

The Visitors

As their SUV rolled to a stop outside the imposing edifice of the packhouse, a flurry of activity enveloped the air, anticipation crackling like static electricity. Elora's parents wasted no time, making a beeline towards the Alpha and Luna, their expressions a mixture of deference and determination. Meanwhile, her sister Alena, as expected, darted towards her boyfriend, Alexander, or Alex as his friends and family called him.

Observing from a distance, Elora couldn't suppress a twinge of disgust as she watched the intimate embrace between her sister and Alex. Their lips met in a fervent French kiss, oblivious to the world around them. They had been inseparable since they started dating a few years ago and everyone knew that they were sleeping together.

Despite her aversion to their relationship, Elora harbored no jealousy towards her sister and Alex.

They both hoped that they were fated mates and, as Alex was now 19-year-old and still without a mate, it was like confirmation for both that they were destined for each other. Now they were both awaiting in anticipation Alena's first shift to confirm it.

At one point in time, similar with all the other girls from the pack, she had a teenage crush on him, but for Elora, the idea of surrendering herself to another before meeting her own destined mate felt like a betrayal of Moon Goddess. Anyhow, whoever dared to lift their eyes towards Alex was quickly punished by Alena and her group of minions; her sister was ruthless in eliminating any girl who dared look in the direction of "her mate".

As the minutes stretched into eternity, Elora found herself lost in a whirlwind of memories, her thoughts drifting back to a long time ago when she and Alex had been friends. They had shared laughter and secrets, their bond forged in the innocence of childhood. But with the onset of puberty, their relationship had shifted.

She couldn't help but recall the ache of heartbreak as Alex distanced himself, his attention consumed by her sister's allure. It had been a bitter pill to swallow, watching him slip away, leaving her adrift in a sea of loneliness, as he was her only friend; what is worse was that he shared her childish secrets with her sister and his friends, who used them to mock her and as a source of their amusement.

Taking in Alex's tall, slender frame, his tousled dirty blonde curls and piercing blue eyes, Elora couldn't deny his undeniable appeal. He exuded a magnetic charm that drew others to him like moths to a flame, his presence commanding attention wherever he went. He was the epitome of the top-tier werewolf, destined to inherit the mantle of alpha from his father.

But for all his charisma and allure, Elora couldn't help but feel a pang of resentment towards him, a bitter reminder of the friendship they had lost and his betrayal.

As Elora's mind drifted through the corridors of memory, her reverie was abruptly shattered by the rumble of engines and the screech of tires as an imposing convoy of cars made their grand entrance. The pack members seemed to tremble in anticipation as the vehicles came to a halt, their sleek, tinted doors swinging open to reveal a procession of formidable figures.

With wide eyes and a gasp of astonishment, Elora watched in awe as the imposing wolves emerged from the vehicles, their sheer size and presence casting a shadow over the gathering crowd. They were like mountains among men, their formidable stature a testament to their strength and power.

But it was the figure that emerged from the middle car that caused Elora's heart to skip a beat, her breath catching in her throat. He was a colossus among giants, a titan at maybe 6'7" clad in a sharp, expensive suit that strained against the bulk of his muscular frame. Dark hair and a chiseled jawline, while piercing blue-grey eyes seemed to pierce through the person, with his full lips set in an unhappy line.

As he made his way towards the packhouse, a palpable hush fell over the crowd, a wave of anticipation rippling through the air like a gust of wind. Elora could feel the weight of his presence, his powerful aura casting a spell of awe and reverence over all who beheld him.

Alpha Blackwood's voice cut through the silence; his tone tinged with deference as he greeted the newcomer with all due respect. "Alpha Storm, we are pleased to have you here," he declared, his words carrying the weight of tradition and diplomacy. "Welcome."

With a nod of acknowledgment, Alpha Storm returned the greeting with a solemn nod, his expression unreadable as he exchanged pleasantries with Alpha Blackwood. The air crackled with tension as the two alphas, followed by their Betas made their way towards Alpha Blackwood's office.

