

Chapter 33

Meelo

Day 39

"I can't smell anything,"

After just getting out of Sera's hut that morning, Grix decided to send me where Callix and Isabel had been taken. He thought that, since I used to be a Kreq, I might have had more luck picking up their scents. Or something like that. His plan didn't work in reality as it did in theory and I felt bad for Fare, who was forced onto a patrol with me.

Fare didn't seem to mind much. "Oh well. If anybody could have picked up the scent, it would have been you,"

After looking onto the ground and imagining Isabel lying there in the snow bleeding, I felt a spark of guilt light within me. "I might have been able to pick up a scent a few days ago,"

The fennec sensed my remorse and changed her tone to a more reassuring one. "You were hurt and making you walk all the way out here would have been a terrible idea,"

"Yeah," I said. "I guess you're right,"

Together we left behind the empty space and headed back to camp.

We didn't make it far before Fare to start talking. She was like Rye in that sense, but without the constant asshole-ish double meanings. *Maybe talking a lot is a fennec thing.*

"How are your wounds holding up?" she asked me.

At first, I thought she was being serious, but I realized that she was just trying to mess with me when I noticed the grin that was stretched across her muzzle.

"Fine," I said. "Would it make you feel better if you carried me back?"

Fare's grin changed into a tiny smile. "I thought that was your boyfriend's job,"

I narrowed my eyes while keeping my grin in order to show that I was still being playful. "Who said Seq carries me? For all you know, I carry him,"

She grunted at that. "Next thing you know, you'll be telling me who's on top,"

I looked off to the side of her, as if I was actually in deep thought. "I don't think I'd go *that* far,"

"Good, cause I don't wanna hear it. I'd never be able to look at either one of you in the eye again without remembering who sits on who,"

I snickered and moved closer to Fare. "Well in that case. Seq always-"

Fare folded both of her tall ears down and held them closed with her hands. "LA! LA! LA! LA! I'M NOT LISTENING!"

She walked like that for couple of moments with her fingers refusing to let go of her enormous ears. I couldn't help but laugh.

Eventually, after my laughter had ceased, Fare turned and shot me a dirty, yet lighthearted, look. "Are you done with all your dirty butt-sex talk, you filthy pervert?"

I nodded.

"Good," Fare groaned and let her ears stand up once again. "So... Glad to finally be able to sleep in your own bed with Seq again?"

"Yeah, but..."

The fennec's ears twitched and her gaze drifted off to the side. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be pry,"

I smiled to show her that it was fine. "No. It's all right. He's just been kind of down lately and I don't know how to cheer him up,"

Fare frowned at the idea. "Wow, that blows. And not in the good way,"

"You're telling me,"

Fare became comfortable about discussing the topic and began to ask more questions. "Do you know why he's so sad?"

I sighed because I knew exactly what had been bothering Seq those last couple of days. "He's taking what happened to Callix and Isabel personally. He keeps on saying stuff like 'What if I had only run a little bit faster?' or 'Maybe I should've stayed behind with them.' I keep telling him not to beat himself up about it, but he doesn't listen. I don't know... What do you think?"

Fare thought about what I said for a moment, as if she was reviewing every single word carefully. "You should definitely keep telling him that it's not his fault that Callix and Isabel are gone,"

I nodded.

"It also wouldn't be a bad idea to do things together that he enjoys, other than fucking that is,"

My tail slightly lifted in the air as I realized the perfect idea. "He likes taking walks at night and looking up at the stars. I don't think he's done that since Riter came to our camp that one night,"

The fennec tilted her head to the side in agreement with me. "That would be a good start. If you can think of anything else like that to get his mind off feeling guilty, do it,"

Fare's forehead wrinkled and her shoulders sagged a little. "I don't know if this is the best example, but when Seq dumped my brother, Rye started spending a lot of his free time making tools and stuff for the tribe. Now that I think about it, that was around the same time when he started only coming out of his hut to grab food,"

Or maybe he was too ashamed to look Seq in the eye.

I didn't share my thoughts about Rye. Fare was still Rye's sister, despite obviously being the better sibling. Her example wasn't entirely appropriate, sure, but it did help me start to think about all the different things Seq and I could do together. We could go back to the lake for a swim, or even spend an evening getting to know more about each other.

I turned and thanked her. "Thanks for the advice, Fare. I really appreciate it,"

Her tail rose in delight from my gratitude. "No problem. Sorry I don't have any more ideas. I could probably tell you more if I had ever been in a serious relationship,"

A moment of silence passed.

Fare rolled her eyes. "You're wondering who I've dated, aren't you?"

My eyes looked away and averted her gaze. "No. That's none of my business."

She didn't seem to hear me and started talking anyways. "I went out with Teo for a little while. He's a nice guy. He's loyal, so you know he won't cheat on you, and he's funny, so it's hard to get bored with him,"

I gave her a look of disbelief. "Teo's funny?"

Fare seemed to understand my skepticism. "He's serious around others. But, when you're alone with him, he shows you who he really is,"

I shook my head. "It's just so weird picturing Teo being funny. I swear, most of the time I think he's got stick up his ass. No offense,"

She brushed the comment off. "We just never connected. I don't know why. Maybe we were too young or something. The only time we actually got serious was when we slept together, which was once,"

"Was he just not good in bed?" I wondered.

She shook her head. "Taiya, no! It took everything in me to keep from screaming his name. He did all the right things in all the right places and more!"

"So if Teo was funny, loyal and good in bed-"

"Great,"

"Okay," I continued, "'great' in bed. He was all those things and you still didn't connect?"

Fare gave a weak shrug. "Sure, he was great to be with and we had a lot of fun together. I just couldn't say that I wanted to be in anything long-term with him. Even when I told him how I just wanted to be friends, he agreed. I still wonder sometimes. I wake up alone in bed and wish that someone could be there next to me. I know I'm not all that girly or into that lovey-dovey crap, but I still wish I could fall in love with a guy. Sometimes I wish I had what you and Seq have,"

"You know," I started to tell her, "Seq and I didn't get where we are just by pure luck. We met one night, went down to the lake and fooled around a little. If he didn't ask me to dance in the first place, none of that other stuff would have even happened. I took chances that night. I don't know why, but I did. If you're going to be in a relationship, or even hope of being happy, you've got to take chances. So, you want a relationship with Teo? Go tell him! Ask to try again, that way you can at least look back and say that you tried to be happy,"

"But," Fare spoke now in quiet voice, "what if he says no?"

"Then forget about him! Don't let one person's opinion of you define you or what you do with your life. You're the only one who knows enough to judge you and that's it,"

Fare thought about what I had said for a brief moment. Then, when she was done thinking, she turned to me. "Meelo?"

My ears pricked. "Yeah?"

"Thank you. I really appreciate it,"

I couldn't help but grin out of pride. "Sure. No problem,"