

## Chapter 77 Lilah

I felt a little bad, Knox seemed a little offended by me brushing him off when he asked me for a swim, but swimming didn't really seem like a good idea today...plus I had my hair loose now too and it would dry all funny...

"You ok Lilah?" I heard Manuel call across from the disposable grills he had set up slightly apart from where we had all been sitting.

I got myself up, grabbing a couple of cans of soda and went over to join him. Feeling bad he'd been left on his own, not that he seemed to mind, he looked like he was quite happy to chill out at the grills, listening to the music he had playing on his phone.

"Yeah I'm good, you? I brought you a drink" I smile, offering him the can.

He smiles awkwardly. I kind of gather he isn't too good around women, which I have to say I find really sweet as so many guys I came across were cocky and sleazy.

"Thanks hunni" he smiles.

"The meat is smelling real good" I tell him "you want any help?"

He looks surprised at my offer "Nah I think I'm good, but thanks though, you like to cook?"

"Hmm a little, I do help my papa on the grill on the summer though" I smile at the memories as I remember many summers from being a small girl and my dad finding little ways I could help out while he grilled meat for our BBQs in our garden. "He cooks some mean food on there"

"Ah same as mine then, that's where I learnt too, him and my grandpops" he had an affectionate smile on his face too so I wondered if he too was recalling memories of childhood.

"See my papa never got a son so he had to make do with me" I joke.

Manuel looks at me with a smile "I'm sure he's more than happy with you hunni"

"Aww you being nice Manuel" I poke him lightly, again he smiles awkwardly "he may be happy but I'm sure he wanted a son to inherit the beta role" I explain.

"Ah never thought of that...but still I'm sure you make your papa proud angel" he said, I look up to him, touched by his affection, being friends with these guys could be good for me, I smile at him and he leans down to wrap his arm round my shoulder giving me an awkward hug. Bless him....

"You and Gabe are cousins right?" I look to him.

He laughs "Oh yeah, can't escape them!" I see him grinning at me, I can clearly see he loves his family as much as Gabe. "Our mums are sisters, both crazy girls or would they say they were unlucky being mated into the big Latina families they were" he jokes. "Massive families, lots of tradition, always around each others, but one thing I can't complain about, is lots of people.... Lots of love...lots of fun...." He smiles "always someone there....so it's like you have your mum and dad and their kids, then the rest of the family is simply an extension of that.... Hectic homes.... Full of laughter and love...." He explains with a laugh.

I smile, that does sound good. I can see how Gabe ended up the way he did, though I do wonder why Manuel is as shy as he is....

"Sounds fun" I smile watching him as he tends to the meat in the grill with such concentration.

"At times...other times I swear you just want peace Chica..." I had to smile again as I think that was the few times I'd heard him use the term that Gabe frequently used.

"Peace is always good I have to agree with that.... Though lately I have to say the company I had had been a big difference too...." I quietly say, wondering if he'd get the reference to himself and the other guys.

He looks shyly at me, a smile on his face "Hey that's what friends are for right, and that what we are now Lilah, don't forget that"

"Oi Manuel, you chatting Lilah up there? You best have some food sorted for me, big hungry wolf approaching!!" Gabe yelled as he came splashing out of the water. I saw Manuel blush.

"Sorry, I..I wasn't..." he said to me, suddenly avoiding eye contact with me. Bless him, I had enjoyed chatting to him and his douche of a cousin had made him awkward again.

I put my hand in his arm "I know silly" I smile "you were being my friend and I'm good with that" I begin to walk away to one of the seats and notice the others are walking out of the water.

Ooooohhh..... Knox has no shirt on..... that dude is chiselled to fuck!!..... I watched him as he walked up the beach area, his hair dripping with water from the lake, I swear he looks like an advert for baywatch or something.... His eyes met mine just for a brief second, Shit look away... he saw me Looking....noooo!!

I felt stupid now for being caught out looking at him...he was just in my line of sight is all.... Though he did look good....but he is an Alpha he has to be in shape.....

Indie was suddenly in front of me,

"Hey you, you didn't come for a swim!" She wrapped herself in a towel to dry her self off before Dan was suddenly behind her, putting his hands to her waist and lifting her as he sat down, placing her onto his knee in the chair beside me.

"Ah didn't fancy it. Thought I'd sunbathe. It's nice up her though" I say smiling at Dan.

"Yeah always somewhere we love to come hang out in the summer, have done since growing up, think most of our pack learnt to swim in the lake" he smiled.

I noticed Knox approaching, along with Jake, Gabe and Manuel bringing platefuls of food with them. They placed the plates on the floor in front of the seats for us all to be able to help ourselves too.

"Mmm that looks good Manuel, your papa and grandpapa taught you good!" I say to him with a smile, looking at the various cuts of meat he'd grilled on the disposable grills we'd brought with us while everyone else messed around in the lake.

"Awww grandpapi is the best on the grill Chica, seriously, his steaks are to die for!" Gabe looks to me with animation clear in his voice.

"You don't get Gabe to help though" Manuel teases.

Gabe feigns shock, laughing "I'm not that bad!"

"Dude the steaks weren't even recognisable as steaks, the chicken pieces you cooked we thought were pieces of coal...." Manuel grins at his cousin.

Everyone is laughing and I find myself laughing too, spending time with these guys just feels so much better than being at pack right now, so much easier.... I even find myself a little jealous of Indie that this is her new pack mates, her new life..... no I shouldn't think like that.... She deserves all this and more....

"You ok?" I hear Knox's voice interrupting my thoughts, and realise he is sat on the ground near my seat. Had he sensed my thoughts about Indie? No that would be weird... He has tilted his head back to look up at me, though with his additional height he isn't far from being level with me as the seats we are using are low foldable sun lounge style seats. If he moved his head slightly it would be on my knee..... I think...seriously girl get a grip!

"Yeah just thinking how well you guys all get on and how lucky Indie is to be part of your pack now" I smile at him.

I can see from the expression in his face he is thinking, what he is thinking I am unsure, does he know what I had thought? Does he know I dread leaving these guys and going back to my pack every day? No I wouldn't think he would....and I planned for it to stay that way. I didn't need anybody else, that was the way I had decided things would be after Logan and I didn't plan for that to change. They made great friends, but that would only be for so long....

Then Knox simply nods at me. "Ok, did you want some food? I can grab you some?" He adds.

"Thanks" I say with a smile. I watch him as he grabs a plate and picks up a selection of the different meats Manuel has grilled, sausages, ribs, chicken pieces and steaks. Before passing it to me – I don't know who he thinks will be eating all that but is unlikely to be me, there is loads there!

"I never got chance to say before by the way, your wolf is beautiful..." Knox says to me quietly, I'm a little surprised he had mentioned sky, though it was his first time seeing her much like it was my first time seeing his wolf too. I could feel myself blushing, despite myself, even though Sky was I suppose technically a separate part of me. But he wasn't wrong she was beautiful, she was everything I wasn't in my person form, she was strong, brave and courageous.

"Thank you, yours too" I said before instantly regretting it.

What?! Where did that come from?! Yeah his wolf is gorgeous but seriously?! I swear I should not be allowed to talk to this man!

"Aww I'm sure Knight will be happy for the compliment" he chuckled, I assumed Knight was the name of his wolf.

I sat awkwardly next to him, aware of how stupid I seemed to be able to make myself sound whenever I speak to him. So I just listen into the conversation flowing between everyone, while picking at the food Knox had provided for me. Feeling strangely content.....