

The Blue Farm House

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NIKI

I woke with a start and swatted at something touching my ear, my hand touched something wet and squishy.

“Zari! You are so gross!” I rolled over in my bed and came nose to nose with my three week old labrador, Zari. “You’re not supposed to be up here,” I told her as she yipped, and wagged her tiny tail. The early morning sunlight was pouring in my window. Blinking hard, I looked out over the farm. The thick green grass was wet with the early morning dew. Some of the fat hens we kept for eggs were pecking around the yard underneath the looming walnut trees. By the barn the horses, cows, and donkeys were already up and grazing. Turning my head to the other side of the room I saw the other bed empty. Nirisa, my older sister, had already gotten up with her deerhound, Potoski. Looking back out the window I saw a flock of turkeys crossing the road. I turned back to Zari. She wagged her tail just because I looked at her.

“Wanna get up?” I asked, putting on my sweatshirt and opening the door. She waddled down the hall without looking back. Music was playing downstairs and the air smelled like cleaning spray. I was surprised, because mom usually wasn’t up this early. Then I remembered why she wanted it so clean. Some new sponsors for the farm were coming. We hadn’t been doing so well lately, That’s why me and Nirisa shared the attic room and that’s why we needed sponsors, to help sell eggs, veggies, and things like

that. I sighed and started walking down stairs when I heard the distinct sound of one certain puppy losing her footing on the wood floor and smashing head first into the wall.

I was outside feeding the chickens when I noticed one turkey was still there. That was strange, the turkeys always got scared when we went out to do chores. But she stuck right with the chickens, and she didn't run off when I spread out bird seed. I heard the screen door open behind me

“Niki! Come inside, we need to get ready!” I forgot! I started running toward the house, scooping up Zari as I went.

“They're here!” Moms shrill worried voice echoed out through the field. Frantically I pulled the last weed from the flower bed. Then I heard the distinct sound of gravel under tires. I put my full weight in on the weed, ignoring the sharp pain in my hands. A car door opened.

“Niki, quick” Nirisa said under her breath, standing in front of me trying to block me from view. One last yank...

“AROOOF!” I looked up just in time to see Potoski bounding towards me. BOOM! As Muddy paws hit me I flew backwards as he hit me. The gravel stung as I tumbled, scraping my arms and legs. I rolled to a stop as a shadow fell across me.

“Are you okay?” Nirisa knelt next to me and helped me up. I stumbled to my feet, my face red with embarrassment and brushing off my clothes.

“Mr. Khan, this is Niki, my daughter.” Mom said timidly.

“Hello” he said with a smile, but his expression said something more like “Ugh, another weed rat.” He was in a black suit, a black tie and polished black shoes. sounds nice right? He was standing in front of a car with the words "Press Time and Landscaping"

plastered on the side. Kind of a weird name. I looked down at Potoski who wagged his tail like “What? You were in my way!” I rolled my eyes. Potoski could win an award for the least socially aware dog ever.

“Um Niki, let's go check on the fish,” Nirisa said pointedly. Fish? We didn't have any fish on the farm. Nirisa had already set off at a brisk walk. I shrugged at mom and jogged after her

“Fish?” I asked as I caught up.

“We just needed an excuse,” she said, steering me toward the creek. We walked for a couple minutes in silence. Then she sighed and turned around to face me.

“Look, Mom and Dad really need this sponsor, and that guy doesn't...” Whatever she was going to say she stopped suddenly, the sound of police sirens rang out through the field.

“Oh no,” Nirisa whispered. I turned around so fast it made me dizzy, and what I saw nearly made me faint.

HEATH

I ruffled my feathers in the early morning cold. It was a quiet, clear morning, only the sound of the occasional car and the songbirds' song pierced the air. My flock was all around me, scraping at the ground, looking for worms or something else to eat. I sighed. My flock was nice and all, but all the turkeys lived the same lives. I didn't want to live the life of every turkey that ever lived in the last century. I turned around intending to get a

drink from the puddle. I looked just in time to see a bobcat lunging at me from the tall grass. I wanted to say that I did something heroic, like fight it and save the flock, but I didn't. I made a sound that was in between a gobble and a scream and jumped straight up in the air. Time seemed to go in slow motion as I watched the bobcat sail harmlessly underneath me and land with a splash in the puddle. Yowling, it ran back into the woods.

“ Whoo!!!!!!!!!! And stay out!” I shouted after it.

