

CH 14

Oriana

She was laying in her bed at sunup trying to decide what to do about the pup she was carrying inside of her; just two weeks along. She couldn't actually hear the heartbeat of her pup, so it was not right this minute. She only knew she guessed, because China wouldn't shift them, didn't even think China had known herself until that moment.

The decision to go down to training was made for her, when Alpha Roman mind-linked to her 'Oriana, please come to my oca, I'd like to talk to you.'

'Yes Alpha. Training?' she inquired.

'Not today.' Was all he said before closing out the mind-link.

Not today, she thought as she got up and pulled on jeans and an oversize T-shirt. She might as well start dressing down, so she could hide that bump when it came. If she started dressing like this now, no one would notice when she needed to wear bigger, baggier clothing.

She was curious as to how long she could get away with no one noticing. It's not like they would be looking for it at all. She'd never had a boyfriend, ever. No one, not her mother or her father, not the Alpha, hell, not even Palmer and Yuri would be looking for something like that.

It should be able to go unnoticed until she started to show, she thought absently as she headed downstairs. Though she pulled on all her Beta training and made sure to think about nothing else when she left that room. Palmer and his dad were both Gammas, and she didn't want either of them picking anything up from her. That would not be a good thing.

She walked to his oca and knocked on the door. Alpha Roman waved her in and motioned for her to sit down. She sat. "Oriana, now I just wanted to let you know how your brother's training was going."

"Alright." she nodded.

"He's actually doing well, learning a lot and following instructions. Is coming along quite nicely."

"Good." She stated and got frowned at, but nothing more.

"I'd like to keep him in training for now, see how he develops out there, let Slade assess the two of you and make a fully informed choice, as to which of you he wants for his Beta, when he gets back." He held up his hand as if to stop her talking, "I know it's your birthright Ori, but I'm thinking long term for this pack."

"Right," she nodded "and me?" she questioned; knew he likely didn't bloody care at all.

"For now, train how you like with Palmer and Yuri, if you want to. Just not at the same time as Hayden, he's easily distracted by your presence, we found."

"I bet." she murmured.

"Alright Ori, come on, it's only fair that he gets Alpha unit training as well. He has wanted it all his life as well, and is the second heir. He does need to train up for when you and your Mate."

She stared at him now, when she found her mate? That could be, never. "Fine, when Slade comes home," she changed the subject. "Is it still my job to go and get him? Or will Hayden be doing that now too, all my duties?"

"No, he won't be. He'll be staying here, and yes, you'll be going to pick up Slade from Alpha College. You're still his Beta at this point."

'At this point' she thought bitterly, "You're going to push for him to have me step down aren't you!" she stated atly, putting what he was actively avoiding stating to her face out loud, and she knew it; out there on the table herself.

"Honestly, yes. But it's ultimately his decision. Slade will make the final choice. I'll be discussing it with him when he gets home. There will probably be a long argumentative conversation, I understand."

She stood, "May I go Alpha Roman? If I'm not required to train, I'll just prep to study for my double degree then."

"A double degree?" he frowned at her "I don't advise anyone to do that, the work load is too much, as far as I'm concerned, consumes way too much of one's time."

"Yes," she nodded in agreement, "but I might as well find something to do with my sudden free time, once you've had me shoved aside." she looked right at him, he'd been honest with her, so she would with him "I'll have lots more free time and the campuses libraries I believe are open all hours, there will be no distraction for Hayden if I'm here, a win-win for you. So yes, a double degree is what I will do to preoccupy myself."

"Don't sign up for that Ori, like I said, it will be Slade's choice, not mine, just" he sighed "A normal degree." He told her.

She didn't believe that, and didn't say anything to his comment about her uni plans. "May I go?" she asked once more.

"Yes, but Ori don't just turn to study, go out, have some fun, hang out with other girls your own age, and do what normal 18-year-old girls do."

"Sure," she stated as she left the oca in time to see her brother with the future Alpha Unit, in her position in the future Alpha Unit. They were all heading off to training. She saw Hayden smile right at her, smugly so. She didn't play his game, she would no longer play his game. What was the point?

She also couldn't just pick a fight with him anymore and beat the hell out of him; she had a pup to protect. She walked herself back to her room and shut the door, sank down and stared at the degree application and hit the on-campus button. To see if she could get the hell out of this pack, before anyone even knew she was pregnant.

There was no point staying here if they're just going to demote her down to nothing. Studying on campus, living on campus, she'd still have to see them all, but only on campus. Slade too when he got back, but at least by then her pup would be in daycare. She might be able to hide it altogether. She didn't know.

'Go out and do what all the other 18-year-old girls do' she thought about those very words and then got up. She could do that, could more than do that. She grabbed her handbag and car keys and left the pack, to do just that.

