**Drop Anchor**

by [Chasyn](http://username)

**Summary**

Owen stays behind to give Ida one last chance. Zach goes back home to attend his final year in high school. They try to make their odd long distance whatever it is relationship work. And it does. Everything’s going great. Until suddenly, it's not. And Zach gets a call from the island that's not Owen.

**Notes**

Sequel, part 2, of my Raptor series. You should read part 1 before reading this. But here's a vague, brief summary: Wu turns Owen into a raptor. Owen now shifts into a raptor. He raises the girls like kids (they even call him dad a couple times). Enter Zach and Gray. Owen tries
to fight it but feels an immediate attraction to Zach. Then Ida (the Indominous Rex) attacks. Charlie gets her tail blown off, but is still alive. All the raptors are still alive. Simon is still alive. Ida's half blind but escapes. Delta kills Dr. Wu. And Hoskins is nowhere to be found. At the end, Owen remains behind with the raptors to save the island. And Lowery stays behind to help Owen.
He took a deep breath and exhaled it slowly. Calm. Calm. Remain the fuck calm. He had one shot at this. Because if he panicked or ran, he could be eaten. Or laughed at. He would certainly be laughed at. He put the radio to his mouth and breathed out. "Open paddock 9."

"Dude." The voice on the radio held excitement. "You are so cool. You wanna come over tonight?"

Owen rolled his eyes and shook his head. He was standing there, risking his sanity and life on an idea, and Lowery was asking him on a play date. "Lowery! Can we talk about it later? Kinda doing something."

"After work, of course." Lowery said quickly. "You can bring the other girls. Charlie would probably like the other company. Right Charlie? She said yes. I mean, I don't really know she said yes. But I'm saying she said yes. You all could spend the night! We could have a sleepover!"

Owen blinked and shook his head. Did the man really just say that? So excitedly? "Lowery!" He snapped.

"Okay, okay." Lowery said. "Opening in 10. You gonna raptor out on her?"

Owen sighed and rubbed at his forehead. "Just open the door. Please." He didn't even try to hide the whine in his voice. The gate started rising slowly. Owen was really starting to regret showing the other man his little secret. But they were the only people left on the island. Owen needed help keeping his other skin off the cameras. And while Owen had his raptors, he knew Lowery was lonely. He and Charlie got on well, Charlie had told Owen she liked him. It wasn't that Owen didn't like Lowery. The man was just a lot to take. All the time. And he liked to talk. And ask questions. And Owen was the only one around that could answer him back. But Owen would be in the dark, quite literally, without someone in the control room all the time. And he really appreciated Lowery taking care of Charlie and keeping her company.

The door was finally opened. And there she was. Towering above him in an all consuming, terrifying way. Her lips were curled and her eyes narrowed and was she always that big? Did she always have that many teeth? Had he ever been this close to her before? Thank god for the electrical field that buzzed between them.

Owen fought the urge to growl at her. "Rexy." He called in a calm, even voice. He held up his hands and took a step back slowly.

Her eyes snapped to him, focusing. Her lips curled back more, exposing more of her long, very large, very sharp teeth.

"Wait, wait, Rexy." He said loudly. "Hold up. I'm not here to tease you. Or fight. Just here to talk." He was starting to doubt Gray's idea.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Earlier that day...

He let out a sigh as he stared at his new phone. It had been a week since they got back home. A
week of their parents and aunt fawning over them. Zach was sick of it. He was so over this pretend, happy family dynamic. His parents weren't fighting. They were hardly talking and when they were in the same room, they were all fake smiles. It was annoying.

And to make everything worse, Zach had texted Owen. A lot. Like so much, he was sure he was annoying the man. But fear kept nagging at him. Now that he wasn't on the island and wasn't near Owen, he was certain the raptor Alpha would forget all about him. Or follow through with his declaration that Zach was too young. Why else would Owen be avoiding texting him back? Zach understood he was busy. But the man couldn't spare a few seconds to text Hi back. Or busy or some other one would answer that would let Zach know he was alive.

And that thought was frightening. Because that would be the other reason Owen wasn't texting him back. Zach forced that thought from his mind and continued to glare at his new phone. Which was pretty much all he'd been doing since he got it.

He was in his bedroom, sitting on his bed. The screen suddenly lit up. *Unknown video call.* Zach frowned down at it. "The hell..." He hit the answer button and it was a couch. That was odd. Then there was a familiar whistle. It sounded like... his eyes widened. "Echo!"

"Is it working?"

Zach felt his throat tighten at the man's voice. "Owen?"

"Zach? Echo! Move!" The raptor moved and Owen appeared. He smiled and waved and sat down on the couch. He looked tired and a bit disheveled. But very much alive and smiley and goofy. Owen glanced off camera. "Hey Blue!" He called loudly. "It still works." He looked back at Zach. "Honestly didn't think it would." He said, still smiling widely. "Haven't used any of it in years. Not since they were little."

Echo pressed to the screen again and squeaked.

Owen leaned forward and pushed her out of the way. "Stop, Echo." He snapped, frowning at her. She turned to squawk loudly at him. Then she turned back to the camera and pressed in again.

"Echo!" Owen snapped louder. "That's it. Get out!"

Echo turned and shook her head.

Owen rolled his eyes. "Get back from the equipment! Right now! You break it and we can't call Trip anymore!"

Echo squeaked and took a step back.

Owen shook his head. "Not far enough. Get behind the couch. And watch your tail!"

Echo disappeared from camera for a moment. And then she was behind Owen, peaking over the couch. She squeaked again.

"Fine!" Owen snapped. He turned back to look at Zach. "She says hi." Owen said with a sigh.

Zach smiled and let out a laugh. He lifted his hand to save at her. "Hi, Echo."
She bobbed her head happily and it almost sounded like she was purring.

"There? You happy?" Owen snapped, turning to look back at her. "You said, he said hi, now get out!"

Echo stuck her tongue out at him and then turned to leave.

"Tell Blue she can..." Owen stopped. He jumped up and dashed off screen. "Delta! Stop it!" Owen's voice carried as he shouted at the raptor. "No, don't lie to me. I can hear you!" There was a pause. "Yes I can!"

Zach laughed and shook his head. He really wished he was there. Looked like Owen could use some help refereeing. And then Blue was suddenly on the screen. She tilted her head and blinked at him. "Uh... hi Blue." Zach said awkwardly. He wasn't exactly sure where he stood with her. He thought she liked him. But it was harder to tell with her. Echo was easier to read. "I wasn't laughing at you." He added quickly.

Owen appeared back on screen and sunk down on the couch. He leaned back and let out a loud, long, sigh. "I told them they have to take turns." He breathed out. "They can't all fit in here at once."

Zach smiled and leaned back against his headboard. "You look tired."

Owen laughed and shook his head. "Understatement of the fucken year."

Blue snorted and shook her head.

Owen glared at her. "It's not funny!" He snapped and then looked back at Zach. "I'd forgotten how much work they were. It's like when they were little. Except they're big. I'm with them now. All the time!" He punctuated the words. "And I mean all the fucking time!"

Blue snorted again and shook her head and Zach got the idea that she was laughing or disagreeing. Or maybe both.

Owen crossed his arms and glared at her again. "I haven't been allowed to sleep in my own bed." He snapped. "Not by myself because they can't fit in there."

Blue shook her head and turned to warble at Owen.

He laughed and shook his head. "No, no, no." Then Owen let out a weird like rumbling sound that sounded close to Blue's own warbling. And she answered. They seemed to be talking or bickering back and forth in their own language.

It was a bit unnerving, how easily and fluidly Owen switched between talking human and raptor. Zach glanced away for a moment. When he looked back, Owen was staring at him. "What?"

"Well?"

"Well... what?"

Owen's mouth fell open. "Zach!" He threw up his arms. "Have you listened to anything I just said?"

Zach blinked at him. "Uh... no."

"No?"

Zach glanced at Blue and then back at Owen. "Owen, I thought you were talking to Blue. You
started like... speaking raptor or something. Didn't understand."

"I did?" Owen asked slowly.

Zach nodded.

Owen smiled and leaned back against the couch again. He glanced at Blue and she tilted her head. "We've been up in the mountains." Owen said, looking back at Zach. "Tracking Ida for three straight days. First time I've been able to wear clothes."

Zach raised his eyebrows and looked away for a moment.

Owen cleared his throat. "So uh..." He trailed off.

"I texted you..." Zach said softly. "Like... a lot."

"Oh?" Owen's smile was back full force. "Echo broke my phone. Like right after you guys left. Like the second the boat pulled away. I mentioned trying to find it and she raced off and she broke it."

Zach breathed out, feeling relieved. He really had thought Owen was ignoring him. Or hurt. Or worse. "I thought... uh... never mind."

Owen laughed softly and glanced at Blue. He nodded towards the door. "Give us a moment."

Blue snorted and shook her head. Then she turned and left.

Owen waited a moment and then looked back at the screen. "You thought... what? I'd ignore you or forget or change my mind so quickly?"

Zach shrugged and didn't answer.

Owen's smile only seemed to widen. "No." He said softly. "I haven't changed my mind. Just..." He sighed. "Wasn't kidding when I said they've been a lot of work. All of them have." Owen rubbed his hand over his face. "Trying to keep Rexy and Moe alive alone is like a full time job. And hunting Ida... she's like... disappeared!" Owen shook his head. "She's covering her tracks. Like completely. We can't find any trace of her."

Now Zach felt bad for doubting him and worrying. Owen had so much to deal with. He didn't need some obsessed flaky teenager bugging him. Owen didn't need Zach adding to it.

"Hey Zach..."

Zach looked away from the phone as Gray peeked in, pushing his bedroom door open.

"Mom said to tell you dinner's done."

Zach blinked at him for a moment. "Uh... okay."

Gray pushed the door opened wider and tilted his head. "What are you doing?"

"Hi Gray!" Owen yelled.

Zach rolled his eyes. "Talking to Owen."

Gray's eyes widened. "Really?"
Zach nodded and waved him over. "Come in and close the door."

Gray closed the door and ran over to him. He jumped up on the bed beside Zach and leaned over. "Hey!"

Owen smiled and waved. "Hey. Echo! Come back in a minute and say hi to Gray."

Gray said hi to Echo. Then Blue and Charlie. Delta was standing guard and refused to come inside. Owen laughed and said she was sulking because he yelled at her. Then Gray started asking a million questions. About the island and Ida and everything he could think of. Owen smiled and laughed and answered easily. He told them about tracking Ida and training a couple of triceratops to help him keep Moe fed. And how Lowery and Charlie were total bros now.

Zach listened to them talk. And he tried really hard not to feel jealous or resentful. He wanted Owen all to himself. He bit his lip and leaned back, letting Gray take over. The kid sounded happy. Real happy. Zach guessed that was a good thing.

"She got a hold of Delta last time we ran into Ida." Owen said, shaking his head. "She's okay, but it almost wasn't. We hardly do any damage to her." He sighed. "She's too big. Her hide's too tough. Too hard to bite. uh... for the girls to bite."

Gray nodded slowly. "You need more teeth."

Owen tilted his head. "More teeth?"

Gray nodded. "Bigger teeth."

Owen's jaw slowly dropped open. "Oh shit..." His eyes widened. "Why didn't I think of that?" He mumbled under his breath.

Zach pressed closer to Gray again to look at the screen. "What?"

"Gotta go." Owen said, jumping up. "Uh... Zach... sorry. I'll try to call again. Soon, okay?" He turned. "Blue!" He hollered. "Gray had an idea. I got a new plan! Line everyone up."

"Owen!" Zach said quickly before he could turn the camera off.

Owen paused and looked back. "Yeah?"

"Good luck."

Owen smiled and waved as he moved closer to the camera. "Later."

The screen went black. Zach smiled and glanced at Gray. "So what was your idea?"

Gray shrugged.

Zach sighed and leaned back against the wall. Of course he would have liked more time to talk to Owen. But just knowing he was okay, that was good enough for now.

Gray turned and looked at him. "I'm sorry." He said softly.

Zach looked over at him. "For what?"

"You were talking to your boyfriend." Gray said. "I shouldn't have interrupted."
"He's not my..." Boyfriend. Zach smiled at the word on the tip of his tongue. "Don't worry about it. It's fine. Sounds like you may have helped.

Gray smiled. "Yeah. I wonder how."

Zach shrugged.

"When he calls back... can you ask?"

Zach nodded. "Yeah, I'll ask."

Gray smiled again.

"Come on. Let's go before mom starts yelling."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

"Oh wait." Lowery said over the radio. "Hold up a minute. The tri-sisters are still with Moe."

Owen frowned and took a step back. He held up his hand. "One moment, please Rexy. Lowery, close the gate."

"But..." Lowery started.

"Now!" Owen snapped. "If I let Rexy out and she decides she doesn't want to listen, I don't want the sisters anywhere near."

"Oh... yeah." Lowery said. "Good call. Hang on." The door shut rather quickly and Rexy let out a loud roar.

Owen turned slightly and lifted the radio to his mouth. "Now... What?"

"Yeah." Lowery said. "They just got there."

Owen shook his head. "They should have already dropped and been far away."

"Yeah. They stopped to fight over who dropped dinner... I think." Lowery answered. "That's what it looked like anyways. Sara... which one has the chipped horn?"

"Trixie."

"Yeah. Trixie. Like I said, Trixie got distracted." Lowery went on. "One of the flying ones flew over head and she tripped over something. Herself, I think. And they dropped it. Then fought. They're on track now."

Owen rolled his eyes. "Patch me through to Moe's speakers."

"Already working on it... and... done."

"Trixie, Sara." He said into the radio. "Stop wasting time! Drop off Moe's dinner and hightail it out of there. Now! Moe if you can hear me, sorry buddy. Okay, Lowery."

"They heard ya." Lowery said with a laugh. "They're retreating."

"Good." Owen breathed out and shook his head.

"Okay." Lowery said after a few minutes. "They're out of range. Man... they can really move fast
when the threat of being eaten by Rexy looms overhead."

"Good," Owen turned back to the door and stepped closer. "Open the door again and cut the electrical field."

"Okay, boss. Doing that now." Lowery said as they door started opening again.

"And go ahead and cut the camera."

"Aw man." Lowery let out a whine. "I wanted to watch."

Owen sighed. Lowery was such a bad idea. "Yeah." He said. "You wanting to watch me strip naked isn't weird at all."

"Just a bit awesome."

"Lowery!" Owen snapped.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah." Lowery said. "I'm keeping the line open."

"Sure. That's probably a good idea." Owen breathed out as he once again was face to face with Rexy.

She tilted her head to the side and blinked at him. She wasn't like the raptors. She hadn't grown up with Owen, talking in his human voice just as much as his raptor voice. He thought maybe something got through to her, since he was still standing there alive. But nothing like his girls.

He unbuttoned his shirt and bent down to drop it and the radio on the ground. Her eyes never left him as he moved. She seemed to be watching him. He shifted quickly and stood before her as a raptor, something he'd never done before. He stood, poised on his claws, ready to run if she decided she didn't want to talk.

Rexy's eyes narrowed as she watched him. She bent down slowly, moving her head closer to the ground. She blinked at him, trying to see him better. Then inhaled and tilted her head.

[Talk.] He said, lifting his nose up in the air. [Just talk.]

[Talk.] Her voice thundered to him.

[Yes.] He said, excitedly.

Chapter End Notes

8D
Awesome Roger

Chapter Summary

Lot's of talking. Just a lot of talking. Like... ugh. Too much talking.

Chapter Notes

Blame Books for the wait. Books told me to get the Lego Jurassic World video game. I did. And played until I beat the whole thing. And then Books told me I should play the phone app game I didn't know existed. I am currently level 23. I have a slightly addicting personality. And am highly suggestible. Also work crap. So I really haven't been writing a lot. I am trying, though. I AM TRYING!

She tilted her massive head to the side. She stared at him as if not hearing him or seeing him. Then she stood up taller and glanced around.

The raptor's eyes widened. [Wait!] He called out. [Rexy!]

She ignored him and took a step forward.

Owen ducked down, moving on instinct as she stepped over him. He let out a snort and turned to watch her. [Damnit!]

The radio clicked. "Owen! Hey Owen!" Lowery's voice came out, slightly panicked. "Dude, Rexy's signal's moving fast. You still there? Is she chasing you? Oh god! Did she eat you? Owen! She did, didn't she! Oh shit, you've been eaten. What am I gonna do? They'll come after me next. All of them. Because I didn't help. Oh god! We'll never get to have a sleep over!"

Owen reached for the radio with his human arm and hit the talk button. "Lowery!" He snapped, pulling the radio closer to his face.

"Oh. Hey Owen. How'd it go?"

Owen rolled his eyes. "She ran off. I'm gonna go get the rest of the girls and go after her."

"So you'll be chasing Rexy."

"I guess."

"Awesome."

Owen shook his head. "Just keep an eye on Rexy's trajectory. Let me know where she's headed."

"Roger."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-
The girls, minus Charlie, were back at the Bungalow. Blue was keeping watch out front, Delta was sleeping near the trailer, and Echo was inside watching Finding Nemo for the second time that day. Blue heard the jeep approaching and turned towards the trailer. [Echo! Delta!]

Echo's head popped out of the open door. [Nemo!]

Blue snapped her jaws. [Alpha!]

Echo nodded her head. She ducked back inside for a moment. Then she came running out and jumped right on Delta. [Up, up! Alpha, alpha!]

Delta snapped at her and pushed her away. For a moment, the sisters wrestled a bit. Then they scrambled up and all three were waiting as Owen pulled up in the jeep. He turned it off and climbed out. "Rexy ran off." He said with a sigh. "Before I even got to explain what's going on or ask for her help." He started unbuttoning his shirt. He pulled it off and tossed it in the front seat of the jeep. He leaned over and grabbed the radio. "Lowery."

"Yeah?"

"Where's Rexy?"

"Gyro field." The man answered. "She was headed north through it for a bit and then stopped."

"Thanks."

"You're welcome. Hey, are you..."

Owen turned the radio off. "I'm going after her on foot. You guys wanna come?"

Blue and Delta nodded their heads right away. Echo glanced back at the trailer and let out a whine. But she nodded her head.

They tracked Rexy into the gyro field, just like Lowery had said. She was standing out in the open, hunched over. An empty gyrosphere was on the ground in front of her. She touched her nose to it and watched as it rolled a few feet away. She snorted and tilted her head, like she was trying to figure it out. She seemed almost sad.

Owen pressed himself to the ground and the raptors behind him followed. Slowly, they slunk closer to the enormous carnivore.

Rexy lifted her head and turned. The raptors stopped. Rexy snorted and shook her head.

Owen popped his head up. [Rexy!]

She turned towards them again and blinked. Her eyes narrowed and she focused on them.

[Wait!] Owen called out. [Help! We need your help fighting Ida!]

Rexy stopped. She tilted her head. [Ida?] She repeated the name.

Owen nodded his head. [A young dinosaur. Part raptor like us and part T-Rex like you.] Rexy tilted her head to the side, looking confused.

Owen sighed and kept talking. He really wasn't sure how much the large extinct reptile really understood. But he was determined to keep trying. He tried to briefly explain Ida and how she'd
taken over the island. How all the people were gone and he was trying to get it back under control.

But really, Rexy seemed to be staring at him in total confusion. She looked away, her eyes trying to focus on the empty gyropshere behind her. She swept her straining eyes over the field. She breathed in deeply and exhaled it loudly. [People.] She said. [Gone?]

[Yes.] Owen answered. [All gone. But me.]

She turned her gaze back on him and shook her head. [Not people.]

Owen snorted and shook his head. [Part people and part raptor.]

Rexy nodded her head. It was comforting to see how she'd adopted some of the same mannerisms the raptors had picked up from people over the years. [Ida's fault?]

Owen nodded his head. [All people left. We want you to help us stop her. We want to work together.]

Rexy tilted her head again.

[Uh... team? Us? Rexy and raptors?] He sighed. [Do you understand? At all?]

Rexy nodded her head.

[You do?]

She turned slowly.

[Wait! Not now!] He glanced at the sky. It was going to be getting dark really soon. [We need to talk more.]

[Go now.]

[Not now! Night time! We can go tomorrow!]

[Me go now.]

Owen let out a growl. [No! Not alone!]

But Rexy was stubborn and her mind was set. She nudged the gyrosphere out of her way gently and set off up the field.

Owen snorted loudly and shook his head.

[Go?] Blue asked.

Owen shook his head. [No. No knowing where Ida is. Wandering around in dark is bad. We'll go tomorrow. Back to the Bungalow.]

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

"She's nosing around the aviary... I think."

"The aviary?"

"Maybe." Lowery said slowly. "Let me pull up the camera... just a sec. Moving slow... and yeah. She's poking her head inside of Ida's door. Kinda funny looking.
Owen sighed heavily as he pulled his clothes back on. He was suddenly tired. Really tired. The extra shifting and the exhaustion of talking with the stubborn monster lizard really wiped him out. He wavered a bit on his feet and rubbed at his forehead. "Hey uh... you mind if I leave Charlie with you?"

"All night?" Lowery's voice squeaked a bit. "Uh... yeah... that's fine..."

"I'm too tired to drive, I think."

"Ooooh... so... no uh... yeah, okay."

Owen let out a sigh. "Ask her for me?"

"Yeah." There was static for a moment and then Lowery's voice was slightly muffled. "Charlie, you mind staying with me all night?" The radio shifted again and Lowery's voice came back. "She shook her head... so that's a yes... she'll stay... yes. Okay, yeah. She nodded her head at that so... she's fine."

Owen nodded. "Tell her we'll be by early."

"Alright. Sounds great. We'll do breakfast."

Owen rolled his eyes. "Yeah, sure."

"Awesome."

Owen turned the radio off. He ran a hand through his hair and breathed out. "I'm going to bed."

Echo started wiggling and Owen shook his head quickly. "No. I'm going inside alone, okay? Just one night. I don't care what you do. Just... don't get in trouble, don't go too far, and just let me sleep."

Blue nodded her head and turned. Delta let out a bored snort and moved to follow. Echo whined as she looked over at the trailer.

"Tomorrow." Owen promised her.

Echo nodded and turned to catch up with her sisters.

Owen let out a sigh again as he headed inside. He shut the door and leaned against it for a moment. Then he pushed off and headed to his bedroom.

He was up early the next morning. He hadn't really slept well. He'd tossed and turned the whole night. And finally gave up. Maybe he'd sleep when all this was over. He rolled out of bed, pulled on some decently clean clothes, and headed out into the living room. He sat down on his couch and sighed deeply.

His eyes settled on the computer and camera equipment. He let out a sigh and leaned forward. He touched the screen and waited. It took forever before the screen changed.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

There was an annoying buzz in his ear. He let out a groan and flopped over on his stomach. He pulled his pillow over his head and effectively buried himself deeper into his bed. But the incessant buzzing kept plaguing his ears. And way too slowly, he realized that wasn't a buzzing. It was a ringing. His hand snaked out of his cocoon and grabbed at the phone on his nightstand.

Heavy blackout curtains were drawn shut. They blocked all trace of light and were well named. His room was completely black and his eyes strained to focus on the seemingly bright light emitted from
the annoying phone display. His brain was refusing to function. And then it finally did and Owen's name penetrated the fog.

"Zach?"

"Owen?" He blinked and rubbed at his eyes. "Do you know what time it is?"

"Umm... like... a quarter after 6?"

Zach stared at him. "7 for me."

"I uh... wanted to hear your voice." Owen said softly.

Zach let out a sigh and reached over to set his phone down on his night stand. "Hang on a sec."

"I'm sorry."

"No, no." Zach mumbled as he attempted to untangle himself from his cocoon. "It's fine."

"Go back to sleep. I'll call later."

"No! Don't hang up!" Zach scrambled to grab the phone and knocked it on the floor. "Damnit!" He bent over to get it and ended up tumbling off the bed, pulling with him all his blankets and pillows.

