Alphas

***INTRO:HUMANITY LOST***

People are always looking for ways to be the best. To be more beautiful, stronger, faster, and more intelligent than our peers. When word had gotten out that scientists found a way to transform humans into just that purpose, the world rejoiced. People ranging from the wealthy to the homeless volunteered to be a part of the Alpha Project. Soon thousands of massive laboratories started showing up in cities with hundreds of people pouring in. What the scientist were doing behind their closed doors were allowed because there was no laws against their genetic tampering to create these "Alpha Humans" as the media called it. Only the very religious were against the meddling of "God's creation" and the fact we were all losing our humanity and will be damned for it. Maybe they were right. But, it did not matter if you were religious or not because we all were destroyed the same way. Turns out the scientist's intentions were more sinister. They were creating Alpha Humans for more than just cosmetic enhancements. They created human weapons that soon escaped their gasp. The primal hunters broke out from across the world from thousands of laboratories to annihilate their unsuspecting prey. The things that escaped were no longer human but a more primitive version.. Some are just ruthless grunts that tore apart anything that got too close. The majority of them though are very intelligent and could strategize taking down even well armed groups using the cloak of night to their advantage The Alphas look similar to humans in basic appearance. The most tell tale signs are their clothes. Matching white shirts and pants with bare feet. They have sharp claw like nails and finely honed teeth that match their cold eyes that have a mix of blue and black with a reddish yellow mix on the outer most of their irises. They are also very becoming. Living up to the saying that beauty kills. The Alphas managed to demolish the unsuspecting major cities in hours. The military did what they thought would be best which in turn sealed our fate. The firebombs rained down on all major cities. There was no evacuation. The events that follow after the bombs remain hazy at best. Some say the military reclaimed some cities and harbor safe sanctuary. Others say that we lost and the Alphas were more cunning and ruthless than we could ever be. All we do know is that the Alphas now run most remaining cities that were not razed by firebombs while the remaining humans roam the outermost wilds trying to survive the new world.

***Chapter One***

I awake with a slight startle from my restless sleep. I take in my surroundings to see nothing is amiss in my tiny room. I see my Australian Cattle dog, Pip, still sleeping by the door snoring soundly. My tension still did not ease as that dog could sleep through anything except thunderstorms. I go ahead and grab my pistol from the nightstand and pad my way to the window to carefully look through it to see the twilight morning sky. I peered through the window for a moment before finally giving up from not being able to see past the morning fog.

"Let's go Pip. Time to start our day." I say to my companion who opens one eye and lets out a snort before stretching. I slip on my worn jeans, long sleeve desert camouflage shirt, and hiking boots then put my hair in a messy ponytail and begin my day.

I pretty much the same routine every day.

Wake up

Grab my hunting bow

Hunt until the sun rises

Dress and prepare any meat from hunt for storage

Breakfast

Check perimeter for unwanted guests and reset my traps

Collect any herbs or mushrooms for medicine

Lunch

Go to east pond and retrieve two gallons of water

Purify and store water

Fish in the nearby tank

Clean any fish

Eat dinner and clean up

Sleep

It is not a lot but it is what keeps me sane and more importantly alive. My stockpile I've created has enough food and water to last me for months if I ration correctly. I am one of the few lucky survivors that has thrived in this world thanks to my dad and his hunting cabin. He used to be a survival enthusiast and taught both my older brothers and I some very basic techniques like creating fire and building rudimentary traps for small game animals. When shit hit the fan, Pip and I came straight here from my college town around 150 miles away from here. I managed to take back roads for about seventy miles listening to the news about how cities were falling with hardly any resistance and this was the end. The last thing I heard was the military were planning to firebomb then static. The rest of the journey I had to hike. It was the longest hike I ever had to endure. I had a bug out pack with only three days food and water and a pistol Dad insisted I keep in the car. I learned a hard lesson about rationing for Pip and I that almost cost us our lives. The worst part was what was happening around me. I could hear people screaming for help for days just screaming. Then there was silence. I almost couldn't handle it I thought I might lose my mind. I only had the thoughts of my family at the cabin and Pip that pushed me through. Now, the cabin has everything from hunting equipment to books on Native American survival techniques. Dad had gotten several survival books to read in case the weather permitted us from hunting. He truly believed when we went up to the cabin, we were cut off from society so that meant no phones or any forms of electronics. He also got wildlife medicinal herbs for my mom so she would come with us since she loves botany. She really did have a green thumb unfortunately that did not pass on to me. Dad also made sure we were all sharp shooters with both rifles, pistols, and bows. He even made us participate in 4H shooting sports and being avid hunters it really did help our accuracy. We were a basic redneck kind of family. The cabin is not really much to look at. Actually it is not even a cabin. It is an small dirty old house that only has the use of sleep, eating, and showering. Luckily the place runs on its own water system from a fairly large tank out back but I have to use lanterns and flashlights at nights. The water is not totally drinking standards but I can still bathe and use the toilet. I consider myself lucky to have this place even though it seemed to cost the lives of my family. I had hoped my family had escaped in time and would be waiting for me when I arrived here with smiling faces. Sometimes I still believe that they will just show up one day just maybe a little late...a year late. At least I think it has been a year I haven't bothered to keep track. It doesn't matter anymore. None of it matters. Only Pip and I matter and we will ride this thing out until the end.

***Chapter Two***

With the sun beginning to set I decide to take a quick stockpile of things instead of my usual fishing. I usually try to keep an organized list of things to help ration my food and prepare for winter which would be coming up in a month or two. I learned a lot from my first winter. One of which was keep a healthy supply of food and water that will last Pip and I at least three months of careful rationing. I start to count and write down the numbers

*60 pounds of dried deer meat*

*25 gallons of water*

*4 boxes of pain pills*

*8 boxes of cold and flu medicine*

*4 jars of my own medicine- antibiotics*

*10 cans of vegetables*

*4 cans of beans*

*2 packages of 16 rolls of toilet paper*

*3 First aid kits*

*4 boxes of bandages*

*1 can of salt*

*7 empty gallon containers*

*3 jars of dried herbs*

*5 cans of dog food*

*3 flashlights*

*4 lanterns*

*10 AA batteries*

*6 AAA batteries*

*5 D batteries*

*2 cans of fatting*

Great. The salt is getting low and I need it to help dry and store my meat.

"Looks like I'm making a run to town tomorrow, Pip." I say over my shoulder. I hear an excited bark from her. "Huh. Glad someone is excited." I mumble. Town runs are typically dangerous because they are usually in Alpha territory. Let's just say they are pretty territorial. They typically ignore me most of the time which is nice but also means I can't bring Pip along. In the past, we usually end up barely getting out alive and with nasty scars that hinders me for a few days. I go ahead and start packing some items for my trip. I get a fairly large tattered hiking backpack and load it up with a first aid kit, a half gallon of water, three pounds of jerky, a flashlight, my pistol, and my kukri machete.

