

Chapter 214

Aaron had scheduled the meeting with the children early knowing Rafe would be up anyway with his sons. It was fortuitous that he had because it meant his friend would be able to discuss any discoveries with the Alpha of the Hanlon Pack when he arrived to meet the babies later on in the day.

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He'd chosen the playroom in his own home as the meeting place as all the children were comfortable there. It was important that the kids felt safe while they talked to them and tried to find out what abilities they were keeping hidden from the adults of the Pack. And it was big enough to hold all the parents.

The only one absent was Lacey. Weres healed more quickly from giving birth due to their natures but she hadn't wanted to be apart from her sons so had opted to stay upstairs with them. Rafe had made the decision to exclude Aaron's three from the meeting until they knew exactly what was going on so they were currently over at the community hall being looked after by the rest of Pack.

Five little faces looked up expectantly at the adults who were all sitting cross legged on the floor around them. Cedar and Alexei hovered close to their girls, Andrei and Loretta beside Lily and Kal. Liam, being the youngest and the one they knew was susceptible to sensing emotions, was resting against his father's chest, Ashleigh just a little distance apart from them.

"Is this like a proper meeting?" Kal suddenly asked looking directly at Rafe. "Like an Alpha and Beta meeting?" He couldn't keep the excitement out of his voice, his brown eyes hopeful.

Rafe smiled gently. He was aware of how much Kal wanted to grow up to be a Beta, that his dream was he would one day be an Alpha. He had no idea how Andrei felt about that but he admired the drive in the little boy asking the question.

"Yes, it is Kal," he answered carefully. "And when an Alpha has a meeting with his Betas he expects to hear the truth at all times. It's very important that an Alpha trusts his Betas explicitly." He let his words sink into all the children and smiled when they nodded instantly.

"Now I know all of you are special and sometimes special people can do special things. Sometimes they're so special that you might think it's best to keep them a secret so you don't worry your mummies and daddies. Like Liam did when he didn't tell Aunt Ashleigh and Uncle Nors that he could feel what other people are feeling."www.(r)@elwo(r)m.cOm

"I'm sorry," Liam whispered, his little face puckering slightly as Nors cuddled him a little closer.

"I'm not angry, Liam," Rafe soothed the child instinctively. "You can feel that, can't you?" He sent a shaft of love directly to the child and soon he was smiling widely and nodding.

Rafe turned his gaze back to other children. "I'm not angry with anyone and nobody will be if you've been keeping a secret too. We need to know if you can do anything special like Liam can, so we can best look after you."

All the children sat quietly for a moment, looking at their Alpha with such focus that he actually felt a little unnerved by their stillness.

"Can Rayne come to the meeting too?" Kallum suddenly asked, startling all the adults who looked at each other quizzically.

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Aaron shrugged his shoulders in confusion at the request. "She took care of the kids yesterday morning," he volunteered. "Maybe they'll feel more comfortable with her here?" It appeared the children were loath to speak at the moment without her.

Rafe frowned, not wanting a stranger to be involved in something that was so integral to the pack. The hybrid children were their richest assets and their biggest Achilles heel. They were so precious to the pack that anything happening to them would most likely spark a killing frenzy of unimaginable proportions.

"Please," Liam whispered quietly his eyes huge as he implored his Alpha.

Something in the child's gaze convinced him and he nodded. Ashleigh jumped up and raced out of the room returning a couple of minutes later with a thoroughly confused looking wildcat.

Rayne looked around the room and the slightly suspicious expressions on the adults' faces. She had no idea why she had been called to the room or what was going on. She saw five expectant faces beaming up at her and she smiled back instinctively, crouching down on the floor beside Rafe.

"Hi, " she smiled feeling the same connection to the children she had the day before, only this time she didn't cry because she was expecting it.

"Can we play the game we played yesterday, Rayne?" Dara asked, her bright blue eyes shining with excitement. "Our parents don't know that game and they want to."

Rayne felt her heart thud hard in her chest. She now knew why she was here. The pack was aware of the children's growing abilities and wanted to know what they were. She could feel the adults stiffen, the tension ratcheting up in the room. She knew she was on dangerous ground, that one wrong move could lead to the children's parents trying to rip her throat out. They would have a good chance of doing it too.

She sat down carefully, crossing her legs and ensuring she was within easy reach of the Alpha. She hoped to convey her trust in him so he wouldn't view her as a threat. Heart thumping wildly she gave the children her brightest smile.

"Well, I don't think much will have changed since yesterday," she said softly. "But if you would prefer to do it this way then, why not?"

She took a deep breath and tried to mask her apprehension. Her secrets, her very life could be in the balance but she couldn't refuse the children. "Hands up everyone who can sense other peoples' feelings?"

Five little hands shot up and she slowly raised hers too.

"Hands up everyone who can talk to others with their thoughts," she asked next.

Again five hands shot up and she matched them with barely a pause. The silence from the adults was practically deafening, though the children didn't appear to notice.

"Hands up anyone who can shift into an animal," she asked next.

Two little hands shot up and Cedar uttered a strangled sound as she stared at her daughters in shock. She barely noticed Rayne raising her own hand or the disgruntled expressions on Lily and Kal's faces.

"Hands up anyone who can mask their scent."

Four hands shot up and Liam let out a disgusted sigh. "I want to be able to do that," he grumbled as Rayne raised her hand to join the others.

"In time, little one," she said gently, giving him a wide smile. "Okay, now it's your turn," she said to the others. She'd done the same yesterday and none of the children had announced any abilities other than what they had gone through already. But she decided to play out the 'game' as she had done the day before.

Lily smiled and stood up brushing down her skirt. "Hands up if you can make yourself invisible," she said with a wide smile.

Startled gasps filled the room as Lily raised her hand high but none of the others did. Her smile of pleasure quickly began to melt as she noticed the looks of horror on her parents' faces and all the other adults. Her bottom lip trembled and she felt tears begin to well up. She didn't want to play this game anymore.

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Rayne stared at the child in shock. It was far too early for her to be able to do master this ability. It had taken her centuries to do so and the little angel before her was only five years old. It was too much power in one so young. The tears suddenly rolling down her face was testament to that.

Her heart broke as the little girl wilted before her and she found herself slowly raising her own hand, giving away her greatest secret in the face of a child's misery. "It's okay, Lily," she whispered softly. "I can do it too. You're not alone, honey."

The low rumbling growl to her left sent chills down her spine as the friendly Alpha she had met before suddenly turned into a cold, ruthless killing machine, his dark brown eyes fixated firmly on her.

To be continued...