"Zach?" Owen's worried voice came from under the blankets. "Are you okay? Zach!"

Zach let out a pained groan as he peeled himself off the ground. "Yeah, yeah."

"You should be. It's like... late."

Zach snorted. "For weirdoes who are up at the ass crack of dawn."

"Well... sorry I can't sleep until noon like you, princess."

Zach rolled his eyes. "Not until noon." He mumbled. "But 11 sounds nice."

"Oh. That's much better."

Zach smiled as he finally untangled himself and managed to pull his phone out. He pulled the phone towards him and squinted at the dim light as he sat back on his bed.

Owen smiled. "You're not wearing a shirt."

Zach blinked and reached over to set the phone down again. "No, I'm not. I was sleeping." He bent over and hauled his blankets and pillowed back on his bed.

"What else are you not wearing?"

Zach rolled his eyes as he settled back down on his bed. He pulled his blanket back on and reached over for the phone again. He was careful this time not to drop it. He yawned widely. "If I were more awake, this might be more fun. Or at least I'd give you a bigger reaction." He yawned again.
Owen laughed loudly and leaned back. "Right. Okay, can't tease you this early in the morning."

"Bingo." Zach said. Owen laughed again and shook his head. Zach propped his phone up and angled it so he could see it and he curled up under his blanket.

Owen smiled at him again. "You sure I shouldn't just call you later?"

"Yeah." Zach breathed out, sleepily. "You should definitely call me later."

"Okay."

"But right now, talk to me. Tell me why you call so early."

"It's not that early!"

Zach smiled lazily. "Yeah it is."

"Well I already told you." Owen said with a shrug. "Wanted to hear your voice. I felt bad that I forgot to call you back last night."

"I didn't know you were supposed to."

"I said I'd call you back later."

Zach yawned again and shook his head. "Later isn't really a time. It's barely a time frame. Could mean an hour or a week. Or a month. Your concept of later could greatly differ from my concept..."

"Okay, okay, okay. I get it." Owen cut in with a smile. "Fine. I just... I really wanted to hear your voice then. Like the moment I woke up."

"Okay. Good. Can do that any time you need. And you did. So... now what?"

Owen shook his head. "You really aren't a morning person, are you?"

"When it's still summer break for a couple more weeks, no, I'm not."

Owen laughed. "Fine. That's fair. There was something I wanted to ask you yesterday."

"What?"

"How are you doing with my conditions?"

Zach stared at him for a moment. "School hasn't started yet."

Owen shook his head. "Not that one."

Zach shrugged. Of course he knew what Owen was talking about. But he shrugged like he didn't. "I already told you I wanted to come back. Just waiting for you to do that whole heroic thing and get rid of the evil dinosaur."

Owen rolled his eyes. "Not that one, either."

Zach let out a sigh and looked away.

"Zach!" Owen snapped.

"You said I had to be nice!" Zach said softly. "She's visiting her grandparents! Her parents said she's
supposed to get back tomorrow. I asked them to have her call me when so... I'll tell her as soon as I can. Nicely. I promise," Zach said. Owen was quiet for a moment. And Zach didn't like that. "What happened yesterday?" He blurted out, trying not to give Owen time to think.

And it clearly worked. Owen tilted his head a bit, looking confused. "Yesterday?"

"With Gray's idea." Zach said. "What was Gray's idea?"

"Oh!" Owen nodded his head. "Yeah. That. Rexy."

"The T-Rex?"

Owen nodded. "I let her out and..."

Zach's eyes widened quickly. "Wait!" He sat up and pulled his phone closer. "You let the T-Rex out? Like... out, out?"

Owen nodded. "Yeah."

"Please tell me you put her back!"

Owen laughed. "Without a team of handlers and several heavy doses of tranquilizers, she's not going anywhere she doesn't want to. Believe me. She's like super stubborn."

"What was the end game of letting her out?"

Owen shrugged. "I thought I could convince her to help me and the girls fight Ida. You know... bigger teeth... more teeth. Gray's idea."

Zach sighed and shook his head. It sort of made sense. In a crazy idea way. Which he had to admit, sounded just like Owen. "So how did that go?"

"She's super stubborn." Owen said, straight faced.

Zach smiled. "That well, huh?"

Owen sighed and shook his head. "I don't know. Honestly, I'm not really sure she understood me. She ran off last night saying she wanted to take on Ida herself."

"Maybe that's good. She's bigger than you guys. Bigger than Ida, too, right?"

Owen nodded. "Yeah, a bit. But... she's old. And half blind. I don't know if she can handle Ida."

"What's the plan now?"

"Find Rexy and ask her again."

Zach smiled. "And when you snubs you again?"

"Then..." Owen shook his head and sighed. "Just try to fight Ida again, I guess."

"Good plan."

Owen snorted and shrugged. "Honestly, at this point... it's the only option. Ida won't listen to me. She won't even let me try." He blinked and shook his head. "Okay. I'm gonna go now. For real. Promised Charlie I'd be over to see her early. She's with Lowery."
"How's she doing?"

"Okay." Owen said, a touch sadly. "It took me a while to get used to my tail. It'll just take her a while to get used to not having hers anymore."

"Sucks."

"Yeah. It does. but it could be worse."

Zach nodded.

"Okay. Alright... uh... I'll uh... talk to you later, I guess."

Zach smiled and nodded. "Later."

Owen rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Tonight." He added. "Better?"
Zach blinked and stared at her. There she was, standing in his doorway. No phone call, no warning she was back in town. No nothing. Just home alone with Gray while their parents were at work and the doorbell rang. They'd been playing video games and then the doorbell went off and he got up to open it. And there she was. He opened his mouth and shut it quickly.

She smiled brightly at him. "Well... are you going to invite me in or stare at me all day?"

Zach glanced over his shoulder quickly. Gray was still sitting on the couch, his eyes on the TV screen. Zach squeezed outside and closed the door behind him.

"Okay... I guess not." She said slowly, her tone changing.

Zach looked at the ground. "Gray's uh... inside. We were hanging out."

"Oh." She breathed out and then smiled again.

Zach cleared his throat and stepped back, bumping against the door lightly. "Sorry, Carly. I just... uh... I thought you were out of town."

"I was, silly." She stepped closer to him. She pressed a quick kiss to his cheek and reached down to grab his hand.

"I was, silly." She stepped closer to him. She pressed a quick kiss to his cheek and reached down to grab his hand.

Zach took a deep breath and glanced around. "Carly..." He started.

She dropped his hand and pivoted. She stepped away. "I just got back an hour ago." She turned back towards him. "Oh my god... my grandparents' cabin is like... in the middle of nowhere!" She threw up her arms. "They like... totally live in the stone age! No internet or cell reception or anything! And their TV only gets local channels! I rushed right over when I heard about what happened!" She stepped closer to him again and reached for him. "Are you okay? Well I mean... I know you're okay... but are you like... okay, okay?"

Zach swallowed and reached for the door knob. He touched his finger to his lips. "Shhh." He eased the door open slowly and grabbed her hand. He pulled her inside and she shut the door softly. Then Zach pulled her back down the hall towards his room. He pulled her inside and shut the door behind
"Zach..." She smiled coyly and tilted her head. "You missed me that much?"

Zach's eyes widened and he shook his head quickly. "I uh... need to tell you... something..."

Her smile fell. "That doesn't sound good."

He took a step away from her and shook his head again. "It's uh... not..."

"Zach, what's wrong?" She pressed.

He looked away.

"Zach!" She snapped.

He let out a sigh. "I have to tell you... I have to... I uh..."

She frowned. "Did you cheat on me?"

He flinched a bit at her tone. "Accidently..." He answered softly.

"Accidently?" She snapped. "How do you accidentally cheat on someone?"

Zach shrugged, his eyes dropping to the floor.

She crossed her arms and narrowed her eyes at him. "Who is it? Some little tramp from school? Do I know her?"

Zach shook his head quickly. "Not from school. Someone I met... on the island." He said slowly, being careful not to use names or pronouns.

She blinked at him. "A stranger you met on the island?" She repeated incredulously.

Zach nodded quickly.

"How far did you go?"

"Just... kissing..." He said awkwardly.

"Just kissing!" She snapped, shaking her head. She turned around and shook her head. "So what does this mean?" She turned to look at him. And suddenly, there were tears in her eyes. "Are you breaking up with me?"

Zach blinked at her. "Carly, I..." He stammered.

"Yes or no, Zach!" She snapped, tears flowing down her cheeks. "Are you breaking up with me for your new little whore?"

Zach sighed and scratched at the back of his neck. What a mess. He should have said no, there was no one else... he just changed or something. Reevaluated his life and decided she didn't fit into it anymore. Or something about going off to college soon and not wanting to prolong the inevitable. Anything would have been better than this!

"Zach!" She pleaded when he was silent too long.

Zach closed his eyes for a moment. He let out another sigh and shook his head. "I don't know how it
happened!" He said softly. "I can't explain it. I just met him and I knew, okay? I can't help it. I just want to be with him all the time!"

She stopped. "Him?" She asked softly, her voice barely a whisper.

Zach's eyes widened. "Uh... yeah... him..." He dropped his gaze to the floor and kicked at it. He let out a sigh. He hadn't meant to say it out loud. Not like that and certainly not to her. "I didn't know." He lied softly. I'm sorry."

"Oh..." She nodded slowly. "So... you're sure then? That you're... that way?"

Zach glanced at her and nodded. "Yeah, I'm sure."

She nodded again. "This makes total sense."

Zach frowned. "It does?"

"Yeah." She said softly. "I always thought you were different from other boys I'd dated."

"Different?" He asked.

She nodded again. "You never tried anything... I thought you were a gentleman. I... really liked that." She said a tad sadly.

Zach sighed loudly and stepped closer to her. "I'm so sorry, Carly. For all of this. I shouldn't have ever lied to you. I never meant to hurt you. I was just... I didn't know."

She shook her head. "It's not your fault. This is... different..." She sounded almost relieved at the accidental revelation. "You uh... you have to... be yourself." She said softly, wiping at her eyes. "Be who you are... not what people want you to be..."

Zach stared at her for a moment longer. Then he slowly smiled and nodded. "Yeah, I guess... maybe... eventually." His smile fell and his eyes widened. "But please! Don't tell anyone!" He added quickly. He didn't need everyone talking about him. He didn't want it to get back to his parents. He wasn't ready for that conversation yet. He wasn't sure he'd ever be ready. He just wanted to graduate high school and maybe go to a crappy college if Owen made him and then move in with Owen and live happily ever after and never tell his parents.

Carly smiled weakly and shook her head. "I promise. I won't."

Zach breathed out and smiled at her.

She bit her lip and looked at the floor. "Do you... think we can still... be friends?" She asked timidly.

Zach tilted his head. "Friends?" He repeated.

She nodded. "Hang out sometimes?"

Zach smiled slowly. "Yeah. I think so." She really was a good person. He'd miss her. They had spent a lot of time together in their more real than he thought fake relationship.

"Thank you." She said softly. "For telling me. For trusting me." She stepped towards him and before he could even react, she wrapped her arms around him and hugged him tightly. But it was brief and she quickly stepped away from him. Then she turned towards his mirror, quickly checked her face and ran her hands through her hair, and then offered him a smile. "I'm... gonna go."
Zach nodded, too stunned to really say anything.

"I'll talk to you later."

Zach watched her leave. She opened his door and slipped out and then closed it. And he was left alone. He let out a sigh and sat down on his bed. That went over a lot better than he thought it would. Although if he was being honest with himself, he hadn't really thought about it at all. Ever since Owen told him to, he'd been avoiding thinking about it.

There was a knock on his door and he looked up. "Yeah?" He called out. The door opened and Gray poked his head in. "Hey." Zach breathed out.

"Hey..." Gray said, opening the door wider and stepping in. "Was that... Carly?"

Zach sighed and nodded. "Yeah. She was visiting her grandparents in some weird, remote place most of the summer. She just got home and heard about what happened on the island... she didn't know..."

"Oh." Gray stepped farther in and closed the door behind him. And then he crossed the room towards Zach and dropped his voice. "Was it weird?"

Zach breathed out. "Yeah. I uh... had to break up with her."

Gray nodded. "Did you tell her about Owen?"

Zach shook his head quickly. "No! Of course not!"

Gray tilted his head. "What did you tell her?"

Zach shrugged. "I just told her I met a guy and that... I'm into that now..."

Gray smiled. "Were you ever not into guys?"

Zach rolled his eyes. "Shut up!"

Gray smiled again. "So you didn't tell her all about your boyfriend?"

"No!" He snapped.

"His dreamy eyes and big arms and hairy chest." Gray wrinkled his nose a bit as he said it. Zach's eyes widened.

"And you like when he growls."

Zach's mouth dropped open. "How..."

Gray smiled again. "You talk in your sleep. A lot."

Zach's face reddened a bit. "Oh shit..."

Gray laughed. "I won't tell anyone, I promise."

Zach stood up and grabbed him. He pulled Gray against him and hugged the younger kid against his will. Gray flailed a bit and they were both laughing when Zach tugged him towards his door. "Come on. Let's finish playing."
The brothers were still playing video games when Owen called. Zach glanced at his phone and jumped up. He dropped the controller on the couch beside Gray.

Gray hit the pause button and looked up at Zach. "Owen?"

Zach nodded, smiling down at his phone.

"Ask him if he found Rexy yet."

Zach nodded again. "Give me a minute and you can ask him yourself." He held the phone up to answer and hurried through the room. "Hey." He said with a smile, moving down the hall towards his room.

"Man." Owen sighed. "I wish I had my phone. Then I could like... call you anytime I want!"

Zach pulled his door shut and walked across his room towards his bed.

Owen paused and looked away for a moment. "Wait... does that sound clingy?"

Zach laughed and shook his head as he sat down. "No it doesn't. But I'd like that. Then I could call you and text and leave messages... does that sound suffocating?"

Owen smiled and shook his head. "We are so good at this."

Zach nodded. "We totally are. You should ask Simon. He can like... drop one down to you."

Owen shook his head. "We haven't heard from him in over a week. He's been busy doing damage control."

"That sucks."

Owen laughed. "Maybe a bit. But it's probably better. We can reopen sooner if he gets everything smoothed out."

Zach nodded. "Yeah, I guess that makes sense. So I guess no phone then."

Owen shook his head. "Nope. No phone."

"Doesn't seem to stop you from calling me whenever you want. You do it like all the time."

Owen shrugged. "Not as much as I want."

Zach paused for a moment. "Really?" Owen wanted to call him more?

"Yeah." Owen said. He crossed his arms and leaned back on his couch, like he was pouting. "Have to be home. Can't be out trying to save the island if I'm always having to come here to call you."

Zach laughed and shook his head. "Yeah, you're clingy."

Owen narrowed his eyes and was clearly trying not to smile. "Well... you're suffocating!"

Zach smiled. And then sighed and looked away.

"What?" Owen said quickly, scooting forward on his couch. "I was kidding! We were joking!"
Zach shook his head quickly. "Not that. I uh... talked to Carly today."

Owen stared at him blankly and blinked. "I don't know who that is."

"My girlfriend."

"Oh." Owen said awkwardly. "How uh... did that... go?"

Zach shrugged. "Good, I guess. Accidentally outted myself when she started crying. Then I sorta lied and told her I met some random guy and wanted to be with him."

"Oh. So you didn't meet a random guy you want to be with?"

Zach rolled his eyes. "I said I sorta lied."

"That is exactly what happened." Owen stated. "It's not a lie."

"Well insinuated then." Zach argued. "She thought it was someone from school."

"I could totally fit in at your school."

Zach smiled. "You know the sad thing... is that you are completely right." And Owen was smiling so big that Zach was certain the man's face had to hurt.

Chapter End Notes

Ya'll know I have no self control. And over half this chapter was done when I finished last chapter. Annnnd next chapter is like... 98% done. SO GUESS WHAT? 8D (I should really learn how to hold chapters.)
They got into a happy rhythm. Owen would call him every day. Sometimes in the mornings, sometimes in the evenings, a few times in the middle of the night when he couldn't sleep. Sometimes more than once a day. Sometimes several times a day. Sometimes he was at home and could easily run to his room. Sometimes he was out doing something and had to find someplace to duck into. Sometimes they talked about the girls or what he'd done or they'd done or were planning to do. They'd talk about Zach's sleeping schedule or how he wasn't looking forward to school. And how bored the teen was. Sometimes Gray would pop in and say hi. Sometimes they talked for a few minutes. Sometimes Owen would just call to hear Zach's voice. Zach really liked those calls. Zach liked all the calls.

"You uh... you look... nice today." Owen said rather awkwardly.

Zach smiled sheepishly and dropped his phone on his bed. There was a slight sheen of sweat on his skin and he'd glimpsed a smudge of dirt on his neck when he walked by his mirror. He'd been outside when Owen called, mowing the lawn without being asked. He'd been trying to suck up to both parents, hoping they would ignore him and not notice how much time he spent alone in his room on his phone. He wouldn't have heard the phone ring if the music hadn't cut out in his headphones. "That mean I looked bad yesterday?" He called loudly as he walked over to his closet.

"No. That is not what I meant."

Zach smiled as he pulled off his shirt. He rubbed a dry spot over his face and neck quickly and then dropped it on the floor. "Well... you looked hot yesterday." He grabbed a clean shirt and pulled it on quickly. "And today."

"You're not even looking at me."

Zach rolled his eyes. "You look hot every day I see you." He returned to his bed and laid down on his stomach. He pulled the phone to him and smiled down at Owen's own smiling face.

They stared at each other for a moment. And then the smile slowly fell from Owen's lips. He let out a loud sigh and sat back. He leaned his head back and set his eyes on the ceiling.
Zach frowned and leaned closer to the screen in concern. Did he say something wrong? Had something happened? Was something wrong? He bit his bottom lip and held his breath for something, anything from the raptor Alpha.

"I just..." Owen breathed out after a few minutes. "I... I miss you... I mean... shit." He sighed again and leaned forward again. "I reeeeeeally miss you." He said, stringing out the word. "When I'm not talking to you, I miss you. Like all the time."

Zach smiled. "I miss you, too." He said softly, his cheeks red. "A lot."

"You do?" Owen asked, tiling his head a bit. "It's weird, right? Is it weird? I feel like it's weird."

Zach rolled his eyes. "I just said I miss you, too. It's not weird."

"Are you sure?" Owen sounded doubtful. "It feels weird to miss you this much."

Zach shrugged. "I don't know. I'm new to all this star-crossed, fate, destiny, soul mates, intertwined whatever shit."

Owen's mouth twisted into a wide smile and he let out a laugh. "Yeah, me too, I guess."

Zach's mouth dropped open. "You guess?"

Owen stuck his tongue out at him.

Zach breathed out loudly and shook his head. After a moment, he bit his lip. "How did you..." Zach paused.

"What?" Owen asked.

"Know... uh... like..." Zach sighed and rolled over on his bed, holding the phone in the air above him. "I mean... what changed your mind?"

Owen frowned. "Zach. I haven't changed my mind. I told you that. Just been a bit... preoccupied..."

"No, no." Zach said quickly, shaking his head. "I mean... before... when I was on the island. You kissed me... and then said nothing could happen. And when you said that... I felt it... like I really felt it." He said softly. "That was it. And then the next day... and after you saved me from Blue... it was like... your mind had been changed... and you were so... certain again." Zach sighed and pulled himself up into a sitting position. "That was a fast change... and you keep telling me you won't change your mind again... but... I just keep feeling those words you said that night in your jeep..."

Owen sighed deeply and ran a hand through his hair. "Okay, yeah." He breathed out. "That was a bit contradictory. And when I said that, I meant it... I thought I meant it. And when I was standing in that control room... after watching Ida rip through the ACU soldiers... suddenly... you were all I could think about. And I turned to Claire and she didn't know where you were." He shifted his gaze and seemed to be staring off camera at seemingly nothing. "I just had this sense of dread. Then Simon said he had been with you and left you at the gyros. But I couldn't get you on the phone and Lowery was tracking your ball and you weren't coming back..."

Zach looked away for a moment. "Voice didn't say a giant dinosaur got loose." He mumbled. "Just said the ride was closed. They really should say why when something closes."

Owen looked back at the screen and smiled for a moment. "I just... the whole time..." He finally continued. "I kept thinking... it could have been you. It was this mess of a rollercoaster. Seriously!
And you called and your voice was like honey."

Zach smiled at the comment.

"And then I heard Ida and I sunk again." Owen shook his head. "Then we found the smashed ball and there was no sign of you but there was no blood. And you're aunt was driving me crazy!" He let out a sigh again. "And there we were, wandering around in the jungle and suddenly I could feel you... but I wasn't fast enough and you were gone... and I had to literally force myself not to chase after you. Because I really wanted to chase after you. And then I found you again and it was like... it was right. It felt right." He sighed and shook his head. "Then all that shit with Ida and the raptors... and I heard that fear in your honey voice and that's when I snapped, I think. I nearly killed Blue when she attached you. I couldn't stop myself. I couldn't control myself. I acted on pure impulse and I would have killed her for you."

Zach smiled slightly. "I uh... I'm glad you didn't."

Owen laughed weakly. "Well yeah. Me, too. She's my girl... my Blue."

Zach took a deep breath and nodded, more to himself than Owen.

"So..." Owen spoke after a few silent moments. "That answer your question?"

Zach nodded.

"It alleviate some of your fears?"

Zach nodded again.

"Good." Owen said with a nod. He leaned back and crossed his arms. "We can stop all this stupid talk about changing minds and shit. At least not until we're in the same hemisphere and can annoy each other to death."

Zach smiled at that. "So... it uh... all did happen so fast."

Owen nodded this time. "Yeah."

"So..." Zach tilted his head. "What's your favorite color?"

"Blue." Owen said with a smile. "You?"

"Green. Book?"

Owen laughed. "I really dug the Harry Potter books."

"I've read those. Gray made me. They were okay."

Owen rolled his eyes. "Oh come on." He threw up his hands. "Dumbledore was kickass. And Hagrid? Come on!"

Zach smiled and laughed. "You are totally Hagrid. Just a lot hotter." He added quickly.

Owen laughed and nodded. "I'll totally take that."

"Movie?"

"Any of the Star Treks."

"New ones, old ones, the shows. Though Kirk kicks
Picard's ass." He said with a certainty.

Zach nodded. "Chris Pine is kinda hot in the new ones."

Owen's smile spread. "Maybe he is..."

"Not as hot as you, of course." Zach added quickly.

Owen nodded. "Of course." He said humbly, still smiling. "Who's your favorite Avenger?"

"Iron Man." Zach answered with a nod.

"Iron Man is awesome." Owen said. "He and Captain America should totally be hooking up."

Zach smiled and let out a laugh. "That would be hot."

"I like Hawkeye, too."

Zach blinked and shook his head. "No one likes Hawkeye. Even Hawkeye doesn't like Hawkeye."

Owen's mouth dropped open. "That's cold, Zach." He said, shaking his head. "Cold."

Zach shrugged. "Favorite food?"

"Food."

Zach tilted his head. "What's that mean? Like all food?"

Owen shrugged. "Yeah. Food is good. You?"

"Food is good." Zach agreed. "Not picky."

"Good to know."

Zach smiled. "So Hey... interruption. But I was wondering something. When you said you ran into your jeep..."

Owen sighed and shook his head. "Yeah. Was trying to get the hang of running with a tail. And forgot about stopping. Ran head first into it."

Zach laughed. "I wondered about that. Kept picturing you drunk and trying to play football with your jeep or something."

Owen shook his head. "I've never been that drunk."

Zach shrugged. "You were drunk enough that you tried to start a fight with Blue. Seems pretty drunk to me."

Owen snorted and shook his head. "I coulda totally taken her."

Zach rolled his eyes. "So what type of music do you like?"

Owen's face lit up. "A bit of everything. But my mom..." He smiled. "When I was younger, my mother, she would make these mix tapes for us, all her favorite songs she liked from when she was younger. Those tapes are my favorites."

