

Oleena Bauthwana

Chapter 2

Second Glance at the Past

Oleena led Sled out over the rice fields toward the hills. As they went, she spoke of the various things they saw. Workers in the rice fields, fishers in the lakes and streams, shellfish harvesters diving in the deeper lakes, and brush workers clearing the walking paths.

It was more than Sled had seen in other parts. Most of Thymion used technology to handle these tasks, yet here it was done by hand. Sled was a bit surprised at how many non-wolves lived here. From what he understood, a fair bit of the nobility looked down on those not pure blooded.

Though Oleena had explained that this particular pair of wolves were barren, and thus adopted as many orphans as they could house. It was barely twenty when they were told no more for now. So they expanded their house, adding more room and facilities for more children.

As they crested the largest hill, Sled looked down at the massive lake before them. It had to be at least thirty miles across. Sled could see boats in the deeper parts, and a few piers spread out over the shore.

“This is the main lake. It feeds all the others in the area. We fish here for larger prey, as well we harvest fresh water kelp. This is owned by no wolf. The lake belongs to all,” Oleena said softly. Sled nodded as he looked over it all.

“So anyone can use this lake?” Sled asked. She nodded and motioned toward where several were swimming. Sled chuckled, seeing a few hybrids goofing off in the shallows. He recognized a couple of them as being friends of Atmos and Kimen.

As the pair moved off toward a small village near the lake, Sled listened to her describe the area and dialect. He had picked up some Thymion in his visits, and could recognize a few words. Oleena brought them to an area between several huts where some children were playing with what looked like a feral fox.

The fox pranced between the kids as they laughed and cheered for it. Sled shook his head as they passed on, coming to a section of huts that looked more open, and set up like vendor stalls. These beings were more tribal it seemed.

“Most of these beings come from my home world. This is the village where our elders established a community for our surviving numbers. Predation of each other came to an end, territory was shared and we began to work together for the first time in our long history,” she said softly.

Sled could see in her eyes the pain. She lost a lot before she came here. What was worse was that when it was over, there was so much to replace. Her new family gave her everything they could to help. But there were some things she still held inside.

Sled walked with her away from the hill and down to the shore of the large lake. Coming to the rocky shore, she looked around a bit before finding one large boulder for them to sit on. Climbing up, Sled watched her haul herself up, watching the muscles under her chub flex hard. She was certainly stronger than she looked, and definitely capable. As she settled herself down, he spoke softly, “So, did you want to tell me more?”

She let out a long sigh and nodded. Looking around a moment to ensure they had sufficient privacy she licked her lips before speaking. “I shall start at the beginning. I was a very

young girl, about three years of age. I had never met my birth father because he had been slain by another clan for food, according to my birth mother. We traveled between mud holes. We searched for water, but it was too high up in the mountains.

“We spent most of our time just trying to survive. The grasses and various plants we fed on were growing more scarce. It was... it was a dark night when mother noticed lights behind us. Torches held by a tribe that was hunting us. She carried me as far as she could. But we were not meant to run on land for long distances. And in her malnourished state, she could carry me no more.

“She collapsed at the foot of a hill, clawing the dirt with foot and finger to get us both higher up. It was all in vain, as the crocodilian tribe set upon us by dawn’s light. Mother shielded me, begging for me to be spared. I suppose one of them heard her, because he called for the others to stop attacking. It was too late to save mother, she was wounded too much. I guess you can call what happened next a mercy. The one that made the others stop pulled a bone knife, and slit her throat. He killed her, to prevent her from suffering for days.”

“Oleena, are you ok?” Sled put a hand on her shoulder, concerned for her now. She was crying, her eyes squinted hard to fight back the pain and tears. He had known these memories were going to be painful, but he hadn’t expected her to react this way.

“I am alright. It is just painful to speak of things I kept bottled up for years,” she said, wiping her face with a hand before smiling at him a bit. Taking a moment to catch her breath, she lay back on the rock and looked to the sky. The clouds overhead were slow, and gentle on the eyes. This helped her calm herself for a few moments before continuing.