"Think this will be enough for my trip?" I ask Pip. She licks my hand and barks. "Me too. Now it is past your bedtime!" She lets out a low whine before heading to our room. We both quickly fall asleep and I actually have a decent nights rest. Hopefully that is a good sign for things to come.

***Chapter Three***

I slip on my ratty tennis shoes and pat Pip on the head.

"You be good okay? I'll be back before you know it." She whines and licks my hand. "I know you don't like me leaving but it's safer this way." I say trying to reason with her. Pip lets out a snort. I take my leave just before the sun breaks giving a small wave to Pip who lets out a small bark. I make my way through the dense brush to the nearby town of Atkins. Atkins has remained fairly intact through the year with little to no pillaging. The riots weren't has bad as the other towns and most of the town evacuated leaving plentiful loot behind. I have been in Atkins enough to know the ends and outs of the place and where the Alphas are. There is only one pack of Alphas in the town that typically roam in the central heart and I want the outer suburbs. The majority of the houses burned down to what I think was lighting. But, there should be enough houses untouched for me to find some salt and other goodies I might need. I think of a strategy for my looting as I walk to the town. I have always let my mind wander when I am out wandering. Probably not exactly safe but, helps me sort through things easier. I figure I could sneak to the houses through the business district that leads pretty much directly to the suburbs with ample cover to protect me. And if I do need to escape some unsavory company, there is plenty of alleys and streets to zip in and out of to make a speedy getaway. I begin to think of a few scenarios when I finally see Atkins itself. Atkins has little signs of destruction. The paved roads are crumbled with plants reclaiming what's theirs. The cars starting to rust and tires deteriorating. The buildings showing slight green growths at their bases with some of the bricks falling off and collapsing. The whole town is eerie with no other signs of life not even deer and sends chills down my spine. A real life ghost town. I gaze up to see the sun still not quite up over me so I made pretty good time. I cautiously approach the town and see the hundreds of X's scratched into the walls of several buildings. I have assumed that is what Alphas use to mark their territory. Alphas have completely gone back to a more animalistic nature and have lost pretty much all humanity. They only hunt in packs similar to wolves with even their own alpha or leader. I try to observe them when I can because they truly are fascinating creatures. I almost pity them for what they once were and what they have become. But then I see them rip apart flesh of animals, people, or sometimes each other and I'm cruelly reminded they do not deserve my pity because they will give me none in return. They deserve my respect at their cunning graceful nature. Maybe that's why I enjoy watching them. They are the perfect predator. I continue to stealthily make my way deeper in the business district occasionally stopping to hide behind soiled cars to check for any signs of life. I idly wonder if Alphas ever do come to this side of town very often. My curiosity is soon killed when I notice a pack of Alphas rounding the corner a few blocks ahead.

"Shit!" I panic. I quickly duck behind a nearby car and quietly crawl underneath it. I steady my breathing and try to remain still. My heart jumping out of my chest. I see the pack's bare feet start to pass by. Each one of them so silent it makes me shiver slightly. One after another pass by the car, each unaware of my presence. When the last pair of feet left my sight I let out a sigh of relief. I decide to wait for a few more minutes to make sure there is no one is trailing behind. The time ticks by excruciatingly slow. I peer around from my limited visibility to see a vacant street. I slide over to get out from underneath until I see another pair of feet start to come directly to the car I am under. 'Where did you come from?' I panic. I carefully go back to the center of the car as the Alpha gets right next to the car's passenger door. 'No please go. I am not here. Just go. Go with your buddies. They need you for their slow pitch softball team. Please go.' I silently plead as I heard the Alpha start sniffing around the car. This Alpha is slightly different due to his black set of pants and not the typical white uniform worn with Alphas. 'Maybe black is the new white.' I muse with myself trying to lighten my very bad situation. I see the feet move over to the side of the car I had entered from. It starts to kneel down and brings its head to the ground. The Alpha is a male with dark brown hair. He looked about my age maybe a tiny bit older. He had a tall dark and handsome thing going and if he was not just one slight turn to the left from meeting his morning carnage I would dare say he is slightly comely. He takes a deep inhale at the ground and lets out a deep growl. My heart pounding in my ears so loud the Alpha must be able to hear it. 'Please just go. Go. Go. Go. Don't look at me. Please.' I beg internally. He turns his head slowly to look directly at me. His eyes that startling blue black color with hints of red and yellow. I try to calm my breathing as he stares at me with his cold eyes. He leans in closer and I swiftly punch him in the face with just enough force to surprise him. I slid out from underneath and start sprinting down the street. I couldn't hear him but that didn't mean he isn't right behind me. I round the corner and make another sharp turn into an alley. I did not dare look back not even a glance. The last thing I want to see is my chance at freedom not his razor sharp teeth. I make a turn to a back street that should lead me to the suburbs. I start to slow down from my dead sprint to a brisk jog. I decide to take a look behind me to see an empty street. The sight did not calm me down the slightest so I continue my jog until I at last see some houses. I'm not letting some weird Alpha deter me from getting what I need. Mom says I get my hard head from Dad. Once I set my mind to something I don't back down even if it might get me killed. I try to usually listen to reason but most of the time I go with my gut. I duck behind a car to see if there is anything around me. I scan the windows of the modest houses and the desolate street and back behind me from the way I came. Nobody that I can see. That will have to do for now. I get up and head to the first house to see it is unlocked and barely touched from other raiders like me. There's the odor of rotting and decay as I turn to the first room to find the kitchen. I open the cabinets when I glance over to see the dead body of a house pet. I grimace slightly and return back to my hunt. The mice had decimated all the boxed food leaving nothing but droppings behind. I find a two containers of salt, three cans of dog food and four cans of beans. I stuff them in my pack and go past the refrigerator that's emitting a pungent stench. I enter into the next room to see the bathroom with a medicine cabinet and some toilet paper. I snatch up two rolls. I really can't have too much of this stuff. I open the cabinet to see four boxes low grade pain pills and one bottle of high grade pain pills. "Score!" I whisper to myself stuffing the pills in my pack. I close the cabinet and see my reflection. It has been awhile since I have actually looked at myself. My face worn from the sun and wind. Scars from Alphas streak down my right check barely missing my earthy green blue eyes. My butterscotch hair in need of some love. I wasn't very pretty before all of this and I haven't really improved. I frown at this damaged thing. Good things standards are pretty low nowadays. Hell, I might even be a model to some people. I tear my eyes away from the reflection and I go over the rest of the house avoiding the dusty pictures on the wall of what appears to be an elderly couple with a cute poodle. I shake my head and I decide to head over to the next house to see if my luck streak could continue. I go out the door and I'm promptly welcomed to a feeling of being watched. No not watched....hunted.

