 55

We were back in the council building. Amie stood beside me and we both waited. For what, we didn't know. On the other end of the waiting area, stood my brother and his Beta. Every now and then, my brother locked eyes with me.

'Don't let him get to you,' Amie mindlinked me. I looked away from my brother.

'He is up to something,' I told her.

'Of course he is. He wouldn't have brought this to the council unless he thought he had something to tip the council in his favour. There is no use trying to figure it out while staring at him. We will know soon enough,' she told me. She was right. But I still shot my brother a sideways glare. Just so he would know, I knew. 'Honestly. It's like you are five,' she added when she saw it. But there was amusement in her mindlink. The door to the council room opened and we were asked to enter. This was not the room with the long conference table. Instead, the council was sitting on a raised platform which was slightly curved, all in one row facing us. Amie and I were shown to a pulpit to the right, my brother and his Beta were shown to a pulpit to the left. Behind each of us, two of the council warriors stood.

"Thank you for heading our summons. Alpha Ryan from the Ocean Shore pack has made a request for the council to force the Blue Mountain pack to merge with them as it has its origins in their pack. We will hear from Alpha Ryan why this request has been made. Then we will let Alpha Finlay respond to the request. The council will have the right to ask questions of both Alphas and their Betas until we feel we have the information needed to make a decision. Do any of you have questions regarding the procedure?" the head of the council asked. All of us remained silent. "Good, good. Then, please, Alpha Ryan. Tell us why you have filed the request."

"Thank you. I want to start by thanking the council for taking my concerns seriously. About eight years ago, my father, Alpha Johannes, was killed defending the pack from a rouge attack. The alpha position went to me as his oldest son. My father trained me my whole life to be ready for this responsibility. My younger brother, Finlay, did not like the change." I felt Amie tense up beside me and saw how she glared at my brother. He had not used my title and it rubbed her the wrong way. Her reaction calmed my own. My brother could call me whatever he wanted. A true Alpha didn't need to rely on what people called him. It was in his actions.

"Alpha Ryan, you should use your brother's title. Respect is important, it is a founding stone in our society," one of the council members corrected him. I looked at the older woman in surprise, as did my brother.

"Of course, I apologise. Old habits, he is my little brother still. Alpha Finlay objected to the change when my father passed away. It was hard for the pack and it was hard for our family losing my father so unexpectedly. I think my brother's grief got the better of him. It's the only explanation I can give for his erratic behavior. Alpha Finlay knew he could never beat me in a duel so instead he persuaded parts of the pack to break off and leave. I have asked him, several times, to stop being stubborn and return home. I have tried to tell him he is putting his pack members, wolves I still consider being under my protection, in danger by living as an unranked pack. Alpha Finlay has refused to listen, and this past fall what I had warned him about happened. Another pack attacked Alpha Finlay's. It resulted in three of their pack members' death, amongst them their Beta, Martin. Martin was one of my former pack members and his family still is a part of my pack. Their grief has moved me deeply. It is time for my brother to stop this tantrum of his and take responsibility. I have requested the union of the packs as a way to keep the wolves I, and my pack, still care deeply for, safe," he finished. His little speech left me worried. He had mixed lies and exaggerations with enough truth to make everything believable. In this moment, I hated him for what he was trying to do to my pack. And I was worried that I didn't know why he was doing this. It seemed to be too insistent to be simply because his ego couldn't handle that we left his pack. There was more behind it. I just hadn't figured out what.

"Thank you, Alpha Ryan. Alpha Finlay, you may speak to what your brother just told us," the head of the council said. I nodded slowly, taking a moment to gather my thoughts.

"Thank you. As my brother says, this is not the first time we have broached this subject. I even remember he tried to make a similar request of the council a couple of years back, but it didn't even go to a hearing. There is truth in Alpha

Ryan's words but there are also falsehoods and exaggerations. If we go back to before our packs split, after our father died, Alpha Ryan took over the Ocean River pack and as expected, things changed. The changes worried me as I saw the weaker members being pushed aside. I was not alone in my worries and I talked to my brother about it several times. He was not willing to listen and it came to the point where I considered challenging him to protect those members of the pack. I wasn't afraid of challenging him, I wasn't sure of a victory, but I believed I had a good chance. My mother pleaded with me not to challenge him. She had just lost her mate, I didn't have the heart to make her lose a son as well. That was why I applied to the council to form my own pack. I did it all by the book and when it was approved, I did not force anyone to come with me. I left my brother's pack and all who came with me did so of their own free will." I had to pause to take a breath.

'You are doing great,' Amie mindlinked me.

"I won't say it was easy. The journey my pack has taken has been hard at times. But it has also brought us closer together and made us a strong pack. In the end we found land which suited us, we have built a new life there. A good life. We

have been successful and have been able to expand our land four times. We have accepted new members, both as pack members have found mates, but also by taking in lone wolves and other wolves who sought a new life. We were attacked this last fall, we did lose three of our members in the attack, including our Beta. Martin was like my brother. I mourn him, as does the pack. But he died honourable defending his pack, a pack he loved and dedicated his life to. To bring this request in front of the council at this point feels meaningless. My pack has survived for eight years as unranked. We are now participating in the game and when we leave in a month, we will no longer be unranked. Instead, my belief is we will be one of the higher ranking packs. All of this makes my brother's objection to my pack mute," I said. I saw some of the council nodding.

"Alpha Finlay makes a good point. Alpha Ryan, do you have a reply to it?"

"I don't agree with my brother's faith in him leaving with a high rank. Just look at the team he has brought. One of the males is as skinny as a twig and he has chosen a female as his Beta. That should tell you how weak his pack is," my brother said with disdain in his voice. I took all of my self constraint not to growl as he insulted Amie.

"This council has seen more than one great female leader. Alpha Finlay, any comments?" the head of the council asked.

"Many. Beta Armeria has my full support and she is beloved by the pack. I will leave it to her to tell you why she is qualified to be my Beta," I said and looked at Amie.

"Thank you, Alpha," Amie said with a slight bow to me. I had never seen her so formal before. But it suited the situation. I had no doubt she would do amazing.