“That's what you get for messing with turkeys! Alright!” I turned to the other turkeys and saw they were still looking for worms like nothing moderately exciting had happened in a few years. Seriously. None noticed. Then I saw something across the road, a chicken. I walked over just in time to see a human coming out of a barn with what was unmistakably a bag of bird seed. She sprinkled it over the ground and me and the chickens feasted. After we were done they all spread out to look for more worms, just like my flock. I was watching a particularly fat brown chicken when all of a sudden my vision got sharper, my muscles tensed, and I could smell every scent in the wind. I was like someone just switched me to a predator's point of view. I had no control over myself, all I could think was food. My heart was racing. I sprinted across the yard and pounced right on top of the chicken. I lifted my foot to strike. Anger surged through me, just before my claw hit the squirming, terrified animal I snapped out of it. The chicken ran away clucking angrily. The last thing I remembered was collapsing on the lawn of the blue farm house.

“Ug,” I shook my head and stood up groggily. Something towered above me. It slid in and out of focus, and when my vision finally cleared I saw a blue farm house, with a chicken coop about twenty feet away. What was I doing here? I walked toward the coop, then it hit me.

“Not again!” I said aloud. Look, probably I should have said this earlier, but lately there have been these periods of time when I turned into a turkey murderer. Each time it gets stronger. Not really a problem you want to have when you are in a flock full of prey. I walked over to the coop to say sorry, but when I got there the chickens didn't really seem to mind me. “Ok,” I thought, “ I guess chickens don't hold grudges.” I scratched at the collar on my neck. None of the others. turkeys had them, just me. I didn't know why I had it, it had always been there, and so had the weird symbols on the side that read: SPECIMEN-V6517- TRACKER-PTL. I assumed it was some kind of human language.

NIKI

I started sprinting toward the house, Nirisa right behind me. How did this happen! It took us a full minute to get from the creek in the woods to the yard. “Mom!” I yelled. I ran forward and threw my arms around her.

“What happened!” I asked, not really wanting to know the answer.

“ Mr. Khan, h-he did this. He picked up a turkey and the d-drove off.” Her voice was shaking. I could see the fire light dancing in her eyes. I turned to look at our house, engulfed in flames. Then I remembered.

“Zari!” I screeched. My eyes filled with tears. She was still in there, locked in her kennel. I knew that I should leave it to the firemen, that I was probably running into a death trap. But I didn't care. I wasn't about to let my *dog* become the world's biggest *hotdog*. Crispy fried Zari, not a good thought. Pulling my shirt over my mouth I ran into collapsing the house. Smoke engulfed me as I ran through the door, everything was barely recognizable. Following the sound of her yips I ran past Mom and Dads room. The door was shut, and hopefully it would keep the flames out. I took the stairs three at a time. My door was also shut. I crossed my fingers...and opened the door. There was Zari, locked in her kennel.

I blew out a breath of relief. She looked okay, my room wasn't touched yet. I turned and shut the door behind me, hopefully that would keep out the flames for a little bit. I scooped Zari up in my arms and held her close to me. Now an exit plan. I figured I should probably have thought of that before I ran in here to be the hero. Then a crazy idea came to me. It was probably not a *good* idea, but it was the only one I had. Flames were starting to creep under the door and I didn't want to run back through the burning house with a three week old puppy. My crazy plan wasn't that dangerous. Totally. Now my whole door was burning. It was now or never. I grabbed a pillow and blanket, took Zari, and wrapped the pillow around her tiny body. Then I used the blanket and wrapped it around the pillow and puppy, holding them together. I walked to the window. I couldn't open it because our bedroom was in the attic, so it took a deep breath. Walked to the window, and jumped backwards. The glass made a hollow “thunk” sound as the back of my head hit it. The jump achieved nothing but a little shift in the wood and a headache. Of course I remembered that the window was plastic after I jumped into it head first.

Smoke was filling up the room, I needed to think of something quick. Setting Zari down on my bed I grabbed the chair from my desk, and broke a leg off. Then I ran to my door and set the leg on fire. Once it was hot I ran to the window and started melting the plastic. I stood there melting my window, playing our lives on a wildcard. Smoke was pouring in the room. It had to be good enough. Dropping the stick I grabbed Zari. I squeezed through the small hole I had made. It was hard to push Zari through because of all the pillows she was wearing. I was at my waist when I felt flames lacking my legs. When I finally made it onto the roof I looked down to see my pants smoldering, but there wasn't time to bat them out. Fire was already on the roof. I took one deep breath, ran to the edge, and jumped. "Niki!" someone yelled as I sailed through the air, clutching Zari to my chest.

As I hit the water I raised her above my head, so she wouldn't go completely under for too long. The pool cushioned my fall, but I still hit my foot on the bottom, and I felt my ankle sprain.

