

Second chapter

The nap was only partially refreshing but at least he knew better what he needed to do. First thing was first, he needed to text his boss, then his parents. His parents had some explaining to do.

Sam: just got out of the hospital. I have some bad news.

Boss: about time I heard from you. I already sent out your final check and cobra forms

Sam: wait what? I've been in a coma and you fire me?

Boss: you know the no call no show rules. You haven't been in and no calls either. So yes you're fired.

Sam: this is bullshit. Not that I was coming in anymore anyways. I just got told I have 3 weeks to live. I'm sure as hell not spending it at work.

Sam didn't even read any replies after that and just called his mom. Her chipper voice picked up on the second ring, "hello dearest son of mine! What can I do for you?"

"Hi mom. I'm having a rough week."

"Is your phone broken? You sound like you've been inhaling helium."

"That's one of the things I called about. So apparently I'm an alien now and I have no idea why. I remember everything from age 4 and up but nothing adds up. Did anything happen to me when I was a toddler?"

Sam heard some expletives he's never heard from his mother's mouth before she turned the cursing on his father. Sam could hear him on the other end trying to calm her down but it wasn't working. Finally Sam heard his mother throw the phone and stomp off into another room. His dad picked up the phone.

"Samuel?"

"Hey dad"

"What happened to your voice? And for that matter, what got into your mom? She just threatened to divorce me over "my dumb idea"."

“Voice is a long story, but, I asked mom if anything happened to me as a toddler that would make me now an alien?” He hadn't meant to phrase it as a question but his uncertainty made it happen.

His father for his part sucked in his breath and held it for a bit before sighing and finally answering, “when you were born, you were weak. Bad heart, arthritis already, brittle bones. It was a mess. Doctors told us that you wouldn't make it past 2 years old so we started looking for alternative medicines that could help. And some of them did, but it wasn't enough. You were dying. Then we heard of someone scouring the globe for a dying child whose spirit they would strengthen. We immediately sought them out and brought you before them. They were huge. 8 feet tall in a big heavy cloak. They held you and turned you this way and that before saying you would be perfect. They brought you into a room with this big black and silver rock shaped like an egg. We were so entranced by the rock and room that we didn't see him pull out a long glowing blade. He leaned you against that rock and rammed the blade through your heart and into it. We thought you were dead! But you didn't make a sound. You and the rock glowed together but the glow moved from the rock to only you. The man said something in a foreign language, yanked the blade out and threw you at us. “It failed! Take your abomination with you” is what he said. We were confused and scared but after that you started healing. Arthritis went away, bones strengthened, heart beat strong. Whatever he did it worked but I feel this isn't what he intended.”

Sam could almost hear his father shrugging on the other end of the phone, “so what you're saying is something alien made me strong enough to get better?”

“That about sums it up. Yeah.”

“Well apparently that alien shit made things worse for me now because I'm being shipped off planet in 3 weeks anyways.”

There was a long pause, “run that by me again?”

“Yeah... apparently I'm an alien now and I fall into the “send them home” bullshit now. It doesn't matter that I was born here. I have to leave.”

“That's fucking bullshit!”

“That's literally what I said!”

“Sooo. What now?”

“Well, I could come visit but more has changed than my voice.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, you remember how mom always wanted a daughter?”

Another long pause, “no way. You're a girl now?”

“Yep! Full package. Tiny too. I'm only five twoish.”

“Well that's inconvenient. How much do you weigh?”

“I don't know. I'd guess somewhere around 90 pounds. I'm shredded too. Muscle everywhere!”

“How do I know this isn't just some sick joke one of your friends is playing on us? Huh? It certainly wouldn't be hard.”

“Believe me, I wish this was a joke. Come over to my apartment and I'll show you a video I got the doctor at the hospital to make to show you what happened.”

“I'll see if I can convince your mother. You going to make anything for dinner?”

“Sure. I'll see what I have in the freezer that I can cook up for you guys. Anything in particular sound good?”

“You know me. I'm not picky. I'll see you in an hour though.”

“See you.”