***Chapter Four***

I just can't catch a break. My bodily hairs begin to stand on end as my mind goes in a whirlwind of ideas to get out of this predicament. I scan the street for the hunter. No signs of him not that I am surprised. I am pretty sure it is the not too happy Alpha from earlier. My best bet would be to go back to the way I came. Although this street does swing around back to a wooded area that I could possibly lose him in.. The woods seem to be my only option. I feign going to the backstreet and go the opposite way down the street sprinting through the dead lawns. I get past the halfway point when a force slams me to onto the gravel road knocking the wind out of me. I cough and try to suck in air only to cough some more. I start to desperately crawl away and stand up only to be knocked down again. I feel a tight squeeze on my arm and I am forcibly flipped onto my back now facing my assailant. His eyes intently look into mine as he puts his whole weight on me pinning my arms and legs. I struggle trying to break his iron grasp only to be met with a sharp growl from him. I freeze for a second before continuing my struggle.

"I'm not going down without a fight you son of a-" I am cut off from my threat as he leans in and starts to sniff my hair. I cease my struggles completely caught off guard. He moves down and grazes over my cheek and then down to the base of neck letting out hot breaths. It sent shivers to my core. I struggle again trying to knee him in his gut only to have him suddenly lift off of me and take off out of sight. I shoot up and take off into the direction of the woods with my kukri out and ready this time.

I ran even when I knew I was out of Atkins. I just want to be home away from him with those cold eyes. He makes me so...angry! He made me completely helpless and toyed with me. It was all just a game to him this hunting and killing thing. I am just a fun sport to him. I could feel a hot tear stream down my face. "DAMN IT!" I scream. I stop and wipe my tears away. There is nothing that I hate more than when I cry. Makes me feel pathetic and insignificant similar to how the Alpha just made me feel. I thrash at a tree with all my might leaving my kukri wedged in place. I fall to the ground and sob. I should be dead. Pip would of been alone waiting for me to never return. But, I'm not. I survived. With a new wave of determination, I rise up and pry the kukri out. I sheath my kukri and take a swig of my water. I let out a drawn out sigh, "I survived." and start walking back to the cabin with the sun still high in the air.

I made it past the clearing of the woods shielding the setting sun from my eyes to see Pip waiting for me on the porch of the cabin.

"Pip!" I yell as she starts barreling to me, tackling me to the ground and happily likes my face. "Yuck!!". I push her off and pet her rough coat a few times. "I got you a treat Pip! Yes I did. Yes I did!" she wags her tail as if she understands. We head to the cabin with Pip close behind, until she suddenly freezes and starts to growl. I immediately pull out my kukri and turn around to see him. The cold eyed Alpha from town. The heat of anger flows to my cheeks. He didn't even flinch. He just stood there as I move in closer.

"Followed me huh? Well why don't you just...I don't know leave? Before this gets ugly." I threaten. Hopefully he understood me enough to get the hint. Or come back with backup. I grimace slightly at the thought. His lips curl into a sick smile as he let out a deep throaty growl. He takes a sure step forward bringing him within arm's reach of me. My jaw clinches as I stand my ground. He begins to circle me. His eyes analyzing me. I follow his movements, not daring to look away. I felt like a gazelle against a mighty lion luckily this gazelle has some claws. I try to keep my face in a menacing look to hide the fear starting to grip me. Pip is also growling at him waiting for my command to pounce. \*CRACK\* We all turn our heads to the sound of a breaking twig. I hear the commotion of at least two or more people. I turn back around to see he is already gone and Pip still on guard at the new problem. I start running back to the cabin for cover only to see the group of four people emerge from the brush. Three males and one female all worse for wear. They all look dirty, starving, and armed. Not a good combo. They notice me and one of the males start shouting,

"Hey! Another one of us! About time!" I freeze. I order for Pip to stay as I switch my kukri for my pistol and take aim at one of the males with a jean jacket.

"Hey now! Let's all be friends here. No need to be rash." the male says. They still advance closer to me.

"Stop where y'all are. What are y'all doing here and what do y'all want?" I inquire.

The group all stop in their tracks. The first male that I now assume is the leader starts talking first, "Well, my name is Chase. And this here is my group of friends." he motions to his group. Chase points to a male with a blue hoodie or I assume used to be blue but it has seen better days, "That's Dan or Danny Boy."

Dan shakes his head and says," Just Dan. Danny Boy is never gonna catch on Chase." Chase chuckles, "Just give it some time. Anyways, " pointing to the next male with a red hat and army jacket with the name Miller written on it," this here is Taylor."

"Taylor Miller?", I interrupt. Taylor gives a quizzical look then says, "Nah nah Jacobs." I slowly nod, "Oh my mistake. I just figured that was your jacket." Chase frowns a little before quickly replacing it back to a charming smile, " Oh yeah, we found it a few days ago. Looks good on him so we decided to keep it. You know how it is."

I nod again, "Yeah it's a pretty brutal world out there." Chase let out a cough before pointing to the female with ratty nasty hair, "And last but not least we have Charlotte. Our honorary bitch of the group." Charlotte's face scrunched up in disgust. "I ain't nobody's bitch ya stupid bastard." she snarled showing some of her rotting teeth. These people were really not well off by any means. They need a lucky break which is where I come in. I am vastly outnumbered. I need a way to thin their numbers without causing too much of a commotion. "Well, now that the gang as been introduced. How about we all get a bite to eat and become better acquainted with each other Miss.." , Chase pauses for my answer. "Rosalie. And I have some stew I can make. My group should be coming back soon too so we can have a big feast and all get to know each other better." I cheerily say motioning to the cabin. I hope they buy the lie about a group to give me enough time to get a plan together to dispose of these...guests.

