

The Best Day

Alex POV

I spent the whole night tossing and turning, unable to keep my excitement at bay. The next morning dawned bright and fair and I woke up with a smile on my face. It was my 9th birthday and I was excited, practically skipping around the room as I got dressed and rushed down the stairs, to find my mother sitting at the table, calmly sipping a cup of coffee. Her eyes were sparkling as she looked at me.

"Whoa there" she laughed, "what's the rush? Is today a special day?" she teased.

I grinned at her. I knew she was joking. There was no way she had forgotten that today was my birthday. She had never forgotten before.

"It's my birthday" I squealed, making her wince.

She laughed and got up, warmly embracing me. "I know it is, I'm just teasing you," she said sitting back down and sipping her coffee again. I shuddered. The stuff tastes horrible. I had tried it once and had promptly spat it back out.

I headed into the kitchen and grabbed myself two pop tarts, eating them cold as my mother looked at them in disgust. I know it is weird but I don't like them heated. I sat down at the table and joined her, munching away quite happily. They were chocolate coated and very gooey.

"So is he coming?" I asked excitedly. I didn't see the need to elaborate.

She looked amused now.

"Is who coming?" asked my mother with a straight face.

I rolled my eyes. "Is my father coming?" I said slowly as though she was hard of hearing.

She grinned. "You know he wouldn't miss your special day," she said with a shake of her head "He'll be here later, for dinner. Which reminds me, what do you want?" she asked me.

I didn't even have to think about it. My favorite meal on this earth is lasagne and my mother makes the best lasagne in the world. My mother grinned at me. "Well, what do you want?" she asked again, rather patiently.

"Lasagne" I yelled out and she laughed, nishing off her coffee and frowning down at her empty cup.

"I had a feeling you would say that, so I grabbed the ingredients when I went grocery shopping," she told me "What are you going to do for the rest of the day?" she asked. "I'm going to be busy cooking but I can make some time to spend with you if you want?"

I thought about it. I really wanted to take a walk. I was old enough to venture out on my own so long as I didn't go too far into the woods. I gave my mother a considering look. "Can I go for a walk?" I asked.

She looked a little uncertain.

"Please" I rushed "It's nice outside and well, there's not much else for me to do. It's not like I have friends to celebrate my birthday with" I mumbled, making her feel guilty instantly.

"Of course, you can go for a walk," she said stiy "Just be careful," she said softly "it can be dangerous in the woods."

I knew that. Rogues were especially dangerous, but my father was good at keeping them from entering his territory.

I grinned and sprinted upstairs to grab my shoes, putting my sneakers on and tying up the laces in a hurry before rushing back down. I gave her a hug. "I'll be back in a little while" I sang.

"I'll get your lasagne ready" my mother sang back.

I giggled.

She winked at me.

I headed out the front door, bracing myself against the slight chill in the air, and headed outdoors, blinking against the bright sunlight against my eyes. I grinned to myself. It was gorgeous outside and perfect weather for a walk.

I was eager to go walk in the forest and I headed right there, going past the tree line and sning the pine smell from the trees with a satised smile. Oh, how I loved the outdoors. I took my time, slowly wandering from tree to tree, occasionally greeted by a bird from its perch on its nest or a small critter such as a squirrel as it darted across the ground. I was so focussed on what I was doing that I didn't register that there was something wrong until the smell hit my nostrils.

The most pungent, repulsive smell of rotten meat and eggs wafted toward me. I crinkled my nose, feeling revulsed. What was this? It was coming from behind me. I heard a low growl and stiffened. Something was telling me this wasn't a friendly wolf. I could feel my body trembling in fear. I glanced over my shoulder and saw the glowing red eyes and the froth foaming from its mouth, the mangy and thin silver body, and its long elongated snout. I knew instantly what the creature was and my mouth went dry. I had ventured too far from my house. I should have paid better attention, but it was too late now. I could tell myself off later, if I survived that is.

I screamed a bloodcurdling scream and ran, heedlessly into the forest, my legs pumping as fast as they could go. My heart was racing wildly in my chest and my eyes were wide as I frantically gulped down oxygen, my arms swinging and ailing. Oh god, I was going to die, I thought as the rogue got closer, its red eyes gleaming in triumph. It leaped through the air and I braced myself for the impact, inging my arms up over my head. It never came. Instead, there came a ferocious growl and I lowered my arms, staring in stupefaction at the large black wolf that had come to my rescue, tearing into the rogue's neck and severing its head from its body as I stared in horror, my body pressed against the trunk of a large tree. The large black wolf growled at the body of the rogue and then turned its head toward me. I heard cracking noises and then my father stood there, a worried look on his face. I heaved a sigh of relief. There was no need to fear him. Was there?

