

Chapter 25

Not A Freak

Nothing else registers in my mind. Don't ask me how, but I feel her fear. I feel her pain. Maybe it's a mother child connection. I don't know but that alone makes me pump my legs harder to get to her.

I feel Raya growl in my head. I don't know why she was growling but a part of me hoped that it was because our pup was in trouble. Because our pup needed us.

My heart was beating wildly as I ran across the lawn. I scented the air and caught her scent. I continue following it while all kind of scenarios plagued my mind. Each one worse than the other.

I hear her scream again and my heart drops. Where the fuck were the warriors?

'Raya? Please give me a boost.' I plead with her.

She groans. I thought that she would ignore me. That she would turn me away but she doesn't. I feel the rush of energy as she gives me some of her speed.

Within minutes I am on the outskirts of the forest.

“Iris?” I call.

Her scent wasn’t as strong here. There were other scents mixed with it. Those didn’t bother me as much as the fading scent of rotting flesh.
Fuck!

“Iris? Where are you baby?” I shout hoping she would hear me.

The mixture of scents was messing with my nose. I couldn’t get an exact lock down of hers. I was getting frustrated when I heard a tiny whimper to my right.

I change directions and head that way. Following the sniffles.

“Iris.”

She wasn’t answering even though I knew she could hear me. I still called her. This was my way of letting her know that I was coming for her. That I wouldn’t leave her.

Finally, after what seems like forever, I break through a field. It wasn’t that big but she looked so small in it. She was curled into herself in a squat. She had her head between her legs and her hands were covering her ears.

The sight broke my heart.

“Baby,” I approach her slowly.

Once I place my hand on her shoulder she starts fighting me. Her eyes were closed as she screamed.

Her hand hitting me anywhere they could land.

I engulf her in my arms and hold her tightly. Caging her flying fists.

“It’s me my darling, It’s your mommy...it’s okay you’re safe.” I soothe her.

As if my voice finally penetrates her mind, she calms down and just begins to cry. Her tears soaking my t-shirt.

I pull her away from me and look at her. She looks completely terrified. I mean out of this world terrified.

She’s shaking and she looks lost.

“Tell me what happened honey...tell me what scared you.” I say gently.

She tries to speak but nothing comes out of her mouth. She keeps opening and closing her mouth.

Words completely failing her.

Finally, she’s able to say something and what she says freezes me.

“I-I s-saw a big big m-monster,” she stutters her words so low I had to lean in to catch them.

I frown. My heart was beating wildly but I had to make sure that I didn't misunderstand her.

“Monster? What did it look like?”

She looks at me with those penetrating green eyes. “Like a huge dog. It-it had r-red eyes.”

My heart drops to the floor. That means that the red eyed wolf (like we've grown to call it) had been here. That explained the foul smell I scented earlier. No one needs to tell me why it was here. If what we guessed is true then it was after me.

I go to speak but then Iris screams again and clutches me tightly. Her scream is full of renewed fear. I stand up and bring her behind me. I was terrified that the red eyed wolf had come back but I was wrong.

I sigh in relief when I recognize Kai's glowing eyes. I turn to look at Iris. She's cowering behind me and she has gone back to shaking. I realize what this might mean to her. She doesn't know about werewolves so she's terrified especially after seeing the red-eyed wolf.

“Please go change, she's scared and tell the warriors to back off.” I tell Kai.

He stares at me then gives a wolfish nod. He yelps, commanding the warriors that had surrounded us to fall back. Once they do, he turns around and goes into the cover of the forest to change.

I face Iris who's look of fear has been slightly been replaced by curiosity.

"Y-you talked t-to them and t-they l-listened."

I was going to answer her when I noticed blood running down her arm. I kneel down and gently grasp her hand.

"Did it hurt you?" I ask her, feeling my heart breaking.

I hated seeing the wound. I couldn't imagine the pain she was in right now. She was just a child. Why would it attack her?

"Come let's go to the clinic." I say just as I feel Darren behind me.

"It's okay...it doesn't hurt so much now and it will heal soon," she whispers looking down.

I look at Darren in question, only to find him looking at me too.

"What do you mean, Iris?" Darren asks.

"I always heal really quick. Any time I hurt myself it just heals. Nanny used to say I'm a freak of nature because of how fast I heal. She said I was abnormal."

Darren and I are both quiet. I look closely at her wound only to find it already closing up. I gasp because I didn't understand. Sure, we have super healing, but it doesn't manifest before we shift. Before the age of thirteen, we are basically human.

Her eyes drop at my gasp of shock. “Do you now think I’m abnormal like Nanny did?”