“They took the one thing we had to our names. A wooden bucket, sealed at both ends and covered with resin. It was how we carried what little dirty water we had. They wanted our water, barely a mouthful for each between their group. After that, they took the bucket and left.

They just left. Naked and alone I sat beside my mother's corpse for two days. I would shake her and call her name until I went hoarse. Then I would sit and cry until I could shed no tears. I slept for small periods before waking to try rousing her again.

"I eventually gave up, pulled away by thirst and the faint scent of mud in the air. Mud meant water, even dirty water. I walked for hours, under the punishing sun that had already blistered my young body. Naked, alone, and dehydrated. I suffered enough to sate the gods apparently. Upon reaching the mudhole I fell into it, wallowing in the mud like some feral animal. The tribe of predators that slew my mother were there. They had taken up residence, and begun taking water from the mud by some means I could not guess. Magic perhaps, or a technique known to their clans. I must have drawn their attention, because before I realized it I was being lifted up from the mud and carried. I no longer cared. If my life was to end, it would end. I awoke the next day in a hut, wrapped in the dried leaves of a large bush. The burns on my body were not painful and my lips were not cracked in parched thirst.

"Their shaman had seen fit to call for my life to be spared. He had tended my wounds and given me water. It was as he came to me that I recognized his intentions. He was nursing me to health again."

Sled lay back on the rock beside her. He had listened to her tale up to this point. It had been a couple hours. She spoke slowly and with method unlike many other beings in Thymion. She was obviously educated, and her memory must be good to recall so much detail. He lay on his side facing her, and gently lay a hand on her arm. She looked to him, and smiled softly.

Sitting up slowly she stretched and looked at the sky before speaking, "It should be time for us to head toward the main house. Once we arrive it will be dinner time, or at least close to it." Sliding off the rock she landed with a soft thud. Sled still couldn't get it in his head how a woman, even one of her ample size could weigh anywhere near enough to hit the ground with

enough force to cause impact tremors. She would have to weigh in at least in the 700 pound range, but that was not possible. She would have to be several times her current size to weigh that much. She had to be 300 pounds at a maximum.

Letting it go for now, he hopped off the rock, his hooves hitting the ground gently and he gave a few steps to catch up to her. Walking beside her, he looked at the world around them. "So this lake is huge. How is it there isn't a massive part of the main city here like all the other lakes I have seen?"

"This area is protected. Tribal housing only in this area. Our mansion is at the border to this section of the realm," Oleena said softly. "My family acts as a sort of go between for the tribal peoples that live in these forests and lakes and the more modern people that live in the cities and other moons. We patrol the area in our fashion, using wings and boat to see if the treaty is being held up by both sides. The technological development stays well outside the area, and the tribal people do not hunt outside their lands. This prevents accidents and makes for a buffer between the two. Light and noise pollution would ruin the area for the tribes here."

Sled nodded and looked toward the small huts dotting the lake shore. They were thatched from wood and earth, made of very simple materials. As they reached the path again, Sled could spot a few in the lush forest, made of more sturdy wood and thicker branches over the roofs. He could also spot what looked like beings standing in the trees, on the ground and in the branches. They watched him from their spot as he watched them while he walked.

Sled turned his gaze back to the path, heading up the hill as Oleena spoke. She talked about the quietness of the lake country, and the part she called home. Her small patch of beach where they met, and her home in the hill just behind the beach. Cresting the large hill Sled turned to look back at the massive lake and the forest surrounding it. He pondered just what else was hiding within the trees and under the water.

Giving a sigh of his own he moved to head down the hill. She was one step behind him, walking slowly as she watched how he moved. He was not a typical mortal. The way he moved, he had strength and speed traditional of the equine breeds, but his movements also spoke of the strength within. He had seen things most mortals would go mad from seeing and yet he still stood there ready to see more.

His strength of will was astounding, and his physical body was impressive as well. She felt a bit of a blush heat her cheeks when she thought about him like that. He was a fine specimen to be certain. He was physically strong, clean, and healthy. But more than that, he had certain features she found herself admiring. His stride showed the ripple of the muscle in his hips and thighs, as his arms moved slowly in counter swing to his legs. The shoulders were broad, stable, and his back showed a good deal of strength as well.