***Chapter Five***

"I'll bring some chairs out front," I say, "so make yourself comfortable. Come on, Pip." Pip and I head inside and I immediately launch into action. I drag out old random boots of my brothers and father from the back room. I sling jackets over some chairs and make some clutter on the dining table with miscellaneous silverware . Then I go and hide my pack in the closet of my room. Looks just like it did when we would come up here. Satisfied, I go ahead and bring out some dining chairs to the front to see the group still there talking amongst themselves. "Here ya go. I'll go get supper going. Anybody need something to drink?" I ask as I put down the chairs. "Water! I'm thirsty." Taylor eagerly says. The rest nod their heads in agreement. "Alright then. I'll be right back." I say as I turn around and head back inside. I go and get three cans of mixed vegetables and a can of tomato sauce from the kitchen cabinet. My stockpile room is actually in an old tornado shelter under the dining room table. Keeps most of my things cool even in the heat of the summer. I have left small amounts of food and water around the cabin just for this scenario. Or if I am out and pillagers come by they'll find exactly what they're looking for and theoretically move on. The last thing I need is for them to see my stockpile. I get out a pot and start mixing the food together. This should be enough food for just the four of them. I also go to my herb stock that I also keep in the upper cabinets and grab some Conium Maculatum. I had collected a few stems and leaves earlier last week because they looked similar to parsley. Fortunately, I had looked it up in the medicinal herb book and saw that I had gotten Poison Hemlock. The only way I could tell the difference was due to its beautiful white flowers growing around it. Hemlock is actually said to have killed Socrates once upon a time. After being ingested, the book said it ranges from an hour to three hours for the symptoms to show. There is typically convulsions, lack of coordination, vomiting, trembling, coma, and death to name a few. Enough symptoms to get me the upper hand if it boils down to a gun fight. I grind up the hemlock to a powder then toss it in the stew. What a waste of food. I look over at Pip to see she is still at the entrance of the door keeping an eye on our unwanted guests. "Good girl, Pip." I whisper. Pip has always had a good sense of people even before the outbreak. Her reaction to these people assures me I am doing the right thing. I snag some matches and a ladle and carry the pot outside to the fire pit. The group didn't seem to notice me as they were still talking amongst themselves. Probably trying to plan for my demise. I start the fire then put the stew on the stand over the fire and set the ladle on the ground next to the pit. I place some more logs on the fire then hurry back inside to get their waters. A hand grabs my arm just at the door frame of the cabin which Pip bares her teeth just about to attack, "Need any help with the glasses?" Chase innocently asks. I glare at him for a second before recovering with a smile, "Sure! That would be great." He smiles back at me. I wave off Pip and she resumes her guard. We walk inside and he glances around the room seeing my imitation of a disorder of people. I head over to the cabinets in the kitchen and grab four glasses. "Let me go grab some water." I hastily say before he could offer to help me with the water I go to my room and grab a gallon of water I keep under my bed. I return to the kitchen with a smile to keep up appearances. Reminds me slightly of the days when I was a waitress. I pretty much perfected feigning my care and interest with an award winning smile to boot. We pour the water in the glasses and we head outside to the fervent group. "About time!", Charlotte bellows, snatching a glass from Chase. Dan and Taylor do the same instantly taking huge gulps. "Wow. At this rate we might go through my water." I laugh. "Let me go get some more." I go back into the cabin to grab the gallon of water. I return back out to see the group talking about their encounters with Alphas. What a fitting topic.

"...but their bites are poisonous or something cause Jake just dropped like a sack of potatoes after that one bit 'em." Dan says. His face contorted.

"Sorry about your friend." I say as I pour him some more water then setting the container in the middle of the group.

"Well, don't. It was his fault that we even got trouble with'em in the first place." Charlotte scoffed.

"What happened? If you don't mind my asking." I say as I go over to check on the stew to see it starting to boil.

Taylor starts the tale, "We were all going to do a quick run at a town near here to get some supplies and we figured we would do pretty well since we had enough gun power we could take down any Alphas that we come across. We get to a super market and turns out to be the hangout to these guys and we barely made it out alive. Well most of us anyways. Jake had the bright idea to run and gun at them but he ended up getting bit. It was horrifying to see really. He just stopped moving...stopped screaming. But, we kept on running and didn't stop until we got here." I look over to see the others nod solemnly.

"Have you heard any good news or anything? We haven't been around another group in a while." I ask trying to lighten the mood.

"Not much good news just mostly bad." Chase says," Heard there is a new kind of Alpha running around that wears all black." My mouth goes dry and my stirring comes to a halt.

"Black clothes?" I utter glancing over to see Chase nod," Yeah. Some kind of tracker or something. Once they get your scent they don't quit. They usually only grab ya in the night even if you're in a group. But, they only take one. It's strange really."

That is strange. The events of earlier today in the street make a little more sense. A sudden wave of terror washes over me but I push it down. Why hasn't he taken me though?

I announce, " Stews done! Let me go get some bowls and spoons." I walk back into the cabin to get five bowls and four spoons. Gives me an excuse to go back plus, I can also say that Pip needs to be feed to buy me time to let the hemlock set in place. I come out to be greeted by hungry eyes. "Let's line up." I order gesturing to the boiling stew. It did not take much to get them all in a line ,with Charlotte being first. I hand them full bowls of stew and a spoon when Chase says, "I see you're one short."

I laugh, "I knew I should of counted them. Oh well I need to go feed Pip anyways. Don't wait on my behalf. Dig in!" I hear them slurp down the stew as I go back inside.

"Let's get us something to eat." I say with an undertone. Pip gives me a happy bark in a reply ripping away from her guard duty. I keep an ear to the ground for any disturbances and grab another cartridge of ammo for my pistol from my nightstand. Hopefully I won't need it. I grab some dog food from my pack then head into the kitchen. Pip starts to beg as I start to open the can and dump it in her bowl. It's nice to find treats like this for her. "Hey Rosalie! Got anything to drink! Like drink drink." I hear Dan yell. "No just water!" I yell back. I hear him groan in disappointment before yelling again," Well, don't get mad but we ate all the stew! By "we" I mean Charlotte " I grin slightly," It's fine! I'll just have something else." Now I just need to buy time to let the hemlock kick in. I slip the cartridge in my pocket. "Pip, stay." I command to her not that I really need to since she is preoccupied with her dinner. I go outside and something catches the corner of my eye out in the woods. I gaze over the moonlight forest to see a shadowy figure.

The Alpha.

***Chapter Six***

I pretend to not see him by continuing to look around the forest before pulling up a chair and joining the group.

"Yeah sorry we didn't save you nothing." says Charlotte. "Oh, it's fine," I beam," I'm just happy that y'all enjoy my stew. The boys hate it. 'Too bland' they say."

Taylor pipes in, "Well I sure enjoyed it. This is a pretty sweet place."

Chase agrees, "Yeah very nice. How long have you and your group been staying here?"

I sigh, " Oh I don't know a while now. It has it's perks but I think there's an Alpha that's been roaming around at night. I'm not sure though. Don't tell the others when they get here. They think I'm going crazy."

