

Chapter 7

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Slinking towards the motel, I shake my fur out as the light misting of rain makes me wet. I am happy that Miss Asteria and Gale chose a motel so close to a forest so that we can stretch our wolf form as it gave me a chance to run free and hunt down a rabbit that I happily gnawed on while mulling over my thoughts. It's been seven days since we left Pine Moon. Three days that I haven't been able to shift till this morning. Keeping the dam of pain and emotions at bay in my mind has gotten easier the further we are from Pine Moon and I find myself enjoying the long drives from motel to motel.

Shifting to my human form, I find my clothes in the hollow tree I left them in and change, rushing to our room on the first floor and entering it just in time to see Gale and Miss Asteria getting ready to leave.

"Did you have a good run?" Gale asks, giving me a hug.

"I did. It was needed." I admit with a small smile.

"Well, you have rabbit blood in your hair. I am guessing you went on a quick hunt." Touching my head to where Gale points, my fingers come back slightly bloodied and I grimace. Gale lets out a laugh as I mumble something about taking a shower but he stops me, asking if I wanted McDonald's for breakfast as that is where they are heading. After giving Gale my order and promising I will keep an eye on their pups, I make my way to the small bathroom at the back of our motel for a shower, stopping just to grab my small bag so that I can have fresh clothes and my toiletries to use.

The shower is quick, just enough to clean the small bit of blood out of my hair and scrub the girt off my body from the run. Within ten minutes I am out and dressed, walking into the main room in time to find Chase and Gray playfight on the bed, I think about the days when Caspian and I would wrestle like this. We are both an only child, our respective parents deciding one pup was enough. We grew up as neighbours just five minutes from one another and became each other's siblings even though Caspian is two years older than me

I wonder how he is doing with it being a week since my leaving Pine Moon. I know I need to call him now that I am slowly getting used to being a Rogue. I did promise in my letter that I would call him as soon as my number was changed but held off out of fear of breaking down and the dam inside my mind releasing all the pain when I am not ready for it yet.

"Penny for your thoughts?" I jump at Miss Asteria's voice as she comes to stand beside me, realizing she and Gale have returned from getting breakfast.

"I was thinking about Caspian." I explain, taking the bag of McDonald's from her and thanking her for the food.

"Is everything alright with him?" She questions as she hands Lunette her meal.

"I am not sure. I haven't talked to him since the night of my birthday and I was thinking of calling him and giving him my new number. I know he won't share it without my permission." Continuing my train of thought, I take a hashbrown out of the bag and shove it into my mouth whole, getting a giggle from Lunette when she catches me doing this and an eye roll from Miss Asteria.

"Well you should do it when we drive to our next destination. Gale found a pack who he has friends in and we might be able to join them." I perk up at the mention of a new pack, the idea of belonging in one again after seven days of being a Rogue and being chased away sounds like an unanswered prayer.

"How far away is it?" I ask ready to be done with motels and driving all day.

"About three days away. Think you can last that long?" Gale is the one to answer as he finishes corralling Chase and Gray, the two pups now devouring their breakfast while Lunette sits quietly watching a movie on the ancient looking television in the motel room we rented last night.

"What is the pack's name?" Chase asks through a mouthful of a sausage and egg McMuffin.

"Don't speak with your mouth full!" Miss Asteria chides him as I hide my laughter. I think I am becoming a bad influence on these pups.

"It's called Golden Fang." Gale answer's his son. The name sounds familiar and I wrack my brain trying to find why I know the name of it.

"Isn't that the weakest in the country?" I ask once I manage to remember where I heard the name from. It was during one of Valor's rants about wanting to expand Pine Moon. About him wanting to attack Golden Fang and claim the land, but my father reasoned with him. Golden Fang is a ten day drive from Pine Moon if you rest at night so even if Valor attacked it, the land would not be able to merge with Pine Moon's land unless Valor made a trade with another pack. The defeated Golden Fang land for land closer to Pine Moon.

"It is, but the Alpha there agreed that we can join if we help strengthen the pack." Miss Asteria states with a smile.

"You know how to train pups and Gale and I can train the adults." She adds, bumping my shoulder with hers. I feel the power of my blood radiate at the thought of training pups once again and smile. Joining Golden Fang will be a good thing for us.

"Well then, we better finish breakfast and hit the road. We have three days of driving before we reach our new home!" I state excitedly, Lunette throwing her hands in the air cheering "New Home" over and over again making all of us laugh. Our meal is finished within minutes and we pack the small amount of items we brought inside last night for our stay. Lunette was sad to hear she couldn't join me on the next stretch of our drive, but I explained to her that I have somethings I need to do alone. After promising her that she can switch back to riding in my truck at the first rest stop, she happily bounds over to her father's truck.

"You sure you will be okay alone?" Gale asks as I open the truck door.

"I am sure. Besides, I won't be alone, I will be talking to Caspian." I answer happily, feeling excited for once since being kicked from Pine Moon. If we are accepted into Golden Fang in three days, then I will let Caspian know. Knowing my best friend, he will happily abandon Pine Moon to be with me in a new pack.

