

{Atreyu Metzler - 10/28/2020 Project start date}

The Importance of Kindness

{Prologue}

The young furry looked down at the ocean below, enjoying the company of her newfound friends as they watched the sun set under the watery horizon.

"What could have caused Xina to react that way towards you?" The fifteen year-old girl to her left asked.

"I don't know..." The young furry replied, tendering her wounded side. "It kinda changes you, watching someone get dragged away by the police. Especially when you're almost unconscious."

"She deserved it. She shouldn't have attacked you like that for who you are."

"We are seen as a disease to society that needs to be burned out, a plague."

"But we know different, we know that you deserve the same rights as everyone else."

The furry rubbed her side. "Heh. Yeah, I guess."

{Chapter One}

"Welcome to Great Bend High School" the electronic sign read.

"Sigh. Now for another new school where I know absolutely nobody." The young fox said with a tinge of sarcasm in her voice. "Another year of being bullied..."

She was orphaned at the age of four and has had to live on her own since she was ten. She was now fourteen.

"Hi! I'm Kayla! What's your name?" The sudden excited voice scared Neko.

"M-My name is Neko."

"Cool! Need me to show you around?"

"Actually, yeah."

This school was big. Nearly the size of a Wal-Mart supercenter. The fox met Kayla's friends, Jake and Vivian, during lunch and Kayla offered to let Neko live at her house. They traded numbers and the bell rang, symbolising for her to continue looking around. She was honestly surprised by the kindness of her new friends, considering they were humans. Then she was dragged into an empty room and engulfed in a flurry of punches. Within seconds, she was on the ground nearly unconscious.

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It felt like hours before she heard a voice.

"Neko!!!" "Where are you!?"

The voice instantly made her ears perk up, and gave her the vitality to stay awake. The door then opened.

Kayla gasped and then managed to speak. "Get off of her..."

"Why? So this school can have another weirdo walking it's halls? This is an Elite school. We don't need HIS kind walking it's halls." She made sure to put the emphasis on "his".

"I don't care what you think. She is a girl."

"Normal scares me. Uniqueness is what this world needs." Jake finally piped up.

"P-Please g-get o-off o-of m-me..." Neko finally managed to work up the strength to speak.

"Why? You can't do nothing."

"Get off of him, Xina!"

"Make me. But if you do, I can ruin you."

"You can't do anything to us!" Jake yelled as he rammed himself into Xina, knocking her off of Neko, and causing him to fall prone.

She forced herself up and ran through Jake, right to kicking Neko again.

"What is wrong with you, Xina?!" Jake yelled, getting up.

"Not me. What is wrong with HIM?" Again with emphasis.

"Stay ... away ... from ... her..."

"Nope." Xina said, increasing to full strength.

"Get away from him!" Vivian yelled.

"P-Please..." Neko said again, on the brink of losing consciousness.

"No! I told you, you deserve this, you vermin!"

Vivian ran out of the room to get help as both Jake and Kayla struggled to force Xina off of Neko.

Xina put up an extremely tough fight before Neko had been able to speak.

"W-Why a-are you d-doing th-this?"

"To eliminate a plague that has long haunted society." She said with a demented smile.

Three minutes later, Vivian returned with all three of the school's SROs to help Neko.

"Get away from her, Xina." The lieutenant said as he went and pulled Xina off of Neko, and arrested her. Jake quickly ran over to Neko.

"Neko, stay with us. We're going to get you help."

Neko muttered one last thing before losing consciousness. "T-Thank y-you..."

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"Hey... Are you okay?" A sudden voice rang out from Kayla as Neko started to wake up.

"Yeah... I guess..."

"Save your energy. You have three broken ribs, a broken arm, and a collapsed lung that needed emergency surgery." Jake said, extremely worried.

"The doctors said you would be clear to leave in a few hours."

"H-How long was I o-out?"

