

Chapter 9: New Beginnings

5 Years Later

“Good morning, mommy!”

My eyes fluttered open and after rubbing them a few times, I saw my little boy standing in front of me.

He has a wide smile on, his blue eyes glistening with happiness, and his raven hair with silver streaks an adorable mess at the top of his head.

“Good morning, Neo.” I moved closer to him to give a small kiss on his forehead.

Neo is my pride and joy. My little boy is growing up so quickly, but watching him grow in front of my very eyes is by far the most heartwarming thing.

When I gave birth to him, I knew exactly what his name would be the first time I laid my eyes on him.

Neo. It meant ‘new’ in Latin and ever since then he has become the embodiment of a new beginning for me. We may have faced hardships together as not everything is all rainbows and butterflies, but with him by my side, nothing was impossible and we conquered it together. 1

“I made you breakfast!” He said excitedly before placing the wooden tray with pancakes, fruits, and orange juice on it.

“Oh thank you, my baby. That’s so sweet of you. Do you want to eat it together?” 2

He quickly nodded his head and pulled himself up on top of the bed.

"Did Auntie Elisha help you make these?" I asked as I split the pancakes into smaller pieces for him.

"Yes, mommy. She helped me before leaving for work." Neo answered before happily munching on the food. 1

Neo wasn't picky with his food, thank the goddess. Even while I was pregnant with him, I never had a problem with pregnancy cravings. After the small incident on the plane where the smell of butter cookies made me feel queasy, luckily that was the first and last time it happened.

My pregnancy had gone on smoothly and by that I mean there were no hiccups to it. For someone who's never given birth, Elisha and her coworkers at the hospital were also very surprised at how easy and painless it seemed for me.

I don't know if it had anything to do with the fact that I was a wolf or maybe even the Moon Goddess or the universe was allowing me to have this one less stressful thing in my life after what I've been through.

Whichever it was, after a few months, I gave birth to the most perfect boy I could ever imagine.

From time to time I would remember River with him, especially his eyes as they were the exact same color, but I don't let that get to me. I push it aside and keep going for Neo and for our future.

"Did you say thank you to Auntie Elisha?" I asked him and he nodded eagerly.

Elisha has been our saving grace all throughout these years. When I

arrived in Arizona, she welcomed me into her home with such open arms. She enrolled me at a nursing college and paid for my tuition for four years. Right after that, she got me a nursing job in the same hospital as hers and in about a month, I'd be celebrating my one year as a nurse. 1

None of this would have happened without all her help. Not only did I gain an amazing close friend almost like a family, but Neo got a loving Aunt too. 1

"Very good, sweetie. I'm so happy to have such a good boy in my life." I ruffled his hair and he began to giggle the most adorable sound ever.

"Mommy?" Neo looked up at me with his big round eyes and some chocolate syrup around his small mouth.

"What is it, my love?" I asked while wiping his mouth clean.

"If I'm a good boy..." He paused, his eyes looking to the side as if in thought before looking back at me. "Then how come my daddy was bad?"

Oh goddess...

My heart sank to my stomach at his question.

Of course, there was no way that I could avoid that question. Honestly, it wasn't the first time.

When Neo began to talk and have more consciousness around him, it was earlier than usual. It was likely because of who he was, but either way, the first time he directly asked about his father was right after he had just turned two.

I remembered we were cuddling as I read him a bedtime story. I didn't realize that telling him a story about a family of bears would impact him.

+15 BONUS

Chapter 9: New Beginnings

Just as it was ending, his little finger pointed out to one of the bears, the papa bear, and he asked it.

“Papa bear? Where is my papa bear?”

I didn’t know how to answer. I’ve anticipated that one day it would happen, yes, but when I was in that situation, it’s like I had forgotten every single thing I practiced telling him.

At that moment, all I could do was hold him close and tell him how much he is loved by other people, me, his Aunt, and his friends in the daycare. In his world, papa bears didn’t need to exist when all the other bears could love him equally or even more.

Throughout the years that he started to become more familiar with what was going on around him, the questions became more frequent and of course, saying the same thing over and over again wasn’t going to last.

When he was four years old, that was when I told him what he needed to know – that the man that was supposed to be his father just couldn’t be one, but that doesn’t make him any less of who he is. ¹

It didn’t affect the way he grew up. He would see other kids with their dads, but because I showered him with so much love and affection, he doesn’t even feel like he is missing anyone else in his life. ⁵

“Neo, my love...” I comfort him, brushing his hair gently. “Remember what I told you before?”

His blue eyes that were an exact replica of River’s twinkled in thought. “There are good and bad people in the world no matter what you do and it’s not your fault?”

Commented [Ma1]:

I smiled before nodding. He was such a smart boy.