"Whoa! An Alpha has been stalking the place? That's bad. That's really bad. You know what we said about those weird tracking ones. That might be one of them!" says Dan his face in a grimace taking quick peeks into the forest.

"Well if the Alpha shows we know what to do with it." barks Chase trying to calm his now paranoid group.

"And when the boys get here there should be no problems from the Alpha. I'm sorry I shouldn't have mentioned it." I apologize.

"No it's just Dan. He is justa scarydy cat is all. Need to grow a pair." insults Taylor.

"We lost Jake today because you were too scared to go back and get him. Kept saying he's hopeless even though we could all hear him yelling for help!" Dan retorts

Taylor jolts out of his chair, "Well I don't exactly remember you going after him anyways. That wasn't mine fault that we got in the situation in the first place. If you didn't kill hi.."

"ENOUGH!" Chase interrupts. His usual cool expression taken over by fury. Taylor sits back down. Dan sheepishly avoids Chase's glare while Charlotte fidgets in her chair. Chase turns to me with his cool appearance back , "I am so sorry. We are after all guests to you. You shouldn't have to hear this bickering."

I flash a smile, "It's fine I don't mind. It's what my boys do too." Although the anger as left, the tension still hung in the air like a pungent stench. Time creeps with nothing but the sounds of the night to fill the silence. The cool summer air sends a slight chill through me. Should be getting close to an hour...I hope.

"Actually we were wondering," Chase instigates, "If we could stay for a spell. We haven't had a decent place to stay in a while." This is what I was afraid of.

I shake my head and bite my lip, "Gee I don't know. I'll have to ask Zak when he gets back. I don't mak..."

"You wouldn't put us out there in the dark would ya. Not with an Alpha roaming the place. Plus we do know how to handle ourselves." Chase slightly threatens. I keep my face in a passive state. This could become a very bad situation very fast. "I don't mean to put any pressure on ya. I am just trying to look out for my group is all." Chase reassures.

I smile, "Of course. And I am trying to look out for mine."

"I promise we won't do any harm. No unless we have to." Chase beams and I get a glimpse of Taylor adjusting his belt.

"Actually when do your people get back? It's pretty dark out. Seems pretty dangerous to leave someone like you all by yourself." Chase taunts.

"Anytime now. They probably killed a deer tonight and probably dragging it back here." I coolly reply.

"I don't think you have anybody here with you. I think you are **all** alone." The others all have the same twisted grin Chase has. Like a wolf that just cornered a sheep.

"I think you wore out your welcome." I growl. Pip comes running outside on cue snarling her teeth. I remain in my seat staring down Chase waiting for his next move only to have Charlotte start to cough violently and collapse to the ground.

"Charlotte!" Dan screams, "What's wrong with you!" Her body starts shaking and convulsing giving me enough of a distraction to draw out my pistol. "You need to get her and leave. Now." I order. They all had a dumbfounded look on their face as they watch their "dear friend" convulse into a coma. Saliva falling out of her mouth. Her face staring blankly into the sky.

"What did you do to her?" Dan blubbers.

"You poisoned us!" Chase spat. As if on cue Dan's body starts to shake and vomits on his shoes. Taylor whips his shotgun around ready to fire at me. As I bring my pistol to aim at him and prepare for the imminent shotgun blast, a blur of motion knocks him down with a new wound gushing from his neck. Taylor chokes, spluttering up blood and flailing his arms around trying to stop his impending death only to stop moving altogether and his eyes glaze over.

"NO!" Dan cries trying vainly to stand up only to fall to his knees. Chase and I glare at each other then he pulls out his pistol. We brace ourselves for another attack with Pip guarding my back and Chase on my left.

"There!" Chase shouts. \*BANG\* \*BANG\* \*BANG\* my ears ring from his shots but the Alpha's charge didn't even falter. Chase let out a small screech before his throat is cleanly sliced by the Alpha. Chase falls to the ground. His body twitching. His mouth spewing and gurgling blood. His face contorts into a silent scream as his blood pools around him. The adrenaline pounds in my veins and my breathing has been reduced to short ragged breaths. My hands can barely stay still as I search for where the Alpha sprinted off to. I back slowly up to the cabin with Pip. I try to calm my shaky breaths as I take careful steps back. I scrutinize every tree and bush for him. I suddenly run into something which I immediately whip around to see the door of the cabin. I sigh in relief reaching for the door handle when I see him coming towards me from my side. I promptly took aim at him only to see him walking, no limping towards me. Pip growls at him which he growls right back. He has ample opportunity to kill me. But he just stops and stares at me as if awaiting my next move. I should shoot him. But, he technically did save my life. Great, now I have a moral dilemma with a damn Alpha. Pip ceases to growl. She cautiously begins to approach the Alpha. He takes a few more steps closer to meet Pip halfway. She meticulous sticks her nose out to sniff him which he allows. I hold my breath, my eyes never leaving his. He extends his hand to her which she smells too. Pip unexpectedly licks his extended hand. I am completely taken back by her gesture. He then pets her head. Pip's tail wags with approval.

"Traitor." I sulk. I slightly lower my pistol and take a step towards them.

"What do you want huh?" I demand. He just stares at me with those damn eyes.

"Do you even understand me?" Again he just stares at me.

"Great. Just great."

***Chapter Seven***

He collapses onto the side of the cabin then hastily stands back up favoring his left side slightly more. I cautiously get within arm's reach of him. I point to the cabin. "Do you want to come inside? I promise I won't try to poison you. I might even see if we can get that leg patched up." I meekly say. I motion for him to follow me and we make our way inside. He hasn't cut my throat yet, which is good I guess. Sad I have more trust in a killing machine than I do people. I clear off the dining room table and help him lay on it. "Hang on", I mutter. I turn on a few lamps around the cabin and grab the first aid kit from my pack. I come back to see him still on the table watching me curiously. I avoid his gaze and commence to examine his leg. His black clothing isn't helping much to bring out his blood. "Where were you shot?" I attempt to ask him. He stares at me like I am an idiot. I mimic a gun, shoot it, point to him, and shrug. "Where is your wound?" He seems to understand ,I think, as he points to his thigh. I go to take off his pants only to be met by his familiar low growl. "Hey!" I exclaim. "I am trying to help you." He shakes his head and gives another growl. I bit my lip. "I promise," I sincerely sigh, "I just want to help you. Just let me see what I can do." I force a small smile. His face softens a tad and his body relaxes. "Thank you". I pull down his pants to see the bullet wound in the middle of his thigh.

