

## Chapter 99

"You've all come so far," Nicole remarked, to the group of people sitting around her. "You've faced unimaginable hardships, but you've found the strength within yourselves to rise above them. You're warriors, every single one of you."

"Thank you, Charlene," an older woman chorused. An applause resounded around the circular space formed by a group of chairs.

Nicole's heart warmed as she took her hand. She was happy with the progress she had made, but at the same time, she didn't know why thoughts of Nicole drifted into her consciousness.

She believed that by changing her name, she could escape her past and forge a new life. Yet, despite the new identity she had adopted, she couldn't shake the memories of Liam or the deep ache in her heart that yearned for his presence.

When in Silverwood, a place that welcomed wolves of all kinds, she found solace in helping others who had experienced similar traumas.

Nicole immersed herself in the community of Silverwood. She discovered a sense of purpose. She became a tutor, offering guidance and support to those who had endured pain and suffering.

Through her own experiences, she understood the struggles they faced and empathized with their journey toward healing. Still, she was always yearning for him. She knew that she should hate him because she only remembered him as mean, but she always had dreams of him caring for her, professing his love for her and being there for her.

"Tasha, you're next," She said to the youngest girl in the group.

Natasha nodded and launched her story on how she had started letting go of her pain. Nicole's pastime had become listening attentively to the stories of those who had been enslaved, abused, and tormented. Her heart broke for them each, but she remained steadfast in her commitment to help them reclaim their lives.

Tasha shared her story of survival and the nightmares that haunted her every night and how she was combating them. Nicole gave her a gentle smile, extending a hand of compassion.

"I understand how difficult this journey can be. But you're stronger than you realize. Together, we can find ways to overcome the pain and build a brighter future."

Tasha looked into Nicole's eyes, a glimmer of hope shining through her tears. "Do you really think so, Charlene? Sometimes, it feels like the darkness will never fade."

Nicole's heart broke. Tasha was so young, she was even younger than she was when her parents sold her.

Most people in her group were either lone wolves before they suffered abuse or slaves before freedom.

Nicole's voice was filled with reassurance. "I promise you, Tasha, that with time and support, the darkness will recede. It won't happen overnight, but each step you take toward healing brings you closer to the light."

Tasha nodded slowly, understanding seeping into her. She turned to the next person in the group and froze immediately as a familiar scent caught her attention. Liam!

Her heart skipped a beat, and she turned around, expecting to see him standing behind her. But it was only her desire, playing tricks on her senses. The ache in her chest intensified, reminding her of the love she had left behind.

Nicole's internal struggle grew more intense with each passing day. She yearned to return to Liam's embrace to seek solace in his presence, but the fear of the past repeating itself held her back. She couldn't bear the thought of putting him in danger or experiencing further heartache.

Her eyelids fluttered close as she found herself lost in thoughts of Liam. The wind whispered its secrets, and she closed her eyes, imagining his strong arms enveloping her once more. Tears trickled down her cheeks...

"Nicole?"

Startled, she opened her eyes to find her support group looking at her. Another young wolf, Ethan, was standing before her. Concern etched his features as he approached her cautiously. "Are you alright? You seemed lost in your thoughts."

Nicole wiped away her tears, offering a weak smile. "I'm just... missing someone dear to me."

Ethan's eyes softened, and he sat down, his voice filled with empathy. "I understand what it's like to miss someone. Sometimes, we have to make difficult choices to protect those we love."

Nicole's gaze met Ethan's, finding a kindred spirit in his understanding. "You're right. It's just hard to let go."

Tasha placed a comforting hand on Nicole's shoulder. "Maybe it's not about letting go completely. Maybe it's about finding a way to heal and rebuild so that when the time is right, you can reunite with the one you love."

Her words resonated deeply within Nicole's heart. It was a reminder that she couldn't remain trapped in the past forever. She needed to continue her healing journey, finding strength and resilience within herself. But how could she? How could she when the Alpha that plagued her memories was a terrible beast?

She smiled at her, clearing her throat she returned attention to the group. "I'm not immune to this fight," she said. "It's bad because my memories are incomplete, and my dreams are even worse. But I'm here, fighting every day."

They all cheered, making Nicole smile. It wasn't easy, and the few weeks she had spent amongst people who she felt understood her for the first time in her existence was the best thing to ever happen to her.

After the group session, Nicole made her way back to her new family in Silverwood. Recently, she learned that after training her mind to heal, it was also important to train her body.

Training her body was the part of the day she enjoyed the most. More importantly, Emily and Lucas joined her little reprieve and made it a lot more amusing.

She walked faster, eager to see them and teach them.

"Are we ready to train, Charlene?" Lucas asked, his eyes shining with enthusiasm as soon as she stepped into their makeshift training area.

Nicole nodded, a gentle smile playing on her lips. "Absolutely, Lucas. Today, we'll focus on refining our reflexes and learning some basic self-defense techniques."

Emily's eyes sparkled with determination as she stood alongside her brother. "I can't wait to become as strong as you, Charlene. I want to protect myself and others."