

## The Floors Pt. 1

Lexi looked around her slowly. I was in a meadow my family used to go to. I saw a woman laughing. I gaped. Shock coursed through me. Finally I asked, "Mom?" She turned, "Hello Dear. I was beginning to think you weren't going to make it here to see me." I gulped, "Did I die?" My mom laughed, "No silly girl. You fainted. Your brain is on overload." I sighed, "So this isn't real? You know what I don't care." I walked over to her and hugged her. I choked back a sob as my arms wrapped around my mother for the first time in over a decade. I said, "I miss you mom." She smiled and patted my back, "I know you do sweet girl. We don't have much time. Your wolf needs you to wake up." I said, "My subconscious is weird today." My mom smiled, "I am not your subconscious Lexi Scott. I am your mother, and we need to talk." I said, "Nothing good is ever followed by those words. Can't we just enjoy this visit until it ends?" My mom said, "Sorry Lex, but we can't. You need to tell Heath to open the oors." I said, "What?" My mom said, "Tell your brother to open the oors." I said, "I have NO IDEA what that means. What oors?" My mom smiled, "In our house." I said, "Mom, we haven't been back there since.... I can't tell him that. He will think I'm crazy. It makes no sense nor does me seeing you or speaking with you." My mom said, "You have to tell him. Some answers are there." I said, "Speaking of answers, who was your ex-boyfriend? Is he after me and Heath?" My mom cringed, "Let's not talk about him. Let's talk about your string." I said, "Mom! I need to know his name. Heath and I are in danger.... I'm pretty sure we are anyway. I KNOW I am." My mom nodded, "I know that sweetie. I was only allowed to tell you about the oors. Don't trust everyone Lex. Your father and I trusted the wrong people too. We trusted too many people." Tears filled my eyes, "One of our people killed you?" My mom smiled, "I can't tell you that."

I said, "What can you tell me?" My mom said, "Open the oors." I groaned, "Fine. I'll tell Heath about the dumb oors." My mom smiled, "Good. Now... your string. Quite the pickle you two are in." I said, "I don't want to know." My mom said, "I know. I think you should let him tell you about what's going on. Or ask your friend, the little fairy princess. She's such a tiny little fairy. She's adorable." I said, "I don't want to know." My mom laughed, "You always were such a stubborn child. Just like your father." I said, "Why isn't dad here?" My mom said, "What? I'm not good enough for you now?" I said, "Mom! Don't say that. I miss you both. I found you guys.... That morning..." My mom tucked my hair behind my ear, "I know sweetie. I am so sorry about that. Your dad and I.... we made mistakes. Don't follow our path." I said, "How the heck am I supposed to know what that path is?" My mom said, "Follow your heart. Stick by your wolf." I said, "Apparently that's the family's going advice." She smiled, "Which family? Mine or your father's?" I said, "I don't know. They left a letter." She laughed, "Probably your father's then. That's more their style." I said, "Why didn't you tell us about them?" My mother sighed, "Sometimes, when you feel like it's you and string against the world.... it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. We thought they betrayed us. We cut them out. One of those things you always think you'll have time to x later, but time was not on our side. Be brave my little Lexi. I am so proud of you and your brother." I smiled, "I'll tell him you're proud of him. That would make him happy." My mom looked to her left, "I have to go. Just be careful. Just because you think someone is a good person doesn't mean they are." I said, "Do you know who killed you and dad?" My mom said, "I do. So do you." With that she was gone.

I sat up gasping. "Hey...It's ok. I've got you." Chase said. I said, "Chase! I...." I didn't know how to tell him what I just saw. I'd sound like a crazy person. Chase said, "You passed out after reading the letter from your supposed family member. Heath came by. He's going to look into it." I nodded. Heath came by? But... that means... oh god. I do not have the mental capacity for this tonight. I just said, "Ok. This night has been really crazy." Chase laughed, "It has been, but is Halloween after all." I bit my lip and nodded. "How long was I out?" Chase said, "A few hours." I said, "Makes sense. I was running all over the damn place tonight." Chase said, "Did everything go ok for you?" I said, "One unforeseen factor, but I dealt with it quickly." Chase asked, "Do you know why your brother was protecting Sophia's area with the Black Arrow?" I said, "I know part of the reason is because her territory is where our shroud is. I think there's more to it though." Chase nodded. I bit my lip, "Do you think...is it weird that her father got sick?" Chase said, "So Heath told you he thinks her dad was murdered?" I said, "No, he seemed certain Sophia's father was murdered." Chase frowned, "I'll have to talk to Alpha Conners. I can't imagine he thinks that her dad was murdered though. He wouldn't sit on that information." I asked, "Did you see her dad? When he was sick?" Chase nodded, "We all did. It's not unheard of that a wolf gets sick, but your brother has a point. It should've at least been looked into." I said, "I'd like to talk to your dad tomorrow." Chase was surprised, "I told him to stay away from you." I smiled, "I know. I'd just like to speak with him." Chase frowned, "Alright. Let's go to bed sweetheart." I smiled, "Goodnight Chase." Chase smiled, "Goodnight."