"Two weeks. But Xina was tried for assault, attempted murder, and hate crimes." "She's being put away for at least five years."

"S-She deserves more....."

"Shh..." Vivian said. "Save your energy."

"She's right..." Jake said.

It was a long three hours and a painful one. But Neko was pleased when she finally got to leave. She didn't really have to pack anything due the fact that she had nothing.

"Ready to go?" Kayla asked

"Yeah."

It was a decent ride from her little alleyway she had turned into a home to her new home. From the alleyway to Kayla's home was at least thirteen miles. Her house reminded Neko of a life she once had. There was an oceanside cliff next to it too. She liked it.

After Neko had got her room set up, Kayla needed to ask her something.

"Hey, Neko?"

"What's up?"

"Y-You're not really a g-girl ... are you?"

Neko was silent for about a minute. Then she responded.

"Not born one, no."

There was an awkward silence that felt like it lasted forever.

"O-Oh... Well, we are very accepting as you will probably find out. But you need to rest to heal your injuries."

"I guess."

Kayla left the room to allow the young fox to rest.

Neko rested for about an hour before becoming restless. She then went to join her friends at the cliff.

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The furry rubbed her side. "Heh. Yeah, I guess."

"Do you think we should tell them about ... **the secret**...?"

"I guess. Can't keep them in the dark forever."

"What secret?" Vivian asked.

"I ... I was not born a ... g-girl..."

"W-Well, what d-do you m-mean?"

Neko was silent the rest of the time until the sun set.

"I'm gonna g-go to b-bed..." Neko finally said.

{Chapter Two}

Neko felt uncomfortable about telling her friends, but she knew it was the right thing to do. She decided to go on a walk. The neighboring area was beautiful and Neko instantly felt a sense of belonging and safeness. It confused her. As if she'd been there before.

It was now the middle of the night. She walked up to the house's huge doors. With a large effort to be quiet about it, she opened the doors, and snuck in. She was then noticed by Jake.

"H-Hey, Neko." "W-Where were you?" A slight blush crept across Jake's face as he spoke.

"Out for a walk. Why?"

"We came in to check on you, worried on how you just walked off, and noticed you weren't here..." "I got w-worried after you didn't come h-home..." The blush became more noticable.

"Are you feeling okay, Jake?" "You look a bit warm..."

The blush instantaneously grew substantially and then disappeared.

"Y-Yeah, u-um f-fine... Like I said, just worried."

Neko wasn't buying it.

"Ookay....."

"I-I'm happy you're safe..." He said.

"I--" Neko couldn't finish that sentence and admit her love to Jake. ***I would ridicule myself...*** She thought. ***I can't tell him yet...***

It was an excruciating night. She couldn't sleep if her life depended on it. She was haunted by her traumatizing experience. She still felt like crying from the pain. It still hurt to breathe.

She couldn't sleep, so she went on another walk. Once she came back, she was ready to go to sleep. Ten minutes in, she was awoken by her alarm for school.

"You have got to be kidding me..." She said with a groan. She got up, got dressed, and met up with Kayla, Vivian, and Jake. Jake still had that bright blush. Neko knew something was up.

"You sure you're feeling okay, Jake?" "You still look warm."

"Jake's just fine." Kayla says. "He just has a major crush on ---
She was stopped by an elbow to the side. "Someone he saw in a dream."
Neko's affectionate feelings were quenched by those words.

"O-Oh..."

She felt the most uncomfortable that morning on the ride to school.

Then she knew she would get attacked again. But she didn't know when or by who.

"Let's see what's going to happen today."

To her surprise, nothing happened. Nonetheless, she was overly cautious.

"So, anything exciting happen today?"

"Other than me nearly
falling down the stairs, no." "To be honest, I thought something was going to happen..."

"Well, let's hope it stays this way... You still haven't healed very well."

"Let's hope..." Jake said. Still blushing unknowingly.

It was a bit awkward waiting until the next day because she knew something was going to happen. And it was going to happen tomorrow.

