

Chapter 8

I couldn't believe I was sitting in the truck of an Alpha I hardly knew heading towards an unknown pack. I must be losing my mind to have accepted his crazy offer. He must have been even more insane to make the offer in the first place. What Alpha offered someone without a wolf a place in their pack? An insane one, that's who. And I, as the idiot that I am, then agreed to get into a truck with said insane Alpha. I had suggested I could take my car. That way I could drive myself back if, no, when I turned his offer down. But Finlay had insisted it made more sense to drive together. That way, we could keep getting to know each other.

"If your pack has only been around for two years, you haven't ranked yet?" I asked.

"No. We didn't leave our old pack until just about two years after the latest games," he told me.

"That sucks," I said.

"It does," he agreed. There was a pause in the conversation where I watched the forest outside the window roll by. "Since I have got you to come with me and you don't really have a choice, maybe I should tell you about our history. It's bound to come up, so it's better you are prepared," Finlay told me in a cheery voice. I tensed up. That didn't sound ominous at all.

"Sure," I agreed.

"Have you heard of the Ocean shore pack?" he asked and I snorted.

"Have I heard of the pack that has ranked in the top three for the last hundred years? Yes, I have," I told him. He gave me a little smile, but it wasn't his usual relaxed one.

"Alpha Johannes was my father," Finlay said, and I was in shock. One of the most powerful Alphas in modern times was Finlay's father? He had belonged to the Ocean shore pack and left? My curiosity peaked. "My father was a great and powerful Alpha. But he had a cruel streak, something he knew and kept at bay. He only let it out when he was dealing with rogues or in times of war," he explained. I nodded. It wasn't unusual for Alphas and Betas to have more flexible consciences. "He passed away a little over two years ago. It was a rogue attack that ended badly. He was injured while rescuing some pups gone astray."

"I'm sorry," I said. It didn't feel like enough, but I had nothing else to offer.

"Thank you. It was a hard time. My brother, Jason, became the new Alpha as he was the oldest. I didn't mind, I had always known that would be the case. Jason had the same cruel streak as my father, but he didn't control it like my father did. Instead, he let it take over. I didn't want to see it at first, but in the end I couldn't turn a blind eye. My instinct was to challenge him for the role of Alpha. But my mother begged me not to. She had just lost her mate and didn't want to see one of her sons killing the other. I had to obey my mother's wishes, so I asked the council for permission to form my own pack. It was granted and when I told my brother, he lost his temper. He declared me a traitor of the pack and forbade me from entering the pack land again.

Before I left, I offered every pack member the chance to join me. Almost half of the pack left with me," he told me.

"I'm impressed. That took a lot of courage," I said. I got one of his genuine smiles in return.

"I don't know about that. If I would have known what I was getting myself into, maybe I wouldn't have even thought about doing it. Do you know how much paperwork there is when running a pack? I mean, there are droves of it," he joked. I laughed as I understood the need not to linger on subjects that left you exposed for too long.

"Not as much fun as you had thought?"

"Not even a little. And then there is the constant need to listen to the pack's concerns. 'Alpha, his apartment in the pack house is two square inches bigger than mine', 'Alpha, why doesn't he love me?', 'Alpha, why is the sun brighter than the moon?'. I tell you, there is an endless stream of questions and opinions," he told me. I laughed as I could tell he didn't hate it half as much as he let on.

"Has the pack been able to settle down?" I asked.

"Yes, we pooled our resources and could buy a good amount of land. It took some time to get the houses built and to establish a good relationship with the local authorities. But now we are finally seeing the rewards of the hard work," he said.

"And do they know you are bringing a stray home?" He laughed at my

question.

"I told my Beta, Martin, and my Gamma, Sam. I asked them to inform the pack we will have a guest stay. If I know my pack, they will all be excited about the prospect of getting to know you," he said. "How do you feel about it?"

