Chapter 5

 I ran through the dark forest, searching frantically for something familiar. My purple and white fur was on end, and I shivered. Suddenly, two paths appeared before me. At one end was Griffen, beckoning to me come with him. But at the end of the other was Eya and the pack. They told me to come with them, that I didn't need him. I started down their path, but changed my mind and began running towards Griffen. But it was too late, he was fading. "Griffen!" I shouted, trying to get to him, but he was gone. Giving up, I ran towards my pack, but they didn't want me back. Eya shook her head and turned away, disappearing into the dark woods. I sat there scared and confused. I was alone. "Mayda!" a voice called. I searched for the source, but there was none. "Mayda! Mayda! Stop kicking me!"

 I woke with a start. "Stop kicking me!" Sage complained. I was too scared to reply. I was still shaking. Griffen's voice echoed in my head, "We can't live like this forever." He was right, we couldn't live like this any longer. And I wanted nothing more than to be with him. I stood up and took a look around me. Sage had fallen back asleep. As silent as a mouse, I snuck out of the kennel, taking one last look at Eya and my friends. It might be the last I would ever see them.

 I tracked Griffen to his makeshift den and lay down silently next to him. He awoke and smiled. I smiled back and fell asleep next to my love. We didn't need to rush, we had our whole lives ahead of us. We could leave in the morning.

 I woke up and yawned. I had a long day ahead of me. Griffen was already awake and waiting. "Are you ready?" he asked softly. "Most of the time." I replied, smiling feebly. We set out under the early morning sun. The forest seemed to be welcoming me to my new home. The birds sang and I could smell a variety of scents I had never smelled before. Rays of sunlight shined on the needle covered forest floor. "Are you sure you really want to do this?" He asked sincerely. "I think so." I replied hesitantly. "I just want you to be happy." he said. I contemplated this for a second, "I am."

 We did a great number of things together that morning. We hunted (He said squirrels were impossible to catch....until I caught one), we played, we talked, we did just about everything you could think of doing with just the two of us. "Catch up if you can!" I shouted behind me. "You got a head start!" He protested. I laughed and kept on running through the leafy trees. But something made me stop in my tracks. "Mayda?" Griffen questioned, catching up. The forest seemed to have turned a shade darker and the animals that normally squeaked and chirped were dead silent. An eerie feeling crept through me, sending chills down my spine. Something was not right. "I don't like the feel of this," Griffen said next to me, obviously getting the same ominous vibes, "let's go." I would have turned and left, if I was sensible, but curiosity gripped me and I took a step forward. "Mayda, let's get out of here." Griffen said uneasily. But I didn't listen. Everything in me told me to turn around and run, but something seemed to pull me into it. "Mayda..." Griffen pleaded. His voice seemed to drag me back to earth. I took one tiny step back. SNAP! Suddenly, pain began to climb up my hind leg and I could feel hot blood drip down my paw. I yipped with pain as I twisted around to see what had bitten my leg. A shiny silver contraption that looked similar to a jaw bone had its sharp teeth deep into my ankle. I tugged on it, but it was chained to the ground. I was trapped.

 I whined pitifully as Griffen hurried to my aid, biting and clawing it. It wouldn't budge. My life seemed to flash before my eyes, would I ever see my sister again? Did I make the right choice? I didn't know the answers, but I had did what I thought was right. But what if they were wrong? My heart leapt to my throat as dread slowly began to take me under its spell. "It's no use." Griffen panicked. "It won't let up." This was the end. I laid down, careful not to pull on the trap. "I love you Griffen, and no matter what happens, I'll still think we made the right choice." I said sadly. And the more I thought about it, the more it became true. I couldn't regret the wonderful time we had spent together. He laid down next to me and I closed my eyes, knowing that no matter what happened I'd know that I had Griffen right then, and I wasn't going to let the chance pass unappreciated.

 I awoke to the sound of familiar rumbling. My first thought was that Master Todd had came to rescue me, but that hope was short lived. I looked around for Griffen but he was nowhere to be seen. I began to worry. But before I could call out, a large black dog stepped out of the undergrowth and barked obnoxiously. "Tagg!" I growled, trying to sound fierce. But in actuality, I was totally defenseless. "Fancy seeing you here." Tagg was about to let out a rude remark, but his master appeared out of the darkening forest. "I can sense you fear." Tagg taunted, enjoying the opportunity to make me mad. "I can sense your stupidity." I retorted. He snarled menacingly and I was happy to return the greeting. Tagg's master shouted something to him and Tagg stood clear of me. I had never before felt so scared in my entire life when he pointed his gun at me. I had seen the horrors of that devil's death stick, and I was the next victim. But just as he pulled the trigger, Griffen sprang out of the bushes and knocked the gun out of his hands, the earsplitting shot echoed through the woods, smashing the trap's chain into oblivion.

