

The sound of my nails clicking against the concrete was a familiar sound to me, with the sounds of the city getting quieter as the calming sounds of nature took over and reached my ears.

"Excuse me! Coming through, and quick! On your left, no, NO, OTHER LEFT!" Scoop comes barging through, a trail of papers left behind her. As she continues quickly as if she's late, I quickly pick one up, I yell out, to no avail

"HEY! YOU DROPPED Some..."

I read a bit of the paper and my voice trails off.

'Who was there for me in a time of great need?'

I think about this as I set down a blanket in an open area, a small field in the middle of the park. It's a warm day. The air has a familiar scent, and the morning dew on the grass has evaporated, leaving a feeling of mist on his fur and pawpads.

"Who comes to mind when I think of this? No one's ever helped me...I'm SHARK!" I flex the bit of muscle I have. "I don't need help...ever!"

As I start to crumble up the paper, it's as if something came barreling back...a memory that I haven't thought about in a long time.

It's raining. The scent of wet grass and water in the air tickles the back of my throat and I stare out into the lake. There's a light fog on the surface of the water, as if there's a dragon who's slumbering underneath the water and deep below. It's not the first time I've been here. When life gets hard or just unbearable, I find myself coming back to the same spot, this lake. I grab a rock, and as I'm about to try to skip it on the surface of this silent and serene lake, my glowing marks shine back at me and I stare. Instead of tossing the rock softly, I throw it as hard as possible at my reflection. The ripples of the water slowly fade, and there I am...staring at myself again.

I've been late on my payments yet again, my job has been nothing but hard, and I can't get a good sleep. I don't know what's going on, but I feel like something just isn't right. Something out there, someone maybe...doesn't want me to feel as complete as I used to be. Suddenly, a branch snaps and breaks me out of my thoughts. I thought I was alone...but a pair of green eyes pierce through me from across the lake. It's almost as if they're...glowing. The fairly large red wolf stares at me, then lifts its head up a bit more and turns. It back sports these futuristic wings, made of metal and glowing stones...it gives me one last look before running silently into the forest. I feel like, despite that wolf never saying anything, it had beckoned me, asked me to follow it. Despite all the red flags going up in my head, all the rules my mom used to tell me about strangers, and the horror stories I had heard about this forest....I get on all fours and run. I don't know for how long I ran. I ran until I got tired, until I felt as if my arms and legs were about to give out and the sticks and mud caking my fur, without a doubt needing a good shower, until I

finally saw it. That red wolf, standing on its' hind legs, working on...something. I stared at the wolf until I finally stood up and walked towards it.

"So. You come here too?"

The wolf speaks and turns around, his voice soft, yet firm. His coat, caked with oil on his chest, reveals his colors. Red, black, white, orange...and his glowing green eyes. He looks at me, and I quickly clear my throat and regain my composure.

"Sorry! Sorry. Yeah. I've never been..."

I look around the tiny clearing. There's a few piles of metal and mangled parts from machines, and what seems like some type of car and spaceship sits behind the wolf.

"Here. I usually don't come into the forest. I just stay at the lake. I come there a lot to think."

The wolf nods and gets back to working. I stand there, not really knowing what to say, until he points towards a small bag filled with tools.

"Can you hand me the wrench please? I placed that bag too far away and now I can't reach this..."

I nod and hand it to him, he thanks me and gets back to working.

"You seemed lost in thought."

He is still turned towards his invention, focusing on it intensely.

"What has you so frazzled? Or...lost I guess. Whatever it was, you seemed...angry. Or stressed. But what do I know."

I sigh and I wipe off a small barstool looking chair and sit down. His eyes meet mine for a moment.

"I don't know...life has been beating me up and I don't know what to do. I'm gonna lose everything. I'm scared, I'm stressed, I'm nervous...I need..."

He sets down the tools and looks at me.

"Help. You need help."

I look down sheepishly and nod.

"Jizo. You can call me Jizo. Follow me..."

His voice trails off, and I realize he's asking for my name.

"Shark. But how can you help me, Jizo? I need a better job. I need a place to stay. I need so many things."

He nods and I follow him down this trail...it's a natural trail, a small path filled with rocks and wild grass. Small bugs and such run as I follow Jizo, until he stops.

"Here. Come in, wipe your paws before you step inside."