"I think you're the only guy that's ever protested against me taking off their pants." I tease and let out a small snort. He remains silent. I give an awkward smile and resume with my task. I lift up his leg to see the exit wound. "Good news! The bullet did exit your leg so I don't have to find it." I say cheerily. He looks blankly at me. "Okay," I mimic my gun and shoot it at his leg. I look around to see a rock on the ground and snatch it up. I point to his wound and mimic my gun while shooting I extend my rock out of the gun. I point to his leg then the rock and throw the rock. He slightly smiles which he sort of has a nice smile even with his killer teeth. "Oh wait! You're supposed to be putting pressure on it. Shit!" I fumble around in my kit looking for gauze. I successfully pull it out and give it to him. He looks at the gauze then gives me a quizzical look. "Put pressure on it." I point to his wound. He places the gauze on it and maintains to look at me. "Here let me see your hand." I point to his hand which he brings to me. I gentle grab his hand and put it on the gauze. I press slightly down with his hand and say, "Okay now hold it." I lift my hand and go back to find some antiseptic and stitching material. "Oh wait pain pills!" I run off to my pack and pull out some of the pain pills I found earlier today. I also grab a bottle of water and return back to my patient. I go to hand him the bottle and pills. "Here to help with the pain." I point to his wound and give an expressive OW! then I point to the pills and dramatic sigh of relief. He shakes his head. "No? You don't have to be a tough guy." He stubbornly shake his head. I give him the bottle of water. "At least drink some water." He seemingly agrees with my compromise and I go back to work. "This should be interesting." I mumble and begin my novice stitching.

I stand over admiring my work. Not too bad. He checks over it too and seems to also think so too. I smile, "How do you feel?" I ask making a thumbs up while smiling then a thumbs down while frowning. He makes an awkward thumbs up with a toothy grin. I laugh a little which is something I hadn't really done in a while. My stomach grumbles. "Maybe it's not too late for a snack. Do you want something?" I mimic eating out of a bowl and rub my tummy. He nods and gradually gets off the table. My hospitality has dramatically changed since this evening. Well, at least with Alphas they are fairly straight forward while humans are unpredictable. I go over to the kitchen cabinet and pull out some deer jerky.

"Catch!" I toss a bag to the Alpha which bounces off his chest and drops to his feet.

"Normally you're suppose to catch it." I toss up my bag in the air and emphasize my catch. I go over and grab the bag. I hand him the bag only for him to shake his head.

"What? You don't want it now?" He pretends to toss something in the air like I had done. "You want to catch it?" I beam. He smiles and nods. I back up and gently toss it to him. He manages to snatch it only to puncture the bag with his claws. He frowns at his hands and looks at me.

"Hey you caught it!" I grin with a thumbs up. He nods still with a frown though. I open my bag and start eating. I watch as he rips apart his bag and devours the half thing in a few bites. Amazing. Pip nudges me out of my ogling.

"Yeah yeah here you go." giving her a strip of jerky. She happily eats in one bit and nudges me again. "Now you're just being greedy." I tell her. She whines somewhat pouting her face. I groan, "You're just a big fat baby. You're such a baby. I'm going to start calling you Baby instead of Pip." She lets out another whine. I roll my eyes, "One day that's not gonna work on me." I give her another piece which she happily eats again. Figuring her luck was out with me, she walks over to the Alpha to try him. She places her paw on his leg and does her signature whine. He gives her a piece of his jerky and she barks with excitement. "Uh oh," I laugh, "now she will never leave you alone." He gives a look of concern as Pip places her paw on him again.

"Pip it's time for bed." She huffs and walks off to my room. I look over the Alpha for the first time. He's massive. Taller than me by another head. His eyes seem to have pupils similar to cat's eyes, probably why they can see in the dark fairly well. His hair is a dark brown that is fairly short just above his eyebrows. His clothes seem to have minimal grim from living in the wilds for a year. Maybe he's been recently released? If so that is somewhat troubling to know that more are being potentially created. His build is lean and strong like a predator. I notice that he is wearing a wristband that looks fairly like a hospital band. I point to it and ask, "What's that on your wrist?" I get closer to him to see it. He raises his arm so I can better inspect the wristband. I turn it over trying to see if it says anything when I can barely make out the words LA out of the dirt. I lick my finger and wipe it to see LAST: AADAMS. I shift the wrist band up to see the letter F. I clean the band some more to find FIRST: KAIDAN. I pause a second then look up to him.

"Kaidan Aadams?" I whisper. He looks at me with pain and fear as if remember something. I gently touch his arm, "I'm sorry I didn't mean to hurt you." He shakes his head and removes his arm from my grasp. He turns to leave but I jump in front of him. "Wait! You don't have to go." What the fuck am I doing? He is a killer! But I continue nevertheless, "There's a room here ... and um...you can shower too! I mean not that you smell just that you know it's probably been awhile since you've had one and showers are hard to come by these days." I ramble. He contemplates for a second then nods his head.

"Hang on. You can understand me?" I angrily ask crossing my arms.

"Yes." Kaidan replies.

***Chapter Eight***

My jaw drops slightly at this sudden reveal.

"So...so you mean to say that I've been doing those stupid gestures for nothing." I stammer

"Well, I thought they were kind of funny." Kaidan muses with a slight grin.

I clench my jaw, "Glad I could entertain you. So, are you staying here or what?"

"I am surprised you even want me to stay let alone feed me and nurse me back to health. After all I am an 'Alpha' as you call it. Why is that?"

I bit my lip, "Does it matter? Maybe I'm just trying to be nice."

He motions out to the front of the cabin, "Oh yes, just like with them."

"I didn't trust them. Something was...wrong".

"Good instincts. They spent the most time talking about how to kill you and your 'group'. So, are you saying you trust me?" he wickedly grins showing some of his sharp teeth, toying with me for a second time today.

"You haven't given me a reason not to. Unless you're saying I shouldn't trust you."

"Sharp mind and sharp tongue." he pauses for a second, "You still have not shot me. Why?"

"I don't know. I just...I just don't get that vibe from you. Do I need to shoot you because I really don't mind."

He grins, "No I do not need any more of your unnecessary stitching. Why should I trust you?"

"Glad we are sticking with a theme here with these questions. And you are welcome by the way. Next time I won't tend to your wounds Superman. And I don't know I am a killer just like you. I could kill you in your sleep just like you can in mine. Why should we trust each other?"

"Because we both have similar interests? Besides I do not think you will want me to leave just yet."

I scoff rolling my eyes, "Believe me, you are not that charming."

"There's another group heading this way. They will be here two days time." Kaidan states

A lump forms in my throat. Another group? Is my sanctuary finally compromised? "Maybe I'll make them some of my stew. It was a real killer with this group." Keeping the rising dread from my voice.

