

The Unwanted Wolf

Chapter 3

Quickly I got dressed, afraid people would return at any moment. My legs felt shaky, but I pushed through it. They seemed nice enough and had helped me in a dire moment, but my fight or flight instincts were kicking. I had to get as far away from this place as I could. Several wolf packs had traveled through this area over the years, and every time it started the same way. I was a lone wolf, and they thought maybe they could help me. They offered to let me join their pack because they wanted to save me. It was dangerous for a wolf to be on their own. It would be easy for a hunter to track them down and kill them. No one would miss them or try to get revenge.

The first time I had been offered to join a pack, I eagerly accepted. It was only a year after my own family kicked me out of their pack, and I was lonely and scared of the future. It started off great, and I let myself imagine a future with the other werewolves. However, that did not last long. The longer the pack was around me, the weirder people started acting. It wasn't long before I was kicked out and told to never return. That one stung almost as much as when my own family removed me. I had gotten my hopes up, only to be crushed.

Every other encounter ended the same way, except I never accepted their offer or expected anything. They would keep trying until they realized there was something wrong with me. It ended in rejection every single time. Sometimes they just disappeared in a blink of an eye, and other times I was left with bruises and cuts all over my body. I didn't understand what was wrong with me. I had tried to ask them, but no one wanted to say anything. I couldn't understand it. I was always pleasant and helpful. They even thought I was funny at times. It was almost like there was a forcefield around me that repelled anyone who tried to get close.

That's why I had to get away from this pack. It wouldn't be long before they came to the same conclusion everyone else did, and I didn't want to deal with the rejection or potential beating.

I listened at the door. There were muffled voices not too far away, so I kept

my ear pressed to the door, waiting for them to go away.

While waiting, I pulled out my phone and pulled up the GPS to get an idea of where I was exactly. They had taken me to some sort of house that was across town from where I lived. If I ran in wolf form, I could probably make it home in 40 minutes. Hopefully they wouldn't come after me after they realized I was gone.

When the hallway grew silent, I slowly turned the door handle and peaked my head out to make sure the coast was clear. I didn't see anyone, so I left the room, shutting the door as quietly behind me as possible. I couldn't tell which way was the way out, so I just picked a direction and hoped for the best.

This is a mistake, Shadow said in my head once again.

I rolled my eyes, ignoring her. She should understand my desperation to leave. She had been rejected along with me over the years. I didn't understand why she wanted me to stick around this time.

As I kept moving, I breathed a sigh of relief when I found the stairs. I hurried down the steps, freezing as one of the steps creaked

under my weight. I froze and looked around, expecting someone to come bolting towards the noise. After a moment, I kept moving. The creak probably wasn't as loud as it had felt. At the bottom of the stairs, I took a deep breath, trying to see if I could smell anyone around.

A familiar scent of lilac and honey filled my nose again. Automatically my body started moving towards the scent. When I realized what I was doing, I pulled myself in the opposite direction. I had to go away from the scent if I wanted to leave unnoticed.

There was a large door that surely had to be the front near the stairs. I started going for it when I heard voices approaching. I pulled

open the first door I could find and slipped into the room. I couldn't see anything at first, and then my eyes adjusted. There were coats

hanging up in here along with some cleaning supplies. I pushed myself as far back as I could in case any way came looking for something in the closet. It was probably futile, since any wolf that came close would likely smell me before seeing me, but it made me feel better.

"Have you seen the wolf they brought in yesterday?" a voice asked, too close for comfort.

"No, Alpha won't let anyone go near her except the doctor."

"He's being weirdly protective."

"I guess. He also may not want to overwhelm her when she's not feeling well. I don't think she has a pack. My scouts said there are no

"That's good. We might be able to make this our permanent home."

My heart started pounding at that thought. If they decided to move their homebase here, I could be the one forced to leave this time.

That would be worse than any other incident with wolf packs.

"Do you think she will end up joining us?"

"It seems like Alpha wants that to happen."

The voices started to fade away and when it was silent again, I cracked the door open. Once again it seemed like I was alone. I tiptoed out of the closet and made a beeline to the front door. I had to get out of here fast. I didn't even have time to think of what I would do if

this pack decided to stay in town. I managed to get through the front door. I shut it behind me quickly, not even worrying about how loud it was. I bolted away from the house, eager to get away as quickly as possible.

I took a deep breath, channeling Shadow as I tried to shift into wolf form.

My chest tightened at the attempt. Nothing else happened.

I kept moving away, but my breathing was more labored than it should have been. I tried again, and this time I felt a sharp pain.

