BOAR [610 WORDS]

It had been hours since the boar first found them. A huge beast that dwarfed the young coyotes easily, when they first realised that they were being followed, they *feared*.

Everyone knew that boars were more than capable of killing coyotes. One full grown adult coyote walking away from a confrontation with a boar, even if just one, was tantamount to a miracle. Survival were the stuff of grim stories, made heavier with the evidence of terrible scars. Escape did not always mean staying alive either. Injuries were often crippling if healed; a slow agonising death if not.

Pale Point and Reed Sway were certainly not soft-furred pups anymore, but they weren't adults either. They were laughably easy targets.

The pale coyote found solace in her imagined boar, but there was a difference between bitter daydreams and the tangible threat of reality. She did not want to die, and more than that, she didn't want her only friend in the damned world to die with her. Not when Reed Sway's only crime was daring to run away with her.

However, as the miles passed, and the sun traced through the sky, the boar did not attack them. Sometimes they would grunt a word in that strange herbivore language, seemingly talking to themself, and everytime they did the pair would twitch in alarm.

They were acutely aware of the boar's gaze, always watching them. Assessing, observing.

Yet…

All the boar did was follow. Keeping pace with apparent ease, the boar would run when they ran and rest when they rested.

Pale Point grew tentatively confident that whatever motivated the herbivore, it wasn't to hurt them. After all, it had been *days*. Reed Sway did not share her confidence, and Pale Point worried that he was going to shed half of his already pitiful weight from stress alone.

Soon, the unconventional trio came to a pause once more, and this time Pale Point found herself thinking. A distance away the boar appeared to be relaxing as well, large head tilted back to bask in the sun and seemingly entirely off in their own world if it hadn't been for how one ear was twisted in the coyote's direction.

Whatever strange peace the trio had fallen into, it was clear that none were comfortable letting their guard down.

Pale Point lifted a paw, absently tugging at the threads of her scarlet scarf. Truthfully, she's had the cloth for so long that often she forgets that she's wearing it at all; she can't remember who might've given it to her. Besides Reed Sway, the clothing on her back had been the only thing Pale Point had taken with her from that colony. Nothing else had been of worth or want.

The boar turned their head, meeting Pale Point's blatant stare with level composure. Relaxed, but poised for action… Content to simply wait.

For some reason, it made the coyote think back to the past few days when the boar first found them, reflecting on the days that had passed as the three traveled. It hadn't felt like two paths simply running in parallel by pure luck, but instead sought out with intention. A purpose, and the confidence to pursue it.

The pale coyote felt breathless at the realisation, and for the first time in her life desperately wished that she could speak the language of prey. The implicit bravery, the implied confidence… A feeling of awe settled like a star in the coyote's chest, and for the first time in her life she felt utterly inspired.

Breathing out a stunned breath, the coyote came to a spontaneous decision and began to unravel her scarf.