As the imposing figure of Alpha Storm strode through the packhouse grounds, a hush fell over the assembled crowd, their eyes widening in awe at the sight before them. The unmated she-wolves gazed at him with undisguised lust, their hearts uttering in their chests as if caught in a trance. Even Elora's sister, usually content and assured, stood with her eyes wide like saucers, ensnared by the magnetic pull of Alpha Storm's presence.

In contrast, the male wolves shifted uncomfortably under the weight of his scrutiny, their own sense of dominance challenged by his formidable aura. Thirty minutes passed like an eternity, the tension in the air thickening with each passing moment until finally, the Alphas emerged from the office.

Alpha Storm walked with a relaxed swagger, an arrogant smile playing at the corners of his lips, while Alpha Blackwood appeared slightly pale in comparison. Elora's heart sank as she caught sight of her father's pallor, a silent testament to the power dynamic at play between the two alphas.

As they stepped outside, Alpha Storm turned with a courteous nod towards Luna Clara, a gesture of farewell. Luna Clara, ever gracious, attempted to extend an invitation for him to stay, if not for the night, then at least for a brunch, but Alpha Storm politely declined and took his leave, entering his tainted SUV and leaving the Back Forest Pack behind.

With their departure, a collective sigh of relief seemed to echo through the packhouse, the oppressive weight of Alpha Storm's presence lifting like a fog. As everyone resumed their duties, Elora felt a sense of normalcy return, the air no longer thick with tension and anticipation.

As her parents and sister remained at the packhouse, Elora made her way back home on foot, as her thoughts churned with a mixture of apprehension and determination. Once inside her room, she wasted no time in pulling out her homework, her determination to finish it at the earliest possible moment burning bright in order to clear her schedule for future events. Her rush was determined by her current timeline, as after tonight she would have her wolf as a companion, and hopefully maybe she would be able to find her mate as well, the one destined to stand by her side through thick and thin.

As the final strokes of her homework pen danced across the page, Elora felt a sense of satisfaction wash over her. With a determined ick, she closed her textbooks and rose from her desk, her mind already turning to the ritual ahead.

Entering the bathroom, she filled the tub with warm water, the steam rising in tendrils as she eased herself into its comforting embrace. With meticulous care, she washed and scrubbed every inch of her body, the gentle caress of soap and water soothing her frayed nerves. Blushing furiously, she wielded the razor with practiced precision, ensuring that every last trace of hair was meticulously removed, just in case.

Once she was satisfied with her preparations, Elora emerged from the bathroom, her skin tingling with the sensation of cleanliness and anticipation. Choosing a light, summery dress, she slipped it over her head, a second dress clutched tightly in her hand as a back-up against the inevitable shredding that often accompanied a first shift.

As the clock struck 11:30 PM, a soft knock sounded at her door, her mother's voice filtering through the wood. "Elora, are you ready, darling?" she inquired, her own excitement palpable.

"Yes mom, I'm coming." With a nod, Elora took a deep breath to steady her racing heart before making her way downstairs. There, she found her family gathered in the foyer, her sister's eyes sparkling with anticipation and a broad smile on her lips.

Joined by their parents, they set off towards a forest clearing where usually the first shifts happen, the air thick with the scent of anticipation and the crackle of nervous energy. It was an important stage of a werewolf's life and usually the family and close friends were present, but as the beta family, their presence ensured a larger-than-usual gathering.

Elora's heart pounded in her chest as they approached the clearing, the moon casting its silvery glow over the assembled crowd. Alpha Ben Blackwood, Luna Clara, and their son Alex stood at the forefront, their expressions a mix of solemnity and excitement.

As the minutes ticked by and midnight drew nearer, Elora felt her anticipation reach a fever pitch. The tension in the air was almost tangible, a palpable force that seemed to hold them all in suspense.