

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

Chapter 65

I knew Finlay was worried about me when I headed off for my girls' night with Becky. I could only imagine that he feared James would leap from the bushes or something. Me wanting to stay away from James was why the idea of a picnic had seemed the best option. We would meet in a neutral part of the woods and not tell anyone except Elder and Finlay the exact location. It gave us both security and peace of mind to relax. Becky stood waiting for me at our meeting spot, we both had a basket in one hand.

"How are you feeling?" she asked as we walked the final way to the spot we had selected.

"Fine. It has almost healed completely. I should be as new by the next game tomorrow," I told her.

"That is good to hear." There was a pause.

"You don't have to think about what you say," I told her.

"Are you sure? I don't want to just push around and be insensitive when it comes to sore subjects," Becky told me as we put the blankets down and started to retrieve the food and wine. I sat down and leaned against a tree.

"I'm sure. This situation is strange for me as well and my connection to James complicates things. But I don't want it to come between me and Elder and me and you. We just have to do the best we can and I'm sure there will be some awkward moments. We will just deal with them. I think it would be worse if we try to tiptoe around things," I told her.

"Sounds reasonable," she agreed as she handed me a glass of wine. "So what is going on between you and Alpha Finlay?" she asked. I almost choked on the wine.

"Wow. You jumped straight in," I said. She gave me a huge smile.

"Oh, come on. Spill the beans. It's obvious something is going on. He watches over you like a hawk and that roar he let out yesterday when you got hurt. Very alpha-mate-vibey," she said. I took and bit down on one of the pierogies I had helped Matilda make as a way to give myself time to think about my answer. I decided to tell her the truth.

"And now we are in the middle of this mess and I feel guilty because I haven't rejected James, because I feel like I'm betraying Finlay. But with the looming threat of a forced reunion of the packs, I just can't," I ended my story.

"Wow. So you got here thinking he would find his mate and discovered you had one instead? I can see how that might mess with you. I don't envy you, especially not with the way James is behaving," she told me.

"What do you mean? James has been no trouble at all. Except for what you told us yesterday, thank you for that by the way, he has stuck to our agreement. I'm guessing because he wants this as much as I do," I told her. She took a bite out of a finger sandwich and shook her head.

"That's because your brother has been telling him to keep away from you."

"What?"

"Elder thinks that if James did as he wanted, and tried to contact you, it would end in a physical altercation between James and your Alpha. After seeing how the two of you act around each other and after what you have told me, I agree," she said. I looked at her.

"But why? I mean, I can hardly feel the mate bond if I'm not next to him. But you are right. Finlay would not accept him coming around." She giggled.

"I don't think James feels the same way you do about the mate bond. Look, I didn't know him before all this happened. I have only known the post-rejection James. The James I know, and like, is a serious wolf which has a hard time relaxing, even a harder time to drop the Alpha-facade he hides behind. Elder tells me he didn't used to be like that," she told me. I shook my head.

"No. It doesn't sound like the James I knew. He had a serious side, but mostly he was just confident and carefree. Loved to joke around. He and Elder could make my life miserable with their stupid pranks," I told her.

"I have heard some stories," she said with a grin. "He changed after the rejection. Everyone, including your brother, thought it was because of how the pack reacted, how much he had to work to earn back their respect. Now, I don't think it was because of that. I think he has been regretting his decision all this time but his stupid pride has not let him admit it. Men. Alpha men, five times as bad. Trust me, my dad was an Alpha and I have four brothers. All have the Alpha-gene. What I'm trying to say is, now he has you within reach, the bond is still in place and I think James sees it as a chance to undo the past ten years."

"But he can't. They happened," I insisted.

"I know. I'm with you on that one. I'm just not sure James is. And he has a claim on you through the bond. I think he has a hard time separating between what he wants to happen and what will happen."

"What a mess," I said with a sigh.

"Yeah," she agreed. We sat in silence for a moment.

"So, when my brother told you all these stories from when we were kids, did he ever tell you about the disaster on gravel hill?" I asked.

"I don't think so."

"Oh you would have remembered if he had. It's one of my favourite stories about Elder. He absolutely hates it."

"So, will you tell it to me?" she asked.