"To be honest, I'm nervous. It's been a long while since I've been in a pack," I admitted.

"Don't worry, it will be like riding a bike. I can tell you have a good, solid upbringing on how to be a wolf. I wouldn't have brought you back if I thought you wouldn't be a good fit," he told me. I nodded.

We continued to drive for miles until the afternoon. The mountains that had been a backdrop in the town I lived in, were now right in front of us and the thick forests spread out like a carpet all around them. Finlay turned off from the main road and we headed out into the forest. After a mile or so a checkpoint appeared, the man and woman manning it greeted the truck and let it pass.

"Welcome to Blue mountain pack," Finlay said.

"Thank you," I responded. I hadn't expected to feel anything when we drove onto the pack land. It wasn't my pack. I had no connections to this land. But there was a slight vibration running through me. A faint reminder of how it felt to drive on to the pack land back home.

"This is us. Most of the pack live in, or close to the village," Finlay told me

as I saw the trees thin and open up in a large clearing. In the clearing, there was a village. The focal point was a large timber house, three stories tall, and in front of it was a square opening where people moved back and forth. There looked to be one main road leading through the village, it was lined with shops. The rest of the village was made up of different types of small houses, all of them with gardens. Running behind the pack house and along that side of the village was a creek. It looked idyllic. "That's the pack house, if you didn't already guess it. Most of the single wolves of age live in the pack house. We provide a small apartment to all pack members who need it, free of charge. The first two months the food is included, then we expect members to either buy their food and cook for themselves, or contribute their part to the communal food budget," Finlay explained.

"That's generous of you," I told him. He shrugged as he drove to the parking lot next to the pack house.

"It gives pack members a chance to save up to build a house of their own. It's a good thing for the pack." We got out of the truck and at once there were happy greetings being called out towards Finlay. He smiled and returned them and waved at some. "Grab your bag and follow me. There should be a guest room made up for you. I just need to find my Beta to know which one," he told me. I nodded and grabbed the bag I had packed last night and followed him. Curious eyes were following me as I walked next to Finlay, but I felt no hostility.

"Alpha, welcome back," a deep voice called.

"Martin, just the man I'm looking for. I see you haven't managed to burn the

place to the ground when I was away," Finlay laughed.

"I'm twice the Alpha you are, Alpha," Martin laughed and then he looked at me.

"Martin, this is Amie, the guest I was telling you about. Amie, this is Martin, the pack's Beta," Finlay introduced us.

"Beta," I said and bent my head how it was expected when greeting someone of higher rank. It wasn't a conscious decision, it was pure muscle memory.

"Nice to meet you, Amie. Hey, man, I thought you said she was a lone wolf," Martin said.

"Even us lone wolves can have manners," I said. Martin looked at me with surprise and then he laughed.

"I think I like you, Amie. I had the guest room on the second floor overlooking the creek made up," he said.

"Thanks, man. I'll just get Amie settled and then I'll come find you," Finlay said. He took me up to a homey room, it smelled clean and had an airy feel to it, with white and beige decor and large windows letting the sunlight in. "I'm sorry to just leave you. But I need to check in with Martin and Sam," he apologised to me.

"It's okay. I could do with a moment to freshen up and get used to the feeling of being surrounded by wolves again," I told him. It was true. Even

though I didn't belong to this pack and therefore didn't have the pack bond, I could still feel the faint buzzing of the pack's connection to each other and the pack land. The once familiar feeling now felt uncomfortable and highly noticeable.

"You have your own bathroom through that door. I'll be back as soon as I can and show you around. It shouldn't be more than thirty minutes," Finlay told me.

"It's fine, take your time," I told him. With a final look and a nod, he left me alone in the room and I sank down on the bed and let out a breath and relaxed.

Cindy Harigel

332 ♥

Oh my. She's about to show powers she doesn't know she has, isn't she? mmmm...

[View all Comments\(40\)](#) ∨

Error correction of this chapter