I swam to the side of the pool, coughing and spitting out chlorine.

"Niki!" I found myself being pulled out of the pool by several pairs of hands wearing cold white latex gloves. I looked behind me and saw Zari in her pillow boat bobbing away on the ripple I had made when I jumped. Leaning against the pillow, she looked perfectly fine and calm.

"Niki! Why did you run in there!" Mom threw her arms around me.

"I had to save Zari" I said in a horse whisper, still in shock from my jump.

HEATH

I woke up in the trunk of a car. A burlap bag was tied around my head, except I could see through it. The last half hour was a blur, I remembered a nice man picking me up, feeding me something that tasted like seed with rotten, acidic walnuts, and then darkness. In the front a man was on a phone call.

“Yes” he was saying. “I have specimen V6517 in my possession. We caught her just in time, her DNA instincts were starting to take over. Our little experiment went very well, wouldn't you say?” I flapped my wings.

“Let me out!” I called, standing up.

“What the-” the man's startled voice said from the front. The car slammed to a stop so fast I fell into the back seat. BOOM! The trunk crumpled in and my captors car skidded into a ditch. The bag flew off my head on the impact. Lucky for me, in the commotion the trunk flew open and I could fly out the sizable hole. “So Long suckers!” I yelled behind me. My captors car was on the side of the highway, and another car was pulled over next to it. For some reason I could still find my way home. Normally I couldn't fly that long, but my wings felt stronger. When I arrived at the house I thought that I flew the wrong way, because there wasn't a house there at all. There was only ash. I landed in a tree to listen.

“We're very sorry,” a red haired police woman was saying. “Do you have a place to go?”

“Yes,” she answered, “my father is taking us in.” She was wrapped in a blanket, a man standing with his arm around her. I looked to the other side of the ash. Two girls were sitting in an ambulance, with a weird, pig weasel thing on her lap.

“What’s that?” someone pointed at me. I flew down from my branch and landed on the ground.

“It’s rude to point.” all the talking stopped immediately. “What? It’s true!” Everyone gawked.

“Hang on,” the red haired woman said, stepping forward. “What’s that thing on your neck?”

“I don’t know, but it’s always been there”

“Can we look at it?”

“Sure,” I said, “I don’t care.” The women stepped forward and un-clipped the collar. Immediately I collapsed.

When i woke up my first thought was “How many times am I going to pass out today?”

I was laying in an ambulance with my wing out to one side.

“You ok?” a girl said. I tried to talk, but it came out as a gobble.

“Here,” a pair of hands appeared above me, holding a collar. “this might help” she clipped it around my neck.

“That’s better” I answered. “What happened?”

“Do you want the long story?” she asked.

“Um, okay” I said, not really sure what I was agreeing to.

“Well, we should start at the beginning. Turkeys are descended from the king of dinosaurs, the T-rex, And you, didn’t quite have all the dino DNA knocked out of you.

Which is why you were in that testing lab. One day I was playing Walkie-talkies with my niece, and I intercepted a message, that’s how I know this much. I couldn’t file a case

about it, because I didn't have any evidence. But now I do. They had an undercover name "Press Time and Landscaping" which was code for "Prehistoric Testing Labs" which couldn't be their only name, they were part of something bigger. Anyway, they were doing an experiment on you, they wiped your memory and put that collar on you, then they could control when you were in the mind of a T-rex, and when you were in the mind of a turkey. That's why you could fly for so long and find your way home. Now I can prove that they did this."

The nice lady took me to a farm in a small town. It was a nice farm run by a retired lady who was very kind. My collar was destroyed, even though I wouldn't be able to speak, it was too dangerous.

NIKI

After i climbed out of the pool, they bandaged my leg up, me and Nirisa sat in the back of the ambulance in silence. We couldn't think about all we'd lost. It was a miracle none got hurt.

"Now what?" I asked.

"Well, now w-" Nirisa was cut short by a shriek from Mom.

Wee looked up in time to see her throw her arms around the policeman.

"Thank you!" she cried

"What?" I asked Dad turned to us, a broad grin on his face.

"girls," he said, "they're giving us a reward for helping keep the turkey safe!"

"But we didn't keep it safe," said Nirisa, "we didn't even know it existed until today"

“It was found on your property,” the policeman explained, “so you get the reward for keeping it safe. This turkey is very important, thank you.” Then he told us how much we got, and the rest was a blur. Now we had enough to start a line of produce, rebuild the house and if i was lucky, maybe get some more animals for the farm.

THE END