Her voice is wobbly and tinged with sadness. Damn that fucking woman. The bitch is lucky that she’s already dead.

Pulling her close to me, I hug her. She immediately calms down and sinks into me.

“I could never think you’re abnormal, because you’re just like me. Just like us.” I reassure her.

She didn’t need to know that healing at her age was not normal to our kind. I would protect her from that truth as long as I could.

“Really?” she asks skeptically.

Darren takes her from me, “Really. Just look.”

He nods at me and Iris turns to face me. Taking a sharp stone, I cut my palm. I see shock and wonder in her face the moment my skin begins closing up. Seconds later, it was fully healed.

She gets out of Darren’s arms and grabs my hand. She begins inspecting it. Turning my hand and poking my palm. She finally stops and stares at me in amazement.

“I’m not a freak...you’re just like me,” she says, tears swimming in her eyes.

I can't imagine how things were for her. Always thinking that she was abnormal because her nanny told her so. The stupid woman viewed her the same way the humans in the lab used to view us. I hated that she had to go through that at such a young age.

I stare at my daughter and study her. She had to grow up quickly. She was too mature for her age and you could tell by how she behaved around kids her age. She didn't know how to be a child because she was abused and maltreated.

"Exactly so don't ever let anyone tell you that you're different." Darren tells her, kissing her forehead.

I fall deeper seeing him treat her with so much kindness and gentleness. He treated her like she was his own daughter. My heart swelled at that.

"Are you like Mayra and me?" she asks him.

He nods his head before looking at me.

'I think it's time to tell her the truth about us,' he whispers through the bond.

I nod my head in agreement. I couldn't answer through the bond because it meant bringing my walls down. He didn't know about Raya yet and I would rather tell him myself other than him finding out when my walls are down.

I bring Iris back into my arms. "Darren is going to show you something. He's going to show you what we are. I don't want you to be afraid. I

want you to understand that we would never hurt you and that it's still him, okay?"

She looks at me quizzically but she answers. "Okay."

Darren moves a little distance back. He would have to shift and tear his clothes. There was no way he was removing his clothes first. She wasn't used to seeing naked men and it would just traumatize her.

"You ready Iris?" he asks her.

When she nods her head, he shifts and soon enough, Kai stands on his paws. Iris screams just as Kai shakes off the pieces of torn clothes.

"Shh, it's okay...he isn't going to hurt you, remember what I told you? Deep inside he's still Darren." I tell her slowly and smoothly.

She refuses to listen to me and cowers back.

"Look Iris, look at how cute Kai is," I tell her pointing at the big brown wolf.

Kai was seated on his hind legs calmly. His tongue rolling off the corner of his mouth in an act to appear harmless.

Curiosity finally wins over her and she takes a peek at Darren the wolf.

"Kai?" she asks, looking from me to him.

“Yes, his name is Kai.” I begin trying to find an easy way to explain to her what we are. “We are half wolf. Meaning we can change into wolves when we want to. Each wolf inside us has a name. Darren’s wolf is called Kai, and my wolf is called Raya...do you understand?”

She nods her head, still looking at Kai with apprehension.

“Can I change into a wolf?”

Shit! I didn’t know how to answer her. I wasn’t sure given she’s half human but the fact that she can already heal points to that possibility.

“Not right now. Children don’t change, not until they’re older.” I explain.

We watch as Kai slowly makes his way towards us. When he is close, Iris backs away so he stops and lays down on the grass. His head on his paws.

“Go ahead, touch him...I promise he won’t bite.”

Iris seems to be fighting an internal battle. Finally, she pushes her hand forward and touches his coat. She starts petting Kai as if he was a dog.

“Good Wolfie,” she says before turning to me. “He’s so soft.”

The moment she says it, Kai stands up and licks her face making her giggle. She buries both hands in his fur, then gets closer and hugs his neck. I felt so proud of how she was handling things. I think part of that acceptance is because she’s one of us.

She suddenly stops and looks at me. “Is the one that hurt me one of us too?”

“No!” I force out. “That one is not one of us so if you ever see it again, you run as fast as you can and shout for help, okay?”

“Okay,” she finally responds after a while.

From there the atmosphere becomes easy. I enjoy watching Iris play with Kai and Darren even though I couldn’t shift. Raya refused to shift so I just had to stay content with playing with them in human form.

Darren gave me a look but it wasn’t time yet to explain things to him.

It was a great afternoon but part of my mind couldn’t help but be worried. Something told that there was something more to the red eyed wolf entering pack lands (something according to the Alphas he never does). Something told me that it wasn’t just about me this time.