Whatever illness I had left me still too weak to shift into wolf form, and I had never felt more vulnerable. I had never had an issue shifting before, and it would take me much longer to get home on foot.

Go back, Shadow pleaded with me. We need him.

"We don't need anyone." I kept pushing forward, running as fast as my body would allow, which wasn't very fast. Every breath stung my lungs, but I didn't stop. I had to get far enough away that they wouldn't find me, if they were looking for me. If they shifted into wolves and sent a search party, I was at a severe disadvantage. I hoped they would not think finding me would be an urgent matter and not worth the risk of running around in wolf form. That could just cause more problems for them.

After another hour of moving, I finally made it to my apartment building. I pushed through the door, and for the first time since I left

the pack house, I let myself stop, and I leaned against the wall at the bottom of the stairs. My body was screaming at me, and I let myself

sink slowly to the floor. Everything was a mess, and I just didn't want to deal with it. I didn't want to think about the fact that if this new pack decided to stay in town, it could lead to me being forced out and having to start new yet again.

After a few moments, I felt my phone vibrate. It was Lana texting me to feel better and if I needed more time off I could have it, since I never took off sick or asked for vacation time. Part of me wanted to take the next couple of days off to fully recover and make a contingency plan, but a part of me knew it could also lead to me sitting in my apartment, stewing about everything. I decided to at least let myself have the rest of the day, and then I could go from there.

A notification popped up, showing my phone was only at ten percent. This was my sign to drag my body to my feet and start the climb to my apartment. By the time I made it to the top, I felt like I was going to collapse. Just a few more steps. I kept repeating that to myself until I was in front of my bed. I let my body collapse, not even worrying about changing my clothes. I quickly fell into a fitful sleep.

When I woke up again, my body still felt heavy. It was dark outside, and I had no idea how long I had been asleep. I checked my phone, but it was completely dead. I plugged it in and then sat in my bed for a moment. My head was pounding, and then my stomach growled, and I wondered how long it had been since I ate. After a few more moments of sitting there, I dragged myself to my kitchen and took some painkillers. I chugged a glass of water after. I must have been dehydrated.

My stomach felt full from the water, but I knew I would need some more substance to let my body fully heal. I found a pack of ramen in the cupboard and proceeded to put on a pot of water to boil. I checked my phone while waiting. I had a few spam emails waiting for me and a response from Lana. It was also 4:00am. If I was going to work today, I would have to start getting ready in forty-five minutes. I did not have the energy to rush, so I figured I should let myself take the day off and fully recover.

I sent a quick message to Lana, letting her know I was still recovering but I should be back at work the next day. I finished making my food and picked at it when it was done. I didn't have much of an appetite, but I ate what I could manage. When I had had enough, I set

the bowl on the counter and crawled back into bed.

I fell asleep again, and it felt like the darkness was suppressing me. I tried to fight it off, but there was nothing tangible to fight.”

Help!” I cried out.

“I’m here. Don’t worry.” It was the voice of Shadow, but it wasn’t echoing in my head like usual. It sounded like it was coming from

I looked around, but my night vision was weak. I wondered if this was what it was like to be human. “Where are you?”

“I’m still with you.” Her voice came from the opposite direction.

I flipped around, but I couldn’t see her still. “What’s going on? Why couldn’t we shift earlier?”

“I don’t know,” Shadow admitted. This time her voice sounded like it was right next to me. “But we need to return to the pack.”

This time when I turned, I saw the shape of a wolf with shining black fur. I placed my hand on Shadow’s head. I had never interacted with her before like this. “They are not our pack. It’s too risky.”

Shadow shook her head. “You’re letting your head get in the way. I know you can feel it.”

“Feel what?” I was starting to feel frustrated.

“He won’t reject you.”

Mark’s face instantly appeared into my eyes. No, he was an alpha just like the rest. Sure, I felt drawn to him, but he would reject me just like everyone else. I was too much of a risk to his pack, but he just didn’t see it yet. It’s not like he even offered me to stay or anything, not that I stuck around long enough.

I wanted to believe Shadow’s words, but I knew it was not worth the risk of getting my hopes up. I wasn’t sure if I could handle the inevitable rejection if I let myself imagine actually joining a pack. Shadow was surely wrong, but I couldn’t find the words to say it out

loud. Maybe, just maybe, this time would be different.

“You need to be careful.” A new voice echoed in the room.

I froze, unable to see anything other than Shadow and darkness. “Who are you?”

“You are in danger.” That was the only response I got from the unknown voice.

The dream started to fade, and everything turned black again.