Sam hung up and put his phone on the armrest. He really should at least text his friends and girlfriend but he was too stressed at the moment. He may have had only

three weeks but that's still a long time for how small his social circle was. A thought came to mind about someone he should pay a visit to for some possible answers: a psychic he's heard a lot about.

Pushing the thought aside, Sam got up and pulled out some steaks to cook for his parents. Add in some grilled corn and mashed potatoes and it was a great but simple dinner. He set the steaks in some water to defrost and started a pot to boil on the stove for the potatoes. The corn was easy enough, just place them in the husks straight on the grill. Those took a while though so he headed out to his patio to start up the grill. He technically wasn't supposed to have a grill in the apartment but since he was on the 4th floor and a corner plot, no one cared. Not that it would make much of a difference any more considering he only had 3 weeks left. He still couldn't wrap his head around that idea.

With the corn on the grill and the potatoes boiling, it gave Sam a chance to contemplate on what he wanted to do. There was always the option of running from the FBI to stay on planet but what kind of life was that? Turned into a pariah and on the run constantly. No that didn't sound like a life he could live. Especially when you have to drive everywhere. It's too hard to evade people when you're limited to the roads.

The doorbell ringing broke him from his reverie. He opened the door to be greeted by both of his parents. So his father got her to come after all.

"Is Sam home?" This was his mother. Boy was she in for a shock.

"Hi mom, Hi dad."

Sam's dad just whistled. His mother, however, just stared in shock. Apparently she was not informed of the situation or anything for that matter. A lot of expressions seemed to pass over her face as she stared at Sam including confusion, excitement, and anger. She finally settled on excitement, "I thought your voice was high pitched now! Yay, we can do spa dates together!"

"Whoa whoa whoa! Hell no! I'm still a guy at heart. No way I'm getting into this girly stuff!"

“Oh good, you are my son. I was just checking, though, that would be nice. Anyways, can we come in?”

“Yeah, come on in! I’m just getting some dinner cooked up. How does steak and potatoes sound?”

“You always did love the simple but hearty meals. Not that that’s a bad thing. Just an observation.”

“Yeah well I didn’t have much time to prepare for anything elaborate. I had one hour to defrost food and cook it. Next time I’ll make something a little more flavorful.”

Sam’s dad threw out the one thing he was afraid of saying, “if there is a next time.”

Sam’s mother frowned at her husband but when she noticed Sam crestfallen, she needed to know what he meant, “Sam. What does he mean? What is going on?”

“Dad told me what you guys did to try to fix me when I was a toddler. I don’t blame you guys. You were just trying to save your baby, but whatever happened mixed me up with alien blood. Now I’m a girl and I have three weeks left on Earth.” His mom looked confused for a minute so Sam added some information, “the FBI thinks I’m an alien now and are coming to ship me off. The “send them home” act from when I was a child. There is nothing I can do about it.”

“Oh. Oh no. No no no no. No I can’t lose my baby again! No one comes back from that! I’ll never see you again! No you can’t go!”

She wrapped her arms around Sam and held him tight. Sam could feel her shaking and tried to comfort her. He knew there was nothing he could say that would make her feel better. She was losing her child.

“Come on guys. I will be gone for a week starting tomorrow anyways. Remember that convention I told you about?”

Sam’s dad was the only one able to talk, “yeah, I remember. You think it’ll be okay you go?”

“I don’t see why not? I mean, hell, I only changed gender. What more could happen to me?”

“Famous last words, Sam. Just be careful. I’ve heard there is more than the FBI out looking for aliens.”

“I’ll be fine, Dad. Besides, I still have my training in Jiu Jitsu and Karate. I can defend myself. Now let me go throw these steaks on the grill before the corn over cooks.”

Sam tried to extricate himself from his mother’s grip but it wasn’t working. He wound up having to move around with her still wrapped around him. It was inconvenient, particularly considering his mother was five foot nine and over two hundred pounds. Sam still finished cooking and they enjoyed the meal together, each parent sitting on either side of Sam and close enough to be crowding him. Sam enjoyed it though. He loved his parents. They were his life and kept him going even if they always did give him a hard time about his weight. They didn’t want him getting a heart attack or diabetes. He understood their concern but he just wanted to be happy, even if that meant being fat.