"Alex" he almost yelled, "Do you have any idea how close you came to being killed right now?"

I nodded my head, still terried. His gaze was full of anger. I had never seen him so enraged. He looked me over. "Are you injured?" he nally asked me.

I shook my head. I had some scrapes and bruises, but other than that I was ne.

He gave a sigh of relief. "Good" he murmured "After dinner, I'm giving you ghting lessons. You need to learn how to defend yourself until you get your wolf" he added "and it wouldn't hurt to know how to ght."

I felt a spark of excitement. "Really?" I asked eagerly "is mother going to let you?"

He laughed and put his arm over my shoulder, turning me back towards the house, "This was her idea" he explained, "she wants you to feel safe when you go outside and I have to agree that you should be comfortable going somewhere by yourself."

My father winked at me. "So what are we having for dinner kiddo?" he asked with anticipation as I giggled. Dinner was a long way away. I was actually surprised that my father had come to the house so early. I had thought that he had important pack business to attend to or that he would be busy with his wife or son.

"Lasagne," I said smugly, making him throw back his head and laugh "My favorite food in the whole wide world."

"Mine too" he exclaimed "I can never get enough of it."

I was beaming as we entered the house. My mother took one look at my father, sighed, grabbed him a pair of shorts, and threw them at him.

"Thanks," he said sheepishly, putting them on and tying up the drawstrings.

"How was your walk?" she asked me.

I eyed my father nervously. Was he going to tell? He shook his head. I took some deep breaths to calm myself. My secret was safe for now.

"It was great," I said lamely "I really enjoyed it."

"That's good," my mother said looking confused at my lack of enthusiasm "Anyway I could have sworn I smelt a rogue outside. Do you think that you might have patrol a quick look, just in case? I could have been mistaken, but I don't want to take any chances, not with Alex here at any rate. It was the merest whiff" she said with doubt on her face.

"Of course," my father said hastily, meeting my eyes "I'll mind link patrol straight away" he promised her.

I saw his eyes cloud over and knew he was mind-linking someone or several someones in his pack.

Neither of us could meet her eyes and we both heaved a sigh of relief as she turned away and went back to cooking.

We spent a pleasant evening watching movies and then having a nice dinner with some chocolate cake for dessert. I have never laughed so much in my life and my mother was fairly glowing with happiness as my father showered her with affection. Part of me hoped that it could last forever, but I knew that was impossible. Instead, I had to be grateful for what I had and cherish the moments, keeping them locked in my memory forever. After dinner and birthday cake, we settled on the couches and my father and my mother retrieved their birthday presents for me. I couldn't wait to open them, my whole being trembling with anticipation as my father handed me a square box rst.

I ripped the paper open and stared in awe at the delicate gold llagree bracelet with a dangling charm hanging from it. I gingerly took it out of the box and held it up, admiring it in the light. The charm consisted of a black wolf that looked like it was running and I knew it was meant to remind me of my father. It was beautiful. I held out my hand and my father gently placed the bracelet around my wrist.

My mother handed me a small square box next. I took the lid off carefully and gasped, pulling out the locket with wide eyes. It was stunning. Pure gold in the shape of a heart, it contained a photograph of herself and of father, one on each side. I felt tears prick the corners of my eyes. It was perfect. Special. She helped to put it on and it nestled snugly between my breasts as I held it tightly with one hand. "Now you know we'll always be with you," my mother said softly.

I nodded, not trusting myself to speak. My throat closed up. Even my father looked like he was ghting back tears.

My father cleared his throat. "Come on," he said roughly "How about we go and do some of that training I was talking about? Learn some self-defense" he suggested.

I glanced outside. It was dark. My mother gave me a nod "Go ahead" she whispered "You don't have much time" she warned my father.

He nodded and gestured for me to follow him outside. My mother stopped me in the doorway, an anxious smile on her lips, placing a hand on my shoulder.

"Did you have a good birthday?" she asked anxiously.

I smiled at her, my heart swelling with happiness "I've had the best day" I whispered, before following my father out of the house and up the driveway. The best thing was, the day wasn't over yet.