

The Howling Heart's Forgiveness

Chapter 4

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“Brynlee, I am vacuum sealing all the bedding.” Miss Asteria calls out, her head popping in the door way. A look of shock fills her eye as she takes in my now empty room before it morphs to one of sympathy. She understands what I am going through as she is also leaving being her ancestral home.

“My bedding is on the bed. I wasn’t sure how to pack it.” My voice sounds emotionless and hollow and surprises even me. The calm that washed over me earlier seems to be working. I am holding myself together pushing all the pain and agony from being rejected and banish into a dam inside my mind. Time will tell when the dam will break and all the pain and hurt comes crashing down on me but for now I can manage each task one at a time.

“I can pack it up for you while you decide what to do with your parents’ room. I left it for you to pack up.” She pads into the room to where I stand, wrapping her arms around me and pulling my body in for a hug.

“Thank you.” I find myself wrapping my arms around Miss Asteria as I breath in the rose scent of the perfume she wears. The same perfume my mother wore. The same one I wore when Rune and I...I shake my head before my train of thoughts return to my now Ex-Mate. I can’t think about him. Thinking about him makes the dam I made in my mind crack and releases the pain. Forcing myself to focus, I feel the dam in my mind repair itself. I know if my mind wanders, the pain will take over. I can’t have that happen. Not until I am far away from this place.

“Don’t thank me. It’s what family does” She pulls back from the hug, looking me in my eyes as she gives me a soft smile.

“I promised your mother I would protect you and I intend to keep that promise. You are my niece – my God Daughter - no matter what Brynlee. I will always take your side because of this.” With a smile she pokes my nose with her index finger before moving towards my bed and scoops the pile of my bedding in her arms, telling me to leave the boxes where they are as Gale and their pups are on their way and will pack it up for me. She leaves me room, her footsteps sounding on the steps to where I assume she is vacuum packing away the bedding while I take one last look at my room before walking out and flicking off the light.

I feel a sense of sadness wash over me as I walk towards my parents room, the frames of pictures gone from the walls. It is a reminder that this is no longer my home and I have to stop and lean against the wall to stop the pain from breaking the dam in my mind.

‘Focus on the task at hand. Keep the pain at bay.’ I remind myself these two things, taking deep breaths to calm myself once more. Once I feel ready, I continue my path towards my parents room and push open the door. Flicking the lights on I take in the untouched room that has their lingering scent.

The only thing missing is their bedding and I call out asking if Miss Asteria took it. She confirms she did and that she sealed them in their own bags for me. I sigh with relief, happy to know that I will have what remains of my parent’s scent while I deal with my new life as a rejected Rogue.

I get to work with packing away my parent’s remaining things, their scent comforting me and helping to keep the dam I built in my mind contained. I remind myself they would want me to stay strong through all of this. To find a safe place where I can let the pain out and start the healing process. As the clock chimes six at night I finally finish packing and stand in a nearly empty room. I want to cry, to break down and scream at how unfair life is, but I stop myself.

“Remain strong until I am no longer on Pine Moon land.” I mutter to myself, wiping at the stray tears that have formed.

“Gale said we have room in our trailer for a bed for you. Do you want us to take yours apart?” Miss Asteria walks in as I finish taping the last box, startling me into dropping the tape gun. She apologizes and rushes to pick it up for me.

“No. I don’t want my bed. It is too small for me now.” I manage to mumble out as I take the tape gun back. She nods, looking around the now empty room until her eyes land on my parents bed. I haven’t laid on top of it since their death, too afraid to lose their scent for good, but I can understand what she is thinking.

“How about we bring theirs then. Add another piece of them to your new life.” She states, giving me a wink and a wide grin. I grin back, looking at the sturdy wooden frame that is older than I am. I like this idea and agree right away before we walk through the house one last time until we end up in the garage. My mother was a gardener and I note that her things – including her many seeds – were packed away. I know that wherever I end up, I will want to plant a garden with her seeds and thank Miss Asteria right away for packing the garage for me.