After feeding his parents and talking for a couple hours, setting their nerves at ease, Sam closed up his apartment to go visit the psychic he had heard about. Her little store front was only open during the evenings and never on weekends. It also seemed to be attached to her house which was quite nice. He went up and rang the doorbell.

“Go away!”

Well that wasn’t the greeting he was expecting from a psychic. Maybe he could convince her to see him? “Wait, I just had some questions about my past! I’ll pay for your services!”

The door cracked open a little bit, “your past? That’s all?”

“Yes. Please! I need to make sense of some things. I heard you’re good at that.”

“Well I am a psychic. Come on in. We can get started. I usually charge 40\$ for a session.”

“That’s fine. Here you go.”

“Okay. What is your first question?”

They sat down at a small table. There were no cards or crystal balls anywhere around. There was however a small tea pot steaming away in the center with a few cups on the side, “it’s not so much a question as I just need to understand what happened to me when I was a toddler. My parents did something to save my life when I was two but it has negatively affected my life this past week.”

“Well tell me about what you know so I don’t repeat what you’ve been told. Have some tea while you’re at it. It’ll help keep you relaxed.”

Sam relayed the story as best he could about what his father told him. For her part, the psychic only raised an eyebrow and nodded when she needed to.

“Okay that is definitely different. And you say you just need to know what actually happened?”

“Yeah, pretty much. I basically need to know why I’m no longer considered human and what happened.”

She stood up and stepped behind Sam, “just sip your tea and relax. I’m going to reach into your mind and pull out what happened. It will probably be a little unnerving and may make you queasy. If you need to throw up, there is a bucket to your left. Now, just relax.”

Sam felt her place her fingers on a few places on his head. Extremely nervous now, he closed his eyes and tried to relax into the chair. Suddenly he was spiraling through his past until he reached the day his parents took him to see the mysterious being. The images slowed down the moment they stepped into the room with the rock and went at normal speed. Sam got to watch from a third person view as the blade was rammed through his chest. He felt heat in his chest when the blade went through but no pain. Then everything slowed down as he felt his soul conversing with another soul. It was the essence of the rock which was actually an egg. It was weak, but oh so old. He couldn’t fathom just how old it actually was. How old SHE was. There was an

exchange, the egg asking his soul for help. Instead of his soul going to the egg, he invited the egg into his body. He promised she could strengthen herself until she was ready to start her own life. She knew it would take years, decades even, but agreed, leaving her shell and joining with Sam. The souls cohabited but did not mix.

The vision ended and Sam opened his eyes. Surprisingly he felt fine, “whoa.... That was intense! So I have two souls?”

“Wait, you saw that too? Huh. You have some psychic strengths too then. I guess I don’t need to explain what I saw then.”

“I guess not, but then why did I turn into a girl when I was exposed to that chemical?”

“How long ago was that?”

“About a week? I was unconscious for the majority of it.”

“Alright then. Same deal, relax and let me in.”

Sam relaxed this time and the images didn’t move through so much time. They actually went too far to the week before he was at the bar with his friends but moved back forwards to the night of the accident. Again Sam watched from a third person view as he got into the accident but felt everything all over again. This time it hurt. Those air bags are vicious. Then the explosion hit. Shards flew through the air, slicing and piercing his body as he flew backwards. Then the chemical, burning from the heat, splattered across his body. Everywhere he woke up to cloth on his body was splattered with burning chemical that melted skin off. He felt another exchange between the souls. His body was dying and his soul knew it. It reached out to the resting soul from the egg within his body and woke her. This time he asked for help. There was nothing that soul could do though. She couldn’t heal the body since she wasn’t the main host. He made a compromise though. A joining. He was about to die but if they joined together and she took over the body from here out but maintained his memories then they could survive. She knew that the joining would complete her and allow her to become reality, but the memories would cause issues. She agreed even though it wouldn’t be right. Agreed knowing that if the body died, so would she. They joined, spiraling together and merging to a new soul, a combination of the two. She got to work the moment they joined, changing the DNA to that of what she should have been to what could be.