"That's really cool." Zach said with a smile. And then he tilted his head. "Wait... us?"
Owen's smile quickly fell and he looked away. "Me." He correctly softly. "Just me."

Zach frowned. It occurred to him that he'd never asked Owen anything about his family or his childhood. And the man had never offered up any information himself. Zach wanted to ask more about the man's past, but he got the sudden feeling that Owen wouldn't answer. "So..." He asked softly. "Really, really old music then?"

Owen turned to look at him and frowned. "It's not that old!" He snapped.

"You said music your mom listened to." Zach said bluntly. "That's old. Like... really old."

Owen stood up and walked off screen without a word. For a moment, Zach again thought he said something wrong. But Owen returned a moment later, carrying something big. One of those comically large boom boxes people would carry around on their shoulders before Zach's time. He set it down on the couch and sat beside it. He popped the cassette out and checked it before putting it back in.

"Wow!" Zach exclaimed dramatically, his eyes wide. "Is that a real tape player?"

Owen stopped and looked at the screen.

"Never seen one before."

Owen rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Ha, ha. You're soooo funny." He said, his voice heavy with sarcasm.

Zach smiled and let out a laugh.

Owen closed the tape deck and hit play. The melody started slowly. Owen closed his eyes and let out a sigh.

"Hell..." The voice rang out over the music. "Hell, what's the matter with your head? Head."

Owen stood up. He hooked his thumb in the hem of his jeans and rocked his hips forward slowly to the music. He stepped back and spun around. Then turned to the camera, smiling broadly. He sang along to the lyrics. "Cuz you're fun and you're mind and you... look so divine."

Zach blushed slightly, watching Owen move.

"Come and get your love." He sang with the chorus as he swayed his hips. "Dance with me."

Zach's mouth dropped open for a moment. He shook his head repeatedly. "No."

Owen stuck out his bottom lip. "Why not?"

Zach glanced across the room at his bedroom door. He knew his parents weren't home. But Gray was. And the little brat would no doubt tease him if he caught him. "I'm not dancing alone in my bedroom."

"Not alone." Owen said, spinning around again. "Dance with me."

Zach shook his head again.

Owen shrugged and swayed again. "It's your business, if you want some, take some... get it together baby."
"You are such a dork." Zach said, smiling.

Owen just shrugged and kept singing. "I will get you to dance with me."

"When we're on the same continent... sure." Zach said with a nod. "Maybe I'll dance with you."

Owen smiled and then stopped. He straightened up and turned to the side.

Zach frowned. "What?"

"You hear that?" Owen whispered.

Zach blinked at him. "No."

"Shhhh..." Owen bent down slowly to turn the tape off. His eyes widened.

"What?!" Zach snapped.

"Rexy." He whispered.

"Rexy?" Zach gasped. "The T-Rex?"

Owen nodded. "I'll call you back."

Zach's eyes widened. "Wait! Owen! Don't..." The screen went black. "Damnit!" Zach dropped his phone on his bed and collapsed back against it.

-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-

Owen leapt out the door. Rexy was standing just in front of the line of trees surrounding his little paradise. Blue and Delta were just in front of Rexy, hissing and spitting at her. Echo was standing near the front of the trailer, growling as well. Owen rushed past her and Echo followed. He darted out in front of the raptors, between them and Rexy, and he let out a growl.

Rexy snorted and took a step back. She shook her head and lowered herself a bit and then turned to the side.

Owen could see the long gash along her spine. "Back." He hissed to his girls. They stopped immediately and stepped back. Owen took a step closer to Rexy, his arms up. "You okay?"

Rexy nodded her head.

He stepped closer. "Run in with Ida?"

Rexy growled lowly and nodded her head again.

Owen stopped a foot from her. He could reach out and touch her. It was the closest he'd ever been to her. He swallowed but held himself still and he stared up at her injury. It didn't look too bad. He sighed and glanced at Blue. "Well... we know for sure she's still on the island."

Blue nodded her head. Then Rexy breathed out loudly and said something. Owen turned back to look up at her, confusion on his face. "Say that again?" Owen shook his head and glanced at Blue again. "What'd she say?" But Blue just confirmed what Owen had heard. Nest. Ida had a nest. "Well fuck everything."
Chapter End Notes

*dances happily* DID YOU SEE WHAT I DID THERE? Ugh! XD Chapter 5 is only 25% done. 6 and 7 are like 95% done. 8D So it might be a while before an update. But it'll probably end up being double or triple updates again.
Rexy let out a whine and swiveled her head back. She snapped at Owen and growled loudly. Owen danced away along her back, out of range of her jaws, and held his hands up. "All the doctors are gone. You're just gonna have to deal with me. You need to hold still. Or it'll hurt worse. I'm almost done."

She let out another growl and shook herself and Owen waved a bit but kept his balance. When she stilled, he pulled himself forward and leaned back over her long cut. It wasn't too deep, but Rexy was pretty old. And he certainly wasn't a doctor of any sorts, like he told her. But he knew basic first aid training from his years in the navy. Applying that training to a stubborn monster lizard was proving a lot more difficult. He quickly finished stitching her up without losing any valuable body parts. He patted her on the neck and slipped down her side. He landed on the ground and straightened up. "Better?"

Rexy shook herself and turned around. She craned her neck back to look at the stitches.

"Wait, wait!" Owen held up his hands. "Don't rip out the stitches! Don't make me find a way to get a dog cone on you. A giant dog cone." He paused for a moment and smiled. "That would be kinda cool."

Rexy shifted her weight and tilted her head, looking confused at him.

Owen shook his head. "Never mind. Just don't pull at them." He mimed biting at his arm. "It'll hurt."

Rexy let out a snort and nodded her head.

Owen smiled and patted her on the leg a few times. Then he laughed and walked over to his jeep. He pulled out the radio. "Lowery."

"Hey." Came a quick answer.

"Hey." Owen smiled and looked back at Rexy. "You coming down to greet our new team member?"

There was a pause. "Uh... yeah... see... I totally would... but Charlie and I just started watching a movie and... I don't want to miss the beginning..."
"Oh come on, Lows." Owen said into the radio. "Charlie wants to meet her, doncha?"

"Uh... she said no."

Owen could hear Charlie's protests over the line, disagreeing with him. "She can't get in the elevator and ride it down by herself." Owen said. "Come on. She needs you. The team needs you." He paused dramatically. "I need you."

There was another long pause. "Really, man?"

"You wanna hang with me... you gotta hang like me."

Lowery let out an overly dramatic sigh. "Fine, fine. We're coming down. But you like... owe me..."

Owen shook his head and let out a laugh. He was so going to regret this. Lowery was going to hold it against him. And probably plan some man date. He turned to look up at Rexy. "Be... less intimidating, okay?"

Rexy tilted her head and blinked at him.

"Yes. Just like that." Owen picked up the first aid supplies and packed them back into their case. Then he ran them back inside to the science lab. As he walked through the lobby, the elevator opened. Lowery and Charlie were inside. They stepped out slowly, Lowery's arm draped across Charlie's back. Owen smiled. Charlie let out a happy rumble as Owen walked over. He smiled again and reached out to stroke her neck and she leaned into the touch. "I miss having you out there with me."

She snorted and nodded her head.

"Good." Lowery said. "You take her and I'll go back up and keep watch over the cameras."

"Oh no." He shook his head. "Hey Charlie, Lows needs to come meet Rexy, doesn't he?"

Charlie nodded her head and Owen smiled.

Lowery threw up his arms. "Oh come on!"

Owen shrugged. "She's on Team Raptor. I think..."

Lowery's eyes widened. "You think?"

"She is... I'm sure... well I'm pretty sure. Like 92% sure."

Lowery narrowed his eyes. "That's a weird number."

Owen shrugged. "I'm just giving you the odds."

"The odds of what?"

Owen turned slightly, his eyes flitting around the lobby. It really did look odd being this empty. "The odds of stuff." He mumbled.

"Stuff?"

"Lots of stuff."
Lowery stared at him. "What are you talking about?"

Owen tilted his head. "I don't know. I stopped listening like five minutes ago."

"You stopped..." Lowery frowned. "But we've been talking..."

Owen shrugged again.

"How can you talk... and not listen... to what you're saying?"

Owen blinked at him.

"You're not listening now, are you?"

He wasn't really listening. He heard Lowery's words, he processed them. But mostly, he was humming the tune to *Hooked on a Feeling* in his head. He shoved his hands in his pockets and spun around. "I can't stop this feeeeling." He sang out. "Deep inside of meeeee."

Lowery glanced at Charlie. "He's insane."

She snorted and nodded her head.

Lowery let out a sigh. "As long as you agree with me."

Owen smiled as he walked outside. Okay, yeah. He was ignoring Lowery on purpose. Trying to goad the man into following him. And it was working. Charlie and Lowery came out a few moments later and Owen held the door open. Echo ran over and bumped her head against Charlie gently. Owen pushed her away. "Alright, Rexy." Owen turned towards her and waved her forward.

Rexy took a step and bent her neck down closer to them.

"Rexy, this is my girl, Charlie. She's still recuperating from a run in with Ida herself. And this..." He glanced back at Lowery and the man was frozen in terror. He looked about 15 seconds from passing out. Owen reached over and grabbed a handful of Lowery's shirt. He hauled the man forward. "Rexy. This is Lowery. He's the only... real person... human, people thing left. He works upstairs in this building and controls everything. Like the gates and fences and speakers. So... he's part of the team. No eating him."

Lowery gasped and stumbled back.

Owen moved with him and helped keep the man on his feet. "I'm kidding, Lows. I'm kidding!"

Lowery swallowed. "Yeah... real funny. Can I go back upstairs now?"

Owen laughed. "Yeah. Go ahead. We're just gonna discuss this nest thing. Rexy's not exactly sure where it was. She's gonna try to explain best she can. Then Charlie and I will be up and the three of us can try to pinpoint it better on the map."

Lowery nodded. "I'll go.. bring up her movements over the last 12 hours."

"That'll help."

Lowery hurried inside.

Owen turned to Rexy. "Okay. Go."
A half hour later, Owen and Charlie were leaving over Lower, pointing at the screen. "Yeah..." Owen said with a nod. "Right there..."

[Water.]

Owen glanced at Charlie and nodded. "Yeah, Rexy said she was standing on the shore when Ida ran at her."

Lowery lit up the spot and the path Rexy took next. "They fought a little, looks like. And then Rexy hightailed it down to your trailer. Like practically a straight shot. Like she knew exactly where you lived."

Owen nodded. "Yeah... she's been exploring the island for a couple days. She's been to my neck of the jungle."

Lowery glanced at Owen. "It's that like creepy? She's like... watching you?"

Charlie snorted and shook her head. [Nest!] She snapped impatiently.

Lowery glanced at Charlie and then turned to Owen. "She sounds mad. What'd she say?"

Owen smiled. "The nest. You're getting us off track."

"Oh. Right." Lowery said, looking back at the screen. "Sorry, Charlie."

Owen let out a laugh. "Rexy said they were fighting and then there was a nest and Ida freaked out. So she ran."

"Okay. Got it." Lowery lit up the area.

"You got a tracker on my jeep and in Rexy. Keep an eye out, let us know how close we are."

Lowery nodded. "I can do that."

Owen clapped Lowery on the shoulders. "Yes you can. Team Raptor. Let's do this!"

Lowery cleared his throat. "Uh... what exactly are we doing?"

"Just scouting for now." Owen said with a nod. "Intel. Get the nest and her hiding spot pinpointed. See how many eggs there are and see how close Ida's sticking. Then we'll come back and plan our next move."

"Next move should be to destroy it." Lowery mumbled.

Charlie nodded her head in agreement.

Owen glanced at Charlie, a little surprised by her quick agreement with Lowery. She'd always been the more... loving and nurturing of the sisters. "So quick to condemn the unborn?" He said a tad sadly.

Lowery snorted. "Their mother has literally destroyed all our lives. So yeah, they need to be Rexy food."

Owen turned to Charlie again. "You agree with him?"
She nodded her head.

Owen frowned. "You're spending way too much time together."

Lowery and Charlie looked at each other. Lowery shrugged and Charlie dipped her head.

Owen stood up and stepped away. "Ida turned all murderous rampage because of what they did to her. Her upbringing caused this. Not... not her. Same thing coulda happened with you, Charlie." He looked over at her. "If you didn't have me and your sisters and were trapped in a tiny pen and left alone. With nothing!"

"She had a sister."

Owen turned to glare at Lowery.

Lowery shrugged. "Just saying... if we're comparing... Charlie didn't try to eat her sisters."

"Charlie didn't." Owen said, crossing his arms. "But Blue tried to kill them all."

Lowery's mouth dropped open.

"She wanted to play with them." Owen explained. "Got impatient. She would have killed them without knowing."

"So..." Lowery said after a moment. "What you're saying is... you wanna keep them and raise them."

"What I want... is to check it out. That's all. Then..." Owen shrugged and shook his head. "I don't know." He let out a sigh. "I just don't know." He repeated softly.

Lowery rolled his eyes and turned back to the screen. "Yeah, ya do. You wanna add Ida's offspring to Team Raptor."

Owen smiled at the thought. It would be a new challenge. He couldn't get through to Ida. But her kids... maybe that would make it better. "Okay." He clapped his hands together. "I'm gonna get going. Team Raptor!" He gave them two thumbs up. And then turned and ran to the elevator.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

"You're closing in."

Owen slowed the jeep to a stop and grabbed the radio. "Thanks. Going on foot now."

"Roger."

Owen set the radio down and hopped out of the jeep. Rexy and the girls were just behind him. He waved Rexy down and she crouched down, getting closer. "Okay. Rexy, I want you and Echo to wait here with me. Blue and Delta, you two scout for the nest and Ida. You find either, come straight back. Don't try to fight her on your own. Use your speed and get back here. Rexy, if they do bring her back here, you get her attention and the three of you can like... chase her away or something while Echo and I get a look at the nest."

Blue blinked and snorted. Then shook her head and snapped at Delta. The two sprinted off. Owen got the idea she wanted to comment. And honestly Owen knew his plan sucked. But he really wanted a look at the nest. He wanted to see it for himself, to make sure Rexy was correct. And to do that, there needed to be space between Ida and her nest.
He leaned back against the jeep. Echo stepped closer to him and rubbed against his side. Owen threw an arm around her neck and pulled her closer. Rexy tilted her head, watching them. And Owen smiled up at her. He held out his hand and Rexy bent down closer and touched her nose against him. He could tell she'd been lonely. He felt bad for not thinking about letting her out sooner.

They were interrupted rather suddenly by a loud roar. Delta and Blue burst from trees, Ida right behind them. The large albino predator slid to a stop, seeing the other three. She let out a loud roar and turned and dashed back into the trees. Blue let out a shriek and she and Delta charged back after her.

"Wait a minute!" Owen shouted. "That's not the plan!"

Rexy stepped forward. She let out a loud roar, shaking the trees around them. Owen and Echo both flinched away. And then before Owen could stop her, Rexy set off to follow.

"Damnit it!" Owen quickly climbed in the jeep and started it. "Come on, Echo!"

Echo let out a squeak and jumped into the jeep beside him.

Owen rolled his eyes. "I meant follow me!"

She let out another squeak. [Go!]

Owen rolled his eyes. "Just this once!" He said, wagging a finger at her. She nodded her head and Owen put the jeep in drive. They weaved through the trees until Echo let out a chirp and suddenly jumped out of the jeep. Owen slammed to a stop. "Echo!" He snapped.

[Next!] She darted off. [Close!]

Owen had no clue how she knew. But he put the jeep in park and jumped out. He dashed after her through the trees and slid to a stop. There was a giant hole dug in the ground surrounded by... it looked almost like stacked trees. Like Ida had uprooted the trees and placed them around the hole. Like a fence or something.

Echo was down inside the hole. She was staring at something. Owen slid down inside behind her and his eyes widened. There were five eggs, arranged in an almost perfect circle. There were bigger than the raptor eggs had been. But not so big that he couldn't strap them to his chest like he'd done with the raptors. And that thought brought a warm feeling over him.

Echo stepped closer to the nest slowly. She bent her neck down and touched the closest egg gently. Owen smiled, watching her. She was so curious about them. She looked up at Owen. [Take?]

Owen sighed and shrugged. "I don't know if we should."

[Echo take!] She said, looking back at the egg. [Echo make sisters.]

Owen smiled again. "You want more sisters?"

Echo straightened up and nodded her head. [Take now! Before back!]

Owen bit his lip and shook his head. It was crazy! Well... maybe it wasn't that crazy. Lowery had said the same thing. And honestly, he had thought about it. The second Rexy said the word nest. "This is crazy, Echo!"

[Take now!] Echo squeaked excitedly. [Now!]
Owen shook his head. "Echo, the lab is empty."

[Take to Alpha home!]

Owen shook his head again. "Can't fit them all in my trailer. Not with the incubators we'd need."

Echo breathed out loudly. [Alpha fix lab.]

Owen frowned and tilted his head. "Me?"

Echo nodded her head.

"There's no doctors." Owen argued.

She snorted again. [Alpha be doctor!]

Owen rolled his eyes. "I don't think I..."

[Take now!] She snapped.

Owen shook his head. "They're eggs. They're still growing. They have to be kept warm and protected and safe!"

Echo nodded her head. [Echo do! Take!]

Owen shook his head. "No."

[Yes!]

"Fine." Owen turned to go. "I'll get the jeep, you keep watch."

Chapter End Notes

Ugh! Getting soooo cloooose to the story's summary thingie! 8D
"Hey."

"Hey." Zach said, smiling as he shut his bedroom door. It was pretty late in the evening. He hadn't talked to Owen since the day before. He was beginning to worry he'd go a day without seeing him.

Owen sighed and leaned back against his couch. "Can't talk long." He said shaking his head.

Zach tilted his head. "Why?"

"Lowery's been bugging me all week about coming over to hang after work." Owen said, sarcastically.

Zach smiled again, walking towards his bed. "He's just lonely."

"I know, I know. I get it." Owen rubbed a hand over his face. "I just... want a night off to like... chill, you know?"

Zach nodded as he sat down on his bed and pulled his legs up.


Zach smiled goofily and didn't care. He felt giddy that Owen included him in his alone chill time. "Just go hang out with Lowery for an hour and then tell him you're tired and then come back and call me, no matter how late."

Owen breathed out again and slowly smiled. "Yeah, okay. Fine. You're right." He leaned forward, towards the camera. "Gray around?"

Zach frowned. "Gray?"

Owen nodded. "Yeah. Just found something cool today I think he'd like to hear about real quick before I gotta go."

Zach tilted his head. "Cool?"
"Yeah."

Zach blinked and glanced at his bedspread. "So you're not like... avoiding talking to me?" He asked softly.

Owen smiled. "Wouldn't have called you in the first place if I was looking to avoid ya."

"Oh... yeah... right." Zach shook his head. "Sorry. Hang on." He dropped the phone on his bed and hurried out the door before Owen could say more. He headed down the hall towards the living room. "Gray." The younger sibling was watching TV with their dad. Zach ignored the man completely and looked at Gray. "Hey. Need ya for a minute."

Gray tilted his head, curiosity on his face. Then nodded and stood up.

"For what?" Their dad, Scott, asked.

Zach turned without answering and Gray got up to follow him down the hall. Zach led him into his room and shut the door behind him.

Gray turned around and looked at Zach. "What's going on?"

"Owen called." Zach said with a smile. "Asked to talk to you."

Gray's eyes widened. "Me?"

Zach nodded. "Yep." He walked towards his bed and grabbed the phone. "Here." He held it out and Gray took it.

Gray smiled at the phone and waved. "Hi."

"Hey Gray." Owen said with a smile. "Where'd Zach go?"

Gray swiveled the phone around to Zach. Zach waved.

"I wanted to talk to you, too." Owen said. "Wanted to tell you both the cool shit."

"Yeah?"

Owen nodded. "Plus I like your face."

Gray wrinkled his nose and laughed. Zach rolled his eyes. The brothers sat down on Zach's bed. Zach pulled himself back along the bed and leaned against the wall. Gray moved in beside him and angled the phone in his lap. "Better?"

"Much." Owen said, still smiling like his idiot self.

"So..." Zach started when Owen didn't immediately start talking. "What'd you wanna tell us?"

Owen leaned back. "Found out where Ida's been hiding. And why."

"Well... tell us why already then." Zach said with a sigh.

Owen laughed. "Ida had a nest of eggs."

"Eggs?" Gray repeated.

Owen nodded. "Five of them."
Zach's eyes widened. "Five? There's gonna be five more of them running around?" He sat up straighter. "Owen, you gotta get out of there! Now!"

Gray glanced at Zach and shook his head. "If she just laid them, it'll be a while before they hatch."

Owen nodded. "Yeah, what Gray said."

Zach breathed out. "Oh... right..." He looked over at the wall, feeling a bit foolish. Eggs. Owen had said eggs and Zach had just heard that there'd be more of the monster dinosaur. He swallowed the lump in his throat and bit his lip.

"Plus they'll be little." Gray went on talking. "They'd have to grow."

"Again... what Gray said." Owen said with a smile. "So I'm perfectly safe. From them." He added. "From their mother... maybe not so much."

Zach rolled his eyes and shook his head. Then a thought occurred to him. "Wait..." He looked back at the phone. "She's a genetic hybrid."

Owen nodded. "Yeah."

"She was made in a lab." Zach said.

Owen nodded again. "All of them were."

Zach rolled his eyes. "But she's the only one, right? No boys?"

Owen shrugged. "Yeah, she's the only one. She ate her sibling." Owen said with a wink at Gray. "But either Wu did something really weird he didn't tell anyone about..."

"Probably." Zach cut in.

Owen smiled. "Or Ida's like... evolved already. Either way... babies."

"So it's like that old Godzilla movie." Zach said.

Owen tilted his head. "What old Godzilla movie?"

"Where that one guy..." Zach looked away for a moment, trying to remember. "With the weird name that like works with earthworms... he says that Godzilla was like... born pregnant? With that... Matt guy?"

"Mathew Broderick?" Owen asked.

"Yeah!" Zach nodded. "That's the one."

Owen frowned. "That is not an old movie."

"Yeah it is." Zach argued. "Pretty old."

Owen rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Anyways... yeah. I guess it's like that. Maybe."

"Parthenogenesis." Gray said.

Zach glanced sideways at him. "Partho what?"

"Parthenogenesis." Gray repeated. "It's the process in which some organisms can reproduce without
fertilization. The female gamete basically creates a carbon copy of itself...

Zach shook his head and pushed Gray away gently. "Blah, blah, blah. Stop talking now. Owen's only got a few minutes. He has a man date."

Owen let out a groan. "Do not call it that!"

Gray smiled. "So what are you gonna do with the eggs?"

Owen sighed and looked away. "Ida's too far gone." He said a touch sadly. "The isolation and captivity has already molded her personality. But maybe... we can have a second chance, you know? With her babies. They're part raptor." He looked at Zach. "Maybe I can work with them." He said slowly.

Zach nodded, understanding what he meant. "Imprint."

Owen nodded. "If they survive... if they have each other and me and the girls... a family..."

Zach smiled. "You can do it."

"I hope so." Owen breathed out. "Just have to hunt down their mother first. And kill her."

"So that's where she's been?" Zach asked. "She's been guarding her nest?"

Owen shrugged. "She mighta been. Before I set Rexy, Delta, and Blue on chasing her. Echo and I stole the nest. Packed them all up in my jeep. Got them set up in the labs."

Gray pressed closer and opened his mouth. But whatever he was about to say was cut off by Zach's bedroom door suddenly bursting open. Scott stood, framing the doorway and looking angry. "What are you doing in here?" He demanded.

Zach dropped the phone on the bed. "Nothing." Zach said at the same time Gray said, "Talking to Owen." Zach sighed and rolled his eyes.

Scott's eyes widened. "That crazy guy you're always talking about? Who talks to animals and stayed behind alone on an island to get eaten?"

