

8 - A Beginning

(Alpha Dracos)

Atlas, my wolf, was getting more restless by the day. We still hadn't found our mate yet and at this point, I had been to most of the packs for hundreds of miles around Centuri City.

I was beginning to think mine wasn't in this damn country or I hadn't been given one. But I was determined to find her if the Moon Goddess didn't forget about me.

If I wasn't an Alpha and technically a Prince I would have made it my life mission, but unfortunately, I had other duties and a lot of them.

Sex was losing its appeal, no matter the partner I just couldn't find the release that I had been looking for. I scrubbed my hand over my face hoping it would push away those thoughts.

"Mr. Dracos," My secretary came through the line, fucking perfect.

"What?"

"Mr. Daniels is requesting a meeting, he's following up on an email he sent."

"Now?" I asked.

"Yes, your schedule is clear for the next hour," I sighed, "Mr. Dracos?" She asked again.

"Send him in," I sat up and adjusted my tie.

"Mr. Dracos, I won't take much of your time." He stood in front of my desk, I gestured for him to sit.

He nodded once, "The girl, woman, that you wanted us to keep track of in our system, she just appeared."

I sat forward, the wariness leaving me immediately, he had my full attention.

"It seems that she rented an apartment that we own in the Lower West Side," He slid a paper over to me with a lease in Willhemia Balfour's name.

I grabbed it from my desk too fast.

"Thank you, anything else?" I asked not looking at him.

"That's all for now, it just came in. I'll keep you posted if anything else comes up." He stood up and I nodded toward him dismissing him.

My wolf seemed to settle in my mind for the first time in ages.

(Willa)

I settled into a rhythm within a few days, it was more chaotic than what I was used to these past years but it was nice to feel like I was doing something and it left me little time to dwell on the negative thoughts that still circled me.

I dropped Emmett off at Cali's place every morning before we walked to work together. Her daughter, Loreli, and he seemed to get along really well. It helped that they were less than a year apart and Emmett didn't see her as a baby.

Work ended up being the hardest thing to adjust to. I studied the menu during quiet periods, but I still couldn't memorize all the food combinations.

After work, I picked Emmett up and my parents and I would make dinner together. My mom seemed more attached to him now that they were planning on going home, and I almost thought that she would beg to move in.

I finally chose classes, but they wouldn't start until the Summer term so I had another few weeks to get fully settled. I hoped to have our place a bit more of a home by then. There were still so many things I needed for the kitchen and for Emmett's room.

The list of things we needed and things I had to do grew longer each day.

It was his first room to himself and I wanted him to have a place that he would love to be in. I would live on a mattress in a bare room for a year if that's what it took to make sure his space was perfect.

"We're going to see a kitchen table and chairs and a kid's bed," My mom handed me a mug of coffee while my dad helped Emmett get dressed, I would miss this help more than they might ever know.

"Let me know how much, I'll pay for it, or pay you back." I took a long sip willing it to wake me up. I felt mentally and physically exhausted after each day and it was harder to shake the tiredness until the rush of work started.

"Don't worry about it," My mom smiled at me, "We can figure it out later."

"Mom," I set down the mug on a kitchen counter, "Seriously. You know I appreciate all your help, but you've paid for the deposit on this place and the first few month's rent, and new mattresses and sheets and all that. I've got the rest."

My parents didn't have that much money put aside, living in a pack most of the things were taken care of for you. They worked before but hadn't in the years since we moved out. I knew that they were dipping into their savings.

"Okay, I'll let you know." She nodded but I wasn't convinced.

I said goodbye to them and took Emmett's hand, his shorts were coming up over his knees and I added that to my mental list of things I needed to do and buy. New summer clothes.

"What do you think you're going to do today with Loreli and Summer?" Summer was their nanny, she had grown kids of her own, and Emmett and I fell in love with her immediately. She was such a mom and I trusted her completely with the kids.

"I think maybe the park!" He shouted, "The big one with all the black fences around it,"

"Well, that just sounds like the best day ever. I can't wait to hear all about it."

He talked almost non-stop until we reached Cali's apartment and she buzzed us up, something I wished my apartment had. Her place was smaller than ours but in a bit nicer area of town with both a playground and park minutes away.

"Let's do the damn thing," Cali sighed, closing the door behind her, "Guess what?" She raised an eyebrow. I found out it could be anything with her. She could be engaged to someone she never mentioned or found a new brand of chickpeas she loved.

"What?"

"You're officially out of training, welcome to the team, Willa." She gave me a wry smile.

"It's all I've ever wanted," I replied dryly. She laughed heading down the stairs in front of me.

It was nice, having a friend. I had Lola but it was different having someone in person again, someone that got to know this new version of me.

It was freeing in a way.

I was nervous but excited to finally be on my own, and be making real tips instead of the ones that Cali shared with me. I felt guilty but she insisted, and not guilty enough to admit that I needed the money. Bad.

I donned the ugly pink apron and made my way to my section. I had the counter today, which I was grateful for. I knew it was because I was new that I got the easier section that didn't require as much running around.

I went to work immediately checking the coffee pots and making fresh batches. The jingle of the bell at the door barely pulled my attention anymore, but I noticed that the air seemed to shift.

The background chatter stopped completely. Both the customers and other servers that were buzzing about cleaning up after the breakfast rush seemed to freeze.

A beep from a coffee machine pulled me from my thoughts and I went back to what I was doing, keeping an eye on the counter in case a customer sat there. I hoped the smell of coffee would wake me as I stood close to the pots filling at an excruciatingly slow speed.

My body did seem to wake up though, finally, the caffeine was hitting. Every fiber of my being seemed alert as a scent hit me that was sweet yet woody, a perfect combination of manly and soft. I turned on my heel confused for a moment as my senses awakened.

My eyes locked on a pair of light blue eyes that almost looked icy.

My wolf, Iris, danced in my mind saying something I thought I never would hear again.

"Mate."