

The sunset was set, the warm light from the yellow jewel sky slowly turned into a colder, lapis lazuli. The cool wind blowing softly like a murmur, enveloping father and son, walking slowly among pavewalk, at least that's what people see but the truth was more complicated than this simple moment of softness between wolf and his cub.

"Uncle....Uncle Vik?" a childish tone, mixed with innocence and worry break the older wolf's gaze upon sunset

"Hmmm....? What up, Slugger?" not authoritative, but a strong, nurturing tone hidden behind that heavy, low voice

"Uncle, do I really need to go back? I wanna stay with you" a childish demand, the cub clutching Viktor's paw, it was clear, he refused to go back to that house, a miniature rose garden ruled by a narcissistic figure.

Beats, Viktor was fall into a silent, deafening even with the sound of wind and bristling leaves on their path,

"You don't like it there?"

"....."

A silent, the child was conflicted

"Liam?"

"I wanna stay with you, but also with mom, i just...."

Viktor then stop, and lift Liam, embrace him and place Liam's head on his board chest, Liam could feel the softness of Viktor's fur, but underneath that was a well toned body trained to perfection with countless battle scars, something inside Liam just feel the sorrow looking at his uncle like this, for eight years old, Liam was far too gifted with emotional maturity, most children won't think much, but Liam knew, there's story behind every scar his uncle bear.

"Do you love your mom?"

A nod, silent affirmation from the cub

"Then you mustn't make her worry and go back ok?"

Another nod, but a pause, sign of the hesitant one,

"Don't worry, I will explain everything to her"

Another nod,

“Good boy”

Viktor then carrying Liam and walking alongside the quiet sidewalk, the warm, soft light illuminating their steps, soft wind still murmuring and he singing some lullaby,

*Sleep, sleep, my little wolf, rest your weary feet.
Sleep, sleep, my dear one, and show me your sleeping face.*

*You ran, ran, ran all day across the prairie,
You leapt, leapt, leapt upon every rock.*

*Now rest, my little one, a precious jewel of my heart.
Close your eyes and drift into slumber.
May your adventures resume in the land of dreams.*

*Sleep, sleep, sleep, my little wolf.
I'll be there when you close your eyes,
And when you open them.*

A low, rough, but comforting melody drift Liam to sleep on Viktor's embrace, Viktor closes his eyes for a moment, slowing more of his walk, he just hope this moment lasts forever, with his son on his embrace, his heart filled with sorrow every time Liam think him as his uncle, every fiber on his body wanna scream out “Im your dad Liam” but it was impossible, at least for now, at least until the chain of restriction was being lifted from him.

What a cruel world, they were so close, yet so far, a son he embraced but cannot keep, the world seems to be enjoying this old, weary wolf suffer, but at this very moment, Liam's was enough. An inoculate he needed from the world that kept poisoning him, a seemingly fragile little boy that kept Viktor from breaking apart.

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That was a long, slow walk, but it feels like a second when Viktor is with his son. He soon arrived at his house, before it was taken away. At the luxurious iron gate, a figure of fair, blonde hair like a golden sunset, and fur white as snow. Waiting for them both, that pretty face filled with worry mixed with anger.

“Take Liam inside, I need a word with him”

A voice soft like a silk, but with authoritative tone, Cynthia commands one of her butlers to bring Liam inside, Viktor clearly hesitant to hand over Liam who is sleeping on his chest to the butler, a big bear, a very intimidated figure.

The bear instantly knows Viktor's concern and he giving a deep bows towards Viktor,

"Sir Viktor, I'm sorry to ask you this, could you let me handle the young master? I'm sure he was more comfortable escorted by you, but as law abiding citizens, you should aware the condition is not available for you to step in any further in the Kessler's residence as court instructed, but don't you worry, i have a wide range of expertise and handling young one is one of them."

A gentle like voice contrast with his appearance, the middle aged bear butler giving a sincere warm smile and gentle tone towards the war veteran, eases his concerns.

"Treat him well" Viktor then handed Liam to the bear's embrace.