"Of course I will. Someone has to make sure you know the real Elder. I was about five so Elder had to have been a little over seven. It happened on that big gravel pile by the communal parking area," I told her.

"I know which one you're talking about."

"When we were little, the older pups loved playing King of the Hill on that pile. Of course it was James' and Elder's favourite game to play. And since I wanted to be just like my big brother, I wanted to play as well. Elder told me I was too young, which really pissed me off, but instead of throwing a tantrum, I used my puppy dog eyes on him. They never failed and he said I could join them if I were careful. I promised and we had so much fun. I don't really remember what happened. I only know I lost my balance and ended up sliding down the entire pile of gravel. By the time I stopped at the bottom, my hands, knees and chin were scraped and were bleeding. Elder and James were in full panic and thought I had died. When they saw I was alive, they started fussing. I just stood up and told them I was done playing and wanted to go home. Elder came with me and when he saw our mother he started bawling his eyes out. It must have been quite the shock for mom. One child bleeding and the other one crying as if he was about to die. Elder wailed about what a terrible brother he was and that I had got hurt because of him and he should be the one bleeding, not me. We both ended up sitting on the kitchen counter, eating ice cream while mom tended to my wounds and dad gave us a talking to about not scaring our mother like that. Elder never let me go close to that gravel pile ever again, not even when I was a teenager," I told Becky.

"That explains why he won't let Mino near the thing," she said.

"Aww, that is so sweet," I said.

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"Why does he hate the story? It's a nice one about how much he loves you," she asked.

"That's not how he sees it. He sees it as a story about how he failed me."

"Right, he hates losing control. He thinks if he can control everything, he can make sure no one gets hurt," Becky said. I nodded. It was good to know she knew my brother.

"Yeah, he has the biggest heart," I agreed. We continued to swap stories. Becky showed me a ton of pictures of my adorable little nephew, and I showed her pictures of Martina and Rose. It was an amazing evening and it was getting dark as we packed up our things.

"Amie?"

"Yes?"

"I'm about to ask a huge favour of you, and probably a really unfair one," Becky said.

"We are family, you are allowed to do that," I told her. She smiled.

"I just want you to know that I'm aware of what I'm asking of you. Before the games are over, could you talk to James?"

"Talk to him?" I asked.

"Yes, just talk. I don't want you to forgive him, or choose him over your Alpha or anything crazy like that. I just think he needs a real chance to talk to you. To straighten things out before you reject him and walk out of his life for good," she explained.

"I will think about it," I said.

"Thank you. I like James, and I like him as an Alpha. I would hate for this to mess him up," I nodded. I thought about it all the way back to the cabin. It was late by the time I got back, all the windows were black except for the kitchen one. As soon as I walked in, I could feel Finlay's scent. I found him sitting at the kitchen table, he had been reading but put his book down as soon as he sensed me.

"Did you have a good time?" he asked as he saw me.

"I did," I told him and walked over to where he sat. I showed him the pictures of Armino which Becky had sent to me. "I have the cutest nephew." Finlay smiled.

"You do," he agreed.

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"How about you? Was it a relaxing evening?" I asked.

"It was. We played Mario cart. I beat Sam," he told me proudly.

"So you won?"

"I beat Sam," he said again. I giggled.

"Who won?" I asked.

"Ramses, by two points." I continued to giggle and sat down next to him.

"Becky asked me for a favour and I think I need to do it," I told him.

"Is it a secret favour?" he asked after a moment's silence.

"No. I just don't know if I will hurt you if I tell you." I could see the frown on his face.

"Tell me anyway. It will hurt more if I found out from someone else." I nodded.

"She asked me to talk to James. Not to take him back, or to forgive him. Just to clear the air," I told him. I could see the effort it took him not to growl, and I was proud of him for not going with his first reaction.

"I don't like it," he said.

"I know."

"But you are going to do it?"

"I think I am. I feel terrible about it because I know how much you hate the idea. But before all of this, James was my friend, and even if we will never be as good friends as we used to, I would like to see if we can salvage something. If for no other reason but because it would make it easier for me to keep in touch with my family. The Eagle Forest pack is a good pack. It would be nice to have them as allies," I told him. He gave me a smile which didn't reach his eyes.

"Don't feel bad, Red. If you think this is the best thing to do, I trust you have considered all the options. I might not like