

Encounter: Return of the Outcast Alpha (Whisper)
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Return of the Outcast Alpha

Moonlight shone through the naked trees on the outskirts of Whisper. There was an end-of-autumn chill in the breeze and the scent of smoke from fireplaces in town spiced the air. Wolves howled and Lianna knew the pack was on the hunt. The full moon ceremony would take place later and they needed a fresh deer. Usually Lianna joined the hunt, but not this time.

Tonight every member of the Seaview Pack had caught the scent of another wolf. To some he was an acquaintance, to others a friend. To Lianna he was much more.

The pack leader had wanted to send a warrior to greet Brandr, but Lianna had convinced him to allow her to go instead.

She paused, a quiver running down her spine. He was close. His scent was strong and as irresistible as she remembered.

A soft growl made her turn sharply, her teeth bared. Her heartbeat quickened when she faced the big wolf. His coat was almost black, as were his smoldering eyes. He shifted to his human shape and stood in front of her, tall and lean with long, unkempt sable hair. Always an athletic man, his muscles were even more well-defined than she remembered.

Several new scars marked his shoulders and chest. His cock twitched to life, the balls beneath heavy. Dark stubble shadowed his strong jaw and the nostrils of his hawkish nose flared as he drew a deep breath. "I've dreamed about your scent," he said, his voice husky. "I've dreamed about seeing you. Holding and tasting you."

His words made her heart soar, yet she told herself to remain calm. After all, he had left Whisper -- left her.

Lianna shifted to her human form. Without her pelt, the night felt even colder and she shivered. Her nipples were tight and tingling, though as much from the excitement of seeing Brandr again as from the cold.

"You could have had the real thing," she said, not bothering to keep the anger from her voice. "No one forced you to leave."

"I had to. You know I couldn't spend the rest of my life hiding here."

"Returning to that den of hatred you call home was better?"

"I had to put things right."

"You mean you needed to get revenge. We were happy here. You were accepted. You said that was what you always wanted."

He lowered his gaze and sighed. "I know you tried, Lianna, but there's no way a purebred like you can understand what it's like to be --"

"No, I don't understand because here in Whisper everyone is accepted for who and what we are. The prejudices of the outside world don't exist here."

"Oh really?" A smile flirted with his lips.

"Even if they do exist, they're not supported. My pack took you in when you were wounded. They helped you get your strength back and told you that you could stay here as one of us. Even more, the Elf clan in Whisper gave you the same opportunity."

Half Elf and half wolf, Brandr had been an outcast among both his mother's people and his father's. Seriously injured by assassins sent by his half brother, he had taken refuge in Whisper two years ago. In spite of the strong attraction between him and Lianna, he had hesitated to claim her. In the end, they hadn't been able to resist each other. He'd promised to make her his mate, but not until he "settled things" with his brother.

"I'm back now." He took a step toward her. When he reached for her, she snarled and knocked his hand away.

"Fine. The others are ready to welcome you. I was just sent to meet you."

Again he smiled slightly. "That's usually a warrior's duty, not a huntress's. You've missed me as much as I've missed you, Lianna. Admit it."

Since she couldn't deny it, she snarled again, shifted shape and ran off. Seconds later, he pounced on her in his wolf form. She grunted from the impact and they rolled together over dirt, rocks and roots. They fell a short distance down a slight overhang. She nearly panicked, expecting to be crushed beneath him, but he twisted his body so that he landed on the bottom, breaking her fall.

Once more they shifted to their human forms. Astride his lean, hard body, Lianna glared at him, panting.

"Tell me you didn't miss me and I won't bother you again," he said. "But if you can't say it, then you'll take your rightful place as my mate."

"You take a lot for granted." Her heart raced as she stared into his intense, dark eyes. Being this close to him aroused her so much. Her clit ached and she resisted the urge to wiggle on top of him.

His hard cock pressed against her bottom. Her hands were braced on his chest and his heart beat fast against her palms.

"Tell me," he said, his voice soft but commanding.

Lianna's lip curled. She didn't want to give him the satisfaction of accepting his proposal, at least not yet. Instead she bent and kissed him hard. Growling, he rolled her onto her back, his mouth never leaving hers. His tongue thrust between her lips and hers met it. The kiss changed from rough to tender in the space of a heartbeat.

Closing her eyes, Lianna clung to him. She caressed every part of him she could reach. Like her, he was shivering slightly in the chilly night, but they were too aroused to care.

He broke the kiss only to trail his lips along the side of her neck and over her breasts. Taking a nipple into his mouth, he licked and sucked it. Lianna moaned and clutched his head, weaving her fingers through his thick hair. He moved to her other nipple and teased it too. It felt wonderful!

She had feared that he would be unwilling or unable to return to her. His pack had treated him with such contempt. She couldn't understand why he'd wanted to go back, even for revenge.

Reese, her pack leader, had told her it was an Alpha thing and she needed to accept it for Brandr's sake. If he didn't confront his half brother, he would lose confidence in himself as a warrior. Brandr was a contradiction in so many ways -- a wolf and an Elf, an Alpha and a loner. Tender yet fierce.

"Lianna, I've missed you so much."

He kissed his way down her stomach. He slid his hands beneath her ass and covered her clit with his mouth. His tongue swept over it again and again. Lost in pleasure, Lianna moaned and writhed, but his strong hands held her steady. He lapped her to climax. While she was still shaking and moaning in the throes of orgasm, he covered her body with his and filled her with his thick, hard cock. He kissed her as he thrust and Lianna wrapped her arms and legs around him. Her tongue mated with his and she relished the feel of his big, steely body against her.

He tore his mouth from hers, panting as he thrust faster.

"Brandr, oh, I've missed you so much," she cried, quickly approaching another orgasm. "I love you, Brandr." She came again, even harder than the first time.

"I love you, Lianna. My mate." With a savage cry, he exploded inside her.

Panting, they rested on the cold ground, their bodies entwined.

Finally she asked, "What happened between you and your brother? Is he..."

"I let him live. Elves don't kill to show their prowess."

"But wolves sometimes do. Especially for leadership. If you challenged him and won, then left him alive, it's a great insult."

"I'm aware of that."

She held his gaze, trying to figure out exactly what he meant. Maybe it was better not to try. "We should go back to the others," she said. "They'll be getting ready for the ceremony."

"I'd like to announce our engagement. If we are engaged, that is."

She grinned. "After this you have to ask?"

Cupping her face, he said, "I'd like a formal answer, if you don't mind."

She studied him carefully. "There are times when I truly can't tell if you're more Elf or more wolf."

"Because I'm both and proud of it."

Slipping her arms around his neck she brushed her nose against his and said, "Yes, I'll be your mate."

He smiled and kissed her. "I have plans."

"Such as."

"I want to start my own pack similar to the one here in Whisper, only deeper in the wilderness. We need more places like this one, that encourage acceptance."

"Great idea."

"Then you're for it?"

"I'll miss my pack, but I want a life with you and I like the idea of being your Alpha female. It's a good plan you have. I really am proud of you."

He kissed her again, slowly, tenderly and with many promises she knew he would keep.

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