

# Running with the Pack

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*A boy finds out that his parent's "date night" is actually a ritual among his "people" and is thrust into a world hidden behind the eyes of everyday people.*

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# 1 - The Fur Flies

I always knew my family was different. My parents still went on dates like every other week, I could never have imagined what they truly were doing out by themselves late at night. I always wonder how a scrawny kid like me was one of the best athletes of my grade. Varsity Cross Country for high school in seventh grade, broke the record for high jump every year in track, and Varsity wrestling for lightweights in eighth. My life was the outdoors, rain, snow, or shine, I was out "running with the wolves" as my mom would say. Everything changed my freshman year.

I still remember leaving our two story house out in, as close as you could get to the country, in a cluster of developments like North Branch, Minnesota. I had been feeling strange all summer feeling more compelled to keep in even better shape. I had spent the summer climbing mountain after mountain out in the west. As I walked to school my back loaded down with the all the stuff I supposedly needed for school, I felt an early chill in the air. I started to jog out of boredom. By the time I reached the high school I was running at a brisk pace, I braked just outside the front doors and headed down to my locker supposedly located at the far end of the building. I remember the sound of my brand new black hiking boots slowly clomping down the hall. It sounded like each step was an avalanche crashing down on glass. The crunch of gravel still wedged in the soles of my boots followed me to my locker, which took three tries to unlock. My back unburdened, I headed down to the cafeteria where my friends said they met.

Karson, my friend since fourth grade, was sitting in the back corner over by the darker kids. I thought I would blend right in since I was the darkly determined kid I could blend in almost anywhere as long as I was quiet. Karson and I talked and even played our little indulgence, Yugioh(TM). As we played some of the other kids even upper class men started to watch, we were amateurs, but we still had fun. After a quick duel we started to talk among the other kids, one senior, Mia, could draw really well I admired most her picture of this awesome wolf.

"Ryder, are you going to do tech this year?" the person asking this question was a kid everyone gets to know especially for his hair was Xander.

I replied with a cryptic "Maybe," I decided to sit down and start reading the book I had brought with, "The Final Warning" as I sat back and dove into it, I wondered what it would be like to have wings. Little did I know that I would have something much better. My first and most favorite class was Choir. we had one of the coolest teachers ever! She stressed we weren't choir or band but a music department. the rest of the day and week went by as mostly a blur of rules and getting to know the teachers since we already knew each other. The first few weeks went by without a hitch little homework and then sports and that was my life until tech started.

The first meeting I met this quite girl with a head aflame and she did exactly that to my heart. They a boy first experiences puppy love then they have crushes. Well I'd known puppy love, and even crushes, but nothing like that. I couldn't stop trying to be by her. The next day was a Saturday and so I stayed up late since I couldn't sleep anyways. I kept getting up and pacing. the moon flooded the room with light and I couldn't help but keep staring at it. Finally I headed towards the front door. As I passed the kitchen my parents stepped out of the shadows and blocked the way. I looked them in the face wondering if I should bolt back to my room since it was past curfew, I couldn't help but gasp as both of their pairs of eyes were a fierce color, my mom's blue and my dad's amber. They looked at each other then back at me, my dad shook his head and my mom said, "It's time."

I looked at the mirror standing in our hall, I almost screamed for standing there was not me but a freak.

He had a snout for a nose and mouth and his eyes, I'll never forget my eye color again, were a bright gold almost yellow with red rimming the dark coals that were his, my, pupils. A russet fur covered my face and body, my dad handed me something like those cloaks you see in those fantasy movies, my parents already were wearing something like mine. We left the house and started walking towards the woods, once we reached the edge of the woods we kept walking a few more feet. My parents stopped and the weirdness progressed. MY PARENTS took off the cloaks and stripped down to pretty much a loose night dress for my mom and boxers for my dad, that's when I realized just how good of condition my dad was in and I assumed the same for my mom who I was almost embarrassed to look at so I averted my eyes. "Unless you want to ruin your clothes I'd recommend you take them off." said my dad. So out in the cool woods at night I was burning up as I shed the layers of clothes I wore. When I was down to my boxers my parents started to sprint, I followed loyally, like a lost puppy. Man, I was surprised at how fast they could run, as they ran they started leaning farther forward till they were running on all fours I followed suit as we flew through the forest, I started feeling the elation of running and the warmth of it. After awhile we came to a lake hidden in the woods, my parents who looked closer to wolves than humans now stood up and walked over to the lake, my dad, at least I assumed that was him ( somehow we had run out of the rest of the clothes as we ran) beckoned me closer. I couldn't stand for some reason, I walked over to the lake and peered at the water what stared back was not even close to human it was a fullfledged wolf, but still the eyes were the same.