I step out into the clearing and stare. A beautiful small cabin sits there, so immaculately kept that it looks as if I've stepped into a mythical world. I step into the cabin, making sure my feetpaws are clean. It's well kept and he gestures to the couch, where I sit down. I look at the magazines sitting on the coffee table, all relating to robotics or mechanics.

"Tell me more about what you need help with."

I nod and tell him all about what I need. About all the horrible things that have happened, and about the pain I've endured.

He steps out of the kitchen area and hands me a napkin and a cup of cocoa while I continue talking.

"I don't know what to do Jizo. There are times that I wonder if I made someone out there angry and that I'm cursed. I need...something."

Wiping my hands with the napkin, I sip the cocoa. It's rich and sweet, warming my body and hands everytime I drink some. He sits in a reading chair facing me, wiping his hands with a napkin himself and taking a sip of the warm cocoa before sighing in content.

"So. You need help. You need a job. That's the first thing. It's killing you inside. Despite everything, that's the first thing you need."

I nod, and he smiles, as if an idea formed in his head at that exact moment.

"You know what a wrench is. So that's already a plus. You also seem to be strong and able to at least follow and understand what I want, so that's all I need. Work for me. I need help in my shop, and you need a job. You seem like a nice enough guy so I could trust you."

I'm in disbelief. A job...working for Jizo? I've never worked as a helper for a mechanic. But...I'm willing to try anything.

"I'll take it. I'll help in any possible way I can, and I'll be strong and helpful and be able to do anything you need me to do. I can follow rul-"

He laughs and I stop talking.

"I'm sorry, I just..."

His laughing fades and he smiles at me.

"You don't need to worry. You got the job already. You got one thing done. It's not much, and it's a temporary thing, but it can help. A place to stay...I have a small apartment in the city that has two bedrooms. It's nothing special, but I can help by offering you the room for cheaper than I planned on renting it out for."

I feel as if I'm going to cry...everything is working...those emerald eyes held the answer to my future and I can start making plans to help my future. To start with a new outlook on life, on a new leaf...with a friend by my side.

I nod and smile, Jizo smiling back as we sip out cocoa and he shakes my hand. We get to talking more and more and over a few weeks, Jizo helps me move into the apartments other room and helps me learn more and more while working for him. Meanwhile, it seems like I've taught him things. He's less...quiet and talks more to me, and it even seem as if he's smiling more. Despite his cold demeanor when we first met, the way he ran, I've never seen him do that since that moment. I cut my hand while at the shop yesterday, and despite him needing to focus on the wiring on the car he's trying to rebuild, he stopped to help me wrap my hand and despite telling me to sit and relax for an hour, he still paid me for that time. I can't thank him enough. I've been able to do so much, and everything has been getting so much better since meeting him.

It's been almost...phew. Two and a half years? I snap out of my memory, so deep in thought that I finally realize that a few families are sitting on their respective blankets in the field with me, Crooks running around, flying kites, Cccats joining in on the fun and Gravents all over the place, everyone enjoying themselves. But there I am...on my blanket. Alone.

"Shark! Haven't you heard me call your phone? Do you just not answer back anymore?"

I turn towards the familiar voice and he smiles. Jizo walks up, carrying a nice basket full of treats. I laugh and he walks over and sets the basket down, opening it and setting everything up before sighing and sitting.

"So what have you been up to? You had to be busy with something, I called like four times."

I nod and hand him the paper. Reading it carefully, he nods. He rolls it up and looks at me.

"So? Who came to you in a time of great need?"

I look at him and smile a bit.

"You. I don't think I would've been here if it wasn't for you. You've helped me so much since that day, and I really don't know if I'll ever be able to stop thanking you for all you've done to help me."

He nods and smiles, smacking my arm playfully with the rolled up paper.

"I could say the same thing. Just as I helped you, you helped me through things that I didn't even think of as issues. Something clicked and my day...no. My life, would get brighter. Maybe it was fate that we met that day. I used to not believe in stuff like this, but I'd say that luck brought us together. And I'm so lucky to have met you and have you in my life."

I smile at him and he grabs a sandwich, taking a big bite and looking at the sky.

"It's a great day right? I'm glad you asked me to hang out with you. Thank you for inviting me."

His eyes sparkle in the sunlight, the emerald in his eyes shine.

"I'm glad too. Thank you...for everything. For all your help, for all you've said, all you've done. Jizo...thank you."

Jizo smiles and turns to me. "If you really wanna thank me...you can help me with my stuff when we're done with lunch." I laugh and nod.

'Always, i'll always help you.'