"Yes, and unfortunately, he was a bad man. The good thing is though that you're not and it's your goodness that makes this world a much better place so what should you do?" 5

Neo's smile widened from ear to ear. "Always be kind to others!"

I pull my sweet boy into a tight hug before my alarm goes off and that means it's time to get ready for the two of us.

As we were getting ready, I helped Neo wash up and put on clothes while I fixed around the house a little before leaving, but still a part of me couldn't help but wonder if it's always going to be like this.

That no matter how many times I reassure my baby boy that he doesn't need anyone else but the two of us and I will always love him more than anyone, he will still naturally look for that other person in his life... 6

I brushed away the thoughts just as Neo came up to me and without saying anything, his small arms wrapped around my lower body and held it tightly.

"Jeg elsker deg, mamma (I love you, mommy)." He says as he pressed his face on my legs and his gesture and words immediately warms my heart up. 1

It doesn't matter that Neo has to grow up without a father and I will have to live with reassuring him about it. What matters is that we have each other and that is more than enough. 1

-

"Hey, K! Think fast!" I quickly turned around and a paper bag was coming straight at me.

Thanks to my better reflexes, I am easily able to catch it though. I opened it and saw a bagel inside.

"Damn it, when will I ever be able to surprise you?" Chad asks as he looks at me disheartened in a joking way.

Chad Manning, green eyes, light brown hair, and I'm pretty sure overdosed on height enhancing medicines as a child with his six foot five -ness. In the hospital, he was one of the youngest doctors. Outside though, he was a Football legend around Arizona.

He was destined to become an NFL god, but when an unfortunate accident happened that tore his ACL, his dream was crushed. Though that didn't stop him. He instead went on becoming a legend in the hospital, too.

He worked his ass off day and night and that's how he became one of the most famous doctors for his expertise and maybe also for his looks.

Other than that though, he was just my plain old annoying closest friend around here.

"Never," I winked at him teasingly in which he scoffed at me.

"Oh, did you see the new episode of Hunter x Hunter? Killua has got me on a chokehold, not going to lie." He said and I almost spit out my coffee. 1

"You know, when you say stuff like that, my gay radar goes berserk."

He looks at me with a feigned offense expression, putting his hand on his

chest as a joke. "I'm bisexual, K. Please tell your gay radar to get its facts straight." 1

Then the two of us laughed all the way to our first patient.

It has always been like this with him. Everything just felt so carefree. Sometimes when I'm with him, I remember Zane. He was the only one that I was able to talk to when it came to Japanese culture because he was obsessed with anime and manga.

I miss him from time to time and hope that he's doing well. Wherever he is.

"Mr. Johnson has been waiting for you, Your Highness." Chad joked before doing a curtsy.

I punched him lightly on his shoulder, but because of his muscular physique my hand just pretty much recoiled.

Mr. Johnson was one of the hospital's long term patients. He's a little bit on the cranky side so many nurses would have a hard time handling him, but the first time I got assigned to him, it was like a miracle. At least, that's what they all said.

"Hi, Mr. Johnson." I walked into his room and he was turned around, facing the glass window where the sun was high up by the mountains.

Sedona Hospital was the biggest one around the city, but the thing is, Sedona wasn't some fast-paced and bustling type of city that was overwhelming. Sedona was more on the nature side. A desert town surrounded by red-rock buttes, steep canyon walls and pine forests.

I feel at peace around here wherever I go. Except when the hospital gets

crazy with patients though that rarely happens. Like I said, it was a quiet place.

Mr. Johnson didn't talk a lot, but what he lacked with words, he made up with the expressions on his face. When I walked up to him, he was already smiling widely at me.

Thank the goddess he woke up on the right side of bed this morning. It almost always means my shift today won't be as tedious. 1

Fortunately, it was just as I hoped. Besides some minor challenges that were easily fixed when communicated properly, the day went on like usual, normal and unproblematic.

"God, I love living in Arizona. Life couldn't be any more quiet." Chad said as he stretched his arms and legs on the couch at the employee's resting space which were not lacking amenities for those that wanted to rest after a tiring day's work. 1

In this case, a not so tiring but still deserving of a rest day.

"Want to watch the new episode? Or read some chapters? I brought some manga." He said while wiggling his brows.

I shake my head chuckling. "I'm good for now, but thank you." I told him before going back to scrolling through my phone.

A few seconds later, I felt his presence hovering behind me.

I turned to him with a raised brow. "Ever heard of personal space, Manning?"

"When you're as good looking as me, you won't even want any type of space from me." He responded in a heartbeat and something tells me

he's said that more than once because it was way too smooth and way too natural.

I couldn't help but let out an amused chuckle before pushing his face away from my phone screen. "You're barking up the wrong tree here. Or better yet, the wrong target market."

