

Chapter 67 Knox

After admiring the paintings we sat in the lounge, Lilah explaining how she and Indie would often be up here together painting, and chilling out together. That Indie had wanted a place of her own, and that the fact this was in the countryside so was ideal for painting the wildlife was the reasoning she'd chosen the old patrol building and turned it into a home.

She'd told us it used to be the home of the pack seer years ago hence the quirkiness of the style of cottage I guess, that between them they'd filled almost all the free space with artwork and that she'd miss that when Indie moved.

I could see the emotion on her face as she spoke and knew she would struggle, we would have to find a way to get her over to our pack so she could still have that freedom to paint with Indie that they had here, hell they could let loose on the pack house, it was probably due a brightening up!

She spoke of the many art related pieces she'd painted recently, he gave so animated as she spoke, I think this was the most she'd spoken to me and it was nice to see her more relaxed, she hadn't even noticed as I'd slipped my arm round her shoulders to rest it on the back of the chair as it felt like a natural thing to do, she was leaning into me as we spoke, Gabe and Jake chatting between them on the other side of the room.

As she leant in and spoke again the front door opened, Indie walked in crying with Dan following behind.

Lilah was instantly on her feet "I'm guessing that went as well as we thought it would then" she said to Indie, and she nodded, clearly there was something we didn't know about.

Her parents are dicks Dan linked me, I wish I'd found her sooner she deserves so much more than them he continued.

Ok weird, I'd definitely missed something here.

Lilah gave Indie a hug and led her to the sofa "what happened?"

"They basically didn't care. Asked if I was sure he was my mate. Asked who he was and if he was going to take care of me and that was it. When I'm offered to call to see them tomorrow to say goodbye they said no" she burst into tears.

Seriously?! What the hell? What sort of family is this? This isn't the sort of family I'd expect within a pack, they would normally be so closely linked.

I looked to Dan who shrugged, then I looked to Lilah who currently had her arms around her friend. She must have felt my eyes on her as she looked up and sighed before whispering into Indie's ear, I noticed a small nod from Indie.

"I know you're wondering a few things" Lilah started.

Indie sobbed and Dan was instantly by her side, lifting her so she was able to sit on his knee, nearly knocking Lilah off the sofa in the process.

I quickly went to help her....this room was far too small for all of us... she had already steadied herself before I reached her despite it taking me no time at all to cross the small lounge, so instead I stood awkwardly next to the sofa....

Be nice to lift her into my lap... hold her close..... I jerked my head... seriously now, where are these thoughts coming from?!

So I do what I was already doing, standing awkwardly while I look to Lilah who has her hand resting lightly on Indie's leg to show reassurance to her friend as she continues "I know you all are probably really close to your families, Gabe I can definitely tell you are just the way you are with Lexi and you definitely have that big brother vibe going on" she smiled up to Gabe who was lounging across the armchair opposite her, he nodded in agreement, clearly as curious as me what she had to say.

"And I know it's normal for most families in packs to be close but it's not really like that for Indie..." she paused and looked across to her friend as if to check she was ok, I noticed she gave her friend's knee a small squeeze. These girls were clearly really close. But I was still really intrigued by this.

"I got this Del" Indie surprised us all by talking, so we looked to her.

"It's nothing strange or bad, my parents are just not very parenty, is that even a word?! " she looked to Dan as if for confirmation with a shrug before continuing "Anyway, I don't know much from when I was small, though from what I've been told I spent a lot of time with my Auntie, my mum and dad just didn't seem to have that love there for me after I arrived. They were so excited for us coming, I was one of a twin, there was complications at the end of my mama's pregnancy....." She paused and looked up to the sky out of the window as if acknowledging something with a small smile.

"My brother died soon after being born while they had to fight to keep me alive" I saw her wipe a tear from her eye and Dan instantly hugged her tighter.

Had they not spoke about this already? I found that hard to believe it seemed like something she may have mentioned.....though maybe it was too difficult, I could understand that.....

Indie gave her head a shake, in a sign of almost defiance I think, trying to be strong "I think my mum and dad blame me for Dex not being here.... Or found it hard to have me there and not him too.... I don't know, but they were never really affectionate to me, they were never really there for me, I spent most time with my Auntie or with Lilah and her family once we grew close in school....." she looked to Lilah with a smile "they became like a second family to me"

"I'm sorry doll" Dan gave her a hug and gently kissed her shoulder "things make a little more sense I guess..." he looked to me and I nodded. I have to agree, not able to begin to imagine what it must have been like to grow up in that environment, I'd grown up in a home where I was surround by love and care, almost suffocated by it in some ways, not just by mum and dad, and sisters, but aunts and uncles and close pack members, to think of Indie feeling unloved by her own parents was heart-breaking.....

"It's ok, I didn't know any difference and my Auntie was always good to me, she never had kids of her own...." She paused like she was trying to think how to explain something "she didn't find her mate..... she's a little different....."

I saw Lilah smile and raise her eyebrows to Indie. Clearly I was missing a joke here, I may ask her later.....