"He's a friend." Gray said defensively.

Scott stepped into the room and shook his head. "He can't be your friend."

"He is!" Gray insisted.

"No!" Scott snapped. "You can't be friends with a man that old. And if he is, it's because he's some kind of pervert."

Gray's mouth dropped open. He shook his head. "He's not."

"Grown men do not hang out with teenage boys!"

Zach glared at the wall behind them and bit his lip to keep from yelling at his dad. Anything he said would just make things worse. He knew that. He wished Gray would get the memo and shut up.

"I don't want either of you talking to him again." Scott said loudly.

"But dad..." Gray started.
"No!" Scott interrupted. He stepped closer to the bed and wagged a finger at them. "You hear me? No more."

"Yeah." Zach said harshly. "We hear you."

Scott nodded and turned. "Karen!" He yelled, stepping into the hall. Zach jumped up and slammed the door shut. "Fucking asshole!" Zach breathed out.

"Shouldn't say that." Gray said softly.

Zach spun around. "Did you just hear what he said about Owen?"

"Zach..." Gray practically whispered his name.

Zach threw up both his arms. "Like I'm some kid he can boss around!"

"You are..." Gray said with a shrug.

Zach shook his head. "Few more months. I don't care. I'm moving out. I'll... find something until I graduate. Then I'm out of here and that man can't boss me around anymore."

"Zach..."

"I already told you, Gray." Zach said, turning back around. "We'll still hang out. I'll come back to visit you and you can come stay with me. Hell... you should probably move in with me. Be better than this fucking place."

"Not that..." Gray pointed to the forgotten phone on the bed. "Owen..."

Zach's eyes widened. "Shit! Owen!" He stumbled back to his bed and scrambled to grab the phone. "Still there?"

"Uh... yeah..." Owen said, looking away from the camera.

Zach pulled the phone closer and didn't take his eyes off Owen. "Hey Gray, give me a minute."

Gray glanced at the door and then back at Zach. He nodded and reluctantly left. Zach waited until he heard the door shut. Then he breathed in sharply. "Owen, whatever you're thinking, please don't. Please! It's not weird or creepy. There's nothing wrong!"

"It is a little..." Owen said softly.

"No!" Zach said loudly. "Don't let my asshole dad change your mind."

"I gotta go." Owen said, standing up. "Need to go make sure the eggs are okay... and... you know... Lowery's expecting me... for our man date..."

Zach shook his head. "No! Not yet! Owen!"

"I'll call you later."

"Tonight?" Zach added almost desperately. "You said tonight!"

"Maybe." Owen mumbled and the screen went black.
Zach dropped the phone on his bed. His eyes narrowed into a glare. At that moment, he hated his dad more than anything. If that man just ruined this weird long distance relationship or whatever thing Zach had with Owen, Zach would never forgive him. Or talk to him again. He would completely cut ties with the man attempting and clearly succeeding in ruining his life.

His door opened again, this time more gently, and his mom, Karen, came in. She stepped inside almost timidly. She sighed deeply, looking tired, and walked towards him. She sat down on the edge of the bed. "Tell me about this Owen again."

Zach sighed and ran a hand through his hair. "He's just this guy we hung out with at the park." His chest felt tight as he played off who Owen was. "He's the head of the raptor program. And he's a... good friend of aunt Claire's." He said a tad awkwardly. "That's why she asked him to show us around. He pretty much babysat us the whole time. Ask Claire. She said I was more mature than him." He smiled weakly. "He's practically a kid himself. And Gray really likes talking to him. They start talking dinosaur stuff and I get bored. But he talks to Gray like they're on the same level, not like he's an annoying little jittery squirrel."

She smiled and tilted her head. "Squirrel?"

Zach shrugged. "Sorta describes him, doesn't it?"

Karen smiled for a moment longer, then it fell and she sighed deeply and shook her head. "But... he calls you?"

"Just like... a couple times." Zach said, looking down at the phone on his bed. "He's all alone on the island. And he found some eggs and like... got excited. So he called to tell Gray all about them. The eggs."

"Eggs." She repeated.

Zach nodded. "Really... it's not weird."

She nodded slowly and breathed out. "Okay. I'll call Claire and try to talk to your dad. But just... don't tell him, okay? Tell Gray, too. Stop talking about the guy when your dad's around."

Zach smiled a bit and nodded. "Thanks, mom."

She smiled at him and patted his shoulder as she stood up. Then she left.

Zach sighed and bent over to grab his cell phone charger. He plugged the thing in and set it on his night stand. He hoped Owen called him back. Really soon.

-Owen stumbled out of his trailer and actually fell down, tripping over himself. He remained on the ground in a heap until Charlie ambled over to him. She bent down and nudged his arm. Owen looked up at her and blinked. Then there were tears in his eyes. Thick tears that he couldn't see through. He shut his eyes tight and curled into himself. [Alpha?] Charlie nudged him again, a bit harder. [Dad!] Echo ran over and practically pushed Charlie out of the way. "I'm okay, I'm okay." Owen said. He let out a sigh and reached up to push Echo's nose away. She was suddenly standing right over him. "I'm fine. Go away." Echo snorted loudly and licked his arm.
"Go away!" He pushed against her again and she stumbled back. He sat up and let out a sigh and shook his head. "Okay. I'm going to see Lowery for a bit and check out the Indy eggs." He glanced over at the two concerned looked raptors. "You two wanna come?"

Echo and Charlie both nodded their heads.

"Blue!" Owen called out loudly. "Delta!" The two missing raptors joined them shortly after. Blue tilted her head to the side. "Nothing." Owen said, shaking his head. "I was just being dramatic."

Blue snorted and shook her head.

"Yeah, yeah." Owen mumbled, waving her offer. "We're going to Lowery's tonight. Coming?" Of course they were. They always did. They always wanted to go everywhere with him. They always had. Just now... they could. He sighed deeply as he pulled himself up. He bent over for a moment to brush off his pants.

Echo darted forward and pressed herself against him. "I'm fine." He said. "I swear."

Owen helped Charlie into his jeep. She was still having balancing issues. Echo watched them, a tad forlornly. Blue snorted and snapped at her pouting sister. Echo turned and dashed off up the road.

"Echo!" Owen called after her. He quickly climbed in the jeep and started it. Blue and Delta followed, keeping pace with the jeep until they caught up with Echo.

They reached the control building without incident. Owen parked right up front and got out. Echo ran up to the door and pushed on it. It was locked. But after a moment, it clicked and she pushed again. She whistled in delight as the door opened and she darted inside.

"Impatient." Owen shook his head. He turned to Blue and Delta and nodded back at the building. "Go on up. We'll be right there."

Blue and Delta both nodded and followed after Echo, maybe a bit more cautiously. They weren't as comfortable inside buildings as Echo and Charlie.

Owen smiled as he climbed out of the jeep. He walked around to the passenger side to help Charlie out. He pulled the door open and held his arms out. "Come on."

Charlie's eyes darted towards something behind him. Then suddenly, she screamed. /DAD!/ 

Owen spun around to look up at her, a growl on his lips. And then everything went black.

Chapter End Notes

*whistles and slinks away to hide under his bed*
Beaten Silence

Chapter Summary

Zach gets that call.

Chapter Notes

AND HERE WE GO! FINALLY! 8D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was the first day of school. He was a senior now. Big fucking deal. Didn't feel any different. Didn't feel special. Didn't feel that whole sense of impending release from childhood to adulthood. Didn't really feel anything. Just felt... numb to everything. And ready for it to all be over. His sour mood could also be from his lack of contact with Owen. The raptor alpha hadn't called him in nearly a week. Well five days. But that was nearly a week and for him, it felt like forever. His dad had said nasty things about Owen and Owen had overheard. And now the man had disappeared.

Zach sat in a desk in the corner of the room. Kids were filing in and milling about, still talking and laughing. He should be doing the same. He was still a kid himself, just like them. But he couldn't bring himself to care about whatever new gossip the girls beside him were giggling about or whatever sports related thing the football players in the front of the room were arguing about.

He didn't care about any of it. He wished his mom would have just let him stay home. But he couldn't think of a good excuse to miss his first day of senior year. Well... he had a good excuse. He just couldn't tell her. Sorry mom. Can't go to school. Sick with worry about my much older maybe boyfriend breaking up with me or being eaten by dinosaurs. Yeah. That wouldn't go over well.

Zach looked out the window and wondered, once again, what Owen and the raptors were doing. Were they fighting with Ida? Were they hanging with Rexy? Or doing something with Moe and the sister triceratops Owen kept on about? Were the Ida eggs still growing? Was Charlie doing better? Was Echo watching Finding Nemo?

He was so lost in thought, he didn't notice the students around him sitting down in their seats or the teacher coming in and moving to the front of the classroom. The teacher was talking, going on about something, but the man couldn't keep Zach's attention. And then Zach's pocket vibrated. Zach blinked. He leaned back in his seat and pulled it out. Video call. His eyes widened.

"Mr. Mitchell." The man upfront said. "Class has started. Put the phone away."

Zach glanced up at his name. He vaguely remembered the man now. He'd had him before. Zach couldn't place the man's name or what class it had been, but he was certain he knew the teacher. "Emergency." He said, standing up.

"Sit down, Mr. Mitchell." He said loudly.
Zach ignored the nameless man and the chatter around him as he ran out the door and into the quiet hall. He held up his phone and hit the answer button. And was greeted by a large eyeball. "Echo!" He breathed out and smiled. "Hey."

She squeaked and pulled back. Then pushed forward again and blinked. Her eye darted around and then she pulled back again and squeaked to someone off screen.

"Echo?" Zach frowned. It was weird that Owen's voice wasn't following immediately, snapping at the raptor for being too close or something.

The raptor turned towards the screen again and looked at him. And Zach thought she looked worried, panicked, like something was wrong that she didn't know how to communicate.

"Echo? What's wrong?" He asked softly.

She snorted and tilted her head to the side.

Zach sighed and shook his head. "Yeah, that won't work. I don't speak raptor."

Echo shook her head.

"Okay." Zach bit his lip. "Is something wrong?"

She bobbed her head yes.

"Is someone hurt?"

She nodded her head again.

Zach swallowed. "One of you girls?"

Echo shook her head no this time.

"Rexy or Moe or..." He couldn't remember the names of the triceratops Owen had grown attached to. "Or one of the other dinosaurs you hang with?"

Echo shook her head no again.

"Lowery?" Zach hated how hopeful his voice sounded. And when Echo again shook her head, Zach felt his heart plummet. "Owen..." He breathed out.

Echo nodded.

"Owen's hurt..." Zach blinked and looked away for a moment. "Is he still alive?" His voice barely came out in a whisper.

Echo turned and stepped back as Blue stepped on screen. Echo warbled something softly and Blue looked at Zach.

"Is Owen still alive?" Zach repeated louder, more desperate.

Blue nodded her head once, then shook it.

"Yes and no?" Zach blinked at them. What did that mean? "He's hurt real bad?"

They both nodded.
Zach swallowed again and bit his lip. "Okay... okay... Don't panic. Don't... uh... just don't do anything... bad! I'm gonna call aunt Claire... Firelady."

Blue snorted and shook her head, but Echo bobbed hers.

"Just... give me some time and then... call me back, okay?"

The raptors nodded again and then the screen went dark.

"Mr. Mitchell!"

Zach didn't even turn to see who was yelling at him this time. He didn't care. He honestly forgot he was standing in the hall of the school. He hurried down the hall, towards the doors. He pulled up his contacts and hit Claire's number and pressed the phone to his ear. No answer. He hung up and called again. Claire was in London, he knew, visiting with Zara's family. He wasn't sure what time it was there. But finally, the line clicked. "Claire?"

"Zach?" She sound surprised.

Zach didn't have time for pleasantries. "Where's Simon?" He demanded.

There was a pause. "Simon?"

"Simon Masrani." Zach said bluntly. "You know, your boss."

"What?"

Zach rolled his eyes. "I need to talk to Simon Masrani. Right now."

"Why?"

Zach shook his head. "I can't tell you."

"Did something happen?" She asked quickly. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine..." He started to say.

"Gray?"

Zach shook his head and let out a sigh. Why would he be asking about Simon if Gray or himself was hurt? "I need... to talk... to Simon." He said slowly, punctuating the words. "Now!"

"Zach... what is going on?"

Zach walked towards the parking lot. "I think Owen's hurt." He said. "Bad."

"What?" She didn't sound convinced. "Why do you think that?"

Zach shook his head. "Can't tell you."

"Zach..."

"You're wasting time!" Zach snapped loudly into the phone. "Simon needs to get him off the island now!"

"Alright, alright." She said calmly. "I'll call him and see if he wants to check it out."
Zach rolled his eyes. "No, I need to tell him."

"Why?"

"I CAN'T TELL YOU!" He screamed into the phone.

"Why?" Claire persisted. "What can't you tell me?"

"Please, aunt Claire!" Zach begged. "You have to trust me! I need Simon's help! Owen needs Simon's help! Please!"

"Fine." She breathed out after a moment. "I will try to get a hold of him and ask him to call you." She didn't sound happy about it.

"Tell him Gray's brother needs to talk to him about Owen."

"If you'd just tell me..."

"No!" He snapped. "Just get Simon to call me!" He hung up the phone and shoved it in his pocket. Zach then proceeded to pace the parking lot, getting more worried with every passing, silent moment. The sound of his shoes on the pavement was echoing in his ears and seemed to only make it worse. If Owen was hurt... if Owen was... Zach blinked as thick tears clouded his eyes. He couldn't think about that. He wouldn't think about that. Because his chest was starting to hurt.

It was nearly a half hour later when his phone rang. Zach stopped his pacing and fumble to get his phone out of his pocket. "Hello?" He said quickly, not even glancing at the display.

"Gray's brother?"

"Crazy guy who owns the dinosaur island?"

Simon laughed over the line. "Okay, Zach. What's going on? Claire said you thought Owen was injured but wouldn't tell her how or what was going on."

Zach took a deep breath. There was only one way to get Simon to really believe him. He'd decided to tell Simon the truth. "Okay... I need you to listen to me. And keep an open mind."

"Sounds rather serious, Gray's brother."

"It is."

"Alright." Simon said. "I'm listening."

Zach breathed in again and started. "Owen... like 3 years ago or something, he was like kidnapped, that dude Wu like experimented on Owen. Like kidnapped him and did some awful stuff and he can transform into a raptor. That's why it seems like he can understand the raptors so well. Because he can actually talk to them and they actually talk back."

Simon didn't say anything but there was a sharp intake of breath over the line.

Zach kept talking. "He called me a couple times because when he saved me on the island, he transformed in front of me and I think I'm the only one who knows. And I think he's really hurt because one of the raptors called me. Owen wasn't there. But they understood me enough to answer some yes and no questions. You need to get him to a hospital! But... they have to be careful. I don't know if he can go to a hospital... but if he's hurt bad... Simon?"
The man on the other end of the line sighed deeply. "It's true." He breathed out, his voice sounding shaky.

Zach frowned. "What?"

"Sick, twisted man." Simon mumbled under his breath.

"Owen?"

"Wu." Simon breathed out. "I had all his computers and notes confiscated. I had everything transferred to my secure personal servers and then wiped and destroyed. There were... these files and pictures... and a video..." His voice trailed off for a moment. "But they didn't show the man's face. I didn't know it was Owen. I didn't know it was real." Simon paused. "But you say you've seen it?"

Zach breathed out in relief. "Yeah, I've seen it." He said with a nod.

"Alright." Simon said firmly. "I own a hospital."

Zach shook his head. "Of course you do."

"I'll send a team to retrieve him right away. We'll get him someplace safe."

"I need to go." Zach said quickly. "I need to be there."

"You?" Simon let out a laugh. "Are you crazy? I'm not taking a kid to that island without confirmation that that monster has been killed."

Zach shook his head and let out a sigh. "I have to go. The raptors... they won't understand without someone there to explain it."

"Explain it?"

Zach sighed again. "They're very..." How did Owen explain it? "Family oriented." He said. "Their family, their pack... it's like the most important thing to them. Owen convinced them... I was family. Gray and I. That's why they called me. They knew I would help."

"You think... they'll listen to you?" Simon asked slowly.

"I don't know if they'll listen exactly." Zach answered. "But I'm pretty sure they'll be less likely to attack anyone who goes to touch Owen if I'm there."

Simon didn't say anything right away. And for a moment, Zach feared he hadn't been convinced. But then Simon let out a sigh. "Where are you?" He asked.

"School." Zach gave Simon the address.

"Stay there." Simon commanded. "I'll call you back in ten. I need to make arrangements."

Zach breathed out and nodded. "Thank you." He hung the phone up. He closed his eyes for a moment and took a few deep, settling breaths. Simon would help Owen. They would get there in time and save Owen and everything would go back to normal. Well... normal for them, anyways.

Ten minutes later, almost exactly on the dot, his phone rang again. Zach answered it quickly.

"Alright, Gray's brother." Simon said over the line. "I'm en route to my jet now. I've sent a helicopter to pick you up."
Despite the situation, Zach smiled. "You're not piloting the helicopter yourself, right?"

There was a distinct pause. "Hey. I am an excellent pilot!" The man said defensively. "I obtained my license last week."

Zach let out a laugh. "I think I need proof to verify that."

"I will meet you at the airport." Simon said in a clipped voice.

Zach smiled again. "Thanks Simon. Uh... can we stop by my house for a minute? I'd like to leave my brother a note."

"Yes." Simon said. "Just let the pilot know. You should still beat me to the airport."

"Okay." Zach hung up and looked up at the sky and waited. He was going to be in a lot of trouble, he knew. Running out of class, ditching school, bringing a helicopter to school, running away to a dinosaur infested island... his parents were going to kill him. But if it meant making sure Owen was okay, then that's all that mattered.

Chapter End Notes

8D
Can't Fix

Chapter Summary

Zach is finally back on the island and reunited with Owen and the raptors. Of course, it's not the awesome reunion he wanted.

Chapter Notes

OMG! I AM SO SORRY THIS TOOK SO LONG THAT I CAN'T STOP CAPS! X( Seriously. This is just HORRIBLE of me. But... WORK and LIFE and EVERYTHING SUCKS! And it STILL MASSIVELY SUCKS! But I finished a chapter! 8D Look at me! I sorta started the next chapter. So hopefully it won't take months. 8D Again... SORRY!

It was pretty cool when the helicopter landed in the football field. The principal came out yelling. Kids pressed against windows. He was so going to be in a lot of trouble. He had no clue if it would warrant a suspension when he got back. He hoped it wouldn't. He needed to graduate on time. He had a promise to fulfill.

Zach sat back in his seat and let out a sigh. He hugged his backpack to his chest and tucked his chin against the faded fabric.

Simon chased everyone out of the cabin of the jet and sat down beside Zach. "Tell me everything." He said, leaning forward.

Zach breathed out a sigh and nodded. He owed the man that much. He sat up straighter and pushed his backpack off onto the floor. He told Simon what he remembered. From being chased by the raptors to being attacked by Blue, to Owen shifting and to fainting. Then waking up with Blue guarding him. He even told him about a few times he'd heard Owen growl or snap oddly. He left out all the touching and kissing, of course. But there had been so many odd moments that made more sense now, knowing Owen was... part dinosaur or whatever he was.

Simon never once doubted or questioned Zach's story. He seemed entranced and Zach felt reassured that he'd made the right call, the right decision in telling the man. "Who all knows?" Simon asked after Zach had finished.

Zach shrugged and looked away. "I think his friend who works with him... Barry. And Dr. Wu did, of course. But I got the feeling that was it."

Simon nodded softly. Then paused and tilted his head. "Not Claire?"

Zach shook his head. "No."

"Why didn't you tell her?"
Zach shook his head. "I didn't think she'd believe me."

"But you thought I would?" Simon asked slowly.

Zach shrugged again. "When you met the raptors... you saw them." He said, looking up at Simon. "You saw how they were and you talked to them... you listened and interacted. Aunt Claire..." He shook his head. "she sees them... as attractions. Her favorite word is asset."

Simon smiled and nodded. "She does enjoy saying it a lot."

Zach nodded. "She doesn't see them as living, breathing, thinking animals. She's not someone Owen would trust with the secret."

Simon nodded slowly, like he understood. The corner of his mouth twitched into the tiniest of smiles. "What about Gray?"

Zach squirmed a bit. "Not my secret to tell. Unless there's some circumstance that Gray needs to know... I'm not telling him." Zach left out the part about jealousy. He knew it was ridiculous to feel jealous of Gray's easy friendship with Owen.

Simon nodded again. Then stood up. "Something to drink?"

The rest of the flight took forever. It didn't really, but it felt like it to Zach. Every minute that ticked by, he got more worried about Owen. And the raptors. And what was going to happened when they got there? Would the raptors let them take Owen? Would they let Zach near?

Simon seemed to almost read his thoughts. He sat down again beside him. He reached over and patted Zach on the knee gently. "Stay positive. We'll be there soon. Everything will be fine."

Zach nodded slowly and bit his lip. He wanted to be positive. But he couldn't help the worry.

"Now." Simon stood up and turned. "If you'll excuse me, I have a phone call to make."

Zach nodded slowly. He pulled out his phone and his headphones.

Simon paused for a moment, watching the teenager put on his headphones. Then Simon pulled out his phone, dialed a number, and then pressed the phone to his ear. He stepped away, moving to the opposite side of the cabin. "Claire!" He hissed her name right after she answered. "I need your help."

"Mr. Masrani..." She sounded a bit surprised. "Alright, whatever you need."

Simon glanced back at Zach, the kid plastered to the window. "I seem to have kidnapped your nephew."

There was a pause over the line. "You what?"

"Gray's brother." Simon said. "I've kidnapped him and we are enroute to the island."

"Zach?" She sounded confused. "You're taking Zach to the island?"

"Yes." Simon said with a nod.

She paused again. "Why?" She asked slowly.

"I require his assistance in retrieving the injured Owen."
Claire sucked in a sharp breath. "Owen's really injured?"

"He is."

"And you need Zach's help?"

"I do."

Claire sighed deeply. "So you just kidnapped my nephew without telling anyone?"

"I am telling you now."

She paused for a moment. "Yes... yes you are. I'm guessing Zach didn't ask his parents for permission?"

"He did not." Simon said, shaking his head. "It was rather sudden. I had him picked up at his school."

She sighed again. "I'll call my sister."

"Excellent!" Simon said, rather excitedly. "See if you can convince her not to call the authorities."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

The jet was too big to land on the island itself. They landed and boarded one of the Jurassic World ferries. Zach leaned against the railing, his eyes on the island. It was steadily getting bigger. Getting closer. His gaze searched the docks as they came into view. Something dark darted across but the ferry was still too far away for Zach to make it out. But he could imagine that it was one of the raptors, keeping watch for him. He hoped it was. He had no clue how to find them if he had to. He needed them to find him.

Not soon enough, the ferry docked. Zach bounced on his toes as he waited for the okay for the captain. The second he could, he raced down the plank. He stepped off the ferry more nervous than he'd ever been in his whole life. He had no clue what to expect. All he knew was that Owen was injured. And he had to convince the raptors to let them take Owen.

Zach took a deep breath and threw his back pack over his shoulder. The second he stepped forward, he heard a whistle. He turned, his eyes searching. "Echo?" He called out. Another whistle, sharper, to his right. Zach turned. There was a park jeep near the docks. Zach glanced back. Simon was walking towards him. "Hang on." Zach said, holding up his hands.

Simon stopped immediately. "What?" He called.

"We're being watched."

Simon glanced around quickly. "Who?"

Zach paused and glanced around as well. He wondered exactly where she was. "Echo, I think. She's hiding."

Simon smiled. "Clever."

Zach smiled and nodded.

"You think you can approach her safely?"
Zach nodded. "It might be better... uh... if it's only me." He said awkwardly. Because if he were being honest with himself, he had no clue what he was doing. At all. But he trusted in Owen, more than anything in his life. And Owen trusted his raptors like family. So Zach would have to trust them, too. He turned and looked at the jeep. He just hoped he wasn't crazy. And that his parents never find out.

