

Puppy Love

02 In Search Of Sophia

~Liam~

I pushed through the forest, howling my soul, pleading with the moon for peace, hoping for a sign of something that would lead me to Sophia, but I knew I was heading nowhere.

How can I have experienced joy, anticipation and hopelessness simultaneously?

I berated myself for wasting time, for thinking there would always be time. I believed she would always be there, within my grasp, ready for me when I was ready.

Her father had ripped her away from my life for reasons best known to him.

Coming to a halt, Alex plopped on the dirt by a tree, mourning our loss because deep down, I knew I might never see her again.

"She might reach out on the phone," Alex thought, and with that, a glimmer of hope rose in my heart.

As much as that was a possibility, I wished I had seen her tonight and told her my intentions. What if it is too late by the time she reaches out?

"We can utilise the royal resources to find them," Alex said.

"You know Father would see that as an abuse of power and privilege," I replied my wolf.

"Uncle David or Theodore might help," he said, and even though they were the least strict members of our family, I knew they would not see reason.

It wasn't like Sophia and I were fated. Besides, they will still hand the matter over to Alpha Thompson, and Mike is his beta. I doubt it will be helpful.

"We have to rely on that phone call," I said, and I opted to try her number, but I had lost my phone when I shifted.

Knowing I needed a phone for her contact number, I traced my footsteps back the way I came. It took a while because it wasn't easy to trace my scent. I made many rounds and finally fell asleep by a tree.

I woke up in the morning and continued until I found the device on the ground. I used my nuzzle to flip the phone to the screen and saw that the battery was dead and the screen was cracked, but

that was an easy situation. I would just have to replace the screen. Holding the phone in my mouth. I headed towards my grandparent's home.

People waved and greeted Alex as we strode along, congratulating me for graduating, but there was no way to acknowledge them. I hoped they wouldn't see me as arrogant, but my heart wasn't in a good place at the moment.

I finally arrived at the estate and found Charlotte outside, worried sick. She still had her nightdress on, and she had bags under her eyes.

"Liam," she said with joy and ran towards my wolf. Bending, she hugged me and began to cry.

"We were afraid. You didn't come home, and we were afraid," she said, weeping.

"Where did you go? You got everyone worried; Grandma and Grandpa were worried sick; each hour passing, they contemplated calling your father. You know, Grandpa just got his wolf back, yet he shifted and went to look for you. Why will you disappear like that?" she said, still crying.

I was ashamed of myself for putting my family in so much trouble and unrest.

"Where are Marvin and the others?" I linked her. She broke away from me, and we started heading back to the house. I refused to shift back to my human form.

"Everyone is out looking for you, especially Harper. She said you went to Sophia's house. We called, and her father answered. He said you didn't come by; that was why we got very worried," she said, and a rage surged within me. Why would that piece of shit lie? I immediately shifted back to my human form, and the phone fell. I picked it up and stormed into the house.

"That lying piece of shit," I growled, and Charlotte was confused.

"What is the matter, Li?" She asked.

A worker brought me shorts, and I wore them before turning to face her. Her eyes were swollen and tired from tears. I wondered where Gemma and Jewels were.

"Where are the others?" I asked.

"They went with Harper," She said and moved closer to me. She used the back of her hand to touch my forehead. I guess she was wondering if I were sick.

"What happened out there, Li? Why are you mad?" she asked.

I could be angry around her because she was an Alpha like me; some might even argue that the triplets were stronger since their biological mother was an Alpha too.

I stepped back and sat on a chair.

"I am angry that that bastard, Mike, lied that I did not come by the house. I went there, and we spoke before Alex took over from rage, landing me in the forest," I said, and she was surprised, then slowly, anger covered her face.

"That snake? Why would he lie? What happened?" She asked.

"I went to check on Sophia and found out she wasn't there. While trying to figure it out, he came out through the back and told me he had sent her and her mother away for their protection. I tried to find out where he sent them. I even accidentally compelled him, but he said he had anticipated compulsion and told his mate not to tell him where they were going. That tipped me off, and I bolted into the woods to calm down," I said, and she was silent for a bit.

I knew my reasons might seem silly, but only I knew how I felt. Charlotte might not even comprehend it.

"Did you call her phone?" Charlotte asked me, and I realised how stupid I was.

"No, I didn't. The way Mike spoke to me did not allow me to think. I later realised that was an option and spent the rest of the dark searching for my phone, which I did not find until dawn. But the battery is dead, and the screen is broken," I said, and she handed me her phone.