"She's not that close to my mum, or the rest of the family for that matter," Indie continued, an affectionate smile coming across her face as she spoke of her Auntie "but as soon as I was born she was there for me.....and my mum let her..... she is so free.....so unique..... spiritual..... and artistic.....she's a bit quirky..... "

Hmmm that sounded like someone we had recently met..... maybe she took after her Auntie..... "and she loves me....." Indie adds. I smiled, glad that she'd had someone there for her.

"Have you told her about Dan?" I felt inclined to ask.

"Of course!" Indie's face lit up with a beautiful smile "I called her the morning we had marked one another, I plan to see her tonight...." She looked to Dan as if checking that would be ok, he simply nodded to her.

"I know you think badly or feel bad for me but don't, I did ok, I had my Auntie and I had Lilah, she was there so much, I spent so much time with her family growing up, so many sleepovers....."

she looked to Lilah with a wistful smile making me wonder if she as remembering "as you can maybe see I'm a little quirky....." I tried not to laugh, feeling bad for my initial judgement of her....

Gabe was grinning at her "Nah it's called unique style right Chica?" Indie smile back with a small chuckle.

"Well, since being a teenager I have always had a unique style if you want to call it that" she looked to Gabe with a wink " my mum and dad said I was too much like my auntie and seemed to resent me even more. Living with them was almost unbearable, I stayed at Lilah's as often as I could, or my Auntie's, when I had my first shift I knew I wanted to move out....."

I felt angry knowing a young she-wolf had been made to feel like this by her own family but then at the same time it seemed they clearly had some sort of grief issues going and I knew grief could seriously mess with your head, but seriously I didn't think this was right....

"Lilah suggested I speak to her Mum, as they knew a lot of the situation, and with being the Beta wife and being friends with Alpha Grayson we wondered if they could perhaps sort something for me.... Maybe let me move in with my auntie now I was older to make that choice myself....."

Actually that would make complete sense to me, so I didn't understand why they wouldn't allow that? I looked to her, urging her to continue, noticing Jake and Gabe were just as engrossed in what she was saying. "Sadie, erm, Lilah's mum was amazing, and said she would do what she could, we spoke to Alpha, I was friends with them too as obviously they are the Beta family and spend a lot of time with Alpha, plus Logan was part of our friendship group growing up, and with me spending so much time at Lilah's house I was often involved in their events...."

The mention of the packs future Alpha Logan made my skin crawl, maybe knowing he was the one that had hurt Lilah was the reason behind that...

"Anyway, Alpha said I couldn't live with Auntie T" she gulped "please don't think bad, I don't want to keep secrets so I will say this but don't let it go further than here....." she paused to nervously look at us all.

I was definitely intrigued now, what was she going to tell us? That she was scared by? I nodded to confirm it would go not further, Gabe put his thumb up - tool - and Jake smiled to try to reassure her.

As she then continued "Alpha informed me then that my Aunt was a seer with witching abilities and that me living with her would not be safe"

I saw Dan's eyes widen a little, Lilah was squeezing her friends knee again, knowing how difficult that was for her to say, and the rest of us were doing our best to dismiss what she'd told us as being no major big deal. But really it was a big deal, witchcraft was most definitely frowned upon and to think that my new pack member was linked to someone who by the sounds of it was involved with it bothered me.

I could see Indie looking to me "Oh she's not a witch, she has no witching abilities either, she's a herbalist at most so is good at healing as well as being a seer" I relaxed a little at that news "though she is friends with a witch or two....." Indie smiled awkwardly at us.....

Hmm I wasn't too sure what to make of this.....

"It's really not that bad, the Alpha has been glad of Auntie T's seer abilities over the years and when normal medicine hasn't helped even our pack Dr will go to her for herbal medicine..." Lilah spoke up in defence of Indie's aunt, she too obviously close to her.

When explained like that I didn't see much of an issue, many packs had a seer and herbal medicine was not unusual. Me personally wouldn't allow witchcraft involvement in my pack as witches and werewolves did not generally mix well but if Indie's Aunt was quite spiritual and they were her friends it seems quite innocent.

I could see Indie was still on edge after telling us all that, Dan still holding her tight, I could see Gabe biting his nails and Jake looking to me for my reaction so I thought I should respond "It's ok Indie I understand, it doesn't bother us, why do they say she's a witch?!" I had to ask as curiosity got the better of me "is it simply because they know she's friends with them?"

She looked shocked I wasn't bothered by it all "It's because she's a seer, she's a bit unique and different, so she used to get picked on and she prefers her own company, never found her mate.....so they look to her as the older, weird lady who lives on her own out near the woods...in truth she's funny.... She's friendly and kind...."

I saw Indie's face full of love talking of her Aunt and realised this was the family that mattered to her.

"Aunty T is the best really, she is like family, we spent so much time there growing up, she is such a character but nobody gives her time of day so miss that in her, and she is an amazing cook too..."Lilah smiles, her face looking just as full of affection as Indie's.

"Well I can't wait to meet her then doll" Dan said giving Indie a big hug.