I waited until Chase fell asleep. As soon as I was certain he was out, I grabbed my phone and texted Ted. I would've called him, but I didn't want to wake Chase up.

Me: You up?

Ted: Of course I am. You know when I'm anxious my brain doesn't let me sleep.

Me: Matt up?

Ted: No. I'm glaring at him as he snores. Without a care in the world. The asshole.

Me: You and me tomorrow afternoon. You free?

Ted: Actually no.

Me: Monday then.

Ted: What are we doing?

Me: Going home

Ted: For?

Me: Answers

Ted: Ok cryptic crystal

Me: LOL you've been hanging out with Haley too much

Ted: not possible. One can only become more awesome from hanging around Haley.

Me: Try to get some sleep

Ted: I will do my best

I put my phone down. I grabbed my birth control out of my nightstand. I'd forgotten to take it today. I got out of bed and grabbed a glass of water swallowing it down quickly. I got back in bed and Chase immediately wrapped his arms around. I had to smile. Even subconsciously he wanted us to be close together. I sighed and went to sleep. I dreamed that I saw my mother getting murdered, over, and over. I couldn't ever see the person's face. It was as if my mind was trying to tell me something and picked the worst thing for me to see. "Lexi! Sweetheart...it's just a dream." I woke up and gasped. I'd scratched Chase's arms all up. I'd drawn blood. "I'm so sorry!" I told him. He said, "I'll heal in a second. What were you dreaming about?" I sighed, "I kept seeing my mother murdered, but I couldn't see who was killing her. Which is weird because I didn't see her get killed." Chase said, "A lot is going on right now. You know if you want, I'll help you search for your family." I sighed, "Heath is looking. I just.... I don't even know if I want to find them. They've been out there this whole damn time, and they've done nothing. Why didn't they come for us? Why did they stay away? Even if someone told them to, they are our family. We should've been with them. Did they really hate my mother that much? What about her parents? Why does everything come up with more questions than answers?" Chase said, "They can answer those questions for you sweetheart." I sighed, "Do I even want the answers? Can they say anything to excuse leaving Heath and I to believe we had no family this whole time? Heath needed our grandfather especially. It's not like at eleven years old he watched our father lead. He had to rely on others for how to lead our people when he turned seventeen. That's a lot to put on a kid's shoulders."

Chase said, "Who did he lean on the most?" I said, "Edgar, Noah's dad, and Tony, Ted's dad. They were the biggest influencers for him. Edgar helped Noah a lot because he was my dad's Lieutenant. Our families were really close before my parents were murdered, and even afterwards they basically took us in. We switched between their houses until Heath took over the Hood. Then it was just him and me in our new house. Which is now Heath's house." Chase nodded, "Do you still want to talk to my dad?" I nodded. I had questions. Maybe I could help unite Sophia and her siblings. I felt the need to connect them. I'd want my big brother in my life if the roles were reversed. She could have sisters but that wasn't the point. I'd want to know if I was her. Chase sighed, "Well, let's get you breakfast." We went downstairs and Chase cooked scrambled eggs and toast. I grabbed another one of his hoodies that he'd worn recently and threw on some leggings. Chase looked ridiculously happy. I said, "What?" Chase said, "I like that you love wearing my hoodie so much." I smiled, "They smell like you." Chase kissed me. We walked to his pack, and then to the hospital. "Your dad is still here?" Chase nodded, "Nadine insisted, and the doctors want to make sure he's ok." I nodded. Matt was walking out of the room as we walked up. He smiled, "I need to borrow Chase." I said, "Ok." Chase sighed. He gave me a quick kiss and left with Matt. I stepped into the room. Isaac turned to me in surprise. He looked at Frank. They clearly linked each other. Frank turned to me, "I'll just be going. It's good to see you again Lexi." I smiled, "You too Isaac."