She woke up late, so she had to walk to school, which made her uneasy. She didn't feel comfortable walking alone -- Because of what happened -- but, she knew it was necessary. That didn't make her feel better though. Even though all of her friends were walking with her.

{Chapter Three}

The area she had previously walked felt so alien and foreboding in the rain from the outskirts of the storm that was supposed to hit them, and she got lost pretty quickly. Separated from her friends, who were then set on edge as they heard Neko get shot.

"Neko!!!!!" Kayla immediately yelled as they began running towards the sound. By the time they got there, Neko was nowhere to be seen.

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"Ugh..." Neko said, wincing in pain from being shot. "W-Where am I...?"

"My vengeance." Xina said, her demented smile showing again. "Vostok!!!" She said, trying to imitate a russian accent.

"I told you, it's Amalia." A silhouette said in the shadows. The silhouette stepped out of the shadows, revealing a Tundra Fox.

"Whatever. Just do your job if you want protection."

"Okay." She said with a sigh. She then looked at Neko and whispered, "Sorry... I really don't want to do this..." She then held a pistol to Neko's head.

"W-W-Why must you d-do this...?" Neko said, trying to speak through sobs.

"You don't deserve to live, let alone come to my school and try to corrupt it."

"Be nicer to her!!" Amalia yelled.

"Just. Do. Your. Job."

"No." Amalia finally said bluntly as she told Neko to run and shot the ropes holding her in place. Neko ran faster than ever. She heard a gunshot and saw Amalia running up to her.

"Sorry about that..." Amalia said to Neko. "She promised protection..."

"You can hang with us." "You won't get hurt when around us." Neko said.



"Really?" She said holding back tears.

"Yep!" Neko said with a huge welcome smile tainted by pain.

It was a painful walk home. Jacob was waiting there for Neko. The others were still looking for her. Neko was welcomed by Jacob running up and kissing her.

It took her by surprise.

*Isn't he in love with someone else?* She thought, *Does he really love me or was that just out of reaction?* She was too deep in thought to enjoy the brief moment while it lasted.

"S-Sorry..." He said, backing away from Neko.

*So it was just a reaction... Reaction... Nothing more...* Neko thought, as she was blushing furiously. *If it was just a reaction, though, why would he be so worried about me being alone? Could it be because of what happened?* She tore herself up trying to figure out what this was all about. ***Could he really love me?***

{Chapter Four}

The thoughts she had ripping through her mind scattered with the sleep she was finally able to receive ... Well, the ten minutes of it...

"Neko!!!" Kayla yelled, running in. "We were so worried!!!"

"You would have had even more reason to worry had Amalia here not helped me out of there." Neko said with a grin, motioning to the Arctic Fox. "Xina had a gun to my head..."

Everyone went silent. After the silence, which felt like years, Vivian ran up to the Arctic Fox, and kissed her, not even noticing what she was doing.

"Yebena mat'..." Amalia said after breaking the moment out of surprise.

"Um.... Jake...?" Neko said, a blush danced across her face, "D-Do you l-like m-me...?"

"U-Um... I-I-I don't... U-Um... L-Like... Y-You....." Jake said.

Unknowing of what Neko's reaction might be...

Neko felt all hope and happiness leave her body.

"Figures..." She said as she walked away.

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"How could I have been so naive...?" She said as she put a couple of clothes in her bag, "How could I think that Jake could POSSIBLY like me..."

She waited until midnight to sneak out. But, as she neared the door,

"Neko? Where are you going?" The Arctic Fox asked groggily, "Do you need a girl-to-girl talk?"

"Y-Yeah..."

After about an hour of talking to Amalia, she promised to talk to Jake about it.

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Later that morning, Jake found her on the couch, crying.

"I-I'm so---

"It's my fault. I know I flustered you a-and..." She said through sobs, "I didn't have the right to fluster you. *I'm* sorry."