"Alright." Simon said with a nod. "I'll hold back. You signal if there's a problem."

Zach took a deep breath and stepped towards the jeep. "Echo?" He said her name again.

She whistled again and popped her head out.

Zach smiled and waved at her. Then stuck his tongue out as he walked to the jeep. He stepped around it and smiled as he noticed the dent in the side. It was Owen's jeep. Echo immediately moved towards him and bumped her head against his chest. She purred happily and Zach ran his hand along her neck. "You behaving?"

Echo stepped back and nodded her head.

"Being a good girl?"

She turned her head and breathed out.

Zach smiled for a moment. "Maybe?"

She snorted again.

Zach let out a laugh. And then his smile quickly fell. "Owen, can you take me to him?"

She nodded her head quickly.

"Right now?"

She nodded again.

"Is it far away?"

Again, she nodded.

Zach breathed out. "Okay, you're gonna have to go slow. I can't keep up with you like Owen."

Echo glanced back at the jeep. Then back at Zach and tilted her head.

"Uh... I need the keys."

She blinked and looked back at the jeep.

Zach leaned over and looked in. There was a ring of keys in the front seat. Zach let out a sigh. "Alright, fine. Just don't tell anyone I still haven't gotten my driver's license."

Echo tilted her head for a moment. And then nodded.

Zach followed along behind Echo. After a few minutes, one of the other raptors stepped out in the middle of the road. Zach recognized Blue's odd coloring right away. She chirped loudly at Echo. Then turned and started running. Zach followed the sisters a bit longer, following the twists and turns of the road. Then they darted off road. Zach slowed the jeep for a moment. Then quickly turned the
wheel.

They were headed, Zach was sure, away from Owen's trailer. Pretty far away. But honestly, Zach had no real clue or sense of direction. The raptors slowed to a stop and turned back. They watched as Zach slowed and stopped the jeep. He hopped out and ran to catch up with them. Echo bumped into him and he pushed her away. "Where's Owen?"

Blue turned and warbled something loudly. Then Delta popped out from behind a bush and snapped at her sisters. Blue snapped back. Echo darted back behind Zach and nudged his back. Zach glanced over his shoulder at her and then at Blue and Delta. He followed the three deeper into the brush around them. He had no sense of direction out there, either. But he trusted the raptors. Then suddenly, a cave loomed in front of him. Zach stepped inside quickly. There was a fire just inside. How on earth the raptors were able to keep a fire going was beyond him. But he forgot about it immediately. Charlie was laying down beside the fire and right beside her was Owen.

Zach let out a gasp and scrambled over, practically tripping over himself to get to the raptor trainer. He knelt over Owen's body. The man was covered in leaves and twigs and Zach wasn't sure what else. He reached out and brushed the debris from Owen's face gently. His skin was hot and clammy. Zach sucked in a breath as he brushed his fingers down Owen's neck and pressed against his pulse. Zach closed his eyes as he felt the faint beating. Owen was alive.

Zach breathed out and smiled. Echo pressed closer and nudged his arm. He glanced back at her. "I..." Zach shook his head. "I can't fix him." He breathed out, looking back at Owen. "The doctors... aren't here. He has to go to the hospital... far away from here... Simon has to take Owen away..."

Zach turned to look back at the raptors. They were all staring at him. Like they didn't understand. Delta shook her head and headed back out of the cave. Zach watched her go and sighed. Of course they didn't understand. He wasn't Owen. He couldn't actually talk to them. But he needed them to understand. He needed them to not interfere. Owen's life depended on it. Zach's gaze dropped to the ground. How could he explain this? His eyes raked over the loose dirt on the cave floor. He blinked as an idea slowly formed in his head. He bent down and motioned Blue and Echo to follow. Echo dropped down right away. Blue moved a tad more slowly.

Zach picked up a short, thin twig and a few small pebbles off the ground. He took the twig and drew a small circle in the loose dirt. Then he drew a second circle, larger and off to the side. He pointed to the small circle. "Island." He said. "Home." He set the small pebbles inside the circle, one at a time, listing off their names as he did. "Blue, Charlie, Delta, and Echo. This is the island. The island." He pointed at the ground with both hands. "Where we are now."

Blue blinked at him and narrowed her eyes, looking annoyed. Echo tilted her head a bit and nodded. Zach wasn't exactly sure what that mean. He pointed to the bigger circle and then to himself. "My home." He said. "Uh... hospitals and doctors." He picked up the twig he'd used to draw the circles. "Owen." He said, holding the stick up. "Owen's hurt... broken." He snapped the thing stick in half.

Blue growled lowered, the sound rumbling in her chest.

Zach lifted his hand. "I know. But..." He set the snapped twig in the small circle, next to the stones. "Owen can't get fixed here." He said, shaking his head. "Owen has to be taken to... uh... the big island." He lifted the broken twig and placed it in the big circle. "The doctors will fix him." He held the pieces of twig together. "And then, he'll come back." He moved the Owen twig back to the island circle and set it beside the raptor pebbles. Then he looked up at the raptors. "Do you understand? At all?" He asked them hopefully.

Echo nodded and looked at Blue. For the next several minutes, the sisters chittered back and forth to
each other. Charlie joined too. And at one point, Blue poked her head out of the cave, as if including Delta in some decision. Then she returned and Echo was suddenly upset. She shook her head and snapped at Blue. Blue snapped back at her and they seemed to be bickering back and forth.

"Hey!" Zach held up his hands and stepped towards them. "I'm not Owen." He said. "I can't speak raptor. What's going on? We have to get him to a doctor... like now! Please!"

Blue turned slightly. She bent down and picked up a small twig off the ground near the fire. Then she turned back to Zach. She tilted her head to the side. She lifted her nose and bumped into his chest lightly.

"What?"

She looked down at the ground. She bent over the large circle and dropped the twig.

"Uh..."

Then she looked back at Zach.

"Oh... me?"

Blue nodded her head. Then she picked up the Zach twig. She set it in the island circle, right next to the raptor pebbles. She looked back at Zach.

Zach watched the raptor move. He looked down at the twigs and pebbles. It dawned on him slowly. "You want... you want me to... stay here... on the island..." He looked back up at them.

Echo bobbed her head first and then started wiggling excitedly.

"With you guys?"

Blue glanced back at Echo and snorted loudly.

Zach's eyes flittered to Echo for a moment and then back at Blue. "Echo wants me to stay?"

The raptor in question let out a squeak and nodded again.

Zach glanced back at Owen, still lying on the ground. "You'll let Simon take him if I stay with you." He took a deep breath and exhaled it slowly. "Okay."
No Cave

Chapter Summary

Zach tells Simon he's staying. And then bonds a bit with the raptors.

Chapter Notes

I've been trying to picture the inside of Owen's Bungalow since I started writing this. XD Because I'm trying to figure the layout in my head. Because it's half a mobile home thing and half a shack. XD That Owen most likely designed himself. At least in my head, he did. So I keep trying to figure out how that would look in the inside. So I can describe it better. XD One of these days, I will just have to sit down and sketch something out that I think MIGHT fit with the images of the outside seen in the movie. And then my head will be satisfied.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Zach scratched at his forehead and sighed. They were standing near the cave. But it was still mostly hidden from view. Zach was pretty sure no one would think to look if they didn't know about it. He glanced back at the raptors behind him. They were all watching and waiting and looking at him expectantly.

"Gray's brother..."

Zach turned back to Simon. The man was also looking at him expectantly. Zach wanted to shy away from the attention. He took a deep breath and stood up a little straighter. "Look... I'm staying, alright?" He said, his voice final and leaving no room for argument. "That is their condition. They'll let you take Owen if I stay with them."

Simon's eyebrows furrowed for a moment. "On the island?" He repeated slowly. "Alone?"

Zach tilted his head and crossed his arms. "Not really alone. That one dude is here, right?" He glanced back at the raptors. "Lowery?"

Charlie snorted and nodded her head.


Simon looked past Zach, his eyes on the raptors. "They told you this, then?"

Zach opened his mouth and then closed it slowly. This was all just so hard and weird to explain. But after a moment, he nodded his head. "Yeah, basically. They told me. Sorta..." He shrugged. "Haven't worked out all the communication kinks yet. But we managed."

Simon shifted his gaze back to Zach. "You manage, huh?"

Echo stepped forward, letting out a squeak and nodding her head. She bumped her head against
"Yeah." Zach mumbled, reaching over to rub her nose.

Simon breathed out slowly and shook his head. "Well... you're certain you're not... one too?"

Zach's eyes widened slightly. "Uh..." He shook his head quickly and held up his hands. "No, no! I'm normal! I swear! Just..." He glanced sideways at Echo, still pressed against him. "Normal, everyday, no one special human."

Echo lifted her head and turned her head towards Zach. She snorted loudly and shook her head.

"Shut up, Echo!" he hissed under his breath.

The raptor shook her head again and tried to argue. Delta and Blue stepped forward. They dragged Echo back a few feet and it sounded like Charlie was reprimanding her. Zach sighed and shook his head. Then turned back to Simon.

"Amazing." The island owner said, shaking his head slowly in disbelief. He looked back at Zach. "The control you have over them in such a short time is amazing."

Zach scratched at the back of his neck and looked down. Yeah, it was weird. He knew it was weird. And if he could really ask the raptors why they liked him so much, he would. But that conversation, he was certain, was totally out of their range.

Simon smiled after a few silent moments. "Alright." He breathed out. "Against my better judgment... you will remain on the island with the raptors." He paused and looked around Zach at the raptors. "If they agree to protect you."

All four of the girls nodded their heads.

Simon smiled and nodded. "Alright then."

Zach smiled. "Okay. Then they'll let you take Owen."

Simon's smile quickly fell and he let out a sigh and shook his head. "I'm leaving you alone. On the island. With loose dinosaurs."

"They aren't all loose." Zach added quickly. "And it's a big island."

Simon blinked at him. "Yes. Well... do not tell your aunt."

Zach's eyes widened and he shook his head. "I don't. Here." He pulled his phone out of his pocket and held it out. "Owen's is broken still. Leave mine with him so he can... like... call on his computer... thing... and talk to the raptors... when he's okay."

Simon nodded and took the phone. He slipped it in his pocket and then pulled out his own.

Twenty minutes later, Owen had been safely been loaded onto the ferry. A doctor was attending to him as best he could until they arrived at the hospital. Zach and the raptors had followed and were standing on the docks. "Take care of him." Zach said softly. "Please."

Simon eyed him for a moment. And Zach was certain he'd taken a step too far. But the man just nodded and reached over to pat Zach on the shoulder. "I will, Gray's brother. I promise." Zach smiled up at him. And then without thinking, stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Simon. He hugged the stunned man tightly. Simon patted Zach on the back before stepping away. "I will
call Lowery when we get to the hospital."

Zach stepped back, nodding.

"When he's settled and stable, I'll be back." Simon promised. "As soon as possible."

Zach watched the man walk up the platform and disappear over the top of the ferry railing, waving as he did. The raptors stepped up closer to Zach, letting out soft, sad sounds. "I know." He said softly to the raptors. Zach understood their sadness. He wanted to say goodbye to Owen. He wanted to hold their alpha's hand and press a kiss to his forehead and whisper that they'd be waiting for him to come home. He wanted to breathe in the man's scent and stroke his cheek and run his fingers through his hair. But Zach couldn't do any of that.

Zach took a deep breath and exhaled it out slowly. They all stood on the dock and watched until the ship was just a speck on the horizon. He wasn't sure how long it had been. He wasn't entirely sure what time it was. But he was suddenly tired. After everything, he felt exhausted. Zach turned slightly and looked at the raptors. "So like..." He started slowly. "I don't have to sleep in the cave, do I?"

Blue tilted her head and blinked.

Zach held up his hands quickly. "I mean, the cave is great and all. Real... uh... awesome. But... I was thinking more... a place with walls and a door? Like... the office or hotel or Owen's place..."

Echo let out a squeak and nodded her head. Blue glanced over at her. Then the beta raptor snorted loudly. She looked back at Zach and nodded her head.

"So that's a yes?"

Blue nodded her head again.

Zach smiled. "I can stay at Owen's." He breathed out. Okay. He was staying on the island. Alone with the raptors. Alone with all the large, scary dinosaurs that were now loose on the island. Rexy, he knew was probably close. And Owen's triceratops. And Moe in her tank. He was pretty sure he didn't have to worry about her. And then there was Ida. Zach's eyes widened. Ida! He'd forgotten about her.

Charlie stepped closer to him. She made a soft click.

Zach swallowed and looked at her. "Uh... Ida..." He said softly. "I was thinking about Ida."

The four raptors all looked at each other.

"Oh shit!" Zach gasped. "She's still alive!"

They all quickly shook their heads.

"Rexy still around?" He asked slowly.

They nodded again.

"Rexy still around?" He asked slowly.

They nodded.

Zach bit his lip. "She still... uh..." What had Owen called it? "Team Raptor?" Blue snorted and tossed her head. Zach got the feeling she didn't approve of the name. But Echo and Charlie both
nodded their heads. Zach breathed out, relieved. That solved one blaring problem. He wasn't in
danger of being eaten by Ida. Or Rexy, he was pretty sure.

"Oh..." He suddenly remembered. He turned and walked towards the jeep. "I uh... brought you guys
something." He reached over into the passenger seat and pulled out his backpack. He knelt down to
unzip it. Echo darted closer and bent down. Zach smiled and pushed her nose away. "Hold on, be
patient." Echo snorted and tried to press closer again. Zach laughed. He pulled the bag open and
peered in it. Then pulled out an orange stuffed animal. He held it out to Echo.

The youngest raptor stared at it for a moment. Then she let out a delighted quick and grabbed the
stuffed Nemo toy.

Zach smiled. "You like it?"

Echo was suddenly rolling around on the ground, rubbing the toy against her face.

"So... yes, right?" He said with a smile. He dipped his hand in his bag again and pulled out another
orange fish stuffed animal. "Charlie, I got you the dad... Marly or something."

Echo stopped and looked over at him. She snorted and shook her head.

Zach shrugged and held up his hands. "I'm sorry. I don't remember the name. I'm close, right?"

Echo snorted again as Charlie nodded her head and took the toy. Delta pressed forward and snapped,
trying to get his attention.

Zach stared at her for a moment. "Uh... I wasn't gonna forget you, I swear. I got you the shark." He
pulled out the white and gray shark from the movie. "I don't know his name... but he's kinda scary.
And you're kinda scary so..."

Delta nodded and snatched the shark between her teeth. Then she turned and stepped away, holding
her head high. She shook her head and Zach was certain she was going to destroy it.

"Blue." He pulled out the stuffed Dory last. "Dory... because she's blue and you're Blue... not
because you're... silly or forgetful..." He added quickly. "Although... you think about it... Dory's the
best one."

Echo popped up off the ground and snorted loudly. She shook her head.

"Dory's the one who keeps the dad going." Zach continued. "All positive and never giving up."

Blue blew out loudly and shook her head. Zach was sure he'd offended her. But then she darted
forward and snatched the toy from him.

Zach smiled as he zipped his backpack up and stood back up. He turned back to the jeep and tossed
it in the backseat. "So... you guys can take me to Owen's, right?" He asked, turning back towards
them. "I've only been there once... and it was really dark when we drove there... and Owen was
really drunk... I don't think I can find it."

Blue snorted loudly, like she was laughing. Zach smiled at her. Then he climbed in the jeep and
started it up. Blue walked over to the jeep and dropped her stuffed Dory on the passenger seat. Delta
watcher her and then followed to copy. Echo snatched Charlie's and dropped both inside.

Zach was once again following the raptors through the jungle. This time, they followed the road and
Zach thought maybe he vaguely remembered the way. But, on the other hand, he'd been slightly
distracted by the drunk man trying to crawl into his lap at the time. Zach much preferred that to this.

He bit his lip as the jeep pulled out of the trees and Owen's trailer loomed ahead. Zach slowed the jeep to a stop and shifted it into park. He leaned back in the seat and let out a heavy sigh. It looked suddenly empty and alone. Echo popped her head over the passenger side of the jeep. She made quick work of gathering all the stuffed animals and passing them out to her sisters.

Zach watched them for a moment. He couldn't help but smile. They were so much like little kids. He could understand why Owen was so attached to them. He was starting to feel that way himself. Zach climbed out of the jeep. He leaned against the hard metal and shoved his hands in his pockets. Echo darted straight up to the door. She turned around and chirped loudly at him. Zach waited a moment longer, watching her wiggle with a smile. Then he pushed off the jeep and stepped towards the door slowly. Echo stepped back as Zach walked past.

For some unknown reason, he was nervous. Really nervous. His hand shook as he reached for the door knob. The door was unlocked and he eased it open. It was quiet. Way too quiet. Of course it was quiet. Zach stepped in and looked around. It still looked the same. Zach turned slowly. He didn't know what he expected. Why would the trailer look any different? Why would it offer a clue to what had happened to Owen after they last talked? Whatever it had been had probably happened far away. Not right here in Owen's living room.

Zach let out a sigh. He reached out and ran his fingers along the top of the small kitchen counter as he walked by. It seemed almost surreal to be in Owen's trailer without the man there. Everything reminded him of the man. Because everything was him. Zach felt tears start to well in his eyes. He dipped his head and rubbed at his eyes quickly. This wasn't doing anyone any good. He needed to suck it up and stay positive.

The door opened again and Zach turned to see Charlie. She stopped and tilted her head. Zach nodded and waved her in. "Yeah, you can come in." Echo had been right behind her. She overheard and suddenly pushed inside, nearly knocking her hobbled sister over in the process.

Zach held up his hands. "Wait, wait! Owen said you guys were too big to all fit in here!" Echo ducked down, pressing herself to the ground. She let out a squeak. Zach sighed, watching her. But they weren't really that big. Zach glanced around the small room. If he moved the computer stuff off the small coffee table to the kitchen counter, and pushed the couch and table into the small bedroom, there would be plenty of room for the 4 raptors and Owen to sit and watch Finding Nemo. Zach smiled as he imagined it. Then glanced down at Echo, still on the floor. And he quickly realized he'd have to do just that.

Chapter End Notes

You will get to find out what happened with Owen, Ida, and the raptors. 8D In a few chapters. For now, just enjoy Zach and raptor bond time.
Take air in. Exhale air out. Repeat. Over and over again. Don't think. Don't fret. Don't let his mind linger on the fact that he left a kid alone on an island filled with dinosaurs. He closed his eyes and concentrated on the simple act. Breathing. He took another deep breath as he leaned back in his seat. This felt wrong. This whole thing felt wrong. Very wrong. Claire was going to kill him. The kid's parents were going to kill him. Owen himself would probably kill him when he was better.

Bad, bad, bad. He'd just have to get back to the island as soon as possible. Get a team together to assess the damage and determine when they could reopen. And how this whole thing could and would be avoided in the future. A third major disaster on the island and the whole place would have to be scrapped. What would happen to all the animals then? And the workers? And Owen?

He was sitting in the waiting room. Doing just that. Waiting. They arrived in recorded time. Simon had called ahead and a team of nurses and a doctor he knew he could trust were waiting. They whisked Owen away the moment they arrived. "We'll do everything we can." The young doctor had said. And then Simon was left alone.

It hadn't been long. Just a matter of minutes he'd been sitting alone in the room. But it hadn't been quiet. Simon stared down at the ringing phone in his hand. It had been ringing non-stop the entire time he'd been there, not giving him a moment of peace. Mom, Dad, and Home flashed across the display. With a sigh, he pulled out his own phone. He opened his contacts and scrolled through it quickly. He hit Claire's number and put the phone to his ear.

"Mr. Masrani." She said as she answered. "Did you make it to the island?"

"We did." He breathed out, leaning back in his seat. He rubbed at his forehead.

"Something go wrong, sir?" Claire asked.

"No." He said quickly. "We found Owen and got him safely off the island. We're at my hospital now."

"How is he?" She asked softly.
"He was unresponsive but alive when we found him." Simon paused for a moment. "This exact moment, I'm not sure. I haven't heard anything yet."

She breathed out a sigh of relief. "Well... that's still good news. Any idea what happened?"

"No." Simon said slowly. "We probably won't know until Owen recovers."

"Yes." Claire agreed. "How's everything on the island holding up?" She asked, her voice taking on her business tone.

Simon rolled his eyes and shook his head. "I was more concerned with Owen." He said. "I didn't spare any time to check anything."

"Oh... alright then." She said, sounding a tad disappointed. "When can I tell my sister to expect Zach home?"

Simon stood up slowly. He didn't answer right away and glanced at the clock on the wall.

"Mr. Masrani? Are you still there?"

"Yes." He said after a moment.

"Oh." She breathed out. "I thought we got disconnected."

"No."

"You didn't answer."

Simon let out a sigh and ran a hand through his hair. No, he hadn't answered. Of course he hadn't answered her. He didn't want to answer her. Not really. But it would be the responsible thing. The grown up thing. "Claire... he's not with me." He finally admitted it.

"Zach?" She said his name quickly.

"Zach..." Simon started walking across the room slowly. "Has remained on the island..."

It was Claire's turn to pause. "You left my nephew on the island alone?" She finally asked.

"No, no. Of course not. That would be irresponsible." Simon said quickly. "I left him with Lowery." He added.

"Lowery?" Claire asked, sounding confused. "What's Lowery doing there?"

"He remained behind to help Owen." Claire let out a sigh. "Why didn't I know this?"

"I do not know." Simon answered truthfully. "But Zach is... assisting Lowery now, since Owen is unable." He lied.

"Assisting?" She didn't sound convinced. "How?"

At least, he didn't have to lie about that. "The raptors are quite attached to him." He answered honestly.

"Attached?"
"Yes." Simon answered. He reached the end of the small room and turned to pace the other way. "Like ducks."

"Ducks?" There was a slight edge to her voice as she said the word.

"Little ducklings, following their mother around mindlessly."

Claire was silent again. Then she sighed loudly. "I can't believe you left him." She said flatly.

Simon rolled his eyes. "He's perfectly safe!" At least, he hoped.

"I don't know how I'm going to explain this to my sister."

Simon shrugged slightly and shifted the phone to his other ear. "Internship. College credit. Make up something and I'll make it happen."

She sighed again. "Fine. I'll do what I can. How's Lowery holding up?"

Simon stopped. He blinked and opened his mouth slowly. He'd completely forgotten about Lowery. He'd told Gray's brother he'd call Lowery with an update to pass along. But he'd neglected to inform Lowery. "I... seem to have forgotten all about him."

"You forgot..."

"Again..." Simon said slowly. "Pressing matters with the raptor trainer."

"I will be there by morning."

"No." He shook his head. "Absolutely not."

"Mr. Masrani, I really must insist."

"I assure you, your nephew is fine. He is perfectly safe." He stopped and glanced at the clock again. He really hoped he was telling the truth. "As is Lowery." He added quickly. "And I will be back as soon as possible. You finish your vacation. We will see you next month."

"Fine." She forced out, her voice sounding strained. "A week."

Simon tilted his head to the side and paused his pacing. Zach's phone had starting ringing again. He quickly shifted his phone and pulled Zach's out of his pocket. He glanced at it and read the display. He smiled. "Fine. See you in a week. I have to go. Gray's calling."

"Gray?"

He hung up on her and shoved his phone in his pocket. Then he put Zach's phone to his ear. "Gray!" He said the kid's name excitedly.

"Uh... Mr. Masrani? Is that you?" Gray asked in surprise over the line.

Simon smiled. "Yes, my boy!"

"What are you doing with Zach's phone?"

"He gave it to me to leave with Owen." Simon answered.

"He's not with you?" Gray asked.
"No." Simon said softly. "That's why I answered when you called. Hopefully Claire's speaking with your parents right now and explaining to them the lie I told her."

"Lie?"

Simon started pacing the room again. "I told her your brother was assisting Lowery. I might have insinuated he'd be in the control room."

