

Chapter 10

CLAIR

I kept the pain at bay while panting, waiting for the wolf to emerge from the bushes. It didn't take long before a big black wolf stepped out of the bushes and towered over me.

"Jake..." Relief coursed through me at the sight of his wolf.

I didn't know how I knew it. I haven't seen his wolf since I was twelve. But I knew it was him when I saw the wolf's eyes - the darkest shade of blue. If I was not in pain, I would have marveled at the wonderful creature towering over me. Instead, I just let out a weak smile, letting him know I appreciated his presence.

After a mere second, screeching pains started to build up again in multiple places - my shoulders, stomach, spine, limbs, knees, elbows, everywhere, and I have no idea which part pained me the most. I just wanted it to end, so I let out another torturous scream like it would help.

My entire body was on fire until a cold hand reached out and gently rubbed my back, a thumb wiping sweat from my brow. I looked up and saw Jake already in his human form. He was crouching in front of me, and his hand extended to cup my cheek before his lips touched my forehead.

The burning did not die down, but his touch calmed me more than I expected.

"You'll be okay, princess." Jake put his forehead against

mine, our noses inches away, and I could smell his peppermint breath.

Despite the pain, his presence and his touch soothed me.

"I don't feel like a princess now," I chuckled, I tried to lighten up the mood, but I did not succeed when the pain started to come again. "I think I'm dying. I can't... do this!"

With my hands clutching the ground, I raised my gaze to look at the man in front of me while I tried to fight off my tears from falling.

He gritted his teeth. Concern and pain were flashing in his eyes as he leaned closer and cupped my face, this time with both hands. "You're not dying, Clair. I won't let that happen." He said firmly, and despite my pain, I trusted him.

I fixed my eyes on him, trying to find comfort in them. I saw restraint in his features before he let out a defeated sigh and leaned his head closer, and before I knew it, he was pecking my lips with gentle kisses.

As soon as his lips touched mine, it all happened - the warm sensation from his lips overwhelmed my senses. I heard my bones snap in different places.

Jake fell on his ass and moved a little farther to give me space. I was shifting. I let out a loud cry until it turned to a low howl as I shifted into my wolf.

The next thing I knew, I was staring at the ground below me with my front paws in my peripheral vision. A gray wolf, just like Mom! And her name is Rain — such a beautiful name! I smiled in spite of myself. The pain subsided but was not

thoroughly gone. But I was beyond relieved. I made it!

I looked up and saw him crouched on the ground, a wide grin forming on his lips.

'I can't walk.' I must have had a silly wolf smile etched on my wolf face because he shook his head with a teasing grin.

"You can try! Come to me!" He motioned with his hands and waited patiently as my wolf strutted clumsily over to him, sliding once until I reached him.

"Good girl!" He cupped my neck and rubbed my fur as he looked straight into my wolf eyes. "You're beautiful, Rain." He said warmly, and my wolf, Rain, whimpered in response.

'Stop flirting with my wolf, Jake.' I huffed in my mind with fake jealousy.

He laughed and smirked at me, "Would that mean you're jealous of your wolf, princess? She wouldn't turn out beautiful if you weren't a beauty yourself."

I let out a whimper and placed both of my front paws on his naked chest before pushing him gently. I then turned around and ran away from him. 'Let's run, Alpha!'

I heard him let out a hearty laugh before something snapped, and I knew he must have shifted into his wolf.

~ ♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡ ~

JAKE

"Run, princess! Don't let me catch you!" I hollered after her before I shifted midair into my wolf, Echo, and ran after her

wolf.

I have seen many she-wolves, but Rain had to be the most beautiful one I've ever set my eyes on, and Echo could not agree more.

I trained my eyes to follow her as I settled on a pace fast enough to slightly catch up on her but slow enough to let her lead.

'Just mind the border. Don't go beyond it, otherwise, I'll be forced to slaughter as many as needed to protect you.' I chuckled, but I hoped she could sense the seriousness in my reminder.

I knew I would go beyond mad if a wolf tried to hurt her.

I kept a steady pace behind her, watching her beautiful wolf run ahead of me, but I was not letting my guard down, just in case danger was lurking somewhere.

