

#3 Fenrir's Pack: Old Nightmares Return

The group separated for bed soon after, finishing the night with the lukewarm hot chocolate. Max took his usual location on the couch, his large Doberman self almost covering it entirely. Meanwhile TenSoon, Puro, and Fenrir went to each of their separate rooms in the large apartment. The house grew quiet as everyone drifted off to sleep. However, a particular wolf couldn't find the peaceful rest that his companions enjoyed.

In the cold blue hued bedroom, Fenrir was wide awake finding himself shivering at his own thoughts more than the winter air intruding through the window. Although the warmth of his lush fur coat usually kept him content in his room's typically chilled space, nothing protected the wolf from the frigidness his memories gave him. Working restlessly at a laboratory didn't help his growing dilemma, they instead catalyzed his festering wounds from those hidden memories.

Laying in his bed Fenrir still didn't know what was wrong with him. From a young age the wolf never understood why he was so different. What about himself drove the people who raised you to hate every part of your existence?

Despite their irrational hatred for him, Fenrir didn't despise his parents. In fact he hardly knew his biological parents which he wished were the same for his adoptive ones. His adoptive family weren't those you would enjoy living with for 18 years. He could never understand where their anger for him came from as a cub, nor understand it as an adult, but shards he tried to understand. He's always tried to understand. They weren't abusive just... different. Another lie.

Nevertheless, Fenrir did love his family even if they would never return the same love. Some of his best memories were when his parents weren't home. Those days were usually quieter. As in it wasn't three people yelling at him. Just one which made it easier for him to pay attention and not get hurt. His brother was typically annoyed with his presence and if he wasn't, he was furious instead. Rusty had his good moments but his older brother was not the "affectionate" type. The years blurred by and his parents overlooked Fenrir's early success academically. Eventually Fenrir stopped bringing up his accomplishments and they never asked to hear them. Why bring unnecessary attention to yourself if your mere presence were enough to be given week long bruises?

The day Fenrir left was an ordinary day. He said his goodbyes while his parents waved him off without a second thought. Fenrir packed his room by himself but when he grabbed the last of his things, his brother Rusty was standing in the doorway. Rusty simply stood there quietly Fenrir felt completely awkward. Rusty walked over to Fenrir and the wolf tensed anticipating a strike. Rusty then surprisingly brought him into a brief hug where tears were shared by both furies. Fenrir was stunned and pierced to the core with the feeling of love returned from his brother. Soon after Fenrir waved goodbye to his old life, determined to be more, with a new job and his whole life ahead of him.

Fenrir smiled, joyful tears falling, as he remembered his brother's love. But that was 5 years ago and now a lot has happened... If any of them knew what happened after that... If they knew what he really was...

Ge immediately started to hyperventilate, shaking from the core. No. No, no, no. He's moved past this. Fenrir shoved those thoughts down deep but the pain from those memories lingered tormenting the wolf. Fenrir whimpered at no one in particular. Why was he whimpering? It was nothing. **He** was nothing. Fenrir curled up tighter in his bed, the spiraling despair sank him further into the mattress.

Then a gentle knock brought Fenrir shooting upright, his ears perked like a meerkat. Puro peeked into the room, his latex wolf ears pulled back concerned for his friend. Fenrir relaxed a bit and he wiped his face quickly to ensure the innocent latex wolf didn't see anything.

"Um Fen are you ok? I heard whimpering?"

Fenrir blushed thoroughly, "Oh I was just having a nightmare... You know... scary nonsense..."

Puro nodded understanding and he moved closer to Fenrir's bed, his posture relaxing.

"Oh... I'm sorry that happened.", Puro climbed onto the edge of Fenrir's bed a bit sheepishly, "I had a nightmare too..."

Fenrir's expression softened and he scooted over on his bed making room for his friend next to him. Instantly Fenrir abandoned his old thoughts, focusing his attention on the innocent wolf next to him, "Buddy... I'm so sorry... You wanna talk about it?"

Scooting next to Fenrir, Puro shook his head and he hugged the anthro wolf tightly.

"No it's silly... And I would rather just have cuddles.."

Fenrir nodded, smiling warmly, "You sure you don't want to cuddle with Max?". Puro huffed in response.

"Oh you know Max... he'll just tease me and Ten is always grumpy when someone wakes him up..."

He paused looking at Fenrir through his wolf mask, his latex tail wagging sheepishly.

"Besides you seemed upset so I thought you could use some cuddles too..."

Fenrir blushed and his tail wagged, the little traitor revealing how much Fenrir really could use some cuddles. He nodded to the latex wolf, smiling and Puro audibly let out a "Yippee!" pouncing onto Fenrir, snuggling close. Fenrir sank into the moment pulling Puro close. Puro didn't know what his friend was going through but he knew cuddles would help.

"Thank you Puro... I really needed this.", Fenrir admitted. It was extremely difficult to not feel admiration for the latex wolf's positivity. Nor was it easy to not feel affectionate to Puro's adorableness.

Puro's tail wagged eagerly in response and his tail accidentally knocked over Fenrir's lamp. Puro blushes in embarrassment.

"Fen! I'm so sorry... lemme get tha-"

"It's fine buddy.", Fenrir chuckled, smiling warmly.

Puro nodded, still having faint blush on his white wolf mask and Fenrir took the opportunity to lighten the mood by tickling the latex wolf. Puro giggled happily and he fought back with a pillow making Fenrir laugh warmly, their tails wagging a storm.

Suddenly the door swings open silencing the pair and an exhausted TenSoon pads in, clearly upset by the uncalled for wake up. His dark fur was disheveled and it seemed he had a rough sleep.

"What in the world is happening in here Fenrir? It sounds like a furry circus trying to cause an earthquake...", TenSoon let out a tired huff of annoyance. "Or were you just trying to make sure I got no sleep?"

Both of the wolves blushed, sitting up in the bed and TenSoon paused seeing the two of them, nodding to Puro.

"Oh you have company. Puro."

"Er... hi TenSoon.", Puro said quietly, trying to act professional despite his blush.

All three felt awkward, Fenrir's blush never fading. Finally TenSoon coughed, needing to know what was really happening in here.

"I am sorry if I interrupted...something between you two but... were you both?.."

Puro tilted his head confused, about to ask TenSoon to clarify when Fenrir interjected, stammering and blushing harder.

"N-no no no! N-Nothing like that TenSoon! We were just cuddling! I-I swear on all of my books.". Fenrir's embarrassment at that moment could have brought a certain Doberman to be on the floor, laughing for weeks.

TenSoon breathed a sigh of relief as he knew already that Fenrir and Puro would never... well he just had to be sure. TenSoon smiled at the two furies and Puro spoke up.

"Sorry for waking you Tenny..."

TenSoon let out a sigh and he slowly shook his furry head.

"It really is fine. I'm not *that* grumpy. Nonetheless... you two should probably decrease your volume."

Puro nodded saying, "We're sorry it's just I had nightmares so I needed someone to cuddle with... And Fen had one too so I thought it would cheer him up."

TenSoon turned to Fenrir quizzically, his expression softened, "Is this true?"

Fenrir nodded sheepishly and TenSoon smiled warmly.

"Well then, I suppose I ought to help our friend out too. With some cuddles of course."

Without a word TenSoon hopped onto the bed and he curled up on Fenrir's side, his large wolf dog form, cozy next to the other wolves. Puro let out a squeak of excitement, and all three of

their tails slowly wagged rhythmically together. Fenrir smiled warmly and the three snuggled together, all their worries put far into the edges of their minds.