

Chapter 12 - Family

"I never liked them." Ember explains, the other wolves unable to eat as they sit and listen. "The kids were sent away into the woods with some of the mothers whenever they brought in a new human to convert. They'd be stripped, caged, bullied and forced to eat raw meat to try and draw out the wildness of their ancestry. I don't know if you know how easy it is to turn a human," he says without looking up from his meal, "all you've gotta do is get some of our blood in your veins, but my family made a huge ordeal out of it." He fiddles with his food, chasing a bit of carrot around the plate while making no attempt to spear it. "When they were deemed ready, their chest would be deeply scratched and smeared with the blood of the strongest. Then there would be a ritual of hate to curse the humans while the Newkin is left to change. First transforms for an adult human are very painful." Cal nods and looks down, as he knows first hand. Ember wets his lips and moves the story on, not wishing to dwell on the nature of his tribespeople.

"I would get away as often as I could and see a guy in the city. He was my lover for a while, but I couldn't let him see me at night. I could resist the change of course, but if it started happening while I was asleep in his bed ..." Ember trails off and sighs, gently laying the fork down on the edge of the dish. "So instead, I'd just slink away to a bit of shelter I'd claimed as my own under a bridge. I didn't know how to work a real job, I just knew how to hunt and fish, so when scrounging for food in the city turned up nothing, I had to go home. Whenever I went back to my tribe I was made to feel like a deserter; chastised, called names, sometimes beaten by my brother, but my mother would always fight them back to let me stay. My family was cruel and barbaric, but they were all I had to turn to when I needed it."

"A little over a year ago," he continues, taking a sip of his rum and cola. "I was away again for a couple of days, seeing that friend I'd meet up with to have a little fun. When I'd run out of scraps to eat and decided to return to the camp, I found it ... empty. Some firmaments were still standing, smouldering. Tattered fragments of clothes lay scattered on bloodied grass, and there was an awful smell of death everywhere I turned. A lingering fog of charred meat and wood burned at my nose. Realising what had finally happened, I ran, as far away and as fast as I could. I didn't even say goodbye to the only friend I had."

Ember sits in silence a moment, clutching the glass and feeling it sap the heat from his trembling hand as he recounts his trauma. The other wolves and the master let him be, allowing him the freedom to recover in peace. He sniffs and drags the glass to his lips to sup a bigger gulp, then continues.

"I read about it, the day after. 'Terrorist Werewolves Slain'." He air quotes with one hand, before setting the drink down and slumping his elbows on the table. "I was devastated and also so relieved I wasn't there. I hated those people, but they were still family. And then they were dead." He chokes the last word and forces a dry gulp to try and compose himself. Cal puts a hand on his shoulder which triggers a reflex of emotions he doesn't want to feel and turns away. "I'm alright," he sniffs again and wipes his eyes. "I'm alright." Cal removes his hand, taking the hint, and stays silent.

"I moved on, found an abandoned cabin in a wood several miles away and fixed it up a little so it didn't leak anymore. After that, I just sort of ... existed. I had no money, no real identity, no skills, and an utter contempt for humans. All I ever saw in them at that point was killers, because I knew that's all they'd ever seen me as. But that didn't get food on the table or any other amenities for that matter. As much as it pained me to be around them, I needed a daytime job. I found a sandwich shop that paid cash, worked at a register for most of the next year and made enough to make the cabin liveable. Sometimes they'd pull me into the kitchen when one of the cooks was away and was able to learn some basic cooking skill. But when I was working, and except for the odd random hookup when the loneliness got bad enough, I spent my time in my own company." He fiddles with the glass, swilling it and watching the bubbles. "I'd still hunt for meat since I was good at that, but sometimes I'd come across a human late at night. In my hungry, bloodlust state, I'd hunt them as well.

"I'd always feel terribly guilty afterwards. In the woods, at night, a human was like any other. Indiscernible from the newspaper picture of the Hunters that slew my tribe. But up close, dead, by my hands, they reminded me more of one of my tribe's victims." He stalls for a moment, sighing in shame. "That is until I found one. I found one of the bastards that murdered my family, and killing him put me into a deep state of unquenchable vengeance. Even after I got back to my cabin, all I could think about was how good it felt and decided to go back out to see if there were more." He looks up and faces the human at the head of the table. "Instead ... I found you ... Alek. You angered me more than anything I've felt in a long time." He looks back down to his food. "Maybe because I had this twisted idea that I could find all the other killers that burned down my village and you stopped me. Or maybe because you made me realise how much like my parents I'd become; not that I could ever admit it to myself."

A silence grew out onto the table. The wolves all look at each other and at Alek and back to Ember. Each wanting to say something, but unable to find the words. The black wolf raises his head and smiles weakly at them all, not able to look into their eyes for more than a second.

