

Chapter 26

Meelo

Day 28

"So what you're saying is that not all of the traders are dead," Grix said aloud for Seq to hear him.

Sera sat at her desk, holding her head with her arm as she intently listened. Meanwhile, I sat on the floor next to Seq, as he sat upright in his bed and was eclipsed by Grix's shadow, while the wolf stood overhead.

"Yes," Seq muttered. I didn't notice it before, but, now that I was close enough, I could see that Seq's cheeks were swelling. "I think it was the one on the ship with Night, but I could be wrong,"

Grix sighed and scratched the side of his muzzle. "Tell me what happened one more time,"

Seq had been through enough for day. He almost got killed and had to put up with whatever crap he argued about with Rye. I decided to speak up and suggest that Seq needed some sleep, but, before I could, Seq began to tell his story for the second time.

"Rye and I had an...argument. I told him to come back to camp and to leave me alone. He didn't want to at first," Seq paused for a while and I looked at him. He was in deep thought about the memory.

The fox continued. "He left, though. I walked for a while, trying to find some prey, but none seemed to be out. When I bent over to see if any rabbits were hiding in a bush, something hit me on the back of my head. While I was on the ground, I saw that it was one of those traders. He started punching me in the face. I tried to shove him off me, but he was really heavy. Somehow, I managed to get my knife, but he grabbed my wrist and twisted it until I dropped it. He threw it off to the side and started clawing at me. I tried harder to push him off. Everything I tried seemed pointless, though. Just when I thought he was done, the trader bent down and started to bite me all over my shoulders. And then, when I thought I was going to die, he socked me in the head and I blacked out,"

Once Seq was finished telling the exact same story that he told a moment ago, I looked up at Grix to see if the wolf was finally satisfied.

Grix kept staring at Seq and I could see in his eyes how much he was going over my boyfriend's story. After a few moments of awkward silence, the wolf turned around and now focused his attention on Sera. "How serious is his condition?"

Sera lifted her head off of her hand and let her arm drop down on her desk. "Well, he *did* get his head bashed in,"

"But you checked to see if it was serious, right?"

Sera nodded. "Yeah. I'm pretty sure its nothing serious,"

"All right," Grix said, seeming pleased as he turned around and focused on Seq again. "If you remember anything else, Seq, let me know. Okay?"

Seq gave a warm smile. "Of course,"

Grix left us alone in Sera's hut and walked out into sunlight.

Now that Grix was finally gone, I edged closer to Seq and put my hand in his. "Get some sleep, okay?"

A smile grew on Seq's face. "Why? So you can finally leave?"

My eyes widened at the very thought of Seq thinking that.

He only gave a small chuckle. "I'm kidding, Meelo. Don't worry so much.

Sera's taking care of me,"

"It's not that," I sighed. "That trader back on the ship, I should have killed him. I was just so happy to find Night that I—"

"You didn't do this," Seq pointed to his swollen face. "He did. And, you weren't the only one there that night. Isabel and I didn't think of killing him, either. We all messed up, Meelo. It could have been worse, though. At least I'm still breathing,"

We stared at each other in silence for a moment.

His forehead wrinkled as he tried to pretend to be sad. "No kiss?"

I grinned. With great care, I leaned over and gave Seq a tender kiss on the lips. After our quick tongue-less kiss, I leaned back and we both smiled at each other. In that moment, I realized just how grateful I was to be able to kiss him again. This morning could have been the last time I kissed him or even the last time I hugged him. Sure, it could have been the last time he went down on me, too, but I never liked doing that as much as kissing. Kissing and hugging had an emotional closeness about them. Not that I didn't enjoy Seq using his mouth down there. There's just something special about cuddling and kissing someone you love.

"Do you two need some time alone?"

I turned my head and looked over my shoulder to see Sera, still sitting at her desk.

"Uh," I said, a little startled when I remembered that she was still there with us. "No. I was just leaving,"

I turned back to face Seq. "Goodbye, Seq,"

My fox smiled and snuggled deep into the bed beneath him. "Thanks, Meelo. I love you,"

"I love you, too,"

After Seq rolled over onto his side and began trying to fall asleep, I stood up. Then, I headed for the door.

"Bye Meelo," Sera said to me. "You have guard duty now, right?"

I stopped, just before reaching the door and spoke with the shepherd. "Yeah. And then I have to go back at nightfall,"

"Oh,"

"Hey, thanks for taking care of him," I said, bumping my head towards Seq. "I really appreciate it,"

Sera smiled and shrugged. "No problem. It's what I do,"

"Still," I said, just before making my way out the door. "I appreciate it,"