She drove the two-hour drive down to Phoenix, and strolled around, had breakfast there, shopped for new clothes, new makeup, new shoes. Got a new hairstyle or got her long hair layered and curled at the ends. Then she stopped and got all her nails done, seeing as she couldn't shift anymore, or for a while, she could do that now. There was no point before, shifting just ripped them off you.

She got herself a nice set of short and neat black and white wolf-inspired nail art; a wolf on one nger, a paw print on another, and a moon too, and sparkly black on all the rest of her nails.

Then she just strolled along, until she saw in a window display a nice matching set of jewellery from Swarovski. It called to her inner-wolf. It was called the Luna range. She bought the entire set, in white gold. Then she bought dresses and skirts and clubbing outfits.

She knew they wouldn't last for long, but she would do what her Alpha told her to, while she could, go out and act like the 18-year-old girl she was supposed to be. She was going to let her hair down for the first time ever, no longer maintain full control and be responsible, like a future Beta should. Seeing as she wasn't going to be the future Beta, there was no point.

She'd always been conservative and in control, due to being the future Beta to the pack. Now she likely didn't have to worry about that at all anymore. Alpha Roman had stated she could go and pick up Slade, but would she really be allowed to? In all likelihood, it was going to be Hayden who did that now.

She was not going to hold her breath, it was weeks away and likely by then, Hayden would have everything he wanted, and she would be nothing at all, just a regular pack member. Couldn't even be moved to the second heir, because she was a girl.

Ori received a phone call at lunchtime from Palmer to ask where she was. She'd smile to herself, someone had finally realised she wasn't there, had left the pack. "I'm having lunch." she stated simply, and she was, sitting in a nice café doing just that.

"Where are you having lunch, Ori?" he asked.

"In Phoenix," she stated simply, as she sipped her coffee.

When she heard him, and another exclaim "What?" she figured it was Yuri. "When did you go there? And by yourself?"

"This morning and why wouldn't I?" She answered, she could actually take care of herself, she didn't see a problem with it.

"You shouldn't go on your own, you know this," Palmer stated.

"Why not?" she asked "the boss himself told me I should take some time off, and go do whatever 18-year-old girls do. So, I'm doing just that, shopping."

"Where in Phoenix are you?" he asked.

"I'll come back when I'm good and ready." Ori stated simply "I travelled on my own six long hours from Sandia Heights, New Mexico to our home in Arizona. So, what's two hours away? I don't honestly see the problem here."

"Alright, what's gotten into you?" she heard Yuri, huff. So, yes they were both there on the other end of the call.

"Nothing, I just wanted out of the company for the day." she kept her word usage to human terms, being out in the human world. And no one had bothered her, she'd walked about for hours now without problems.

"Ori!"

"Palmer!"

She heard him sigh and mutter "you better get your ass back here in one piece or Yuri and I will cop it."

"No, you won't. You were doing company training with Hayden, I believe." She bit out his name. "And like I said, the boss told me to, so it's on his head, I believe if something happens to me. Go speak to him if you're unhappy." and she clicked the line closed.

She didn't know if they actually would go and talk to Alpha Roman, but technically it would be Alpha Roman's head, not theirs. She as the future Beta, understood how the rules of the pack actually worked, right down to the nitty-gritty ne print of it all. Had, had to study that as the future Beta, so that she could help Slade with punishments.

She drove into the pack just after 6pm and was carrying all her stuff with her, a large multitude of bags in each hand. She really worked that pack card of hers today. When she saw her father walking towards her, "Yes father?" she asked.

"You left without telling anyone."

"Alpha Roman gave me the day off, told me to go do what 18-year-old girls do. So, I did. I went shopping." she held those bags up for him to see. "All I did was do what every 18-year-old girl does, to fill my suite walk-in, or am I not allowed to do that?"

"Yes, of course you are, but telling someone where you're going would be the responsible thing to do."

"I had permission," she stated atly.

"Oriana, I know you're upset."

"No, I'm not." she murmured "I was ticked off, but now..." she shrugged "I'm all shopped out and over it. Oh, I'm going clubbing tonight." she told him with a smile, "in case I need to tell you my every move."

"Oriana," he grated out, "you're acting like a child."

She turned and looked at him, "Well, father, as you, and everyone around here, keep telling me, I'm a girl." She dropped sarcasm. "I believe father, teenage girls are just that, all hormonal and get that teenage angst, become bitchy and argumentative. I guess you were lucky to not see that in the past few years. I'm overdue, to do all of that am I not," she stated atly, and walked off up the stairs away from him to her room.

'We're not drinking.' China growled at her.

'No but I can go dancing and drink water or juice, I want to just let my hair down and act my age for the once, instead of always being proper and all Beta responsible. I want to be the future Beta. That, I see, is now not necessary, because they're never actually going to let me be that person they've held me to, all these years. Just a freaking waste of my time is all it was China.'

'Fine, go dancing, no alcohol, or I'll be stopping you.'

'You won't need to.' she told her wolf.