"But..." Gray started softly. "He's not in the control room with Lowery?"

Simon shrugged. "I'm sure eventually they'll get acquainted. But no. That's not why he stayed."

"Then why did he?"

"He's staying with the raptors." Simon answered.

"The... raptors?" Gray repeated.

"Yes." Simon said, nodding his head.

"Why are you telling me?" Gray asked.

"I trust you with the knowledge." Simon answered. "You told me about the raptors. You told me how... special they were. And they follow your brother around. Like ducks."

Gray laughed softly. "You think without Owen, they imprinted on Zach?"

"Yes! Exactly that!" Simon said, excitement in his voice again. "I witnessed it. It was amazing. He actually talked to them. Like they understood. And they answered! Apparently they asked him to stay. Well..." He paused. "I don't know if it was so much asking... as demanding. They seemed pretty adamant that he stay."

Gray laughed again. "I can imagine. I've seen the puppy dog eyes Echo can give."

Simon smiled and laughed with him for a moment. Then he let out a sigh. "Gray, there's another reason I trusted you with this. Your parents..."

"I didn't tell them, I swear." Gray said quickly, interrupting him. "Aunt Claire called and told them. Then they asked me and I told them I didn't know. But I did know. Zach left a note. He hid it in my room and..."

"It's okay, Gray." Simon said with a smile. "I know it wasn't you. That was me. I realized I sort of kidnapped your brother. It was all in very poor taste."

Gray hummed slightly over the line. "He'll be 18 in a few months. He keeps talking about leaving the second he can. Don't really think you could kidnap him."

"Still a minor at the moment, living under your parents." Simon breathed out and shook his head. "The real reason I told you... I was hoping you could help convince your parents of the lie. Tell them how well the raptors listen to your brother. Or... tell him Owen was... training him to... train them... or something."

"Well... he said he was going to." Gray admitted softly. "But they didn't get around to it."

Simon smiled. "So not completely a lie."
"Mr. Masrani..."

"Call me Simon." He said quickly.

"Simon..." Gray started again. "Is Zach really safe?"

Simon paused for a moment in his pacing. He dropped his gaze to the floor and let out a soft sigh. "Honestly... I don't know. But... the way I saw the raptors act around him, I feel confident that yes, he's safe. And I promise, as soon as I can, I will be back on the island. And... I'm pretty sure your aunt will, too."

"If you talk to him... can you tell him... I miss him?"

Simon smiled. "I will."

"Thanks." Gray said softly. "How's Owen?"

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

The raptors were asleep, all piled on top of each other in front of the TV. There was hardly enough room for them. But they'd all been happy to watch movies and fall asleep. Zach had sat in the back, on one of the kitchen stools. He trusted the raptors. Well... he was pretty sure he trusted the raptors. Mostly. But it was weird to be so close to them, to be in the same room with them, without a wall or a raptor trainer between them. It still felt dangerous and foolish. He wasn't sure he'd be able to sleep in the trailer with them.

Zach let out a sigh as some dancing snowman was singing on the TV screen. Some animated movie he'd never seen was playing. Zach wasn't paying any attention to it. He had no clue what was going on or why there was a reindeer eating a pie. He was contemplating turning it off when he heard a beeping sound. He frowned and looked around. After a few more beeps, he realized it was the computer.

Incoming video call. Zach's eyes widened as he quickly hit the accept button. An image of Simon's face appeared on the screen. The man smiled. "Gray's brother! Can you see me?"

Zach smiled and nodded. "Yeah, Mr. Masrani." He whispered.

"Call me Simon." He man said with a smile. "Why are you whispering?"

Zach turned the screen slightly, showing the man a view of the raptors. "They're sleeping. Didn't want to wake them. Echo would want to talk to you." He turned the screen back around.

"Cute." Simon said. "Where are you?"

"Owen's trailer..." Zach said slowly, trying to act like it wasn't odd. It really wasn't. He was watching the raptors. The raptors belonged to Owen. So... yes. He should totally stay at Owen's trailer.

"And you're all together there?" Simon asked.

Zach nodded his head.

Simon was silent for a moment. He looked away and let out a sigh. "I can't help but feel like this is irresponsible."

Zach shrugged. "It probably is."
Simon glanced back at the screen and smiled.

Zach cleared his throat. "So... uh... is Owen... okay?" He asked, trying not to sound so invested.

Simon nodded quickly. "Oh yes. He's in surgery at the moment, to repair a collapsed lung."

Zach's eyes widened and he swallowed. "His lung?" He repeated, his voice shaking a bit.

Simon nodded. "He's got some severe internal bruising and several deep lacerations on his chest and back. The doctor is... sort of surprised he lasted this long without medical attention. You said you thought it'd been five days, right?"

Zack nodded absentmindedly and glanced at the raptor pile. He wondered again what had happened to Owen. "Yeah... I guess... the raptor stuff... makes him stronger or something." Zach shook his head and looked back at the screen. "Did they... find anything weird?"

Simon shrugged slightly and tilted his head. "I don't know yet. The doctor only stopped for a few minutes to brief me. I will remain here until they are done and I can speak with him, make sure he's as trustworthy as I think or if I need to buy him off."

Zach smiled slightly. "Thanks... uh... for everything you're doing for us... uh... Owen!" He correctly quickly.

Simon nodded. "I talked to your aunt and fed her a lie that you're helping Lowery. So... if you do talk to her or your parents, please pass that along."

Zach nodded quickly.

"And I spoke with your brother."

Zach's eyes widened a bit. "Gray?"

Simon nodded. "I sort of told him the truth. I said the raptors wanted you to stay. So you're staying with them."

"Gray... say anything?" Zach asked slowly.

Simon tilted his head to the side. "About what?"

Zach shook his head. "Never mind." He trusted Gray wouldn't say anything about him and Owen.

Simon turned away for a moment. "I'm getting another call. I have to take this. I'll call you again when Owen's out of surgery."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry it took so long. It shouldn't take very long for the next one. I was just putting off the boring talk. XD
Surgery. Simon had said surgery. And then hung up. Zach swallowed as he stared at the computer screen. Surgery. Collapsed lung. Deep cuts and internal bruising. That all sounded bad. Really bad. But... it could have been worse. It probably should have been worse. He knew that. So much worse.

Zach nodded to himself and breathed out. Owen was alive. That was the important part. Owen was alive and at a hospital and in surgery. With a doctor. Who worked on humans, he assumed. He didn't think Simon would take him to an animal doctor. Oh god! Had Simon taken him to an animal doctor? Owen would be mad. He'll probably be mad to be at any hospital, human or animal.

Zach stared at the computer screen for a moment. Simon said he had talked to Gray. And Claire. He hopped Claire could keep his parents out of his hair for a while. Gray though, he wouldn't mind talking to Gray. Gray knew part of the truth. It took a few minutes worth of fiddling with the computer to get the video calling program up. And a few long, embarrassing minutes trying to remember his brother's cell phone number. He never actually dialed it or looked at the display. He just clicked on Gray's name.

He finally remembered the number and typed it into the computer. It started ringing. And seemed to ring for a long time. Then finally, Gray's face appeared on the screen. "Zach!" The kid said his name excitedly.

Zach smiled. "Hey Gray. Just wanted to say hi."


Zach nodded quickly. "Yeah, I'm safe."

"Good!" Gray said with a nod. "When I talked to Simon, he didn't sound too sure. I can't believe he just left you!"

Zach shrugged slightly. "He didn't have a choice."

"Still..." Gray breathed out. "If anyone knew the truth..."
Zach didn't want them to find out the truth. He wasn't really sure what they could or would do to him or Simon if they found out. "Mom and dad freaking out?" He asked after a moment.

Gray nodded. "Dad yelled a lot." He said softly. "Mom cried."

Zach sighed and looked across the trailer at the raptors. "Don't tell them I called you, okay? I don't want them to know where I am... I'll go see Lowery tomorrow and find a real phone to call them from."

Gray nodded again. "I won't. I promise. But uh... where are you?" Zach smiled and turned the screen slightly. Gray's eyes widened. "You're in Owen's trailer? With the raptors?"

Zach nodded.

"That's so cool!" Gray squealed out.

"Shhh!" Zach let out a soft laugh and nodded. "I guess so. It's certainly weird."

"Simon said... you can talk to them?"

Zach shrugged. "A little bit, I guess. Mostly it's just me talking and them nodding or something. I honestly have no clue how much they understand. I'm probably just talking to myself."

Gray smiled. "Maybe you can teach me."

Zach looked back at the raptor pile. Echo was laying on her side, hugging the small orange plush against her. A tuft of gray was sticking out from under Delta, like she was completely laying on top of the shark. He wasn't sure it was something he could teach. Owen didn't actually teach him. It just sort of happened. He was certain it had something to do... with them being... them. Whatever they were. Owen was part raptor. The raptors were like his kids. And Zach... He smiled as he thought about it. He was part of their weird little family.

A couple silent moments ticked by before Gray spoke. "What are you thinking about?"

Zach blinked and looked back at the screen. "What?"

"You're smiling." Gray said. "Really big. Like silly looking."

Zach looked away again.

"You're thinking about Owen, right?"

Zach closed his eyes for a moment and let out a sigh.

"He's going to be okay, Zach." Gray said softly. "I know it."

"How?" Zach asked, his voice barely a whisper.

"Because." Gray said. "You said you were soulmates. So he has to be okay."

Zach looked back at the screen. "That's not really a thing."

"Yes it is."

Zach smiled. "Thanks, Gray. I'll call you tomorrow, okay?"
Gray nodded. "The raptors, too?"

Zach smiled and nodded. "Yeah, the raptors too. Love ya, squirt."

Gray smiled and waved. "Love you, too!"

Zach switched it off and stood up. He glanced at the raptors and Blue was staring at him. She was still laying between Delta and Charlie, and half under Echo. But she had lifted her head and trained her eyes on. Zach lifted his hand and waved at her. She just blinked at him. Despite everything, he just wasn't ready to sleep in the same room with them. He pointed towards the bedroom door. Blue nodded her head and then laid her head back down, her eyes still on him.

He smiled and quickly stepped towards the door. He slipped inside the partially opened door. The couch and coffee table took up the small room and kept the door from closing all the way. He climbed over the couch to get to the bed. Then flopped down on it. It wasn't made. The blanket was bunched up on the side and the pillows were piled up on top of one another on the bottom corner. He was suddenly really tired. The stress of the whole day, really the whole week, had finally caught up with him. He pulled the blanket up and pushed the pillows to the head foot he bed.

The bed ready, he paused for a moment. He didn't have anything to sleep in. Actually, he didn't have any extra clothes. Or anything. He hadn't brought anything but the toys for the raptors. He hadn't expected to stay. He jumped up and reached for the dresser. He opened a couple drawers and pulled out a t-shirt. It was old and faded, with a weird looking baby dinosaur on the front and the words Not The Mama across the top.

Zach shrugged and shut the drawers. He just needed something to sleep in. He'd worry about his lack of clothes and stuff tomorrow. He peeled off his pants and shift, then quickly pulled on Owen's shirt.

Owen's shirt. Zach stopped, his fingers still on the hem of the shirt. Owen's shirt. He was in Owen's bedroom. He'd just gone through Owen's dresser. He was wearing Owen's shirt. And he was going to sleep in Owen's bed. He swallowed and glanced at the bed. Then he sighed and shook his head. There was no reason to feel weird or nervous. Owen wasn't here. Before he could psych himself out further, he climbed into Owen's bed, pulled Owen's blanket up over himself, and laid his head down on Owen's pillow. Just sleep, he thought. He just needed to sleep. He breathed in deeply and smiled.

Owen was all around him. The pillows, the sheets, the blanket, the shirt. Everything smelled like the raptor alpha. And it made him feel safe. Zach closed his eyes.
Team Raptor

Chapter Summary

Zach tries.

Chapter Notes

This chapter just kept getting longer. And longer. And getting a bit out of control. So much that I actually cut it shorter than where it was supposed to stop. I just don't know WHY! But I guess good for you. Slightly longer than normal chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

He runs. As fast as he can. He runs. He darts and moves around, through, and over the trees. He's nearly flying through them, through the jungle. The edges of his vision blurs slightly as he moves. He hardly sees them anymore. He just moves. Instinct drives him. Not fear or terror. Neither emotion grips him. Just something telling him to run. Just for the fun of it. The wind in his hair and the leaves and brush pulling against his legs and arms.

There's a squeal to his right.

Then a voice to his left, calling his name. But it's not his human name, not a human voice.

Zach opened his eyes slowly. It took a few minutes for the dream to fade and reality to set back in. He was still in Owen's bed. Zach closed his eyes for a moment and hugged the pillow against his face. Such a weird, comforting, safe feeling. Then he heard the squeal again and opened his eyes reluctantly. "Echo." He called out. "Is that you?"

A moment later, her head peeked into the room. She chirped and titled her head.

"No, no." Zach sat up quickly and lifted his arms. "You can't come in here." He said. He stifled a yawn and rubbed at his eyes. "You can't fit. Not with the couch and table."

Echo let out a whine.

"Give me a minute." He said. "I'll be right out."

Echo snorted and ducked back out.

Zach yawned again and stretched his arms above his head. He craned his neck, cracking and popping his joints as he moved. He'd slept really well. Surprisingly well, despite everything. He closed his eyes and breathed in deeply. He let the presence of Owen settle around him for another moment. And then there was a loud chirp. Zach rolled his eyes and rolled out of the bed. "Echo!" He snapped her name. "I said give me a minute!" He climbed over the couch and peeked out. Echo was the only one in the room. "Where's your sisters?"

Echo turned and pointed her nose at the door.
Outside?

She nodded.

Zack walked over to the computer. He glanced down at the screen and sighed. No messages or missed calls or however the thing worked. He had no clue what Simon was doing now. Or where he was or what time it was there. He had no clue what hospital it was or where it was. He'd just have to wait. And he couldn't really just stay at the trailer all day and wait for a call. He had to do the responsible thing. He had to get to Lowery. He had to call his parents. And he had to take care of the raptors. Whatever that entailed.

"So..." He said, looking over at Echo. "We should... go to the... whatever it's called... the central plaza thing?"

Echo nodded her head.

Zach glanced down and fingered Owen's shirt for a moment. "Too big." He mumbled. "I'll go put my clothes back on and we can leave, I guess."

Echo shook her head quickly.

Zach looked up at her and frowned. "What?" She chirped happily again and bent down to pick something up. Zach stepped around the counter to watch her. She held something between her teeth and stepped closer. Zach tilted his head and stared at her. "Echo. Where did you get that?" He touched the fabric and she let go. She bobbed her head and let out a happy chirp.

Zach unfolded it. It was a shirt, with he Jurassic World log and a picture of Rexy on the front. "You... got me a shirt..."

Echo pointed to the floor.

"And shorts." The shorts also had the Jurassic World logo and what looked like dinosaur tracks printed up the side. Zach stared at Echo for a moment longer. Then he shrugged, took the clothes, and slipped into Owen's bedroom to change. "You broke into the gift shop, didn't you?"

Echo nodded her head.

"Come on." Zach said, shaking his head. "Let's go." He grabbed the jeep keys and headed outside. The other raptors were outside. Waiting. Zach looked at them sheepishly. "Uh... I guess you guys are used to getting up earlier..."

Blue snorted and nodded her head. She didn't look too happy with him.

Zach swallowed and headed for the jeep. "Sorry." He climbed inside and closed the door. "Okay... so... Lowery's in the control room, right?"

They all nodded.

"He's always in the control room."

Charlie let out an amused sounding snort and nodded her head. Blue let out an impatient sounding snort and ran off. Delta glanced at Zach and followed.

Zach sighed. "Great start." He mumbled.

Echo chirped happily and nodded her head. Charlie shook hers and nudged Eco. Then the two
followed after their sisters at a slower pace.

Zach started the jeep, put it in gear, and followed.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

They arrived at the central plaza. Blue and Delta were nowhere to be seen. Zach frowned as he shut the jeep door. "Okay. Level with me." He turned towards Charlie and Echo. "I pissed Blue off, right?"

Echo tilted her head to the side, looking confused. But Charlie nodded her head.

Zach stepped closer to Charlie. "Is it just the sleeping in thing? You guys coulda woke me up."

Charlie shook her head.

"Okay. Not the sleeping thing." Zach scratched at the back of his neck while he tried to think. "The Nemo toys? Was she offended?"

Charlie shook her head and Echo opened her mouth wide, like she couldn't believe it.

Zach smiled for a moment. Then he turned slightly and went back to thinking. "Is she mad I'm here?" He glanced back.

Charlie shook her head again.

"Is she mad I'm... uh... with Owen?"

Charlie shook her head quickly that time.

Zach sighed and threw up his hands. "Then what? Does she just hate me?"

They both shook their heads at that.

Zach sighed again and shook his head. This conversation was getting him nowhere. Yes and no questions weren’t working. He was still no closer to finding out what was up with Blue then when he got out of the jeep. The language barrier was going to be a problem. "Never mind." He said dismissively, shoving his hands in his pockets.

Echo let out a soft whine and glanced at Charlie. The two raptors conversed for a moment. Echo tilted her head to the side as Charlie seemed to be explaining something. Then Echo nodded and turned back to Zach. She stepped towards him and nudged his chest gently.

Zach breathed out and straightened up. Another game of charades. "Okay. Me." Echo nodded. Then she stepped back. Then she flopped down on the ground and tilted her head to the side. Zach frowned as he watched her. "What... sitting..." He didn’t get it. "You're not doing anything."

Charlie nodded her head.

Zach blinked at them for a moment. "She thinks I do nothing... she thinks I'm lazy?"

Charlie nodded her head as Echo stood up.

Zach rolled his eyes and shook his head. "One night!" He said, throwing up his arms. "One night and she already thinks I'm lazy!"
Charlie tilted her head to the side and shook her head slightly.

"What?" He frowned. "Not just from last night?"

Charlie shook her head again.

Zach's mouth fell open. "What has Owen been telling you? It was summer break! I'm supposed to be lazy during summer break!"

Charlie breathed out and Echo let out a snort.

"Don't I get any credit for agreeing to stay?"

They both nodded.

Zach sighed again. "So... I have to prove to Blue that I'm not lazy... by... doing stuff? Like Owen? I mean... I can't do the stuff Owen does... not the way he does... but like..." He closed his eyes and rubbed at his forehead. "Hanging with you guys I can do. Hanging with Lowery, too, I guess. Though that was never Owen's favorite thing to do."

Charlie let out snort.

Zach opened his eyes and smiled. "And I guess I have to check on Ida's eggs and Moe and..." He paused for a moment and shivered. "Rexy..."

Charlie and Echo both nodded.

"And getting up earlier wouldn't hurt, right?"

They nodded again.

"Okay." Zach clapped his hands together. "One of you has to be my alarm clock. I don't do early on purpose."

Echo bobbed her head excitedly.

"Good." Zach said with a nod. "We have a plan." He glanced around, looking for signs of Blue and Delta. "Wait... the gift shop..." He said with a smile. There was a very Echo-looking hole in the glass. "You literally broke into the gift shop."

Echo nodded her head.

"Well... since you already did... you two stay here. I'll be right back." Zach ran through the gift shop as quick as he could. He grabbed a couple changes of clothes. Everything was plastered with various dinosaurs from the park. The boxers with Echo's face he found particularly creepy and steered clear. That was just all sorts of wrong. He didn't think Simon or Claire would mind. And if they really did, he'd keep track and pay them back. He found a toothbrush and quickly returned to the jeep and waiting raptors. He threw his stolen items in the back of the jeep. "Let's go check on the eggs."

Zach followed the raptors towards the science building. They didn't head for the doors and instead walked around the side of the building. Where there was another hole in the glass. Echo climbed through without pausing and Charlie stepped back. She turned to look at Zach. Zach shook his head.

"You guys didn't break into stuff when Owen was here, right?"

Charlie shook her head quickly.
Zach stepped closer to the window. He carefully pulled himself up through it. "So you can't get through locked doors. Just break the windows." He jumped down and landed behind Echo. She let out a chirp and nodded his head. Zach shook his head as he moved out of the way and Charlie climbed in. Once she was safely inside, he straightened up and looked around. He followed behind Echo as she weaved through the various tables, incubators, and whatever else was in there he didn't understand.

Finally, Echo stopped and started wiggling beside a large incubator. Zach stepped closer to the eggs. He swallowed nervously and glanced back at Charlie. She stepped up beside him and nudged his arm gently. Zach looked back at the eggs. Five of them. He breathed out and shook his head. They looked about eight inches long and maybe five inches thick at the widest part.

"I thought they'd be bigger." He said softly. "I guess... they'll grow."

Charlie nodded her head. Echo touched one of the eggs gently with her nose. Charlie let out a soft growl.

Zach glanced between the two of them. "I'm guessing no touching."

Charlie tilted her head to the side.

"No Echo touching." Zach corrected.

Charlie nodded her head and Echo let out a whine.

"Step back." Zach said. He stepped around the incubator, moving between it and Echo. She let out a whine but stepped back. Zach continued walking around it. He didn't understand it. He didn't understand how it worked or how it was controlled or anything about it. Of course he didn't. But he was certain Owen new at least the basics of it.

"Attention intruder."

Zach's head snapped up to the ceiling and he stopped. "The hell is that?"

"Oh uh... hold on." The ceiling said. "I forgot the audio... and there. Okay. Repeat, please?"

Zach rolled his eyes. "Lowery." He vaguely remembered the man's voice from the hamster ball.

"Yes. Who are you?"

"Zach." He said. "Claire's nephew."

"Dude!" Lowery actually squealed. "The one who fell into the raptor paddock!"

Zach sighed and crossed his arms. "I didn't fall. I was pushed." He mumbled.

"Man. That was so awesome!"

Zach's mouth fell opened. "It was not. I was terrified! I almost got eaten."

Charlie shook her head.

Zach looked over at her. "Charlie, that was before. Can you honestly tell me when I landed inside your home, that you didn't think about ripping my arm off?"

Charlie looked away from him.
"Are you still talking to me?" Lowery said over the intercom. "I can't tell. I lost audio again. Damnit! Please don't leave! I have no clue what's going on." His voice rose in pitch a bit, taking on a whining, desperate tone. "I haven't seen Owen in over a week and haven't heard from Simon and I ran out of Poptarts!" Lowery's voice continued rambling on.

Zach turned to Charlie. "Can we get to the control room from here or do we need to brake more windows?"

Charlie nodded her head and walked off.

"Wait... was that a yes to going or a yes to breaking windows?"

The three of them headed out of the lab and into the hall and towards the elevators. The doors opened as they stepped inside. Then the door closed and Lowery's voice came over the speakers. "But no one even likes the brown sugar cinnamon ones! Have you seen those Maple Bacon ones? Those were amazing!"

The elevator came to a stop and the door opened. Charlie let out an excited squeal and dashed inside. Zach stepped out slower, Echo moving with him. Zach glanced around the room. It certainly looked like a man had been living in there. Trash and various articles of clothing were strewn all over the place. And it was hard to miss the mattress and blankets on the floor in the center.

"Where have you guys been?" Lowery asked, smiling at Charlie. He was sitting at his desk.

"You don't know anything?" Zach asked.

Lowery shook his head.

Zach let out a sigh as he stepped closer and pulled over a chair. Echo and Charlie settled down on the floor and Zach leaned forward. He started with what he knew. Something happened with Ida that he didn't know the details of. But it ended with her being killed and Owen being badly injured. Then he backtracked, lied to Lowery about how Owen called him once, to talk to Gray about the Ida eggs. Then the rest was mostly the truth. Echo called him, he called Simon, Simon brought him to the island, and Simon left the island with a very injured Owen and Zach still didn't know the outcome of the surgery.

Lowery leaned back in his seat, his eyes wide. "I knew something had happened." He admitted softly. "I just... I didn't know what."

Zach sighed and glanced around again. "So you've been in here all by yourself since you last saw Owen?"