"As you wish" The bear gave another low bow and head inside the house.

Viktor could only stare as Liam was taken away, every muscle on his body wanted to take him back, even inside the corner of his mind, he wanted to snatch him and ran away, but he precisely knew that was not an option, that egoistic will will ruin Liam's life. Cynthia just stood there, looking at Viktor, she clearly knows how much Viktor loves his son, yet the rage and emotion takes control of her.

After Liam finally got inside the house, Viktor lowered his head, staring at the floor, before turning his back and walking away, ignoring Cynthia who so eagerly wanted to erupt at any time.

"VIKTOR!" Shout her, demanding his attention, but Viktor just keep walking, giving her a cold shoulder

"Don't you have some explaining to do Viktor?? Just like you ignoring the responsibilities"

Viktor stop on his step, he stares back, with cold eyes toward Cynthia, and scoffs,

"Heh, you're the one who talks about responsibilities, when Liam has enough and runs away, are you that blind to ignore the elephant in the room?" a provoking speech, clearly Viktor wanted to vent his frustration, he was not that kind of man with a speech.

"Did you tell Liam anything?" A clear fear painting Cynthia's face

"I'm his father i free to tell him anything i want"

"SO YOU DID TELL HIM, IGNORING DA AND CPS ORDERS???? HE IS NOT READY TO KNOW YOU'RE HIS FATHER YET!!!!" the fear turns into rage, Viktor smirking with satisfaction looking at Cynthia panicking before he broke the news.

"Relax, i do not tell him anything, unlike your loser of husband, i follow every words on the laws"

Hearing that, Cynthia giving a sigh of relief,

“Why does he come to you? All of the people? You abandon us, yet you’re the one won his heart, it’s unfair”

Viktor’s face reddened. He clutches his fists,

“You really have the nerve to say that” a deep rough voice, no sign of gentleness but pure rage vibrating through Viktor’s voice, before he composed himself and decided to just leave those conversations.

“DON’T EVER COME NEAR HIM AGAIN WITHOUT PERMISSION VIKTOR!! YOU HEARD ME!!!”

Viktor just bites his muzzle full of frustration and walks away from that place, leaving Cynthia full of jealousy, because she was losing to Viktor, as a parent.

Viktor Side Story 2

It was an early morning at construction site, no one seems be around that early, but the sound of hammering could be heard from one of the work bench,

“Hey Rusty, got you some more wood, where should I put this?”

“Just at that table there dud”

“You really are hardworker huh? Started working on side commission even before we clock in”

“Can’t help it, I have a growing boy, he eats a lot these days!”

“Good thing boss let us use leftover wood and tools huh? How old is your son again?”

“Colt 7! Such a bundle of energy even at this age!”

“NO WAY! My son is also 7!”

“Yo, never know you had a son, who is the little guy name?”

“Liam! Oh boy he also a bunch of energy, ran a lot, on soccer team”

“Colt is on the football team! Offensive line!”

“Tough guy huh? Looks like his dad.”

"You yourself have crazy stamina, Liam must have monstrous stamina like you!"

"You given me too much credits, not only have stamina, the kid is smart as hell, im sure given few more years he goin smarter than me"

"What a doting parent you are! Totally changed my views on you!"

"Give me a break, all I did is shaping my son to be great person, unlike his dad"

"You should give yourself more credits, i know you working 2 jobs Vik, you aren't fooling anyone when you say all those money gone for drinks"

"Well, have it your way, just finish this table before the shift starts, we're gonna be busy today!"

"Gotcha, let me treat you to drinks tonight for your help"

"7th avenue black wolf district Sinking Cauldron"

"Oh ho? That Irish bar? I always wanted to give it a try"

Both of those doting parents then continue the side commission while keep boasting about their sons.

It was a pleasant evening, Viktor working at the construction site as usual, his massive frame as usual looks intimidating at site while carrying the inhumane loads of tools on his wide shoulder, his steps are springy, his muzzle humming while smoking his government approved medicinal blunt for his mental state,

“Hey brother! You seem unusually bright for once, something good happened?”