 Before Griffen could get up, Tagg hurdled into him and bit down hard on his neck. But Griffen wouldn't have it, he kicked Tagg off of him and attacked. And the hunter, seeing that it was too dangerous to retrieve his gun, ran back and seized a cage from the back of the truck. With a stick, he herded me in. "Griffen!" I screamed as he hauled me into the back. The hunter whistled shrilly and jumped into the front seat of the truck, Tagg just behind. Griffen's eyes were wide as the car started off down the road.

 Griffen began to pursue the truck, yelling my name. "Griffen, go get Eya!" I yelled frantically back, "She knows where to go. You can't keep up with this truck forever!" He kept running, but seemed to realize the truth in my words. He nodded and turned back, bolting through the forest as if his tail was on fire. I watched him go, wishing that he would turn around but knowing that he had to go back and beg the one I had deliberately left for help. I feared that I might not see either one of them again.

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 Griffen's heart was racing. He dashed through the forest on his quest to save his love. Nothing was going to stop him, not even if the world crashed down his shoulders. Nevertheless, he was nervous that he wouldn't make it in time. It was only a matter of time before the hunter gets a new gun. His heart was racing against his legs and all his muscles burned from running so long. But he couldn't give up, Mayda needed him and he wasn't about to let her down.

 A sigh of relief escaped him as he broke past the edge of the forest. He could see the cabin in the distance, and picked up some speed. Knowing that Eya probably wouldn't be very happy about this, he recited all of his comebacks just in case. He shuddered, remembering how strong and fierce she was, but he was ready to lay all that aside for Mayda's sake.

 "Eya!" he shouted frantically as he barged into the cage. "Eya!" All the other wolves had seen him several times, but never had he been so hysteric. Griffen had no time to ponder why they were staring at him so strangely. "Where's Eya?" he panted, realizing that she wasn't among the gapers. "She went out to search for Mayda." Savoy answered shuffling nervously, his fluffy blue fur fluffing up even bigger. "I can take you to her." he added. "We must hurry, it's urgent." Griffen barked. Savoy led him into the forest, glancing back every once and a while to make sure Griffen was keeping up, to near the place where Mayda had been trapped. The sky was darkening, casting shadows that reached out to consume all the remaining light. Griffen felt like the shadows. They found Eya sniffing around in the needle patch where Mayda had caught the squirrel. "Eya! Eya!" he chanted, out of breath. "It's Mayda. She's been captured by the hunter! She told me that you would know where to find her. Eya, I'm so sorry." He begged, "I'm sorry." Eya looked astonished. "We need to go find her!" She stated with authority. "Savoy, go back and tell them what has happened." "But I want to help!" he protested, his light blue eyes shining earnestly. "You can help, by relaying the message. Savoy, you're the bravest, most loyal wolf I have ever known, but I need you to do this." Eya persuaded. Griffen was unsure whether she meant it, but the way her eyes shined told him that there was truth in her confession. Savoy was too stunned to speak, so he just nodded and turned around. "Let's go." She breathed.

 Eya ran so fast that Griffen had to double his gate just to keep up. He was built for fighting and strength, but she had long legs that had a knack for speed. And not to mention, she had a mission and she was not going to slacken her pace. "Where are we going?" Griffen shouted to Eya just ahead. "To the town. He has a cabin near the shop where he does all his skinning." She replied loudly. Griffen resisted the urge to stop and howl. His love was about to be skinned and it was all his fault! He had persuaded her into danger, and now he was paying the price. He wanted to tell Eya how sorry he was, he wanted to confess everything that was tearing at his heart. But now was not the time for apologies. He had to keep running, no matter how tired he was or how much his muscles screamed for mercy. He had to go on.

 Griffen had never been so close to the town before, all the strange things that they had made. Smoke drifted up out of their dwellings and tingling at his nose. Strange scents wafted towards him and everywhere he looked was something strange and foreign. Some smaller huskies were scuffling with some human pups. People crowded the streets and cars rumbled through the spaces in between houses. Griffen wished he was back in the cover of the forest.

 Eya weaved in and out of oncoming objects and swerved to the left, Griffen close behind. Finally, we halted at a crooked looking cabin on the outskirts of town. He quivered at the skins racked on sticks in the front yard. Were they too late?