CHAPTER 43

I came out of the shower feeling clean and fresh. I put some moisturiser on my face and body before changing. Zeus was no where in sight. I wanted to go find him to see if he was okay, but I don't think he needs me right now.

As much as I want to see him and talk to him, I think he needs to be on his own for a bit, let his mind mull over things.

So for the time being, I put on some leggings and a jumper, leaving my wet hair down to air dry. I went down to the kitchen to find something to eat. Three hours of working out and fighting can make a person pretty hungry.

I opened the door and to my surprised found my cousins sitting at the counter. They all turned their heads and smiled.

"Haven't seen you around a while, little cousin." Xavier said.

"Yeah well kinda busy preparing for a war." I said with a raised brow.

Kieth shakes his head, "What else is new? I feel like we've grown up in it."

I grabbed a bowel of cereal because I can't be bother making anything else and sit with my family at the counter. Family? It's been a while since I've thought of all of them.

"Yeah, I think we're all pretty familiar with the concept of war." I said before taking a bite.

"Do you think it will ever end? Will our family ever find true peace?" Milo said frowning with his jaw tensed.

"Yeah when we're dead." Kieth joked.

Xavier shakes his head, "Shut up, Kieth." Xavier was very sensitive towards Milo. He always was ever since we were kids. We all knew the trauma that Milo went through in his early childhood. And even though he was a really happy child when he came to the pack...he had developed some issues as any normal person would with that background.

Milo was still very strong. But he can still be slightly timid at times and sensitive. He su ers with pretty bad anxiety. Xavier had always been there for him though. He protected Milo a lot. Kieth was a mindless jackass at times, but he still cared. He can be insensitive, but he always had Milo's back in his own way.

"I feel like we always go through challenges our whole Milo," Xavier said, "We will always have something to disrupt our peace. But that is why it is our job to protect it. We fight for our peace and our families. But at the end...we will. I have no doubt so you shouldn't either."

Milo nods his head silently.

We sat at the counter in silence...the silence that comes before a storm. I took a deep breathe, "Things are going to change again." I said.

"I think we should be preparing ourselves emotionally and mentally for this." Kieth said seriously.

I frowned, "What?"

"With war comes death," Kieth.

Milo rolls his head, "Kieth this isn't the best time. Why can't we just not think about it?"

"Because," Kieth said, "It never is the best time. I feel like because we have gone through so many wars in our life and we come out the other end with no loss...we have this mentality that we're almost invincible, that nothing could touch us."

"You're saying we shouldn't think like that." Xavier stated.

"Yeah," Kieth continued, "I'm not saying it's going to happen, but we should prepare for one of us or anybody else we love, to die."

"Kieth!" I exclaimed.

"It's the reality, Lily! There is no war without death! We are no more invincible than the ordinary wolf in our armies. We are just like them! And we might die just like them! I hope to God that it won't happen, but just a precaution we need to prepare for it or else we will feel even more pain."

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

We all feel silent. I guess he was right. We can't treat this war like we will come out of it magically unharmed and everything will be all as well. We could die. Any of us could. I guess it's a little harder to accept because we don't want to even have the thought of losing someone we love.

"I agree," Xavier said, "I think we do need to prepare."

Milo nods his head, "As much as I don't like it and the thought really scares me...it is the reality."

The weight of the realisation that there could be a chance of dying really settled on our shoulders. The atmosphere felt heavy.

I looked at my cousins around the table, Xavier, Kieth and Milo. And I think about my other family back at the Blood Moon Pack. All the memories and all the love that came with it.

I smiled, "Kieth," He turned to me and I asked, "What is one of your favourite memories that you always find yourself thinking about constantly?"

His face scrunched up as he was thinking. His eyes glazed over and they so ened as a small grin formed on his mouth. A loving fondness was on his face, "The day I finally got to have a mother."

Everyone at the counter smiled. We all remember how excited Kieth was.

"I remember," Kieth said, "Wanting a mother so bad. I would see my friends mums come and cuddle them and give them kisses. I remember seeing other kids get hurt and their mothers would come running to comfort them and hold them. So one day I purposely hurt myself, I had jumped o a tree. I had this idea that if I got hurt...maybe my mother would know and she would come running. So I did...but she never came."

I laid my hand on his arm and gave a comforting squeeze.

Kieth smiles and said, "But then...Mia came. As soon as I saw her, she looked like a beautiful angel, but I was still cautious. One night, I had a terrible nightmare, I woke up filled with heart-pounding fear. I felt so alone, knowing my father wasn't the best back then, he wouldn't come. So I accepted the fact that I had to try and be brave. But then Mia came. She wiped my tears away and sang a song. At that point on...she was my whole world, I knew I just had found my mother."

I leaned my head on Kieth's shoulder. He was a jackass at times...but he was a sweet one.