Though she could only imagine the ripple of his muscles were he naked... Oleena's eyes fluttered wide as she realized that thought crossing her mind. How had such a thing happened?! She was never known to have these thoughts before, and certainly did not look at other beings this way. What was it about him that sent these thoughts into her mind? Was it his charm? Could it be his musky scent or his calm demeanor? Was it that he was known to the Empress and her kin?

As a myriad of questions flew through her mind, Sled was having thoughts of his own. This woman was strong, certainly physically but also emotionally. She had suffered so much, more than enough to break even Angel. Sled had seen that break before and knew that what Oleena endured would top most anything Angel had been through. And yet she still seemed so caring and kind.

The horse glanced back at her, and saw her deep in thought. He wondered what she was contemplating, and pondered if he might offer her some companionship while he was in the

realm. New Thymion was massive, and she was only here in this little piece of it. He let the thought roll in his head a bit before stopping and looking down at the rice fields. They were empty, not a soul in sight. "Guess dinner started already," he said softly.

Oleena nodded and smiled, "Come. We can still find plenty to eat if we hurry." She took his hand and started to run down the hill. Sled kept up easily, his breed of stallion was one of the faster ones. As the pair came to the front of the house, they were greeted by the sight of dozens of beings seated around, or leaning against the wall eating. There was a large table on the front porch that held lots of plates and plenty of food.

Oleena took a moment to catch her breath, motioning Sled to get his plate. Sled was not one to argue with freely offered food. Taking a plate he loaded up with a variety of foods, making sure to get a sample of anything he thought looked or smelt tasty. Oleena came over after a moment, helping her plate full of fruit and veg. Sled noticed she had no meat on her plate at lunch as well. "Vegetarian?" he asked softly.

"Yes. My particular species has no tolerance for meat of any kind. I get everything I need from the plants I eat. Though I must admit there have been times where I was tempted to try meat. I think when I was young I tried it once and it made me very sick to my stomach. So from then on I just stuck to putting barbecue sauce on my tofu. This aside I do enjoy cheese and milk from time to time."

Oleena sat on the front stairs and patted a spot for Sled to sit. As he sat by her, she began to eat her food quietly. Sled looked around at the others, whom were all engaged in eating, though he could hear light conversations around. He was barely able to tell what was said though. But then a thought crossed his mind, and he turned to Oleena.

"Have you ever seen the festivals in other parts of Thymion?" he asked softly. She paused from her food and nodded. "I have. I am a shaman. I have taken part in several festivals

and rituals across the realm. I believe the one I am most fond of is the blessing of a pregnancy. Expecting a new life is such a wonderful thing, and I enjoy helping bring peace of mind to expecting parents.”

Sled smiled, seeing that gleam in her eye. She enjoyed being a shaman, and most of all she loved being able to help others. As they ate, the pair were mostly silent, only commenting on the food or on various things they saw. As the meal drew to a close, Oleena stood and stretched. “Do you have a room nearby?” she asked Sled

“My place is in the capitol district, just below the Wolfen residence. I can probably call for a cab to take me back before sunset,” he said softly. Stretching himself, he cracked his neck a couple times before stretching his legs out.

“That’s an hour flight at least. I could offer you a bed at my home. I have two. You are more than welcome to stay the night with me. That way you don’t have to lose too much daylight before you return tomorrow,” she said as she smiled to him.

Sled thought it over, agreeing with a nod and motioning her to lead him. The walk back to home was not long, though it was nearly dark when they arrived at her home. It was a simple structure, a single floor structure with a few rooms inside. As they entered she reached over and flipped the light switch. Sled was surprised she used electronic lights, given her personality and type of lifestyle.

As she shut the door behind them, Sled noticed her home was furnished in a bit more simple fashion than her parents’ massive home. Her sofa was made of wood and covered in feral furs. She had no radio or television, however she had a large bookcase full of books. As they moved to the bedroom, the equine saw that she had two large beds in her room. He was a bit confused why she needed two.