Lowery nodded slowly. "Pretty much."

"You haven't gone outside once?"

Lowery shook his head.

Zach turned back towards him. "Why not?"

Lowery leaned back in his chair. "I'm the dude with the red shirt in the landing party who doesn't have a name."

Zach frowned. "What does that mean?"
"I die first." Lowery said with a straight face.
Zach shook his head. "I still don't know what that means."

"You are really young." Lowery said flatly.
Zach crossed his arms. "You are really old."
Lowery shrugged. "It's a Star Trek reference. It really isn't funny if I have to explain it to you."

"It's not really funny anyways."

Lowery shrugged again.

"What about the raptors?" Zach asked after a moment. "I saw Echo's door hole. I assume she checks on the eggs."

"Ida's eggs?"

Zach nodded.

"Well yeah." Lowery nodded. "I've been checking on them, too. I get alerts every time there's movement in the room."

"So why didn't you go down?"

Lowery leaned closer to Zach and dropped his voice like he didn't want the raptors to hear. "I don't know if I can trust them without Owen."

Zach glanced down at Echo and Charlie. "Didn't Charlie spend a lot of time in here while she recovered?"

Lowery shrugged. "She was drugged like the whole time."

Zach stared at him for a moment. Then shook his head and leaned back in the chair. "So the eggs, they're still okay?"

Lowery nodded his head. "Far as I know."

"Any clue on when they'll hatch?"

Lowery shook his head. "None of that was my expertise. I'm strictly control room. Before and after."

Zach sighed. "So you don't really know if they're okay."

Lowery shrugged. "I guess not."

"I need to make sure they're okay." Zach said. "I need to figure out how the incubation thing works."

"Why?" Lowery asked, tilting his head to the side.

Zach sighed and leaned back in the chair. "Blue called me lazy." He mumbled.

Lowery stopped. He straighten up in his chair and turned. "Blue called you lazy." He repeated slowly.

"Yeah! Well..." Zach paused and shrugged. "She didn't tell me. Charlie and Echo told me she think
I'm lazy."
Lowery stared at him. "So you can... like Owen..."
Zach looked over at Lowery and frowned. "Like Owen what?"
"Like Owen talks to the raptors..."
"Well... Owen talks to them like they're people. So yeah, I do that, too."
Lowery squinted his eyes for a moment and then tilted his head to the side. "So... you aren't like Owen..."
Zach paused for a moment. Slowly, he turned towards Lowery. "I don't know what you mean..."
"I think you do. Or... maybe not." Lowery tilted his head the other way. "Do you?"
Zach rolled his eyes. "Of course I know!" He snapped. "How could I be here if I didn't know?"
"What... do you know?" Lowery asked awkwardly.
Zach rolled his eyes and shook his head again. He pointed at the raptors. "If they trust me enough to demand I stay here, don't you think Owen trusts me?"
Lowery tilted his head again. Then shrugged. "Guess so. How did you find out?"
"He saved me." Zach said, dropping his gaze to the floor. "From Blue when Ida had control of her."
"So... you've... seen it?"
Zach swallowed and nodded his head.
Lowery smiled widely. "Isn't it the most incredible thing ever?"
Zach shrugged. "I guess."
Lowery's mouth dropped open. "You guess?"
"At the time... I was terrified." Zach said, remembering the fear he felt. Enough that it made him pass out. And then again when he woke up and found he was alone with Blue. He swallowed and shivered.
"I just think it's cool." Lowery said softly.
Zach glared at him.
"Anyways... uh... glad you're here now." Lowery said. "Where ya staying?" He asked slowly.
"Owen's place." Zach said a tad stiffly. "Because of... the raptors." He added quickly.
"That's cool. But you could like... stay here. You know."
Zach nodded quickly. "Maybe. Was just the first place I thought of... because the raptors. And the uh... computer stuff. Oh... you have a real phone I could use? To call my parents? I didn't... uh... want them to see... the raptors."
Lowery nodded quickly. "Probably not a good thing." He turned and reached across his desk. He
grabbed his desk phone off its charger and held it out.

Zach accepted it with a smile. "Thanks." He glanced over at Charlie and Echo. "Keep quiet you two, please." They nodded and Zach quickly dialed his mother's cell phone number. It rang nearly forever before she answered.

"Hello?" She said in a soft voice.

"Mom..." Zach barely got the word out.

"Zach!" Karen practically screeched into the phone. "Oh my god! Zach! Honey, are you okay?"

Zach sighed and leaned back in his seat. "Yeah, mom. I'm fine."

Chapter End Notes

So next chapter will be half continuation of Zach and Lowery bonding time and half the actual next chapter. XD Originally all supposed to be one big chapter but oh well. Like I really have any control over this shit. Eventually we'll get to Owen and the hospital and meet his doctor. 8D
The phone call with his mom went good. Well... better than his expectations at least. Although his expectations had been very low. Really low. Extremely low. Basically, if his parents agreed not to call the cops or didn't threaten to drag him home by his hair, he was calling it a success. So it had been a success! His dad was at work so he only talked to his mom. For which, he was really glad. Mostly, she just cried. A lot.

"I'm fine, mom." He said as steadily as he could. "I promise!"

"I just don't understand..." She choked back a sob. "Why you're there!"

Zach bit his lip. "I'm helping Lowery."

"But why you?"

Zach sighed. "Because I offered to."

"That man has hundreds of people on his staff. Why would he say yes?"

"I begged him!"

"Why?"

His mind raced for a real reason. Something that would make her stop asking questions and stop thinking. "College." He blurted out. "I want to work for Simon. I'm going to college and intern and work here... at the island."

She was silent for a moment. "You really want to work at the park?" She didn't sound convinced.

Lowery turned away for a moment. He reached across his desk and picked up a tablet.

"Yes, mom." Zach said, watching the man move.

Lowery's fingers flew over the tablet and he pointed up at the screens on the wall.
Zach turned and looked up at them. He frowned slightly. It was a webpage. "University of Southern California." Zach read the highlighted title aloud.

"What?" Karen asked.

Lowery clicked on the Majors of Study tab and scrolled down to the bottom.

The tiny arrow pointer stopped and Zach read off the screen again. "Zoology and animal biology."

"Honey..." Karen sighed over the line. "What are you talking about?"

"I want to go to animal school?" He said awkwardly.

Lowery rolled his eyes and shook his head.

His mom wasn't convinced either. "Zach, I don't understand the joke here."

"It's not a joke, mom!" He said, trying to sound more serious. "I've already started looking into it. I've researched several colleges."

"You've researched colleges?" She asked skeptically. "You? Researched?"

Lowery's fingers danced across the tablet again.

"University of Florida." Zach read off the list on the screen. "University of California-Santa Barbara, Ohio State University, University of..." He rolled his eyes and shook his head as he read off more school names. No one had ever said the word university that many times in their whole lives, let alone in the span of two minutes.

"Zach!" His mother interrupted him loudly. "Are you just saying college names?"

"No!" He snapped. "They all have zoology majors! I swear!"

"Zach! Stop it!"

"I'm being serious!" He insisted. "I wanna be an animal person thing!"

"Zoologist." She said.

"Yes!" He snapped and looked at the screen again. Lowery had brought up a list of class requirements. "I'm gonna take classes in microbiology, animal behavior, ecology, genetics, en...entomology... endocrinology..." Those were some really big, really weird words. He wasn't even sure what a few of them meant.

"Zach, do you even know what endocrinology is?" His mom asked, as if reading him.

"Do I even know the endo thing is?" He repeated, glancing at Lowery. "Of course I know what is it!"

Lowery typed again and another webpage popped up.

"Mom! I can't believe you doubt me!" He said, stalling for a moment as the webpage loaded. "It's the study of biology and medicine dealing with the endocrine system and hormones." Zach quickly scanned over the next sentence. But he was having trouble wrapping his head around it. ...concerned with the integrity of developmental events proliferation, growth, and differentiation... what the fuck did that even mean? He didn't even think he could say it without completely butchering the words.
Lowery quickly highlighted a few words in the beginning of the paragraph and then a list towards the bottom.

"It deals with the metabolism, tissue function, sleep, digestion, mood, stress, respiration..." He skipped down to the bottom. "Basically everything. Hormones are fun, mom."

She was silent for a moment. "How do you know that?" She asked softly.

Zach rolled his eyes. Did she really have so little faith in him? Granted, he really didn't know all that off hand. But still! "I'm on an island in the middle of nowhere without my cell phone. You think I'm reading this off the wall or something?"

"No..."

"I can do smart things, mom."

"Calm down, Zach." She said quickly. "I just... I didn't know you were interested in... any of that. Or of any college." She added. "Or anything to do with school. Ever. In your entire life."

"Okay, I get it, mom." He mumbled softly. "But thangs change. People can change." He said, speaking honestly.

"But honey..."

"The island changed me, mom." And it had. Going to the island had changed his whole life. "I'm serious... about my future. I know what I want."

"So helping with..." She paused for a moment.

"Animals, mom. They're just animals."

"They aren't just animals, Zach." She said sourly.

"They are." Zach repeated. "Simon said he'd treat this like an internship. And he's got connections everywhere and having him on my transcript could help me get into that... southern whatever school I said earlier."

Lowery leaned heavily on his desk and shook his head.

Karen sighed over the line. "Fine. We can talk about it when you get home."

"Okay." Zach breathed out.

"When will that be?"

Zach turned away from the screen. "I don't know, mom. A couple days, probably. Or a week."

"Zach..."

"I'll call you every day!" Zach added quickly, interrupting whatever she was going to say. "I swear!"

"Fine. I don't like this Zach."

"I know." He said softly.

"But you're almost an adult. And you're safe, right?"
"Right." Zach said quickly. "The monster dinosaur is gone and most of the other dinosaurs are also
dead. Plus the fences and stuff. Totally safe. Just sitting here in the control room."

She sighed again. "I just don't understand what you are actually doing there..."

"Mom, I gotta go." He said quickly, interrupting her again. "We just got an alert. One of the galla-
giant ostrich turkey things crossed it's boarder line thing. It's brain chip thing must not be working.
Gotta go herd it back... in the jeep... and check the... brain chip thing. Love you! Call you
tomorrow!" He said everything in one, quick breath and then hung up the phone. He was going to
pay for that tomorrow, he knew.

"Brain chip thing." Lowery repeated with a straight face. "In the gala-ostrich turkey dinosaur."

"Shut up." Zach said, handing him the phone. Lowery took it and Zach leaned back in his chair. "I
just became a scientist. Thank you so much for that. Now I have to go to college and become an
animal person."

Lowery shrugged. "Just play along for a while and then tell her you changed your mind."

Echo suddenly let out a loud whine. Zach glanced over at her. "Yeah, you're done being quiet." She
nodded her head and wiggled a bit, then pointed her nose towards the screens. "Echo, we didn't
come here to watch TV." Echo snorted and laid her head back on the ground, pouting.

Lowery looked between the raptors and Zach. "You're sure you're not like Owen?"

Zach shook his head. "I'm not. I swear."

Lowery looked at him with wide eyes.

"I'm not!"

"Then how do you explain it?"

Zach dropped his gaze to the ground and shrugged slightly. "I can't really... I guess... I just...
guess..." He bit his lip. "I watched Owen interact with them... I learned a bit of their personalities...
and mostly I just guess."

"You guess." Lowery stared at him blankly.

Zach nodded. "Echo really likes watching TV."

Echo nodded her head.

"Finding Nemo is her favorite movie."

She nodded her head again.

Zach smiled. "She'd watch it every day if she could... which I'm pretty sure she'd been doing
recently."

Charlie nodded her head.

"Echo's the easiest to understand. And she'd king of a spoiled brat so..." Zach shrugged again.

"So... that's it?" Lowery sounded really disappointed. "That's your big secret? You guess!"
Zach nodded. "Plus the human mannerisms they've picked up from Owen over the years."

Lowery looked at the raptors. "He just doesn't want to tell me the secret. He's jealous of my friendship with Owen. We're like brothers. Practically twins."

Zach wrinkled his nose. "Don't say that again. Ever. Please."

"Well we totally are." Lowery said, leaning back in his chair. He crossed his arms and smiled.

Zach rolled his eyes. "Whatever."

"You can be like Owen, too." Lowery said, still smiling. "We'll be triplets."

"Oh my god!" Zach shook his head. "Stop talking!"

"Actually... that gives me an idea." Lowery leaned forward and pushed his chair away from his desk a bit.

"I don't what do know what you mean."

Lowery ignored him as he pulled open his bottom desk drawer. He rifled around in it for a moment and pulled out another tablet. He plugged it into his terminal.

Zach watched him. "What are you doing?"

"Hang on." Lowery bent over his desk. Dragging, dropping, copying files. After several long, silent minutes, he unplugged the tablet and turned back to Zach. "Here." He held it out. "You really want to learn more about the island and not be lazy, study up."

Zach took the tablet and stared down at it.

Lowery continued on. "Feeding schedules, exhibit info, histories, files about Moe, Rexy, and Ida..."

"Ida?" Zach interrupted, looking back up at Lowery. "But she's dead, right?"

Lowery nodded. "Far as I know." They both looked at the raptors. When the raptors both nodded, Lowery shrugged. "Yeah. Mommy is dead. But you asked about the eggs when you first came in."

Zach nodded. "Yeah. It's important to Owen and the raptors."

"They're the same thing."

Zach swallowed and looked away. Memories of big teeth and broken glass flashed before his eyes.

"The schematics for the incubators are on there."

Zach shook himself and nodded. He held the tablet in his lap. "Thanks." He said softly. Echo stood up. She stepped up beside Zach and pushed in closer. She bent over him to get a closer look at the tablet. Zach looked up quickly and pushed her nose away. "Echo! No touching! You'll break it!" She let out an indignant snort and shook her head.

"Oh yes you will!" Zach snapped. "You break everything! Sit back down or go outside!" Echo shook her head again. "Yeah, maybe you should wait outside, alone, for Delta and Blue."

Echo darted back to Charlie and sat down beside her. Charlie let out a snort and chirp and for a moment, the sisters bickered back and forth.
Lowery pointed at them. "Any idea what that's about?"

Zach shrugged. "I'm not that good of a guesser."

Lowery smiled and turned back to his desk. He scanned the cameras, his fingers moving over the keyboard quickly.

"What are you doing?"

"Checking."

Zach pulled his chair closer. "Can you show me?"

Lowery spent the next few hours giving Zach a virtual tour of the island. It was much different watching the video feeds than walking the park. And the lack of people and very few dinosaurs seemed eerie. Echo had gotten bored after only a few minutes. Lowery setup Netflix for her on one of the other desks and then she was happy. Charlie watched with her for a bit. Then she got bored of that and walked over to Lower and Zach. Charlie leaned over and watched the videos. She listened to Lowery talk.

"Moe's got like an iron stomach. She can eat anything." Lowery looked back at the screens. "So all the dead dinos we have all over the island thanks to Ida get fed to Moe. Owen trained those two triceratops sisters..."

"Trixie and Sera." Zach interrupted.

Lowery nodded. "He told you."

Zach nodded. "Just briefly."

Lowery looked back at the cameras. "You met Rexy yet?"

Zach's eyes widened a bit and he shook his head. "Not without very thick glass and Owen between us."

Lowery smiled and pointed to one of the camera feeds. "Well... now's your chance. Here's she comes."

Zach looked at the video. Rexy slowly stepped into the central plaza, rather close to Owen's jeep. Just below her feet, Blue and Delta raced in. They swerved around the much larger dinosaur's feet. Rexy bent down and lazily snapped at them and opened her mouth to roar. Blue roared back and Delta darted around to snap at Rexy's tail. It looked like they were all playing. Actually, it looked like they were fighting. But Zach was pretty sure it was the playing thing.

Zach swallowed again. "Uh... you met her, right?"

"Yep." Lowery answered.

"You wanna say hi?" He asked.

Lowery shook his head quickly, not missing a beat. "Nope."

"Because you're the red guy with no name."

Lowery scoffed and shook his head. "I bet Owen would get that joke." He mumbled under his breath.
"When he's better, I'll ask him."

"Good." Lowery leaned back in his chair again. "That's all I ask."

Zach glanced sideways at him. "So... you're gonna be up here... keeping watch?"

Lowery nodded. "It's what I do."

It was almost comforting. An excitable man-child shut-in watching the cameras and never leaving the control room. The key word there was almost. Because Zach doubted the man could really help if something happened. Zach could be out there, dying out in the open on the gyrofield and Lowery would be up in his chair, daydreaming about being Owen's twin.

Zach breathed out slow and steady for a moment. He could do this. If Lowery did this, he could definitely do this. He picked up the tablet and stood up. Echo bounced up quickly and Charlie followed more slowly. Without word or prompting, the three moved towards the elevator.

"Wait!" Lowery jumped up and raced across the control room.

Zach paused and turned around. "Change your mind?"

Lowery frowned and shook his head. "Oh hell no. I don't hang with monster lizards that could use me as a toothpick."

Zach let out a shaky laugh and shook his head. "You think if she really wanted you between her teeth, the walls and glass would stop her."

Lowery blinked and his mouth dropped open slowly.

"Owen told her exactly where you are." Zach continued on, trying to joke around with the man. "And you never leave. Ever."

Lowery glanced around the control room. "I uh... she wouldn't... uh..."

"I'm just kidding, Lowery. She wouldn't do that." Zach turned towards Charlie and Echo. "Right?"

Echo shook her head but Charlie tilted hers to the side. Lowery let out a gasp.

"She's kidding, too!" Zach said loudly. "If Rexy really thought that, she'd done by now."

"Oh my god!"

Zach frowned. "That sounded so much better in my head."

Lowery turned. He reached for the nearest chair and sunk down heavily on it.

"Lowery." Zach said his name softly.

Lowery pulled his glassed off and rubbed at his forehead. He slumped forward a bit, his elbows on his knees.

Echo let out an impatient whine. Zach waved them towards the elevator. "Go head. I'll be right down." He leaned in and pressed the ground floor button. The door closed and the raptors were gone. Zach turned back. "Lowery." He stepped towards the broken looking man slowly. "I really was just joking. You're safe up here."
Lowery sighed loudly and leaned back. "I know." He said softly as he lifted his glasses up to squint at them. He frowned and lowered back to his lap. He used the hem on his shirt to clean them off.

Zach pulled a chair closer and sat down.

"I don't know." Lowery finally said after a few minutes of cleaning. He slipped his glasses back on and looked at some unknown spot across the control room. "Honestly... I'm so in over my head. I don't know what I was thinking, offering to stay to help Owen. The guy doesn't even like me."

"He does..." Zach said softly.

Lowery looked over at him. "No he doesn't." He shook his head. "I'm not stupid. I know I'm just an annoyance to him. He only tolerates me because I do the control room shit. I was stupid enough to stay behind because I thought we could actually... bond or something." Lowery looked away again, shaking his head. "Sounds so stupid to say it out loud. But he's just... awesome."

Zach smiled a bit and looked away, glad Lowery wasn't looking at him. "He is." He agreed softly.

"I guess I thought... I could be awesome too." Lowery continued. "If I stayed. But I can't leave the building. I'm terrified. I don't know what I'm doing. At all."

Zach couldn't think of anything comforting to say. Nothing that would make Lowery feel better. The man was speaking the truth. Owen thought him annoying and he couldn't leave the building. The only help he could do involved staying right where he was, the control room.

Zach sighed and looked at the screen. Echo and Charlie had made it outside. Echo was now running around Rexy in tight circles. "I don't know what I'm doing either." He admitted softly. "You think you're terrified and in over your head..." Zach swallowed and closed his eyes for a moment. "I thought I was coming just to help Simon get Owen away from the raptors. They like me... for whatever dumb reason, Echo really likes me. And I thought... I could get Owen away from them so Simon could get him to a hospital. And then when Echo demanded I stay..." Zach's voice cracked a bit. "I've never been more terrified in my life. The idea of being on the island... alone with them... without a fence or Owen in between us..." His voice trailed off and he dropped his gaze to his lap.

"You look like you're doing fine." Lowery said softly after a moment.

Zach looked up at him. "So do you." He said softly.

Lowery let out a sigh. "So... we're both in over our heads trying to help our awesome friend Owen."

Zach nodded. "At least you actually work here. I'm no one."

Lowery shrugged. "I don't know about that. You look like you belong here, too. You actually look like the gift shop threw up on you."

Zach smiled slightly. "Wasn't planning on staying and Echo has no hang-ups about breaking and entering."

Lowery smiled and let out a laugh. "No, she doesn't."

Zach stood up and glanced at the elevators for a moment. "Sure you don't want to?"

Lowery nodded his head quickly as he stood up. "Very sure. I'm fine being the control room guy."

Zach nodded. "We'll stop by before we head back to the trailer."
Lowery smiled quickly and then pulled his lips taut and shrugged. "If you want to. I don't care."

Zach rolled his eyes. "Whatever."

"If you need to get a hold of me, there's a radio in Owen's jeep. I'm here. All the time. Like we've already established."

Zach smiled again and waved. "Later, Lows." He hopped on the elevator quickly and hit the ground floor button. He took a deep breath as the doors closed and he held the tablet tight against his chest. Deep breath. He closed his eyes for a moment. Meeting Rexy was just like meeting the raptors. Except she was much bigger. She could eat him in one bite. And hadn't been raised by Owen. In fact, Zach was pretty sure up until a couple weeks ago, they were like sworn enemies or something. And no had no real clue if she could understand him like the raptors did. And she wasn't in a cage anymore.

So... this was nothing like meeting the raptors.

The elevator stopped and the door opened.

Chapter End Notes

So... at least one more chapter before Owen. 8D I BLAME THE READERS! They keep accidently inspiring me to work on bonding and character development.
And Again

Chapter Summary

Zach meets Rexy...

Chapter Notes

So here we go. More Zach and Team Raptor! Eventually we'll get to Owen.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Zach felt like his heart was going to burst from his chest. He hadn't even realized he was breathing so fast until his chest started to hurt. He hadn't even made it across the lobby yet and he was already seconds from a panic attack! He closed his eyes for a moment and took a deep, calm breath. He could do this. He could do this!

"I can do this..." He said softly to himself. For Owen, for Echo, for the other raptors. He opened his eyes and walked towards the door. He didn't stop and instead, pushed the door open and kept going. He stepped out and looked up. And there she was. Looming over the whole plaza.

All five dinosaurs looked over at him. Echo let out a delighted squeal and Delta snapped at her. Which prompted Charlie to snap back at Delta. Then Blue joined in. And suddenly, all four sisters were chittering back and forth rather loudly and animatedly.

Rexy tilted her head to the side, watching them. Then she breathed out and looked back in Zach's general direction. Zach waved at her timidly, his hand barely moving. But it was just enough that her eyes focused on him. She blinked at him. Then tilted her head again and turned her whole body towards him. The raptors danced out of Rexy's way as she moved closer.

Zach's eyes widened as she came closer. He swallowed and tried not to shake or run or pee himself.

Rexy stopped and bent down. Her nose was a foot from him. If Zach reached out, he would be able to touch her. He didn't. Of course he didn't. He was frozen in place. If she did have the desire to eat him, he couldn't even attempt to run. He could hardly fathom the idea of moving. Rexy's nostrils flared a bit and she inhaled deeply. Zach could feel the force of it, feel the air rush past him.

Rexy turned her head to the side and leaned closer still. She brought her massive eye to Zach's eyelevel and blinked at him. Zach forced a smile at her and lifted his hand slowly to wave at her again. One of the raptors warbled loudly. Zach wasn't sure which one it was. He wasn't taking his eyes off Rexy's eye to see.

Rexy let out a soft snort and turned her head again. Then suddenly, she opened her mouth, stuck out her tongue, and licked him. From bottom to top. Zach stood there, stunned, as her slobber soaked into his stolen clothes. Rexy licked him. The t-rex had licked him! What?!

