

Chapter 9

Kris's POV

"It's still dark outside." Lacie protests as we walk inside the pack house gym. "What do you expect, it's 5 am?" Rylee says, laughing at her. The way she looks at him could curdle milk.

Freddie recommended we take a picture of me holding a Sunday newspaper. He would send it to the Wolf Council later on that day. Then, on Monday, he would submit a report informing the Wolf Council that I had left that day. Effectively, I gain an extra day if he does it this way.

"I know it's early. But if we take a picture in an artificially lit room, Council Member Clayton won't know what time of day it is." Freddie answered her. "Now all of you start running. I need you to all make it look like you have been here for hours."

Erin, Lacie, and Isabelle. Start jogging on a treadmill. "Get that speed up. You need to be sweating." Rylee barks at them as he takes off his top.

"He is taking this way too seriously," Isabelle says, loud and snappy.

"No, he understands the importance of fooling the Wolf Council," Freddie answers her. "If they suspect anything is amiss. They will send someone else in my place. Maybe even Clayton himself." The look of horror must have been apparent on my face as they all doubled the speed on their treadmill.

It's not long before we are all glistening with sweat. "Here Kris. Hold this in front of you." Freddie tells me as he stops my treadmill and hands me a newspaper. "Say cheese," Freddie says cheerily. He says this every time he takes my picture. "That man is very happy at this time of morning, too happy if you ask me!" I told Rylee. Who enjoyed the fact he got an early morning workout?

Dillon and Nathan will look after the pack while I am gone. There were no pressing issues. If anything were to happen, we were only a day's drive away. Less if I let Siren run home.

Dillon gured that if we drove to the Northern Valley Pack on the Sunday. We could swing by at least 6 other packs on the way home. It would make it a long week of traveling for us. But if this is what I've got to do, this is what I've got to do. I have to at least try to find a suitable mate for myself. My pack is my home. I can't let my pack down, no matter how badly the Council wants me to fail.

"Right, let's get ready and get moving," Rylee announced. We all headed upstairs and got ready for our very long car journey. My girlfriends didn't have to come. They wanted to come, to support me and make sure I didn't make any stupid decisions on my journey.

To say the journey was long would be an understatement. It was torturous. Rylee even shared the driving as it was so long.

We'd been on the road for 14 hours when we finally pulled up to the Northern Valley Pack gates. Rylee showed them their Alpha's open invitation. They then directed us to their pack house. "Alpha will meet you there." They told us. "Bloody cold up here," Rylee said once he closed the window.

I had to agree with him. I was cold, and the wind was icy cold. I've never felt as cold as bone-chilling. When we made it to the pack house and climbed out of the car, you could tell we were in one of the coldest parts of the Wolf Kingdom.

A man in his late 30s approached us. He was tall and well-built. Quite attractive for an older man. "Alpha Kristen? I wasn't expecting you to actually visit me." He laughs and rubs the back of his neck. I smiled, about to answer him, but my teeth chattered instead. "Let's get you all inside," he said.

"We don't need to be asked twice," Erin shouts. Everyone grabbed their bag and ran inside the pack house. All the time, the Alpha snickers at us. The moment he closed the door, the heat inside the pack house instantly warmed us. "There is a re in there." He says, pointing towards a room. Lacie was the first through the door. "Out of my way," she yelled, warning anyone who may stand in her way. The rest of us followed her.

"I honestly didn't think you'd ever come here, Alpha Kristen. No one ever comes this far north. So why have you?" Alpha Philip asks curiously.

I looked at Rylee. "You received my letter. You're aware of the situation I have been put in by the Wolf Council. You responded by giving me an open invitation to visit your pack. Why are you so shocked I came?" I responded.

"Honestly? I am really shocked you came." He smirks. "You have come in vain, though. I don't have a family or a son that could be your mate."

I crossed my arms and raised my eyebrows. "You deceived me."

"Yes. I wanted to see if you had the balls that all these male Alpha's lack. No one comes here because of the weather. Their skin is too precious to be exposed to extreme temperatures. You have already earned my respect, by the way." Alpha Philip answers me. I know he is being honest.

"Nice to know that my balls are bigger than theirs. They're in my purse, by the way." I respond. That makes everyone laugh.

Alpha Philip joins us in front of the roaring re. "I am sorry you felt I deceived you. Simply put. I never found my mate. I refused to take a chosen Luna when pressured. Not when there is a chance she's out there. If I am to find her, I need to start somewhere." I am about to say something to him. "I knew I wouldn't be your mate. Given the age difference between us. But if I offered you an olive branch and invited you here. You may offer one to me. I need to go south and see if I can find her. Before, it's too late, and I am too old." He looked embarrassed.

I snickered at him. "I know what you mean. I wouldn't want another mate other than the one that was fated for me." I looked at my friends. "Thankfully, though, he rejected me. Now I get to choose."

"What?" Alpha Philip says, shocked. "Who the hell would reject you? He would have to be blind."

"Ah, but I am a woman not afraid to get my hands dirty. He was a man afraid of dirt."

Alpha Philip holds up his hands. "Callouses are seen as a badge of honor in this pack."

We spent the evening with Alpha Philip, laughing and comparing the North to the Central parts of the Wolf Kingdom. As there is no need to stay another day. We decided to leave in the morning. But not before I invited Alpha Philip to the River Valley Pack, an open invitation. Should he ever wish to head south?

Before we left, we asked if we could let our wolves go on a short run. Experience the cold weather for themselves. Oh, my goddess, did Erin and Lacie complain about stripping off in the cold. In the end, they shifted while wearing their clothes. Or should I say, ruining their clothes? Because that's what happened. They tore their clothes during the shift.

Siren didn't stay out long. It was too cold even for her. "I won't complain about the heat back home ever again." She promised me. "Neither will I. Now knowing there is a pack up here that lives in this temperature day in and day out."

"We made an ally," Rylee said as we drove out of the pack's borders.

"That's more than my dad ever did." I praised our achievement based on that fact alone. Onto the next pack.