"I used to live with my sibling, however she married and moved out. When she left she gave me all the furniture she had bought for the house," Oleena said softly. She had seen his confused face and figured that was his thought. As Sled sat on the edge of one bed, he spoke softly.

"So, do you still want to tell me the rest of that story?" He asked not out of curiosity, but concern. He knew she felt the pain still, and offered her an outlet for it. She sighed as she sat on her bed and slid back to lean against the wall. Looking at the ceiling, she let out a low grunt and spoke.

"As I had said, the shaman had taken me in. He returned me to a healthy state, though by healthy I do mean as I was before my mother was slain. The rest of his tribe said nothing to me, and regarded me as just another being in their midsts. He gave me a waterskin with clean water, some grass in a bundle and a cloak made from the hide of another. I took them without question, understanding that this was just the way of our world.

"When I left, it was late at night, and he told me to only travel at night, and to take shelter in the day. He gave me a charm to keep me safe, saying that if others of his kind came across me to show it to them, and they would know not to harm me. After that, I never saw him again. I wandered the wastes for a week, just trying to survive as best as a child my age could.

"I was happened across by another tribe, though they had no interest in me at all. I followed them for a while, before they came across a village under a rocky outcrop. It seemed a friendly place. I managed to trade some labor for food and water. I was getting ready to leave after a couple days when we saw the first lights in the sky."

Oleena paused to look at Sled, and saw he was still watching her. She had only known others from her world to be so interested in the tale of how she was found. Leaning back up she looked at him, seeing the kindness in his eyes. He was a gentle soul among warriors.

"I will tell you more tomorrow. For now, let's get some sleep. You look tired and I feel as much," she said softly as she smiled at him. He smiled back and nodded. As she began to disrobe, she noticed him turn away in respect. He let his pants on, though he did remove his shirt. She could see the muscles in his shoulders and back, how they rippled as he moved and flexed. She bit her finger softly, feeling that idle thought and feeling cross her mind again.

As she watched him lay back on the bed, she finished undressing. Laying on her bed she closed her eyes and relaxed. The lighting in the house began to dim, as its sensors detected the lack of movement. They remained on, only at a very low setting. In the night, Sled lay still facing the ceiling. He glanced at Oleena a couple times before closing his eyes and falling asleep. Though his dreams were calm they centered around the things she had told him about. A barren world with no hope left.

It was with morning and the scent of fresh cooking that he arose slowly. Stretching and reaching for his shirt. As he sat up, he glanced at her bed. She was not there, though her clothing was still laying on the edge of the bed. Getting up, he headed to the front room, hearing her there. Coming in, he had a clear view of her ample backside. She was smooth skinned, a beautiful deep brown color. She had a thick butt and her tail swished from cheek to cheek slowly. She spoke to herself softly as she cooked, though Sled could not tell what she said.

He smiled and tapped on the wall to let her know he was there. "Oh! Good morning Sled. I was making breakfast. Do you like oatmeal?" she asked softly, as she turned to greet him. Sled got a very good view of her front. She had a round, full tummy with ample breasts. She had a certain bounce to her movement, natural and just right for her size. He was thankful for the jeans he wore, keeping his shaft restrained as he held his shirt in front of himself.

"Oatmeal sounds delicious. I must say, you do look wonderful today. Feeling better after talking some?" he asked gently. She smiled, reaching up and pushing a braid of her hair back

over her ear. She nodded and set the pot back on the stove before turning back to her cooking. She was cutting up fruits to put in the oatmeal.

“Yes. Thank you. I was thinking that today we could visit the docks and see if there are fresh fish for purchase. Then we might spend a bit of time tending the rice fields, if you would like to do so.” She looked at him, and smiled as he nodded. Returning to her cooking she heard him step over to the table and take a seat. He was a decent guest, and she found she enjoyed his company. As she was thinking, her mind rolled over to another possibility. One she had kept pushing away. He did not seem to shy away from her when she stripped her clothing off, he turned his face out of respect. He was not bothered by her nudity now either, meaning that he didn't find her unattractive.

She began to ponder if he might mind her attractive enough to be her first. As that thought came to her mind she began to ask herself one single question over and over. Would it be right to ask that of him?

To be continued.