"Unless you have enough for fifteen people ,which I seriously doubt, then we either need to A. Pack up and leave or B. Prepare for them to come."

"WE? I didn't realize you were included in this. Besides how do you even know they can't be reasoned with?" I ask even though I already knew the answer.

"Because they are ruthless. They will kill you without a second thought to get at what you have under that table." He indications to my stockpile. "You know this."

"But, I can't leave." I murmur. "This is my home. This is the only thing I have left." The pain surfacing in my voice.

"Can you protect it?"

I shake my head biting my lip, "I can try."

"That's reckless. You will die," he pauses sensing my interjection, "Pip will die."

I sigh, he is...right. I close my eyes and rub my temples. "You're suggesting we run? Just leave this place? Where would we go? Actually why do you even care?" I throw my hands up in frustration.

"Because you are...different." he says with a soft voice. "When I saw you in town today, you were able to hide from the pack undetected. In case you did not know that is not a feat common in most of your kind. You have a smell. Very unique in a sense."

"A smell?"

"Yes. We 'Alphas' can smell better than you can."

"Another perk, huh?" I think back to what Chase said tonight. "Is that what you do? Find people that are unique? Is that why you are here?" I brace myself for his response.

He avoids my gaze and says, "Not me. But, others do."

"Am I supposed to believe that? Are you reformed now?"

"If I wanted to take you away I would have done it by now."

I nod, and we wouldn't have any problems doing so. "So, let's say I believe you. Where would we even go?"

"I know a place not far from here. I scouted it out a few days ago. Should be safe for you and Pip." he says.

"Riiigghhtt." seems a little bit too convenient for my taste. I let out a long sigh. Maybe he is telling the truth. Why would he need to lie? Why is he even helping me? Too many questions but not enough time to question every detail of them. Maybe I just need to take a leap of faith. "Let me sleep on it okay? This is a lot for me to take in. I'll decide in the morning what I want to do".

"It is hard leaving something like this. Maybe you can come back here in a week or so. Your best option is to come with me."

"Yeah maybe. So I guess I should show you the guest room huh? Or do you plan on sleeping outside?"

"Since you offered..."

I lead the way to the room in the back. Used to be the room my brothers and I slept in while I took the one dad stayed in. I open the door and motion inside. The scent of my brothers' cologne still lingering in the air. I push the memories down before they can even begin to surface. I did my grieving there was no point in dragging it out any longer.

"It's not much but it's enough. If you want to wash up the bathroom is there," I point over across the hall, "you can take one first. I need to clean up outside. There's fresh clothes in the closet there if you need to change." I go to leave.

"Thank you." I pause and turn back to him.

"You're welcome." I beam. I almost turn back around when I think about earlier with his name. "Kaidan?" I ask.

He looks at me, "Yes?"

"Why were you in pain...earlier. When I said your name." I tentatively question.

A ghost of a smile traces his face, "It is nothing to worry about. Just reminded me of something."

"What did it remind you of?" my curiosity not quite quenched.

His gaze shifts down, "When they were doing the experiments on me. Some of them were not so...pleasant." He looks back up to me with the same pained look in his eyes.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't of brought it up. I just don't want to upset you by saying your name or anything."

His smile returns reaching all but his eyes, "You can say my name. It's just been a long time since I've been called that."

"What are you called?"

"Tracker 692." he states coldly.

"I like Kaidan better." I grin. I take a step back towards the front door. "Okay I'll end my interrogation here. I'll see you in the morning. Goodnight, Kaidan." I mosey over to the front door when I hear him say, "Goodnight, Rosalie." I'm thankful I'm facing away for him or he would of seen my face turn a bright shade of warm red.

***Chapter Nine***

I grab a lamp and make my way outside. I see the slumped over the forms of my guests still there. I let out a sigh and begin the morbid task.

It took longer than I hoped. Dragging corpses around is very draining. I positioned all the bodies on the North, East, and West edges of the forest then I crossed the arms and legs to make it seem more ritualistic. Hopefully the incoming group will see this and think that psychopaths live here and keep on going. Or...I could also make X marks in the trees to seem like Alphas had something to do with this. I go back inside to grab a knife to see Kaidan standing in the doorway. "Thought you would be taking a shower by now."

He looks sheepishly at me, "I do not know how to use it."

I try to contain my laughter only letting a small smile escape. "Well, good thing you are in the presence of a shower master. Come on."

He stands aside and follows me to the bathroom. I turn on the lamp inside and turn the knobs for the shower. "There we go. Soap is there and shampoo is over here. Anndd towels are right in this cabinet." I turn to see him nodding. "You could of gotten me sooner you know."

"You seemed fairly busy. I thought you usually buried your dead."

"I misplaced my shovel." I smirk. He didn't seem as amused.

"Look, I know it's messed up what I am doing and I will bury them when I get back. Just right now, I need to use all my options to make sure this place stays intact and not overrun by greedy bastards."

"You are pretty clever for a human."

"Gee thanks, I guess. You're wasting water now hurry up and take a shower. Pretty sure you can figure out the rest of the showering process oh mighty Alpha." I leave the bathroom and go into my room for a knife. Pip is lightly snoring in her bed so I try to be as silent as possible as I quickly grab what I came for and make my way outside to finish my primitive protection.

I look over my craftsmanship over the few trees I mutilated. Not too bad if I did say so myself. I will have to ask Kaidan if they were pretty close to the real thing tomorrow. For now, I had a shower calling my name and a bed waiting for me.

***Chapter Ten***

I wake the next morning with the sun pouring into my room. Surprisingly, I got a lot of sleep even though I felt like I had the world weighing on me. My future seemed uncertain. My routines would cease to exist. Everything I had worked for could be gone. Not to mention I had a stray Alpha with me. I rise out of bed, my body aching from last night's events. I see Pip still passed out. At least I still have her. I go out to the living room and make my way to my brothers' room. I gently crack open the door to find it empty. Huh, maybe Kaidan was just a very vivid dream. But, I knew he wasn't. He probably just left. Good I didn't need any more drama in my life. Although talking with someone was somewhat refreshing. I have come across the occasional wander over the year but mostly just brief chit chats. Nothing that made me smile or laugh. I close the door and head to the kitchen to make a late breakfast feast. Might as well if I might not be able to come back here. Not that I have eggs or toast or anything breakfast themed really. So maybe a lunch feast is more appropriate.

The feast only took an hour and half to prepare and boy was it a feast. Chicken fried deer steak, green beans, corn, and deer jerky. Alright maybe it wasn't that much of a feast but it is to me. I give a plate of food to Pip who immediately chows down and I fill my plate with as much as I could possibly pile on. I'm about to take my first bite when Kaidan comes through the door. I pause slightly startled at his abrupt entrance. "Well...hello. Just in time for lunch."