Rusty, a tall and big bull beastman a very good friend of Viktor tapping his shoulder

“Oh it’s you bro! Who is not happy as today is our payday! I also received an extra payout from boss Boris from all those overnight!”

“True true, my son won’t stop pestering me tomorrow for a date”

“HAHA! I hope my Liam is more like that! He never asks for anything considering my condition, you know, but I’m gonna spoil him rotten tomorrow!

“I know I’ve been saying this a lot, but you’re such a doting parent”

“You yourself are the same bro! Well it’s usual really considering how great our sons are!”

Their idle chat about their sons continue lively until one ring from Viktor’s phone cuts their chat, he looking at his screen and notices some unusual person calling him, he instantly know something going on,

“Aunt Angela? What’s wrong?”

“VIKTOR!!!! NIKOLAI!!!! YOUR UNCLE!!!!!! HAVING AN OD!!!!!!”

“WHATTT?????!!!!!!”

“PLEASE COME HERE IMMEDIATELY!!! I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO!!!!”

“OKAY AUNTIE!!! I’LL BE THERE SOON!!!!!!”

Without saying anything Viktor immediately grab his jacket, Rusty hand holding him,

“Hold on V! What’s wrong???”

“MY UNCLE!!! MY UNCLE ARE IN TROUBLE!!!”

“Sir Nikolai??? From another division??”

“YES!! PLEASE TELL BOSS I TAP OUT EARLY!!”

“It’s okay V! I will handle it!! It’s almost time for us to tap out anyway!!”

Viktor nods and slides down from the construction pole to the parking lot, humming his motorcycle to life and storming off.

It usually a 15 minutes ride to his uncle’s place but Viktor arrived in less than 5 minutes with maximum speed he allowed, he parked his rides outside and ran on a bit worn, the run of mill apartment on middle class area, he ran up and up the stairs until he arrived at highest level where his uncle lives.

DOK DOK DOK DOK DOK DOK!!!

“AUNTIE AUNTIE!!!!”

Viktor banging on the door so loud, it start to attract neighbour attention, until his aunt opening the door,

“AUNTIE!! HOW’S UNCLE???”

“OH VIKTOR!!!!!!” Aunty Angela in tears and hug Viktor

“Your uncle!!!! He’s not responding to the first aid I administered!!!”

The commotion attracts the neighbourhood and many of them start to come out from their room, murmuring, Viktor who has experience in the military instantly knows how to handle the situation.

“Dear tenants of the building, I sincerely apologize for the commotion, but we have an emergency situation here, I implore everyone to give some space for a medic that is gonna arrive soon.”

An authoritative, yet non threatening command immediately controls the situations and most of them go back inside, with Viktor also entering the room with his aunt. They go to the room and Viktor find some disturbing situation inside.



Viktor's uncle, Nikolai was laying on the floor twitching, heavily breathing and all sorts of fluids coming out from his body including involuntary urination making the room reeks of ammonia, his eyes are empty, staring without blinking at something they cannot see, on the floors, all sorts of empty drugs bottles scattered around the room, including 2 unidentified bottle written in chinese words directly injected to his veins, the foam starts to come out from his mouth, he is also on the verge of cardiac arrest.

"AUNT!! NARCAN???"

"I TRIED!! BUT THIS THING IS NOT OPIOID!!! IT HAS NO EFFECT!!! I TRIED TO SLOW HIS HEART RATE BY SEDATING HIM BUT ALSO NO LUCK!!"

Viktor staring at the scattered medical tools on the floors, Angela was a nurse, she had some knowledge handling the OD but even her professional expertise and experience cannot remedy the situation. Knowing nothing he can do to help, he immediately calls 911, and Viktor starts to remove everything injected into his uncle's body, and carry him to the living room for easy extractions.

"Aunt!!! How long will this happen?"

"I ... dunno, i just came back home from work and found everything so quiet so i checked the bedroom and already found him like this, my professional guess he's been in this state for 30 to 40 minutes."

"Why didn't you call 911 immediately?"