“I loaded her potted plants into the bed of your pick-up truck. I told Gale he has to dig up her lilac bush before we leave because I refuse to leave that beautiful bush for these Goddess forsaken wolves.” I laugh at Miss Asteria’s grumbling, doubling over as my laughter takes over. I have never seen Miss Asteria so ruffled before, but I have a feeling she is done with her younger brother’s bullshit. She stares at me for a moment, her eyes not hiding the fact she is wondering if I lost my mind and honestly, I think I have. The last twenty-four hours has taken its toll on me. Besides, laughing is better than crying at least.

“We will not let them have your parent’s hard work.” Gale’s voice sounds from the open garage doorway and brings me from my laughing fit. Two of his pups, Lunette and Gray, peak out from behind him and I smile, opening my arms for the pups to rush in and give me a hug.

“Daddy told us what happened. You deserve better.” Eight year old Lunette states. I smile, thanking her as the two pull away and Gray tells me he is excited for this new adventure. Chase stands beside his father, the fourteen year old staring at me before he nods a greeting.

“So are we all packed?” Gale asks, coming to hug his wife.

“We are. Brynlee and I did a final count of what we are taking so I will show you what to pack.” With Miss Asteria’s confirmation, the six of us get to work packing my things into the trailer that is hooked to my truck. Gale told me that while Miss Asteria took care of my wounds, he took care of hooking my dad’s trailer to my pickup truck and packed the Garage away with his wife in there first before they went to prepare their own home so that I could rest uninterrupted. Warmth spreads through my painfilled heart at how much this family cares for me and I can’t help but hug them in turn, happy to know I won’t be leaving alone.

It takes us another three hours to pack away my belongings, the last item being my mother’s wedding dress that I packed into the cabin of my truck. With time to spare, I think of my best friend and sworn brother Caspian.

Caspian and I grew up together with Rune. He will be next in line as Beta when I leave. Deciding I need to leave him an explanation, I write a letter for Caspian to find, knowing that my best friend will understand why I left when I did and telling him the house is his if he wants it, leaving the dead inside the letter. I know he is looking for his own place for himself and will appreciate this gesture. I also know he will take good care of my childhood home as he spent many nights here as a pup due to his situation with his own parents.

“We have three hours left before the deadline. Do you want to say goodbye to anyone?” Gale asks as I close the door to my childhood house.

“No. As far as I am concerned the pack turned their back on me. I left a letter for Caspian and told him I will contact him when I get a new phone number.” I answer, turning to look at Gale and his family. The pack turned their back on me when I became an Orphan last year. Only the five wolves leaving with me and Caspian cared for me in my darkest hour. Even Rune was too busy with Tanya to check and see if I was okay. I remember asking him to just stay with me as I had been there for him when his mother passed away, but he made every excuse as to why he couldn’t. Now knowing he is betrothed to Tanya, his actions towards me since last year makes sense.

“Good. Lets go then.” Gale declares, everyone climbing into our respective vehicles. Lunette asks if she can ride with me and I instantly agree to it before her parents could say now. I can use the company and distraction from everything that has happened and tell Gale and Miss Asteria this. After making sure Lunette is buckled in, I climb into the driver seat and turn on the pick up truck – a 2018 Ford F150.

“Any music request?” I ask Lunette as I pull up my Spotify. She thinks for a moment before asking for pop music to sing to and I obliged. With music picked and both of us settled, I honk to Gale signalling we are ready. He honks back before his own truck begins to move, his trailer

being pulled behind him. The drive through the pack is bitter sweet. With my house being placed near the back farthest away from the exit, I am forced to see the places I spent my days growing up.

Lunette is great at keeping me from breaking down and crying, the eight-year old babbling on about the new adventure, finding a new pack to live in and making new friends. She isn't sad to be leaving, instead she seems excited at the prospect of starting at a new school and this makes me smile. After forty minutes of driving, we cross the pack line and officially become Rogues. I know one day we will find a pack to call home but for now we focus on surviving until that day comes.