He looks disapprovingly at all the food and cautiously approaches."You should be leaving. Not eating."

I shrug, "I'll leave after this okay, Mom? Just sit down and join me already."

He shakes his head, "You are not taking this seriously."

"I am! I just want to enjoy my probably last good meal for awhile. In case I don't get to come back here. So are you going to enjoy this lovely meal with Pip and I or are you just gonna keep telling me how bad my life choices are?"

He huffs and sits down in a chair next to me.

"Good! Let me grab you a plate."

I get him a helping of everything and I resume my meal. Out of the corner of my eye, I watch in amusement as he tries to figure out how to use a fork like me with a perplexed expression . I bite my lip and put down my utensils. I take a handful of food in shove it into my mouth.

"Table etiquette went out the window a while ago anyways." I grabble with a mouthful.

He seems to relax slightly and dives right in. He gives a moan, "This is delicious. Much better than human flesh."

My jaw drops and I shockingly look at him.

"I was joking. You seem to use humor a lot. I thought I would try it too."

I continue staring at him before I finally start laughing. I mean a true belly aching laugh. He appears to be confused by my outburst before he joins in with his strange laugh. It was more of a snarling snorting sort of thing, like he has never laughed before in his life. This of course makes me cackle even more. A few moments pass before we calm down enough to be able to breathe. I wipe a tear from my eye and look over at him. His face still red from our fit.

I smile, "You're pretty funny for an Alpha."

He grunts, "Gee thanks." He smiles back at me. I bite my lip before recommencing my meal.

We finish the rest of our meal and wash dishes in silence. I steal glances at him every once in awhile when I notice that he is wearing my brother's clothes. I freeze and turn to fully look at him. A red shirt, worn from the many uses and blue jeans just as worn. They fit...well on Kaidan. They were loose on him. He liked it that way.

"Does something trouble you?" a look of concern on Kaidan's face.

"Yeah...just noticed that you're wearing his clothes. They look good on you." I beam.

He pauses as if choosing his next words carefully, "What was his name?"

"Ryder and the other one was Jason. You're in Ryder's clothes now. His favorite color was red."

"I do not have to wear them if they make you uncomfortable." He starts to take off the shirt. I step closer to him and grab his arm.

"No it's fine. I promise. Besides it's just clothes." he pulls down the shirt and looks at my hand with a mixture of emotions.

I retract my hand. "I'm sorry. I need to go finish packing." I leave to my room and close the door. I let out a breath that I didn't realize I was holding. I need to get a hold of myself. I know I haven't been around anyone in awhile but that does NOT mean I should throw myself at him like a teenager. Besides, he doesn't feel these kinds of emotions. I'm pretty sure anyways. I go back to the task at hand. Time to pack for the future. Pip, me, and my estranged Alpha. What a team.

***Chapter Eleven***

Packing and hiding all the important essentials (Survival books, traps, skinning materials, ect.) into storage didn't take too long maybe an hour with Kaidan's help. I packed enough food and water for the three of us to last a few weeks if we ration of course. I also packed a first aid kit, some medicine, and hemlock just in case. I put a good portion of the supplies in a child pack for Pip to carry. The rest I could handle.

I look out over the forest from the doorway of the cabin. The sun still fairly high so at least a few more hours of light before the twilight sets in.

"Ready?" Kaidan asks.

"Ready as I'll ever be."

Kaidan starts walking and I follow close behind. We go to the northeast woods and just as we leave the clearing I look back to the cabin one last time. So peaceful and safe. My heart aches as I compel myself to look away and continue after Kaidan. He notices my hesitation, "You will be back here before you know it. Look at this as a vacation."

"I hope it's not a beach vacation. I forgot my sunscreen." I try to say lightheartedly but came off as more gloomy than anything.

"If it helps, you do have me along so you just have to walk and not worry about anything."

I smile for his effort at comfort. Enduring really. "Yes, it does help thank you."

This seems to please him and we continue walking.

We walk for a ways before I finally get tired of brooding in my thoughts.

"Sooo, where were you this morning?" I question.

"Went to check where the group was."

"And where was the group?"

"Twenty miles south of the cabin. About a day's journey."

"You went twenty miles no wait forty miles in a matter of hours?" I ask astonished.

"Two hours actually. Another...perk as you put it. Humans can run for long periods of times. We just run faster and longer than humans."

"Any other perks you have?" trying to focus on what he is saying but also making sure I did not trip on the entangled roots and rocks.

"What do you know about us?"

"Well, I kn-" I twist my ankle on a loose rock like an idiot and fall to the ground. I brace for impact but a set of hard arms catches me first.

"Are you okay?"

"The only thing hurt is my pride!" I try to walk but quickly collapse back into him.

"You've been carrying your pack for awhile. I can carry it for the day." he slips the pack off of me and makes it seem like it weighs less than nothing. "Can you walk?"

"Yes I'm fine don't worry." I limp a little ways before finding a rhythm to keep moving. "Anyways, I know that Alphas are territorial. At least I assume that's what those scratches are for. Similar to bears and how they mark territory. Travel in packs. Some are smarter than others. Like one can make a plan while others just are grunts. What else? Oh, there are different kinds of Alphas. You are different than the Alphas in town. Not just with your clothing but the fact that you can actually talk and aren't as primal as the others. I think that's about it." My limping soon became none existent by the time I finished talking which made me very happy. Foot injuries usually meant death and I am not a fan of that.

"You actually know a fair amount on us. I am surprised."

"What can I say, I like to observe things. So, how close was I?" I eagerly inquire.

Kaidan lets out a small chuckle snarl, "Well, you are right about territory and packs. The scratches are to warn other packs not to intrude. The numerous deep scratches mean that there is a large number of us there. So try to avoid places like that. You were also right about the smart and dumb Alphas. Also we do not call each other Alphas. We do not really have a name for our kind. Alpha is a good name for us though. I am different from the other ones in town. I am more of a solitary Alpha. I do not require a pack. My clothing is different from the others so I can hunt more successfully. White is not exactly subtle."

"Why are you solitary?"

"I do not know. That was how I was made."

"Made?"

He stops dropping the pack to the side. "I was made to be this. I remember being human once. Very hazy. But I was human. Now I am this...thing. Abomination. I see the way you looked at me when we first meet. Fear. Anger. But, now you look at me with kindness and comradely. You are quick to change your feelings towards me. It makes me worried that you will forget that I am not supposed to be a friend. I cannot be your friend. I can hurt you and Pip. I am unstable. You did not ask what I hunt."