

Wolfless, Fateful Encounters Chapter 10

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Rue

Reece takes off at a full sprint up the two flights of stairs to our modest apartment. I sigh, pulling the grocery bags into one hand and adjusting my backpack and his so I didn't drop anything. I hoof it up the stairs and find the front door wide open. I called for Reece to help put the groceries away and his bag on the hook. He skipped back to me with a sheepish grin, "Sorry, mom. I had to use the bathroom."

I laugh, "No need to say sorry for that. Can you help me?"

Reece nods and hangs his backpack on the hook by the door. In L.A it was always just the two of us, so Reece started helping me as soon as he was ready. His few chores (making his bed, putting clothes in the dirty hamper, picking up toys) gave us time to catch up on our day while we did them together. I treasured the mini check-ins and loved the responsibility it taught him. I set the grocery bags on the tiny counter before hanging my bag on the hook next to Reece's. I patted my son's head as he removed his shoes, "How was your school day?"

"Good, I guess. I don't have any friends yet, but the teacher is super nice," Reece announces as he helps me unload and put away the food items. My heart breaks with his admission. I stare at the milk jug in one hand as my other hesitates on the fridge's door handle. All of my doubts and insecurities about this job and move surface. I blinked back my tears, and I hoped that we both would adjust to our new settings sometime soon.

I turned toward him after putting the milk in the fridge and exclaimed, "Well, I have good news."

"What?" Reece asked with the same enthusiasm as I had.

I cupped his chin and smiled, "I talked to your grandfather today, and we will see him in two days!"

"Really?" Reece cried out, "I'm so excited! Does he like cars?"

"It has been a long time since I've seen him, but I'm sure you can ask him if he does," I reply diplomatically, still unsure if my father would even let me in his house. "But for now, we will get dinner ready, bath time, then bed!"

"Can I stay up late?" Reece's eyes rounded in the cutest puppy dog face.

I bent down and nuzzled his cheek through his gleeful laughter, "No way!"

My mind was all over the place after dropping Reece off at school earlier. He has not stopped asking me questions about our upcoming visit to my father's house, and I'm running out of ways to dodge specific questions. I've strived to be honest with Reece as I want to build a stronger bond with him than my father did with me. After everything that happened, I want to be the parent who believes in their child and their child feels comfortable enough to come to them. However, with the complexities of my history, it was hard to explain certain topics.

I finished changing in the locker room at the training facility, trying to focus my thoughts on the tasks before me. My locker door suddenly eased shut, and Emma's face popped up behind it, "Hey, home-wrecker. I heard some crazy rumors about how you seduced the Alpha Prince and have now carried on a torrid affair!" She threw her hands up in sarcastic exasperation, "I thought we were going to start a sordid affair, and you were going to help me score an amazing new promotion."

I giggled, "You know what they say about rumors?"

"What do they say?" She shook her head.

"Rumors you hear about me are as true as the rumors I hear about you." I pull my black hair into a high ponytail.

"Then you are as bad as the rumors say!" Emma laughs so hard she snorts, which sets us both off laughing. When we calmed down enough to head out to the training grounds where I would meet up with Sammy, Emma looped her arm around my shoulders. She leaned in and, in hushed tones, said, "So rumors aside, the group that trained with you yesterday said you were amazing. Strong and crazy talented, I wouldn't mind pairing up sometimes."

I smiled. It had been a long time since I had a gal pal—not since Jess. I was cautious about this new friendship but also excited about the chance to have a friend again. I almost laughed out loud at how I was in the same boat as my kiddo because the only friend I had left was another Alpha Heir and childhood buddy, James. "I've had years of training. I was a professional fighter in the human world, so fighting is literally my life."

"No shit? That's so cool! You definitely need to teach me your ways!" Emma pulled away from me with awe in her expression.

"Why would you want that slut to teach you anything?" The familiar nasally voice announces at the edge of the training field.

Emma's face turned up in annoyance with an exaggerated eye roll, "Can it, Cassandra. We weren't talking to you."

So, the bully has a name. I've successfully avoided her, but I guess she was in today's group. I quickly searched for Sammy, hoping to avoid another run-in with this crazy lady. Cassandra huffed and stomped her foot, "No, Emma, I will not let this snake be an instructor!"

I folded my arms across my chest, and Emma did the same, "It's not your decision who is an instructor and who isn't."

"I challenge you to a duel!" Cassandra smugly calls out, "I will not accept you as an instructor unless you can beat me."

Emma stepped forward, pulling at my elbow, "You don't have to fight her. She is an entitled bitch, and doesn't deserve your time."

If I could finish this in one sweep, that would be easiest. I'll show everyone here that I'm not to be messed with, and that will be the end of it. I grinned at her and turned to Cassandra, "Sure. Let's go to the box down there."

I walked to the boxing ring, but behind me, I heard the familiar snapping sound as Cassandra shifted into her wolf form. I closed my eyes before turning around, knowing this would be a dirty fight. I take on my stance, hopping on the balls of my feet, and follow Cassandra's sloppy movements. She snarls, snaps, and charges at me while I dodge for a moment, looking for an opening.

Cassandra leaps to my left, her jaws barely missing my left arm—her neck twists, leaving her weakness open. I do a solid right punch to the top of her head. There was a loud whimper as Cassandra fell at my feet. The only movement is her steady breathing. Knock-out punches were challenging to time and judge the strength needed, but I had accomplished it. A sense of pride swelled in my chest as I stared down at the unconscious bully.

"What the hell?" Another woman screams, and I notice the crowd around us. The woman and Cassandra's friend from yesterday snarled before shifting into their wolf forms. Two-on-one was a lot more complex than one-on-one when you can't shift. I'm not as confident I can do two more knockout punches, so I would have to focus on my lower body and core to immobilize them temporarily.

It's harder to dodge both of them constantly as they lunge and jump back. They worked in tandem like a well-oiled machine, reading each other's movements in a way only years of practice could accomplish. I was in a tight defensive spot. My body now had so many little cuts and gashes, which slowed my actions. My only saving grace is their strength and strategy are amateur at best. No killer instinct left numerous openings. One She-wolf misstepped, so I kicked the back of her knee and roundhoused her chin so she flopped to the mat. Now alone, the other was quickly dealt with. In the end, I was able to knock both of them out completely. I stood in the middle of the three

unconscious bodies in front of me and yelled out to the growing crowd, "Who else wants to challenge me?"