"I.....can't, we have a bad credit score, we cannot afford the care benefit, no insurance and we also didn't have a health program, your uncle is also on probation, if he found these illegal drugs, he will be....."

Viktor immediately grabs the things injected to his uncle and few bottles scattered around the room, using the translation devices on his phone, he read the chinese words on labels:

"NIRVANA"

His aunt shocked

"You said NIRVANA??? Is that written on the labels???"

"Yes, you know about this aunt Angela?"

"Yes!! I saw few people also OD from same substance at my ER"

"This is bad, have they survived?"

“Many of them are not, only 1 in 10 people survived from the high dose exposure to said drugs”

Viktor became more uneasy, but he didn't have time to idle. He immediately does some quick cleaning around the room, he grabs all illegal drugs and hides them, making the scene much cleaner for the made up story he is thinking right now.

“Aunt, we need to have some story in case authorities get involved, we still must mention the drugs he uses, but we will say he got attacked and forced to take the drugs by some thugs, do you understand?”

Angela nodded, not long after their discussion, the medic came and immediately assess the situations,

“Sir, you have no idea what drug he takes?”

“When I was about to visit my uncle, on my way here I saw some thugs surrounding him, I chased them off but I already found my uncle twitching like this with a few bottles like this on the scene, i tried using translation and the labels said "NIRVANA ".

The medic nodded and brought out something from the bag, injecting Nikolai with it, and Nikolai instantly calmed down, his twitching gone and his racing heartbeat back to normal.

“I think we are lucky, the drug is still not inside his system that far, but we still need to monitor him overnight just in case, these drugs are very strong and he loses a lot of fluids.”

Viktor nodded and they went inside the ambulance together to the hospital. Viktor arranges the rooms and they can finally relax a bit.

Viktor exhales an breaths of relief,

“HAAAAAAHHHHHHHH looks like uncle's condition is better than i thought, i think one or 2 days rest he will be recovered fully, i will ask my boss for permission to watch him these 2 days too including his sick leave.”

“Thank you for everything Viktor....”

“We are family auntie, family help each others”

Angela faces red from embarrassment,

“No Viktor, you always here for us, but we never there for you.....even in your darkest moments, we failed you”

“.....”

Uncomfortable silence, Viktor know when he came back from war and suffered a great deal of PTSD and mental breakdown from the legal divorce with Cynthia, his uncle and aunt never once were there for him, he will not sugarcoat or covering the fact that his own flesh and blood abandon him when he was down.

“Auntie.....be honest with me, did Uncle.....are in trouble?”

“.....”

Another uncomfortable silence,

“When i was cleaning the room, i saw a lot of overdue bills and his phones full of transfer receipt towards gambling websites”

“.....”

“Is this been going on for a while?”

“.....”

Angela still refuses to talk, while she fidgeting, trying to cover his arm on her long sleeve sweaters,

Viktor saw it very well, a bruises,

“Is he.....also being violent with my cousins?”

“.....no, they all went to college, it's been just two of us for a while now”

Viktor exhales a deep breath.

“Aunt.....you two can always come to my ho....”

“DON'T GET COCKY YOU BRAT”

An cold, harsh, heavy words coming from bed, Nikolai is awake

“Uncle....i don't mean to.....”

“ZIP IT KIDDO!!!! YOU THINK I CANNOT AFFORD TO FEED MY FAMILY???? IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?? YOU SONNOV....”

“JAMES!!!!!!!”

Shout Angela,

“You should go Viktor.....”

Viktor saw Angela trembling with her face facing down, he knows, if he stay longer it will become bitter situations,

“ARE YOU DEAF????? SHE SAID GO!!!!!!”

Nikolai in his rage, grab the flower vases and throw it on Viktor,

CRASHHHHHHH!!!!!!

Wounding his head, a fresh blood dripping down from his forehead to his chin down to the floor, Viktor leaving the room with a streak of bloody drip on his way out. His face full of sadness and disappointment, few nurses noticed him wounded, all offering for aid but he just ignored them and went out to finish the hospital administrations before storming off with his bike.