"Spending a day here ... with all of you ..." he sniffles, and quivers with his words, tearing his eyes away to try and stop them from welling. "Has ... been ... the best," he can't finish his sentence and breaks down, dipping his head in strained sobs.

Cal is immediately at his side, hugging and cooing softly which only exacerbates the relentless cries. The white wolf holds him tightly and rocks him in his seat as he wails an aching release of a bittersweet melancholy. The work granted for his skills, the friendliness displayed to him even when he was difficult, the promise of gifts and training for anything he desires, a real wage and just the knowledge of feeling truly accepted by people like him, is something he has longed for his entire adult life. The second chance he dreamed for every night but knew he would never get because he thought didn't deserve it. For the first time in as long as he can remember; he felt happy.

The crying eventually dies down and Ember is given a tissue to wipe himself down. He finds that Hess had knelt by his other side and Voigt had gone around behind the chair and begins to rub his shoulders. Cal pulls himself away a little to plant a long kiss on the black wolf's cheek, still wet with tears.

"Sorry," he whimpers and everyone starts talking together to get him to stop.

"Don't be silly dear." Cal says, and Ember hears a wobble in his voice as though he'd also been crying. "You have nothing to be sorry about."

"Yeah. Fuck man. The stuff you've been through, I'm sorry to have given you a tough time." Hess puts a hand on Ember's.

"You haven't though," he laughs meekly. "You've been the nicest wolves I've ever met." he swallows, trying not to break down again and nods to himself in silent agreement. "I was only saying sorry cause your food's gone cold."

Cal titters and Hess shakes his head with a smile at the dumb joke. Voigt guffaws, smacking Ember's arm with one of his big hands.

"Really ... I'm ok. I promise." Ember says, gently rubbing the impact point and hoping that it will disperse the crowd. They each break away and sit back at their place.

"Thankfully, a bit of cold couldn't stop me from eating pie." Voigt claims before shovelling in a full fork to prove it.

"How did you know?" Ember asks Alek, finally picking up the elusive carrot.

"Cord isn't exactly a common surname, but just to be sure, I checked my diary from when we went to go check out that tribe. We did a full head count as we observed from a distance. The newspapers described a total that was one fewer than what I had written down."

"Heh, and here I thought I'd manage to escape that part of me."

"There may be repercussions to you being here, you killed a Hunter. But mark my words; you will not be harmed under my roof, understand?"

Ember nods and the corners of his lips turn slightly in appreciation. "Thank you, master."

Hess offers to microwave anyone's leftover food and puts away what's left in the dish for anyone to snack on if they feel hungry. When the plates are emptied, Cal and Hess glance at each other and then over at the master who nods suspiciously. The black wolf stares at them as they both get up and go into the kitchen.

"We would like to give you something, as a sort of peace token and welcome gift now that you're officially part of our little family." Alek says and Ember looks over at Voigt who is grinning eagerly.

"Wh-what? What kind of gift?" He asks nervously, assuming that any kind of present given in this house could range between a lap dance and a games console. He hears the kitchen door swing open behind him and turns his head to see Cal carrying a cake on a tray and Hess following behind with a childish grin.

"Happy induction, I guess." he giggles and places it down on the table next to the wolf.

Blushing wildly, Ember looks down at the cake which is decorated in icing with the face of four wolves encircling a single candle in the middle. The faces are all happy and done with different colour icing: brown, green, blue and orange. Looking around the room, he realises those are their eye colours and whimpers as he tries not to get upset again.

"You guys ..." he mutters, looking back down at the cake.

"We didn't know what kind you'd like, so I played it safe and just made Victoria sponge. There's double cream to go with it." Hess sets down the pouring jug.

"Sponge is great. This is great. You're all just so dang great." Ember says and stands up so he can hug the two wolves again. "Thank you so much." he moans softly, angling his behind so the wagging doesn't batter the dessert.

"Hey come on now, don't get all soppy again." Hess says with a playful laugh and pushes him away. "Today's been emotional enough as it is."

"Heh, sorry." Ember snuffles and is made to sit back down, wiping his eyes again. "Did you do the decorating?"

"Yeah. I did a couple of practice wolves on some paper first. I think I captured you pretty good though, yeah?" Ember nods, looking at the smiling orange wolf.

"I've never looked happier."

"You can make the first cut, if you like." Cal offers, presenting the knife.

"Seems almost a shame." Ember says, holding it.

"Well, you can always take yours off if you wanna keep it. It's just icing, it'll stay like that for a lifetime." Hess suggests. Ember nods and blows out the candle and then carefully removes the orange wolf from the cake.

"Thank you." Ember carefully lays the cute icing wolf down on the table and then glides the knife through the cake.

Servings are divvied and cream poured. Hess beams as everyone compliments him on the good texture and flavour, especially Ember. Food always taste better when it's free, and even more-so when it's made for you.

