

Chapter 1 We Will Meet Again

Deep in the heart of the American Rocky Mountains, bathed in the warm glow of the late summer sun, a young girl stood beside an unmarked tombstone, her unique tribal garb contrasting with the rugged landscape. She was Meredith, the long-lost daughter of the Kane family in Northerndale.

In a case of mistaken identity, Meredith had been switched with another baby at the hospital seventeen years ago, growing up blissfully unaware of her true heritage.

Now, with the truth finally revealed. Today, she was embarking on a journey to the unfamiliar world of city life, a world she had never known.

"Let's head down, Merry. Your family should be arriving soon. Once you're back in the city, you'll be officially part of the Kanes. Put the past behind you..."

The old woman's gaze shifted from the tombstone to the young girl.

"Grandma, you head down first. I want to stay here for a bit," Meredith replied softly, her eyes lingering on the tombstone.

The old woman gave another glance at the tombstone and sighed, "Don't be too long, Merry."

With that, she turned and left, leaving Meredith alone to her thoughts.

Later, a sudden rustling sound from the woods behind her shattered the silence. Something was moving through the trees, approaching Meredith with urgency.

Meredith cautiously turned around, her long eyelashes casting distinct shadows under the sunlight, lending a mysterious and somber quality to her gaze.

Suddenly, an imposing figure clad in rugged combat suit emerged from the woods. It was Zenon Stormborn. His face was smudged with dirt, making their features indistinguishable.

However, Meredith's eyes were instantly drawn to the emblem on their right arm. The rustling sounds from the woods continued, hinting at more unseen figures lurking within.

"Danger! Run!" the man let out a low growl. His surprise at finding someone in this remote, mountainous region was evident.

His voice drained of strength, trailed off as he stumbled. He crashed to the ground, sprawled out amidst the lush grass, a crimson stain spreading across it.

Meredith furrowed. The intensity of the blood scent told her this man had lost a significant amount of blood. If she wouldn't intervene and stop the bleeding soon, he'd bleed out.

Just then, two men emerged from the rustling woods.

"Look! There's a girl here!" exclaimed the curly-haired man excitedly.

"Let's take her with us," the bald man behind him echoed, his thick lips curling into a lecherous grin. Seeing a beautiful girl in this desolate region had clearly stirred something within him.

Meredith's heart pounded like a drum in her chest. Having lived in the mountains for eleven years, she was no stranger to its dangers.

But this was the first time she had faced such a situation.

She couldn't help but feel relief that her grandmother had already left the scene and was safe at home now.

She glanced at the weapons in their hands and mustered a weak voice, "Please don't hurt me. I'm just an ordinary villager..."

The bald man stepped forward, lifting Meredith's chin with the spout of his gun. He fixed his gaze on her elegant features and unblemished skin that seemed to invite touch...

He licked his lips and grinned, "Of course, sweetheart. Join us, and I'll show you a life of excitement and luxury."

Meredith glanced at the menacing gun, her long lashes quivering slightly. She gasped, "Spare my life; I'll do whatever you want. I can go with you."

Her apparent submission only fueled the man's predatory intentions. He chuckled, "Since you're up for anything, let's get started!"

Snicker echoed around as the bald man carelessly let his weapon drop, seizing Meredith's right arm and forcefully pulling her into his embrace.

Meredith's left hand deftly moved along the side of her garb as she collided with his chest, revealing a small but potent device. In a lightning-fast motion, she delivered a non-lethal shock that rendered the bald man unconscious.

"Ugh..." Before succumbing to unconsciousness, he caught a glimpse of Meredith's cold, steely eyes, devoid of any trace of her earlier timidity.

Meanwhile, the curly-haired man, sensing trouble, let out a curse and raised his gun. However, fearing for the safety of his bald companion, he aimed the dark barrel at Meredith.

Reacting quickly, Meredith shoved the unconscious bald man aside, rolled nimbly on the ground, and positioned herself behind a tombstone.

She grabbed a handful of white powder from a nearby basket and flung it at the curly-haired man.

Simultaneously, he loaded his gun, but he was still a step too late.

The white powder dispersed in the air, and as he inhaled it, his vision blurred, his senses weakened, and then he fainted.

The potent concoction she'd used, a homemade animal repellent with no antidote, had knocked the guy out cold for at least an hour.

As Meredith got to her feet, she noticed the new garb her grandmother had sewn for her, now stained and snagged. A frown creased her beautiful eyebrows.

She turned her attention to the fallen man and realized a bullet had pierced his right scapula, and blood was oozing out.

Meredith loosened the man's heavy combat suit, raising her garb to reveal a collection of tools concealed beneath the fabric.

Choosing one, she casually gathered some leaves and plants, chewed them, and spat the mixture onto the man's wounded scapula.

Without a second thought, she tore a strip of cloth from her torn garb and wrapped it around the injury.

The critical nature of the situation made bullet extraction impossible.

Zenon's consciousness flickered back, his right shoulder feeling numb but pain-free. In a daze, he felt hands on his chest, and a sudden wave of alarm hit him.

Just as Meredith finished tending to the wound, her hand was captured by a larger one.

"Relax, I'm just helping you with the wound," she explained soothingly.

Zenon finally got a clear look at the girl's face and couldn't help but stare in disbelief, "...Naomi?!"

Upon hearing that name, Meredith's stoic face transformed into one of shock.

Through her widened pupils, she caught a glimpse of the man's face, smeared with dirt. With a sudden surge of strength, she wrenched her hand free from his grasp and stepped back.

Naomi is a guarded secret known only to the Stormborn family! Could this man be one of the Stormborns?!