"Take, use my phone. Call her," Charlotte said.

"You have her number?" I asked, and her cheeks coloured.

"Why do you think no one dared ask her out? We made sure of it. Harper, Gemma, Jewels, and I have always known of your crush. I mean, you made our parents send all of us to Grizlo because of her. The instant you chose Grizlo Academy, we knew why; what we did not expect was that our parents would require us to join you. Well, here we are, so we kind of kept tabs on her to be sure she won't break your heart when you are ready. We do not want a heartbroken king ruling us," She said, making me laugh.

Her phone gave me hope, and the realisation that I could reach out to Sophia gave me hope.

Charlotte unlocked her phone and displayed Sophia's number. I dialled it immediately, and I was grateful the phone rang. It rang for a while before she finally picked.

"Sophie, Sophie," I said.

"Li?" she asked, and I relaxed.

"Where are you? I went by your house last night, and your father said he had sent you and your mother away. Tell me where you are, and I will come and get you. If you need protection, I can provide it," I said, and I heard her crying on the phone.

"I didn't think you could help us, Li; I think my father" She did not finish when I heard a rustling sound.

"Sophie! Sophie!" I called out on the phone, afraid something horrible had happened to her.

"Hello," a female voice said, and I knew it was her mother.

"Mrs. Maguire, it's me, Liam," I said, and she sighed.

"Oh dear Liam, my husband said you came by yesterday, and you were distraught," she said, and I did not respond.

"I am sorry it was sudden, your Highness, but this was for the best. You need not involve yourself in things that are beneath you. You were always above our class. I think it is best this way. I am sure you have other friends," she said, and I was confused.

"What are you saying? Where are you? If you are in trouble, I can help," I said, and she sniffled, which made me know she was crying.

"You can't help us. I doubt the Royal family will want to be caught up in this mess. I am sorry, your Highness, but where we are going, even your father won't be able to find us, and as for this number, I have confiscated it. It is best you move on and forget about my daughter," She said, and I heard Sophia in the background.

"No, mamma, no! At least let me say goodbye, please. I am begging you." She was pleading and crying in the background, and her mother said no.

"I am sorry, Li! I ..." she said, but the line went dead before she could finish the sentence.

I took the phone from my ear and looked at the screen in my hand. Silent tears were streaming down my cheeks.

I redialed the number and put it on speaker, hoping it would ring, but it did not go through. I called repeatedly, and Charlotte quietly pried the phone from my grip.

Without saying a word, she wrapped her arms around me and held me. I did not know I was crying until she held me.

"It is okay, Li; it is okay to cry. It is just us; no one will know," she said, her voice shaking too. A sniffle betrayed her tears. She had heard the conversation too.

She held me for a bit, and soon I wiped away my tears and went to my room to freshen up.

I was going through the motions. Thinking of the many ways this would have gone.

Had I arrived there early, they wouldn't have been able to take her. I would have abused my power and grabbed her from them. I stood under the shower and wept.

I had planned it all out. My graduation, asking her out, marrying her. Everything.

Some would say I was too young to think of things like that at eighteen, but I had it all planned.

I had the urge to go to her house and beat the hell out of Mike.

I wanted to beat him until he could tell me why.

I fought my rage under the shower, and when I finally realised I had to give in, I turned it off, dressed up, and headed out of my room. Ready to return to the Maguire's residence and do some damage.

I was greeted by everyone in the living room. My grandmother and everyone looked concerned. They felt sorry for me, and somehow, I knew they knew. I looked at Charlotte, who shook her head, indicating she did not tell them.

"She didn't tell us, Liam," my grandfather said.

"We figured it out when your cousins returned from the Maguire's and said the house was empty. Mike has fled too," Grandpa said, and my grandmother came to me and hugged me.

"Oh, Liam, my sweet child. I am sorry your journey is starting like this. You have to let her go, Liam. Her father is in big trouble, and I doubt they can ever show their faces again. You have to let her go," my grandmother said, and I broke the hug and looked at her.

"What did Beta Mike do?" I asked, and she looked at me. I could see her contemplating whether or not to tell me what he did.

"You have to tell me, Grandma," I said, desperate to understand what had happened.

"He murdered the alpha and his family. Their bodies were found this morning. People are looking for him. Unlike in Lucland, Grizlo's laws are a bit different; if they catch him, it means they will slaughter his wife and daughter too. Your parents can't interfere with the local law," She said, and I froze.

It was as if everything was at a standstill.