Neither Frank nor I spoke for a moment. Frank broke the silence, "I'd like to apologize. I shouldn't have bugged you or told you to stay away from my son." I said, "No you shouldn't have. That's not why I'm here." Frank said, "I'm also sorry about your family." I said, "You had no way of knowing that. It's just a sore subject for me. Again not why I'm here." Frank said, "Then.... why are you here? Chase said I had to stay away from you." I said, "He could hardly hold this against you. I came to you, and I told him I wanted to talk to you. He's aware I'm here." Frank said, "Why are you here then?" I said, "Can you tell me about Sophia's father?" Frank was surprised, "You want to know about Sophia?" I nodded, "Well her dad. My brother told me a little about her. God, I should back up. Ok here's the deal. I don't want to know Chase's situation that Haley and he are trying to x. I know by the way you've been acting lately you know what Chase and I are to each other now. The complete one eighty sealed it for me. So I don't want to know until it's dealt with." Frank frowned, "That's why you haven't moved into the pack? That's why you haven't been marked by my son?" I said, "Being marked is Chase's deal. He wants to have his situation handled before then. I'm not totally against being marked, but I'm not sure I'm ready yet. When I am, I'll tell him. Then it's his choice to keep waiting or not. Again... not why I'm here." Frank snorted, "You know he won't confirm it to me that your his mate, but you straight up told me." I said, "I don't have a problem with you knowing." Frank asked, "Who do you have a problem with knowing?" I groaned, "I don't want Haley to know I've met him yet. I like our bubble. I'm not a fragile person Frank, but I just want to be happy. I don't want whatever is hanging over Chase to get in the way of our relationship. Being in a steady non emotionally abusive relationship is new for me. I'm protective of how happy I feel right now. Again, NOT the point."

Frank studied me, "All right. Sophia's father was a good man. A bit of a wild soul before he met Martha, Sophia's mother." I said, "What happened to her, Martha? No one has mentioned her to me." Frank sighed, "She passed not long after Sophia was born. We aren't really sure what happened. Allister didn't share." I said, "That's her father's name? Allister?" Frank nodded, "Yes." I said, "What did he get sick with?" Frank sighed, "It was a simple mistake. As wolves we do runs with silver in our system. It's not straight silver but we want our pack to be able to know what that feels like. Allister had made his pack do them more often than most of us. His shot didn't get diluted enough. He took on too much silver, and it made him susceptible to illness. He got cancer." I said, "No one found that odd? That he was basically poisoned?" Frank said, "He would've been ne. He just got cancer." I said, "So... you didn't find it odd." Frank stared at me, "I'm thinking your people do find it odd." I said, "I do." Frank sighed, "Allister put the doses together himself. I always... well I shouldn't speak ill of the man. He's dead." I said, "You always what?" Frank sighed, "I think his daughter reached an age she could take over. He'd lost his mate, and he wanted to join her. I thought it was his way of killing himself." I said, "I still think it's odd. Did he get cancer treatments?" Frank nodded, "Yes, they didn't work." I said, "Why would he bother with treatments if he was trying to die?" Frank opened his mouth and shut it several times. Then said, "If someone killed Allister, then we've let them get away with it far too long." I said, "You said he was a bit wild before he met Sophia's mother...." Frank laughed, "Oh he enjoyed his fair share of women. Even some she wolves. He had a knack for coming across she wolves as they went into heat." I said, "Doesn't that mean they have a mate?" Frank said, "Sometimes. It means they used to have one at the very least. Mated she wolves go into heat even if their mate has died." I said, "So... he wanted kids?" Frank said, "It's... not exactly that. The pheromones secreted by a she wolf in heat are VERY hard for wolves to resist especially Alpha Males."

I said, "So...do you know who the she wolves were? That he came across." Frank said, "I know who one of them was. She was in his pack. Her mate was a warrior who'd died literally the night before she went into heat." I said, "Was his death suspicious?" Frank said, "No. He was on patrol and their guard unit was overwhelmed. He died protecting his mate's little sister." I said, "Who was she? The woman who went into heat." He said, "Oh... her name was Tenley... Tenley Olsen." I said, "What happened to her?" Frank said, "After her heat she was embarrassed. She didn't get pregnant and asked Allister if she could leave the pack. He tried to get her to stay and told her it was nothing to be embarrassed about. She insisted, she wanted to go. She ended up joining a pack I believe somewhere in Illinois." I said, "So you don't know how to get a hold of her?" Frank frowned, "I could ask around.... Why?" I said, "I just want to talk to her. Do you know anyone else that Allister was with before Sophia's mom?" Frank said, "They weren't from his pack." A thought formed in my brain, "Oh... her sister. The one her mate saved. What happened to her?" Frank said, "Opal." I laughed, "Opal Olsen?" Frank said, "Yeah, it's an absurd name. She never met her mate, but after Beta Alfred's mother passed.... She mated with and was marked by his father. She's still there." I said, "Wait... Beta Alfred's mother died too? That's a lot of dead higher ups in one pack dying." Frank frowned, "Yes... actually. It is. I could ask Opal about Tenley. That would be the easiest way to get in contact with Tenley." I said, "No... I'm trying to be more covert about it than that." Frank said, "Why?" I said, "I just am."

