

Chapter 30

Callix Day 35

"Move!" a male jaguar with pure black fur and piercing yellow eyes ordered, as he jammed his small gun in my face with a scowl. If I had my gun or my knife, I would have gladly wiped that cocky look from his face.

I lifted my arm towards Isabel, who was being carried on the back of a surprisingly strong male lynx. "I just want to look at her leg and see if it's okay,"

For the most part, I was telling the truth. I was concerned if Isabel's bleeding had stopped, but I also wanted to slow us down in the hopes that we would be saved. I knew it was a long shot, since the sun began to sink into the horizon. Too much time had passed since we were separated from Seq and it didn't help that the Kreq had covered our tracks during the entire time we had been walking. They also had dabbed this clear liquid onto themselves, Isabel and I. Apparently it was suppose to mask our scent. They had reached into their pouches when they captured us and took out these small containers that were clear with black tops that came off. I thought that that they were going to take a drink. Then, they patted Isabel and I down with the stuff before we had moved out. I figured that was how they murdered Aether without him wreaking as though he had rolled around in a pile of cat hair. The more I thought about it, I began to realize that they must have gotten it from the traders who gave them their guns.

The jaguar didn't move. "You worry about walking! We'll worry about the bitch's leg,"

"Hzuk," the female cheetah that carried our guns on her back said. "Calm down," I had almost forgotten about her, since she walked behind us the entire time and covered our tracks while we walked.

Somehow, Hzuk's rage removed itself from me and locked onto the cheetah. "This piece of shit killed Daqey and Jex, Stara! If he's gonna cause problems, I might as well blow his brains out right now,"

"That's not for you to decide," the lynx that was carrying Isabel over his shoulder growled.

Hzuk pointed his gun at me again, but kept his eyes on his tribe mates. "You don't think Riter won't do the same exact thing when we get back to camp?"

Stara puffed out her chest and stared at Hzuk like a piece of prey she was about to pounce on. "Like Weko said, killing him isn't for you to decide,"

I looked around at all three of the Kreqs' faces and, when I realized that none of them were willing to back down, I spoke up. "Just let me look at her leg and I'll walk the rest of the way without talking,"

They all seemed to like the idea enough to not kill each other.

Stara turned to Weko and sighed. "Let him look at the girl,"

Weko didn't argue and gently placed both of his hands on Isabel's hips, just before lowering her onto the snow.

When I walked towards Isabel, I couldn't help but feel terrified by how much taller Weko was than me. If I wanted to make eye contact with him, I would have

had to bend my head back as though I was looking up a tree. He was even taller than Grix. *Aren't lynx's supposed to be small?*

I crouched down next to Isabel and tenderly examined her leg. As I looked over her, she looked up at me with terror in her eyes. What I wouldn't have given to trade places with her right then.

Her leg was still bleeding, but not as much as it had been earlier. It probably was going to take twice as long to stop bleeding altogether, since the Kreq had nothing to bind it with.

I reached up and grabbed the right sleeve of my tunic with my left hand, and began to rip it off.

As the material ripped, Isabel tried to stop me. I could hear weariness in her voice. "Callix,"

"Shhh," I told her and continued to rip off the rest of my sleeve. "Don't worry. It's fine,"

After I had finished ripping my tunic's sleeve, I wrapped it gradually around Isabel's leg and covered her wound. As I tied a knot, a red blotch began to stain through the material. I gave the sleeve a small tug to see if it would come loose and, when it didn't, I asked Isabel, "Is it too tight?"

She shook her head.

"Good," I said.

I got up and let Weko place Isabel back on his shoulder, before I turned around to face Hzuk.

"Now," Hzuk said, raising his small gun once, "move,"

I wordlessly walked past him and proceeded on to wherever it was that they were taking us. Their pawsteps followed behind me and I could feel the muzzle of Hzuk's weapon brush the tips of my neck fur. I prayed to Taiya and asked for Isabel to be safe, even if I didn't live through the night.