'You're too slow! Starting to lose your speed, old man?' She teased before hiking up her speed.

I chuckled as I sped up, and in seconds, I leaped over and my paws caught her back and swiped her over, making both our bodies stumble over the ground. My wolf paws caged her body under mine, eyes boring deep into hers.

'Who did you call old man?' I growled at her, not to scare her but to tease her.

She whimpered under my grip before lifting her head and licking my face. We stayed in this position, just letting her have her way until my wolf could not take it anymore.

A resonant growl vibrated from my chest, and I backed away to let her go. I needed my wolf to catch and control himself, or Echo would be mating with Rain in no time.

My wolf turned around and started walking away.

'Hey! Where are you going?' Her wolf ran after me before walking to follow my pace.

'We should get back. Shifting will drain your energy soon. You need to rest.'

'I don't want to go home.'

'Why?'

'None of your business.' She snapped at me and started running in the direction where we left her pickup.

I didn't say anything more and just followed after her. She could be hot and cold.

As soon as we hit the clearing where she shifted, I picked up the clothes I had taken with me when I came to find her, made my way behind the tree, and slipped them on.

When I came out, I saw Rain just staring at her clothes.

"Are you okay?" I asked verbally.

'I feel so tired and my body is aching.' She answered through the mindlink.

"I'm sorry it was painful. You should shift back, you need to rest."

'How?'

"Just think of what you look like in human form and tell Rain you want Clair back."

She shifted in a matter of seconds, which amazed me. Others took time to shift back into their humans, but then this female has been surprising me a lot. And as much as I wanted to run my eyes over her nakedness, I didn't want him to feel embarrassed, so I turned around to give her privacy to put on her clothes.

"I destroyed my shirt when I shifted. I was not able to take it off. But if you can take one from my bag in the truck, I don't think my legs can handle walking." Her voice was throaty, but it came out sexy.

I closed my eyes as I let her voice embrace me while I took off my shirt. I needed to control myself to avoid walking around with a hard dick. Her voice and the image of her naked were so tempting.

"Take this," I told her as I threw my shirt back without looking at her.

"Thank you!" I heard shuffling and I had to stop myself from turning around. I wanted to see her already, but I didn't want to take advantage.

"I'm ready." She said it almost in a whisper.

I turned around immediately and saw her clutching her pants. She didn't put them on, just my shirt, which just covered her thighs halfway. And then I lifted my gaze to her

face.

"You look pale!" I blurted out. It worried the shit out of me.

She tried to take one step and faltered. With quick reflexes, I moved towards her and caught her before she completely fell. I hooked one arm under her knees and wrapped the other arm around her back, scooping her off the ground and holding her close to my chest.

"Relax. I'll take you home." I said in a low voice.

"I don't want to go home." She answered, mumbling as she gripped my arms tightly.

"Yes, I get that. Sleep. I'll take it from here." I answered softly and placed a kiss on the crown of her head as I walked us back to her truck.

I sent Aaron a mindlink, telling him, Clair and I were heading to the pack house. I already notified him earlier when Clair shifted but gave him an Alpha command not to follow or look for us. I could tell he was annoyed, but he said nothing.

"Thank you." She murmured with her eyes closed. "Thank you for being here, Alpha." She cooed as she scooted her face into my naked chest, and eventually, her breathing steadied, and I knew it wouldn't take long before she would fall asleep.

"It was my pleasure, princess." And I mean it. This was one of the moments in my life that made me proud and pleased.

I always felt proud to witness the pups in my pack when they shifted. Those were Alpha-proud moments. But this one was

beyond that. I felt proud and honored, and as selfish as it may sound, I was honored to be the only witness to her first shift, the first one to see her wolf, Rain, and the first one her wolf licked.

I smiled despite myself. This female was slowly making her way into my heart. ²

I threw her a glance when we reached her truck. I was torn between putting her on the passenger seat or just letting her sit on my lap as we drove back to the packhouse. ²

I chose the latter.

I didn't have an explanation for it. All I knew was that having her in my arms, in my shirt, just felt right at the moment.

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