Frank said, "Have you met Sophia?" I said, "Oh umm no. I just...I guess I empathize with her. I lost my parents too, but I had Heath. She has no one." Frank hummed, "That girl has more than she realizes. It's hard for those of us with Alpha Blood to know who our friends are sometimes. We think we know everything. I know I do. As do my sons. They are wired though. So is Sophia. It's part of being young. You got you've got everything around you. You just don't. One day they will look back and go Man.... I was an \*\*\*\*\*. They will all be right too." I said, "I'm sure Sophia has a lot of pressures Chase and even Cameron don't. Even though he's not your rstborn son, no one opposes Cameron ruling a pack. I'm sure plenty of people oppose Sophia because she's a woman. Wolves are very antiquated in how things run." Frank laughed, "You're very smart. You are also right. Sophia has had her share of trouble because she's a woman." I said, "A fact her father would've known. Did he love her? Or was she just his legacy?" Frank said, "Oh he loved her. She was his little princess. He always wanted a big family, but when her mother died.... He just couldn't think of a family with someone else." I nodded. I got that. I couldn't think of a family with anyone but Chase. I said, "So he didn't get a second chance mate then." Frank said, "He didn't go looking so he might have." I said, "Did you go looking?" Frank laughed, "No... I wasn't looking for Nadine, but I'm damn glad she found me. I needed her." He studied me, "I can guess why you want to track down Tenley. There's no way she had the Alpha's child. She'd have stayed. Her child would've taken care of and wanted for nothing." I said, "Even if Tenley understood the Alpha couldn't resist her.... She was still grieving the loss of her mate. It's not like she was drunk, but her choice was still stripped away. She probably wanted control. Did he make her get a pregnancy test?"

Frank was stunned silent again. "No he didn't. He trusted her word. You certainly have a way of putting things Lexi." I said, "A woman's perspective never hurts. Plus, I study people often. I know a lot about people. I'd like this to stay between us. I'll even keep you in the loop of what I find." Frank laughed, "You don't want Chase to know about this." I sighed, "It's not that. It's....if I can nd family for Sophia.... I want to give it to her. I don't know what her and Chase's ally status is. He tenses whenever we go into her territory, That's where my P.O Box is. I know he's got a lot on his plate. This just seems like something I'd like to do to do that. She shouldn't feel as alone as she has to feel right now. Or as Haley would say, I'm projecting how I would feel onto Sophia. I'm right though." Frank said, "You are but I'd be careful in how you approach Sophia. If she has a brother. She could feel threatened by that." I said, "Why?" Frank smiled, "Oldest child and a boy? They could take her pack." I said, "No they couldn't. She'd kick their ass in a ght. She's the daughter of the Alpha and his mate. She'd be more powerful than any of his children regardless of gender." Frank laughed, "You are correct. She would be stronger. Tenley was an omega." I said, "I just...I'd want to connect with family if I was her. Especially if they don't know about each other. I think they deserve that, to at least know. My brother has a lot going on, and I'd like to help him out. I can do this. I can at least nd them for him." Frank said, "Alright. This will be between you and I." I smiled, "Thank you. For what it's worth to you.... I'd like to start over between you and me. I don't have a dad in my life anymore. I have father figures, but they aren't my dad. I always wanted to be close with my string's family. I have Heath and Haley. That's my family, but I'd like for us to be.... I don't know. Never mind it's stupid."

Frank said, "No, starting over is more than I deserve. I was awful to you when you'd been nothing but kind and gracious with my family. Losing Chase's mother was the hardest thing I'd ever gone through. Everyone says it's not true, but I feel like I failed her. That's hard for an Alpha to deal with. Failure of any kind, but to lose your own mate to failure.... it clouds my judgement not infrequently. Chase told me I needed to stop being afraid, and he's right. It's just easier said than done. I do count you as family to me and mine, Lexi Scott. I'd love to have a clean slate with you." I nodded, "I would too. I'm not really a grudge holder, and you thought you were protecting Chase. I understand that. I want to protect him too." Frank smiled, "I think you suit my son quite well. I thought I would be in Cassandra Conners boat. I deserve to be. She did wrong with that fairy daughter in law of hers." I snorted, "You didn't do anything near as bad as she did." Frank said, "Agree to disagree Lexi."

I said, "Putting aside that I do not have the same life experiences as Haley. You did not welcome me into your family giving me everything I'd ever wanted. I do have that in common with Haley for different reasons. Haley has longed for acceptance and family. I longed for family. You didn't know who I was to Chase and warned me to stay away. Cassandra Conners is a b\*\*\*\*h who welcomed Haley into their home and made her feel like she was part of this big happy family. Haley shared all of herself with them, and I KNOW they didn't know what a big deal that was.