"So, I've made a decision." Alek begins as he finishes swallowing. "Tomorrow is the last day before a banquet, which means there is a lot to prepare. As such, there aren't going to be any sessions now until Sunday."

Hess and Ember whine in unison from this news. Voigt seems disappointed but makes no sound, and Cal simply nods as he takes a bite of his cake, likely expecting this news. "So we don't get to cum now until Sunday?" The brown wolf asks pitifully.

"I didn't say that," Alek smirks. "I just said there'd be no sessions."

"Wait ... you mean," Hess brightens considerably. "You're gonna let us cum outside of the lab?"

"I've been doing some stock analysis." Alek begins again, taking a bite and chewing it slowly to keep the wolves in tension. "Now I've had a sample of our newest wolf, I've determined that we could reduce our output by a single day's equivalent and still be in profit."

The wolves all look at each other in turn, looking quite excited by this news.

"On average, I will have a session with all of you around six times a week." Alek continues, pouring a little more cream on his cake and taking another bite. "With the addition of Ember's semen, I believe we can reduce that by a day without suffering losses." he puts his fork down and looks at each of his servants around the table. "As such, I'm willing, to give each of you one free orgasm a week. How does that sound?"

"Fuck yeah!" Hess slams his hand down on the table, startling Voigt. "Ohhhhhh I've been wanting Voigt to fill me up since-" he's cut short as he gets smacked over the head again.

"Keep your language civil around the master, boy."

"Will you punish me if I don't?" The chubby wolf smirks, rubbing his head.

"Punishment for you would be me *not* doing anything to you." Voigt quips, and Hess just grumbles.

"That's one vote then. I assume the rest of you have no objection to this allowance?" Alek says, taking back the conversational reign and setting down his fork.

"No, master." affirm the rest.

"That's what I thought." He pushes back his chair and wipes his mouth before standing up. "Your collars will all need replacing to account for the new rule. So who would like to go first?" Hess immediately shoots his hand up. "Remember, one a week. If you cum tonight, that'll be it for seven days."

"Yes master, I know. I'm just so so eager."

"Alright, come with me." Alek walks away, and when Hess stands up, everyone can see that he's already hard with excitement and jogs to catch up to the master.

"I never thought I'd see the day." Cal sighs, smiling to himself as he watches them leave through the door.

"How do you mean?" Voigt asks, starting to stack the used plates. "He's always been very pragmatic about stuff."

"Hess and I used to have sessions every day, no exceptions. If there was an event, we would have to go twice to make up for it." Cal starts helping clear up, as does Ember, who also very carefully moves his icing caricature to further down the table. "Hess started getting more obsessive because of it, whereas I saw it more as just another one of my duties. When production went up, we were able to start pulling back on the amount we had to do it, taking function days off and the odd holiday.

"When Voigt joined," he continues, addressing Ember directly, "We were made to start taking one day off a week, I think because of the electricity the chair uses, which actually did more to frustrate Hess. Never, and I mean never, have we been permitted to orgasm outside of that office. So while it's not surprising to me that we're given another day back from needing to provide samples, but being granted one free orgasm per week, I never would have expected that." Cal raises a finger, "But I have a theory."

"Oh?" Ember asks, carrying a pile of plates to the trolley. He stops when the finger falls forward to face him. "Me?"

"I think he likes you."

Ember flusters and quickly puts the plates down. "What do you mean?"

"Well I mean he likes you, no else way to say it dear."

"He certainly lets you get away with a lot of back talk." Voigt huffs.

"Nah, he's always very understanding in the first week about that stuff." Cal rubs his chin, and then shrugs it off. "I dunno, maybe I'm reading too much into it, I just get a feeling is all."

"Best to not look a gift horse in the mouth. We don't need to know the master's reasons for wanting to let us be able to cum when we're not on the machine."

"Don't get me wrong, I'm only curious, not ungrateful. It'll be good to finally enjoy a nice intimate session every now and then with a happy ending." Cal says, winking at Ember before wheeling the trolley into the kitchen.

"Ember, why don't you take your little icing wolf thing up to your room so I can wipe down the table?" Voigt suggests.

"Oh, sure, yeah I'll do that. Thanks" He picks it up gently and takes it upstairs, being careful not to bump into anything. He puts it down on his windowsill and sighs at it. A sad smile creeps onto his face again as he thinks about how alone he was, and how his entire life was turned into a gay, horny dream in a single day. He almost finds it hard to believe, and worries that it could all be over when he goes to bed and wakes back up in his cabin. But something about this cute little wolf face made of sugar and water acts like a mooring to the listing boat of doubt. The fact that this unique, perfect little thing that was made for him, of him, to symbolise his acceptance here serves as a ward against his fears. As long as it's here, in *his* room, he feels safe to go to sleep.

But not yet, there's still work to be done.