

## Wait! Werewolves Exist? Chapter 9 - Tips

AMBER.

Lakeside was picturesque. I was driving up a street lined with businesses. It seemed like anything you could need was here on this one street. I passed a clothes shop, a grocery store, a chemist, a dental practice, a butchers, a bakery, and so much more. I saw a car park and pulled in. I decided to walk to the restaurant I had seen. I could get directions and have some breakfast at the same time to quieten my grumbling stomach. I wandered down the street, looking in the shop windows as I went. I got a few strange looks from passers-by.

I figured I probably looked pretty dishevelled, I had slept in my car after all. I checked my reflection in the window of the toy shop I was in front of. I chuckled at the sight of myself, and I was definitely not looking my best. I tried to smooth out my creased t-shirt a little and ran my fingers through my hair. I realised the woman behind the counter was watching me with an amused expression. I blushed as I gave her a little wave before hurrying away.

I pushed open the door to the restaurant and stepped inside. The most delicious smells surrounded me, and my stomach growled loudly. Everyone in there seemed to stop and stare at me for a moment. I hadn't realised it was that loud, I thought, slightly mortified. I shuffled uncomfortably under their gaze. A shorter, curvy woman who I figured to be in her late 40s, early 50s at the most, approached me with a warm smile, and everyone began eating and chatting again.

"Hey there, table for one, or are you meeting someone?" the woman asked cheerily. "It's just me" I replied, and my stomach growled again. She chuckled and led me to a table by the window. "Sounds like someone needs feeding." I nodded eagerly and took the menu she was offering to me. "Would you like something to drink?" she asked. I ordered a coffee and began looking at the menu. By the time she brought my drink over a few moments later, I was ready to order.

When my food arrived, I asked the woman if she would be able to help me with some directions. "If you can stick around until the morning rush is over, I will happily help you with anything you need." She replied. I nodded my thanks and tucked into my food. I groaned in happiness it was so good. She glanced back at me and chuckled again. When I was done, I just relaxed in my seat

and looked out of the window. I was looking forward to living here, I couldn't explain it, but I felt completely at peace, like I was meant to be here.

The crowd had thinned out, and the woman came back over. She set another coffee in front of me and sat down in the seat opposite me with a cup for herself. "How was your food?" she asked. "It was amazing, very possibly the best thing I've ever eaten." I told her, and I meant it. She smiled and said she was glad I liked it. She took a sip of her coffee and tucked some of her black hair, streaked with grey behind her ear. She then told me that her name was Ellie and asked where I needed directions to. "I'm Amber James" I told her "I'm trying to find a house, but the address I have is unusual. It's called Bluebell cottage, but I don't have the house number or street name."

She looked surprised "That's Mary's place. It's been empty for years. Why are you looking for it? If you don't mind me asking." Her green eyes were fixed on me now. I explained that Mary had raised me and that she had passed away. I told her that I'd inherited the property and that I'd decided to move in and have a fresh start. She nodded silently, just taking it all in. When I was done, she said "I'm so sorry to hear about Mary, I always liked her. We were good friends growing up." She sounded genuine, and I smiled in acknowledgement.

Ellie gave me clear directions, explaining that Lakeside was a bit different. There were no street names, other than Main Street, and no house numbers. There were different areas, and each house had its own name. Bluebell cottage was in the area of Lakeside where the well-off lived, those who came from wealthy families, or worked in a position of power.

All the homes there had flower based names. Ellie told me that she lived in the area a bit closer to the main street, which was occupied by the business owners and their worker. The homes there had bird based names. She told me that her, her husband and her daughter lived at Nightingale cottage, and her son lived at kingfisher Cottage. I liked it, but I said I would have to find a map or write it all down. It was all so different from the city. Ellie told me if I ever needed anything to just ask. I thanked her and paid my bill, making sure to leave a good tip.

I stopped at the grocery store on the way back to my car. I figured I would definitely need some cleaning supplies. After all, I had no idea what kind of state the house would be in. It had been standing empty for years. I hadn't even considered that. What if the house was uninhabitable? Then what would I do? No I'm sure Ellie would have mentioned that. "People were looking at me strangely again. It's as if they've never seen a stranger before. I headed back

to my car with my shopping bags. Now I just had to hope I remembered Ellie's directions correctly.