Starting in the areas where the chemical burned away flesh and started to dissolve the body.

“Whoa. All of that happened in the time span of a minute?”

“It seems so. God this is so nice not having to explain what I saw. That would have been so confusing to anyone else who didn’t see it happen. So that is why you survived the accident and are now a girl. I saw the soul once it was merged though. I do not think you are done changing.”

“What do you mean? I never saw it. Just felt it.”

“She was... interesting. Giant wings, horns spiraling into the sky, tail with a fan of feathers, and eyes of the purest gold. She was fascinating. You’ll have to come visit me once you find her. I’d love to meet her in person!”

“I... guess? I’ll try. The FBI wants to ship me off planet in the next 3 weeks so I don’t know if I’d be able to do that.”

“Ah, bummer. Didn’t know the FBI already got hold of you.”

“Yeah, well... better than the alternative, no?”

“Probably. I’ve heard of some horrible things happening to people. So any other questions?”

“I guess I just have one last question: what now?”

“What now? What am I, a fortune teller? I just deal in people’s pasts. You want advice, go to one of them. I just help figure out what happened in people’s pasts and help them.”

“Sorry sorry. I guess it’s more rhetorical. I just don’t know what to do with what I now know.”

“Yeah well you have plenty of time to figure that out. That soul that is now inhabiting you is around 15000 years old. That egg has been around for a very long time, and you will probably also be around for a very long time.”

“You mean, like, I will probably outlive everyone I know?”

“Like you will probably outlive the entirety of the human species. Assuming no one tries to kill you. Anyways, go. You need to process over all of this and I can’t answer any of the questions you will have.”

Sam just nodded as he was guided back outside. The psychic gave him an apologetic smile before waving him off. He really only had one question now that he was outside and it was eating at him. Why did souls operate on their own? Sam didn’t even pay attention his whole way home. The next thing he knew he was going through the paces and lighting incense in his apartment. He finally snapped out of his thoughts when his phone rang. He picked it up and looked at who was calling: Lacy, his best friend.

“Hello, Lacy.”

“Oh. I didn’t know Sam got a new girlfriend. Can you put him on?”

“Lacy. It’s me, Sam. A lot has happened in the past week.”

“Sam? But you sound like a girl!”

“Yeah. Like I said, a lot has happened.”

“You want to talk about it?”

Sam didn’t even hesitate. He went straight into everything that happened including his recent visit to the psychic that brought the memories to the forefront. Lacy listened patiently through the whole spiel and never questioned him. At the end, she didn’t even have much to say, “Good thing you’re coming up to me tomorrow! I’ll be able to hug you and say everything is going to be alright in person.”

“Thanks. That would make me so happy right now. I’ve just had so much dumped on me lately. I don’t even know how to deal with it! There is so much involved.”

“What are you going to do about them making you leave the planet?”

“I don’t think there is anything I could do. I’ll be an outlaw if I don’t go and I wouldn’t be able to see anyone anymore anyways. So what’s the point? Anyways, I’m just trying to make the most of the time I have left.”

“Totally agree. So I’ll see you tomorrow then?”

“Disaster pending, most definitely!”

“Alright. You take care then! I don’t want to hear you didn’t make it for some reason.”

“Enough has happened already. How bad could my karma be that more disasters would hit me?”

“Famous last words, Sam.” *click*

Sam looked at the phone and mumbled to himself, “huh. Dad said the same exact thing. Maybe my karma is unbalanced. Oh this can’t be good.”

Sam settled in to sleep but knew it wasn't going to come easy tonight. Too much had happened in a short time. He reached for the sleeping pills he kept for emergencies and popped two for good measure. He settled in and set an alarm to make sure he was up early to get ready for his train ride. Quicker than expected his eyes started to close and he was asleep.