"Well keep your eyes on the road and call my cell if something happens. I can't wait to be in a pack so we can mind link again." With Gale's protective grumbling over, he makes his way towards his truck as I climb into mine. The silence is a little unnerving. I have spent the last seven days with an eight year old singing everything from the

latest pop song to all about Disney. Having this small moment to myself is like a blessing to me. Turning on my truck to keep my mind from wandering to thoughts I keep locked away, I wait for the Bluetooth to connect to my phone, scrolling on my new social media accounts until the speaker beeps indicating my phone is connected.

I scroll through my new phone and find Caspian's number. I am grateful for having a Samsung and being able to upload my contacts to my new phone, and even more grateful that the company where I gained a new cell phone number bought my old one after I switched my data over. No one from Pine Moon will be able to track me unless they have my new number now.

Looking at the familiar number I know I could never forget, I worry about what Caspian might say. I never said good bye to him that day. He was scheduled for patrol and my ability to mind link him was removed when I was banished from the pack, so I left a letter. I hope he found my letter and the deed to the house. Hope that he understands I had no choice in the matter because of what the father and son did to me.

Taking a deep breath to calm my growing nerves, I click on Caspian's contact information and the unmistakable sound of a dialling tone comes from the truck speakers. Once, twice, three times. As the dial continues, I worry that Caspian won't up and start thinking this is a bad idea.

"Caspian Kane speaking." I nearly cry at the familiar deep voice of the man I call my sworn brother. I love Gale, Miss Asteria and their pups, but they aren't my Caspian. The man that knows me better than I know myself.



"Hello? Did you dial the wrong number?" His voice comes through again and I laugh at how confused he sounds. Silence settles after my small laugh and I debate on what to say to dispel the awkwardness that settled.

"Brynlee?" His voice is a whisper and I smile. All I have to do is make a sound and he will always know its me.

"Hi Caspian." I manage to state before he goes into a tirade.

"Where are you. Scratch that, don't tell me just yet. Are you safe? Did you heal from your wounds? Are Gale and Asteria okay? What about their pups?" His questions come one after another and only stops when Gale pulls up beside me and honks his horn. I nod and watch as he drives off before I follow behind his trailer.

"What was that?" Caspian asks and I laugh again as I realize that I have been missing his scatterbrain self when he is with me.

"That was Gale. We are traveling to a pack that says they will accept us. No, I will not tell you what pack until I know whether or not I will become a member." I answer back, giving him this small happy news, a smile on my face as he lets out a loud sigh and I picture Caspian slumping on his bed with relief for my safety.

"I'm glad. The pack hasn't been the same since they banished you. I miss you Bryn." His voice is quiet and I can sense his sadness. We have never been apart this long since I was born. The two of us have been glued at the hip as pups. Where he went, I was there behind him.

"I miss you to Caspian. When I am safely settled, I will let you know



and maybe you can -"

"Yes." He cuts me off making me chuckle.

"I didn't even finish what I was saying." I retort back, getting a signature Caspian chuckle, so deep it has dropped many of the pack whores panties.

"Don't care. When you find a new pack, I will follow." My body relaxes as I take in his words. I have never had a more loyal friend than Caspian and I know that what he says is the truth. Where ever I go, he will follow, and vice versa.

"Okay Caspian. I have to go but know we are all safe and okay. We are staying closer to the small Human towns so that we don't risk getting attacked at night." I know our call needs to be cut short. I can't risk Pine Moon – risk Rune – finding me right now. I can tell that Caspian understands why I am rushing to end the call and am thankful he doesn't push me for more time to talk.

"Good. I will keep your number saved under a new name for now. But I expect a phone call every day Bryn" The thought of being able to talk to Caspian every day brings the wide grin back onto my face. Seven days away from my best friend is seven days too long.

"Deal. Keep me under Lilac."

"Like the damned bush you dug up from the ground." Caspian growls out and I can just imagine the glare he would have sent my way.

"Yep. Like my lilac bush we dug from the ground." I confirm, feeling lighter than ever.

"Thanks for doing that by the way." He grumbles out, making me

smirk. Clearly this act caused some drama in the pack and I wait patiently for my friend to continue his tirade.

"Tanya screeched about wanting the bush to burn and I got the brunt end of her tirade when she realized that one, the bush was gone, and two, that I now own the house and she can't touch it. I wish someone would kill the bitch." I laugh again as my twenty year old friend complains about the woman who is to be his Luna in a few weeks time.

"Look Caspian. I am moving on from Pine Moon and the wolves there. If you can keep this from him, I would owe you one." My voice cracks at the word him. Caspian knows who I am talking about and I am glad I don't have to say his name.

"I punched him the day you left so other than pack business, me and him aren't speaking." Shocked, I want to ask Caspian more about this but his voice sounds through the speaker before I can ask anything.

"Anyways I have to go but expect multiple texts." Curious at Caspian's confession to punching my Ex-Mate, I make a note to ask him about it when I am ready. Instead I tell him to have a good day and will look forward to his texts, reminding him that I am driving and might not reply right away. When our call ends, the truck cabin grows quiet and for once since leaving Pine Moon I feel hopeful for my future.

I can feel the pain of the rejection and banishment pushing at the dam I made in my mind but I remind myself over and over again that I need to hold on just a little bit. In three days I will be in Golden Fang. In three days I will be able to finally break and allow the pain to take over and bleed through my soul before I start picking the pieces back

up.



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