"And that's exactly why you're my closest friend here," he proudly said before laying back down on the couch and flipping through his manga.

I let out a louder chuckle. Okay so technically it wasn't just because of our common Japanese interests that got us closer together. It was also the fact that I was one of the very few people in this hospital that does not and will not ever have the need to become anything more than friends with him. 1

I could attest to his struggle because during my first week here, I still vividly remember him being cornered by a few interns so they would go out with him. It was an extremely awkward situation and luckily, the interns didn't last long, but that was just the tip of the iceberg for Chad.

A lot of the other people who get into Sedona Hospital sometimes have an ulterior motive and that was to date him. To make the long story short, it never worked and when Chad realized I couldn't care less about doing anything remotely close to him if it wasn't part of my job, we started to get closer.

Until now a lot of the nurses and some doctors envy me because of our friendship that they think was more than one, but I've learned not to mind them just as I used to do back then with River and I's relationship.

The difference this time is that Chad was nowhere near as much of an asshole as River was and probably still is.

"Oh and I'm sure Neo will love a trip to the amusement park for his birthday more than that humongous lego puzzle you were looking at. As much as he loves wolves, don't you think building another one for his fifth birthday is a bit of an overkill?"

I turned to Chad and he was giving me a 'yeah I saw what you were looking at on your phone and I know you know what I said is right' look.

Like I said, the guy was my closest and most annoying friend around here.

Annoying because he was definitely right. Neo has never been to the amusement park because one, there were none in our city, and two, I just couldn't find a big enough reason to go through the trouble of finding a way to get there and all the other logistics related to it.

Sure a big reason would be to see Neo excited, but at the same time, he's never been the type of kid to demand for something. He was always grateful and that's exactly how the tradition of giving him a wolf puzzle started. 1

My son knows who he is, what he is, and the kind of lives we were born into. At least, for the most part. He doesn't know the more complicated things, just that we weren't like the humans we live with and see everyday.

"Did somebody say an amusement park?"

Both Chad and I turned to the door where Elisha was coming in. She looked much more tired compared to the two of us, but that's probably because she's quite literally the head doctor and she's been here since the start of the morning.

"Yeah, I told Keira she better take her little boy to the one in Phoenix. He'll squeal in happiness, but she won't believe me. You should convince her, Dr. Silver." Chad said as he casually threw me under the bus.

"It's not that I don't want to. It's just that I'll have to take a weekend leave and arrange accommodations and rent a car and all of that. I need more time. Maybe next year." I shrugged my shoulders and was about to continue scrolling through the online shop when Elisha sat down on the chair adjacent to me.

"Weekend leave? Easy approval from me. A place to stay? I actually have a coupon for a free overnight stay in one of the resorts there. If I'm not mistaken, it's a few minutes away from Phoenix park. A car? I told you that you are free to use mine any time. My sweet Keira..." Elisha took my hand and held it as she looked me in the eyes.

"Your little boy is turning five years old. Do you know that in that age, family relationships become the most important influence on their development? At five to eight years old, they gain more sophisticated play, stronger friendships, tricky emotions, and improved thinking and physical skills? This is the perfect time to bring him to something as exciting as the park, and besides, there's a wonderful spa place in the resort. You can have your first break after five years of hard work."

I start to get teary-eyed. I couldn't help it. Elisha had just single-handedly offered Neo and I the most magical weekend we would ever have and that was on top of her having provided and cared for us these past few years.

Elisha Silverstone wasn't just an angel, she might actually really be a goddess in her past life.

"If you try declining a generous offer, I'm available that weekend, Dr. Silver." Chad joked and I quickly threw him one of the smaller pillows which hit him directly on the face.

"Is that a yes, sweetie?" She smiled.

I nodded my head. "Thank you, Elisha. You don't know how much this means to us."

"No need for thank you's. Like I told you before, the two of you are a blessing to me, not the other way around."

I sniffled a little, but fought back the urge to cry as I didn't want to end up bawling in a public place.

As the day went by, all I could think about was how next week, we would be having the time of our lives.

From feeling like a nobody who was banished and treated like an outcast from whom I believed were my family to building a wonderful life with an even more wonderful family in such a beautiful place, I've definitely come a long way.

I once asked Fuyu and I if we regretted saying yes to River that night and neither of us really knew the answer.

Now, I can proudly say that I do know, and the answer is no, we don't regret it.

No matter how much pain and heartbreak he caused, in the end, he gave me Neo and because of him banishing us I ended up here and met all these kind and loving people. I definitely wouldn't have it any other way. 5

+15 BONUS

Chapter 9: New Beginnings

He may have destroyed my life years ago, but now I'm living the best of it.



Comments



Support