"Because we are doing all this emotional shit, Milo, tell us your favourite memory." Kieth said.

I laughed and sat back up.

Milo tensed up and looked slightly panicked, Xavier leaned forward and said, "You don't have to if you don't want to, Milo, there's no pressure."

Milo took a deep breathe. His eyes were focused as if he was searching through his memories.
"No I want to." He said, "I think my favourite memory is probably not as impacting or significant to you all because it was normal for you guys. My favourite memory-actually two memories and probably one of the scariest ones in my whole life."

"What was it?" Kieth asked as he leaned forward.

I sco ed and smacked Kieth's arm, "Let the guy finish!"

Milo chuckles, "It was when I got to see and feel real grass," Milo's grin broadened into a smile, "I remember it was such a weird sensation to feel something so , green and alive under my feet. It was the best feeling in the world. At that point my mother was still asleep, we had only just got to the pack. And then I look up and I see you guys."

All of us grinned as we glanced at each other.

"I was really scared because the concept of family was so foreign to me. It's only been my mother and I. So the thought of you guys being my family forever...it kinda blew my mind. Then all of my insecurities came flooding in. What if they don't like me? What if I'm too weird? What if I'm not like them, I'm not normal? What will I do if they rejected me? I was shaking like a leaf," Milo said laughing, "But all of those thoughts went away when you guys asked me to play some soccer. You guys introduced yourselves as my cousins, my family. You all didn't look at me weirdly, or with disdain. You accepted me right then and there as if I had always been your family."

"Because you were, Milo. You were just lost. Even when you didn't know it...you always had a family. And to be honest, it always felt like something was missing when you weren't there." Xavier.

Milo's eyes widened, "Really?"

Kieth said, "Yeah as much as I hate this emotional shit, I have to admit Xavier is right. When you came along, it felt like our family was complete."

Milo looked a little surprised that everyone was so loving towards him. It made me happy to see him like this, feel loved and accepted and supported. That's exactly what he needs and what he will always needs.

I turned to Xavier, "What about you big cousin? Any good memories you wanna share?"

Xavier shakes his head, "I think every moment I spent with you guys are the memories I find myself thinking about. Obviously we love our younger siblings, but before they came along...it was just us for a bit. I'll always remember our crazy adventures."

Kieth laughs, "True! Lily do you remember when we lead you to that pile of mud!"

I roll my eyes, "We're talking about good memories Kieth not abusive ones where you used my blindness to your advantage to feed into your obsession with mud!"

Kieth continues to laugh, "But you have to admit it cousin...it's pretty damn funny."

I giggled, "Yeah now it is...not back then."

I look around the table and saw my cousins laughing with each other. I loved them so much, "Do you think this is what it was like for our parents?" I asked.

"What'd you mean, Lil?" Milo said.

I was playing with my cereal as I said, "Like us, the circumstances we're under. I feel like it would have been like this when they were in war."

"I think it was," Xavier, "Before we ever came along, it was just them. It was them and their love for each other."

"And then we came along and ruined everything," I said giggling as well as everybody else.

"Yeah," Xavier said, "Then we came along and they fought a lot harder because they knew that it wasn't just themselves they had to take care of anymore."

"They fought for us." Kieth said.

"Maybe we should be doing the same." Milo said.

"Fighting for not only us and now, but our future, for our children and our children's children. Even though they don't exist right now, they're still worth fighting for. It's still worth fighting for their futures as well as our own." Xavier said. I felt admiration towards Xavier, he's becoming more and more of an alpha everyday.

Everyone sat in agreement.

"Do you remember our big family dinners where everybody would come together at your dad's house, Xavier?"

He smiled and nods his head, "Those were the best times ever."

Milo chuckles, "I always looked forward to our monthly family dinners. The food was to die for!"

"Why did we even start those dinners?" Kieth asked.

"To remind us," I said, "Remind us of what's important."

Sozin, Ozai and Donny came walking into the kitchen. Their faces looking stressed and solemn.

"We have some news." Ozai said.

"I went to the market just before," Donny said, "And I was just in one of the shops getting a co ee when I saw some pretty dodgy lookin guys whispering amongst themselves. I overheard them say the name Zeus. So I decided to try and ease drop on them."

This isn't good news.

"I sat down next to their table and got a magazine I was pretending to read. I heard'em say that by the time Nikolai comes tomorrow, Zeus is done for. They were talking about Nikolai's army...it's like nothing I've ever heard before. I'm not sure if we're gonna make it."

Everyone sat silent as they took in the information. The hopelessness was a common feeling amongst us. What are we going to do?

"I have a plan." We heard a voice say.

Our heads spin around and see Zeus leaning against the sink with his arms crossed over his chest, "I want everyone to gather in the lounge, grab your cups of tea or co ee or whatever and then I'm going to pitch my idea of how to kill this bloody bastard."