Echo let out a squeal and raced up the steps towards him. And then preceded to try to lick him. That
snapped Zach back to himself. He frowned and pushed her away. "Echo, stop it!"

She whined loudly and glanced up at Rexy.

Zach shook his head. "I don't care if Rexy did it!" He snapped. Ech opened her mouth to argue more and Zach shook his head again and lifted his hand. "No!" He snapped, pointing at her. "No licking!"

Echo pouted. Blue and Delta huffed laughter. And Charlie just stood back, watching. Zach turned slightly. "I'm just... gonna... change quickly." He headed for the jeep quickly. Luckily, it was parked on the other side of the building, away from the crazy, licking monster lizard. He set the tablet down on the passenger seat and then grabbed another stolen gift shop shirt. He changed quickly.

Back in dry clothes, he returned to Rexy and the raptors. Well... Rexy hadn't eaten him. Or tried to. At least he hoped that wasn't what she'd tried to do. Zach breathed out and looked up at Rexy. She was watching him still, her pupils zeroed in on him. "Uh... please don't do that again." He said, shaking his head.

Rexy stared at him for a moment. Charlie stepped closer to the larger dinosaur. She warbled out something. Rexy looked down at Charlie and then back over at Zach. She nodded her head.

"Yes like... you won't do it again?" Zach asked.

Rexy nodded her head again.

Zach breathed out again. "Okay. Good." Setting boundaries with the monster lizard was good. Very good. He was certain Owen would be proud of him. He hoped. Whenever Owen got back... if he... Zach shook his head quickly. Owen was going to be fine.

Rexy bent down again. She tilted her head to the side again and then turned slightly. She craned her neck around, trying to touch her nose to her back. Zach watched her and noticed the large stitched cut along her spine. Rexy reached back again, trying to rub her nose against it. But she couldn't reach well. She let out a loud, frustrated snort and looked back at Zach.

Zach frowned slightly. "What? It hurts?"

Rexy shook her head.

"Itches?" He held up his arm and mimed scratching it.

Rexy nodded her head. Then she stretched her head out towards him and blinked at him.

Zach tilted his head to the side. "What?"

Rexy craned her neck again and looked at her cut.

Zach watched her for a moment. And briefly, he wondered how she got stitched up. It was something he could see Owen trying to do. Because there was no one else on the island. And then it dawned on him, what she was trying to ask him to do. "You... want me... to scratch it?"

Rexy nodded her head.

Zach breathed out loudly. Rexy wanted him to scratch her itchy back. How was that even possible? How was that even a thought of hers? It had to be because of Owen. Because the man was odd, in more ways than the obvious. Zach had no doubt that Owen had climbing up her back and stitched her back up. So why wouldn't she expect Owen's replacement to do something similar? Zach let out
a sigh and nodded. "Fine." He grumbled out. "Owen did that, didn't he?"

Rexy nodded her head.

Zach breathed out and waved her down. "Can you... like... bend down or something?"

Rexy lowered herself to the ground. Her belly rested on the ground, her tail curled around her feet, and her short, stubby arms hovered just above the ground. She looked like some weird, oddly shaped cat. With no fur. And enormous teeth. "I can't believe this." He mumbled under his breath. At least it would be something to tell Gray. Zach stepped closer to her. Rexy's eyes followed his but other than that, she didn't move as he reached out and touched her. He rested his hand against her leg for a moment. It was sort of cool. If he really didn't think about it. Because he was certain if he did think about it, he'd flee back up to the control room and lock himself in with Lowery. And that sounded like a really bad, really boring and annoying idea.

Zach lifted his foot off the ground and stepped up onto Rexy's tail. He glanced up at her quickly and she just blinked back at him. Okay. He could totally do this. He drove a motorcycle up Ida's back. And she had been trying to kill him. Zach used her tail to push himself up her leg. Then he quickly scrambled up her side and up her spine. He stopped and bent over the cut. It looked like it was healing fine.

"Itching is good." He said as he touched it gently. He lifted his eyes to watch her but she made no movements. "That means it's healing." He kept on talking. "That's what my mom always told me. I remember crashing my bike when I was 6 or something." He ran his hands along the side of the stitches gently. "Didn't break anything but busted up my knee and had to get stitches. And it itched so much and mom had to keep yelling at me not to pull at the stitches." He was nervous and he couldn't stop talking. He wasn't even sure if Rexy understood anything he was saying. He figured the raptors could follow him easily.

Rexy didn't seem bothering by his talking. She closed her eyes and let out a contented sigh. She arched her back slightly into his touch and almost seemed to purr. Zach smiled.

"Sorry to interrupt whatever this is..." Lowery's voice rang out over the speakers. All of them stopped and looked up at the control window. The man could just barely be seen waving. "Zach, you have a phone call."

Zach sighed and shook his head. Great. His mom wasn't going to leave him alone. Or she called his dad.

"It's Simon."

Zach's eyes widened and he practically ran down Rexy's back and up the stairs and into the building. He was in the elevator and the doors were closing just as Echo stepped up to the door. She let out a loud squeal and Zach sighed. He held the elevator as she and Charlie squeezed in. Zach waited a moment longer, but Blue and Delta remained outside. He leaned back inside and the doors closed. Then the elevator was moving upwards. But it seemed like it was taking forever until finally it stopped and the doors opened.

"Man, that was awesome." Lowery practically squealed the moment the door opened.

Zach rolled his eyes as he stepped out. Echo pushed out and dashed across the control room towards Lowery. She squealed loudly and Lowery stumbled back. "Echo!" Zach snapped as he shook his head. "Simon did not call to talk to you!"
Lowery pointed towards his desk. "Uh... he's on hold... just uh... pick up the phone... and uh... hit the button..."

"Echo!" Zach stepped across the room towards Lowery's desk. "Get away from him or go back downstairs and wait."

Echo let out a whine and started sulking. But she backed off.

Zach picked up the phone and pressed it to his head. "Mr. Masrani?"

"Gray's brother!" The man said over the line. "Good. I tried to call Owen's computer but there wasn't an answer."

"Yeah." Zach said. "The raptors wanted to check on the eggs and Lowery."

"Yes." Simon said a tad sourly. "The man wouldn't stop talking." He mumbled. "Sorry I couldn't get back to you last night. I was in meetings and by the time I was done, it was too late to call."

"Oh... uh... you coulda still called..." Zach said quickly. "Anytime... uh... we woulda woken up."

"Okay. Noted." Simon said with a light chuckle. "The surgery look longer than anticipated. There were some complications."

Zach's eyes widened. "Complications?"

"Yes. I didn't get the details."

Zach swallowed. "Is... is Owen okay?"

"What? Oh yes!" Simon said quickly. "I apologize. I'm a bit distracted. I have another board meeting I'm preparing for."

"It's fine. I just... you said Owen's okay?"

"Yes." Simon answered. "He's still in a coma. But the doctor is positive he'll make a full recovery. It may just take some time."

Zach closed his eyes and breathed out slowly. "Thank you, Simon. For everything."

"Zach, I'm sorry. I have to go."

"Oh... Okay..."

"I will call you again, I promise." Simon hung up.

Zach pulled the phone away from his ear, frowning slightly. He was happy Owen was alright. He just wished he knew more. He had so many questions for Simon. So many questions for this doctor friend of Simon's. But clearly, he was not getting any answers any time soon. He let out a sigh.

"Well?"

Zach put the phone back on the receiver and looked up at Lowery, Echo, and Charlie. They were all suddenly in front of him, looking expectantly. "Owen's okay. There were some complications but he came out of surgery fine. He's in a coma."

Echo tilted her head to the side.
"Coma... like... sleeping." Zach said. "Like before, when he was hurt. But he is getting better. He'll get better... he just... needs to sleep..." He was rambling. He knew he was. He sighed and leaned back in the chair.

"Well... that's good news, right?" Lowery said.

"Yeah, you're right." Zach breathed out and stood up. "We better go tell the others before they run off again."

They said their goodbyes to Lowery again and headed down in the elevator. Zach told Blue, Delta, and Rexy about Simon's phone call. He tried to explain what surgery was and about the coma. He wasn't exactly sure any of them really understood. He wasn't sure how much of anything they understood. But they all nodded their heads like they did.

Rexy introductions done, she and the raptors took him to meet Moe next. The mosasaurus was one of the largest animals on the island. But she was also stuck in her tank. And when she surfaced and lifted her massive head out of the water, it was clear she understood nothing. Or else she just couldn't hear Zach. But either way, she dived back down after only a couple minutes, seemingly uninterested.

Zach look back at the raptors and Charlie tilted her head to the side.

"Moe's had little real human interaction." Lowery's voice rang out over the speakers. "Owen was really trying to get to her but he said she didn't seem interested."

Zach nodded and waved at one of the cameras. Then they headed back.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

It was starting to get dark when Zach returned to the trailer. The raptors weren't with him. From what he gathered, they were hungry. And left with Rexy. Zach didn't want to think too hard about that. Because it meant they were going to have to kill something to eat. He wondered how Owen did it. How did he feed them now? Did he participate? Yeah, Zach didn't want to think about it. He grabbed the tablet and slammed the jeep door. He headed inside and quickly raided Owen's freezer. He found a couple dinners and pizzas. So he had some hope for the man, at least.

Zach fixed something quickly and ate. He turned on the TV and brought up Netflix. But he really wasn't in the mood to watch anything. And that wouldn't really be productive. And he was trying to prove he wasn't lazy. Zach let out a sigh as he stood up. He settled back down in front of Owen's computer with the tablet Lowery had given him. He stared down at the screen for a moment. Then sighed again and turned it on. He'd start with the incubators. Those were the most important. He opened the files on them. But after a few minutes of reading, his head was starting to hurt. It just wasn't something he understood.

He looked up at the computer again and checked the clock. It was just after 7. It wasn't late yet. Gray would still be up. He smiled and a few minutes later, Gray was on the screen, smiling back at him. "Hey. Hope I'm not bugging ya."

Gray shook his head quickly. "No. Mom tells me you're going to college. To be an animal person."

"Lowery made me say that stuff." Zach rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Gray let out a laugh. "Well... whatever you said, you convinced her."

"I did?" Zach's eyes widened slightly.
Gray nodded his head. "She started looking up those schools. And she called your school to talk to
the principal."

"Why?" Zach asked.

"To see how much school you can miss without automatically flunking." Gray answered.

Zach nodded slowly. "Oh."

Gray continued on, smiling. "She talked about trying to get you to do homework from the island."

Zach sighed again and shook his head. "I guess it's not impossible. I do have access to the internet...
but... I so don't wanna do homework."

Gray laughed and shook his head.

"But actually... I was hoping maybe you could help me."

"With what?"

"Lowery gave me homework."

Chapter End Notes

THERE'S STILL MORE! 8(

OH YEAH! 8D I just found out a video game I want comes out tomorrow. 8D So I ran
to Gamestop to pre-order so I can pick it up tonight at 9 pm during their early release!
*dances* And I might plan on playing it instead of writing for a few days... so... sorry!
Zach opened his eyes slowly. He was still tired. Really tired. He felt like he could sleep until noon. But the annoying alarm clock of Owen's that he slapped and knocked on the floor said it was 5 am. Oh god! It was 5 am! Why was there even a 5 am? Why was it a thing? Why did he have to be awake? He sighed and pushed himself up. It took way more effort than it should have. But finally, he was sitting up on the bed.

He felt a yawn coming on and tried to beat it by taking a deep breath. And then another. If he starting yawning, he'd just get more tired and never stop. And then he'd fall back asleep. And then Blue would call him lazy again. He slipped out of bed and peeked his head out. Echo was asleep in front of the TV. Netflix was still on, flashing images of the movies across the screen in it's weird sleep mode.

Zach tiptoed around her and towards the door. He pushed the door open slowly, trying to not make any noise. Charlie was asleep on the porch. Rexy, Delta, and Blue were asleep, spread out across... the front yard? Was that the right word? Or jungle clearing? It sort of served as a front yard. Just a normal house, with a normal yard, and normal... dogs sleeping in the yard.

Zach smiled as he stepped out the door. He carefully moved around Charlie and looked out at the water. It was really beautiful and peaceful. He could see why Owen liked it so much. He turned, looking out at the girls again. And suddenly, he noticed the dried blood on Rexy's snout. And as he stared longer, he could pick out more specks of it down her side and... was it on her feet, too? Zach couldn't suppress the shiver that ran down his spine. He glanced over at Delta. Then at Blue and Charlie. All of them had specks of dried blood on their faces. And caked on mud and who knew what else all over them. They needed baths. Zach paused at that thought. He ran a hand through is hair and glanced down at his bare legs and feet. Okay. They could all use a bath.

He stayed out there for a while, just watching the water and thinking. He'd never really thought about his future. Not beyond graduating high school and getting out of his parent's house. Away from the yelling and fights and more recently, the passive aggressive happy shit. They'd always fought. His whole life. He never realized how much that affected him. His only goal in life was to get away from his parents.

Sure, it's a goal every teenager has. Get out of their parents house and get out on their own. But it wasn't the only goal they had. College, jobs, families, some sort of life. Some dream of their futures.
Zach didn't have that. He just always remembered wanting to leave. He never thought about the logistics. He never thought beyond that. Just leaving. But now... he'd told Owen he'd come back to the island once he graduated high school. He'd said that before, back when they were in Owen's jeep, outside the hotel, when Owen had said no. Zach thought back to that pain and emptiness he felt when Owen had said that. It was awful! And it was something he never wanted to feel again.

He wanted to be on the island. With Owen, of course. But with the raptors, too. As crazy as the thought was to him. He wanted to be here. He wanted them all in his future. And he couldn't just sit around the trailer all day, waiting for Owen to get home from work. Blue already thought him lazy after a day. How lazy would she think him if he became... a trophy wife or whatever the male equivalent was. Oh god! Owen was not his sugar daddy! That thought was just wrong!

So... then... maybe Lowery's idea wasn't a bad one. He could go to college and get a degree in... animal whatever. That would make his parents happy. Claire could hire him, fair and square. Then he could move to the island and date Owen and he'd be older then. 20 or something. And no one could possibly object then. Well... they still could. But he'd be an adult with a job and a home and money and... he'd just block their calls and hide in Rexy's pen.

Zach smiled. He had a life plan now. For the first time in his life, he had a real goal. He just had to wait a few years. Zach sighed deeply as he looked around. Could he stand waiting years for all this? Would Owen wait for him that long?

Zach turned back to head inside. Charlie was awake, watching him. Zach smiled at her and lifted his had to wave. "Morning."

Charlie tilted her head and looked up at the sky.

Zach looked up as well. "Yes it's early. I used Owen's alarm clock."

Charlie nodded her head quickly.

"I thought it was a good idea." Zach smiled again. Charlie moved to stand up. She fumbled a bit and Zach stepped forward. He put his hands on her side and she leaned against him slightly. "You doing okay?" He asked her softly. Charlie breathed out loudly and nodded her head. Zach let out a sigh too. Their communication limitations really sucked. A lot.

Charlie dipped her head forward and rubbed against his arm briefly, like she understood his thoughts. They went inside and Zach headed to the kitchen area. He rifled through the cabinets and found coffee grounds. He was never one for the black, gross, bitter liquid. But he felt like he needed something to keep awake and going. He turned around and leaned on the table when he finished, his cup in hand. He sipped the awful liquid and frowned. Charlie was watching him curiously. "I hate coffee." He mumbled. "But I'm so not a morning person. Was hoping this helps."

She nodded her head. Zach looked over at Echo, still sleeping. She'd rolled over and now her head was upside down, a tuft of orange sticking out from under. Zach shook his head as he took another sip. His eyes strained to the TV. Netflix was still cycling through movie ads. A dolphin was on screen. And then it was gone. Zach stopped. He set his cup down quickly. "Wait..." He stepped towards the sleeping Echo and grabbed the remote off the floor.

Charlie let out a soft squeak and stepped towards him.

"That dolphin." Zach said, holding up the remote. He hit a few buttons and brought up the search mode. He typed in the word dolphin and the movie appeared back on the screen. The pointed the remote at it and glanced at Charlie. "I haven't seen it. But I remember hearing about it. A dolphin got
injured and they amputated her tail. She couldn't swim right so they made her a tail." Zach glanced back at Charlie. Then he turned and looked at the computer. It was early. But screw it. He headed towards it and sat down. He opened the video call program and clicked on the recent call tab. He found Simon's number and hit the call button.

After a few minutes, Simon's face appeared on the screen. "Gray's brother."

Zach smiled back at him. He wasn't sure if Simon actually couldn't remember his name or if this was just their thing. "Do you ever sleep?"

Simon let out a laugh. "Who has time to sleep?"

Zach smiled.

"So why are you up to early?"

"Blue called me lazy." He grumbled, crossing his arms and leaning back slightly.

Simon frowned. "Lazy? After you saved Owen's life and stayed behind to help?"

Zach shrugged. "She didn't like that I slept in, I guess."

"Where is she now?"

Zach smiled. "Still sleeping."

"Better wake her lazy ass up then."

Zach nodded. "I'll do that. And I'll tell her you told me too."

Simon's smile fell and his eyes widened slightly. "You can't! I still have to get them to like me!"

Zach shook his head. "Never happen. she's too stubborn."

Charlie let out a worried sounding squeal.

Zach flinched and his eyes widened. He turned slowly. Of course it would be his luck. The second he jokes and bad mouths her, Blue would be up to overhear him. But as he turned and looked at the door, no one was there. Zach frowned and looked at Charlie. Her tongue lolled out and she panted laughter at him. "Not funny, Charlie!"

Simon let out a laugh. "Oh yes. It's funny."

Zach rolled his eyes but he couldn't hide his smile.

"So, Gray's brother." Simon said, growing serious. "What can I do for you?"

"For me?"

"I assume there's a reason for the phone call."

"Oh yeah... Charlie..." He glanced over at her. "I was just thinking... have you seen that movie... Dolphin Tail? Where these people make a prosthetic tail for an injured dolphin so she could swim?"

"Maybe." Simon answered. "I vaguely remember that."

"Is that something... I mean could you... do that... for Charlie?"
"Me?"

Zach shrugged. "Money and connections you always talk about."

"Ah. But you have access to the patient."

"Oh... right... I'll talk to her about it."

Simon nodded. "If she's interested, get the measurements and draw up a schematic."

Zach nodded slowly. "I'll ask Gray if he wants to help."

Simon smiled and nodded again. "Yes! You guys get all the details worked out and I'm sure I can get it made. But I do have to go."

"Another meeting?"

"I am a very busy man." Simon waved and the screen went blank.

Zach leaned back for a moment. Then looked over at Charlie. "Well?" He asked her, tilting his head to the side. "What do you think? You wanna give it a try?"

Charlie glanced at the TV, an image of the dolphin with the fake tail still on the screen. Then she craned her neck back to look at her stump. She breathed out heavily and looked at Zach.

"It won't be the same." Zach said. "But it might help with your balance. And with running again."

Charlie tilted her head, like she was really thinking hard about it.

"We could try." Zach said softly. "And if you don't like it, we'll throw it away and forget about it."

Charlie looked at him again. And finally, nodded her head.

Zach smiled. "Come here." He said, waving her forward. "We'll call Gray and ask him to help."

Zach stood up and watched as she moved. Then he sat back down once she was settled beside him. Gray answered after the first ring. But the screen was black. He thought he could hear some muffled voices, maybe belonging to their parents. Zach glanced at Charlie and touched his finger to his lips.

After a few minutes, Gray smiled at them. His face lit up when he saw Charlie and he waved.

"Sorry. I was in the kitchen. We were eating breakfast."

Zach wrinkled his nose. "Still doing that fake eating together, happy family shit?"

Gray nodded his head. "I don't know it it's better than the fighting." He admitted softly. "But it's quieter. I lied when my phone beeped. I said it was a calendar reminder for a book report I had due today."

Zach smiled. "We just wanted to catch you before school." Zach quickly explained his idea and call to Simon. Gray had actually seen the movie and was familiar with the idea.

"I can't believe someone didn't think of it before now."

Zach shrugged. "Too busy." They talked for a few more minutes and made plans to talk again when Gray got home from school. "Alright, kiddo. You've got to go to school and I've got to go give a bath to a T-Rex."
Gray's eyes widened. "What?"

Zach smiled and Charlie let out a snort. He turned off the computer and jumped up. "Alright. Bath time, Echo!" They woke up Echo. And then Echo ran outside and bounced around loudly and woke the rest. Then grudgingly, Zach herded them towards the water and they all got in.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Several hours later, after bath time, checking on Moe, meeting the triceratops sisters, saying hi to Lowery, and calling his mom and once again trying to convince her he wanted to be a zoologist, Zach and the raptors were at the lab, checking on the Ida eggs. Rexy was left outside in the central plaza. She couldn't exactly fit inside the labs. But she didn't seem to mind.

"Do they have names?" Zach asked as he looked at the eggs. He turned and looked at the raptors. All of them shook their heads. He frowned. "Really? Owen never named them?" That didn't seem possible.

Blue shook her head again.

"Why not?"

Blue stared at him blankly.

"Oh..." Zach nodded. "He didn't get to... no time... before..."

Charlie breathed out and shook her head.

Zach nodded slowly. "Okay... so no names yet..."

Echo let out a squeak and nodded her head.

"What... names?"

She nodded her head again. And then stepped forward to bump her nose against his arm.

"Me?" He asked. "You want me to name them?"

Echo nodded her head vigorously.

"I don't think..." Zach started to say. But Echo let out a loud squeal and turned to Blue. They bickered back and forth for a moment. Then Charlie joined in. Delta shook her head and stepped away, looking completely uninterested. "Hey!" Zach snapped loudly. He didn't like knowing they were talking about him and he couldn't understand. It was unnerving. They all stopped and looked at him. "We'll... just wait for Owen, okay?"

Echo whined and shook her head. Blue turned and snapped at her.

"There." Zach said. "Blue said no. So drop it, Echo."

Blue turned to look at Zach. She shook her head.

"See, no."

Blue shook her head again.

Zach frowned. "No... no?"
Blue breathed out loudly and tilted her head to the side. She looked a little pissed.

"So... yes?" Zach said quickly. "You want me to name them?"

Echo nodded her head quickly and Blue did so a moment later.

Zach glanced at Echo and then back at Blue. "You just wanted to say it... because you're in charge."

Blue looked over at Echo and narrowed her eyes. Echo ducked down and let out a chirp. Echo always for her way in the end.

Zach rolled his eyes as he turned back to look at the eggs. But he was smiling. "I don't know... what's a good name? What would Owen name them?"

Blue snorted and shook her head, stepping up beside him. She looked out over the eggs and nuded Zach's arm.

"Me... what would I name them?" Zach crossed his arms and leaned back slightly. This was a test, he was sure. Blue called him lazy. She wanted him to be more like Owen. She wanted to see if he could pick out names like Owen. Zach tilted his head to the side, thinking. Owen named the raptors military terms. Accept Blue. But he didn't really know any. So no, not that. Owen also liked names that had to do with their species. Like Trixie and Sera, the triceratops. And Moe and Rexy. Though Zach wasn't sure if Owen actually named any of them. But he did name Ida.

Zach mulled it over in his head. He'd never named anything before. "Minnie." He said finally.

Blue nodded her head and reached out to touch one of the eggs.

Zach nodded. "Yeah, sure. That one's Minnie. And that one..." He pointed to the largest of the group. "Is... Indigo." What other names could he get out of Indominous? Or wait... maybe that was all wrong! Using one of Owen's naming tactics. Blue wanted him to name the eggs. Zach bit his lip as he looked at the next egg. Maybe it was a trick. Blue was setting him up. He was sure. "Sunny." He said. "Uh... because... they're white... like snow... and uh... the sun is warm and that's the opposite..." He was rambling and he wasn't even sure why he was trying to explain it. "That's dumb." He mumbled.

Blue narrowed her eyes at him and bared her teeth.

"Okay, okay. Fine." He held up his hands. "Sunny?"

Blue nodded her head.

Zach sighed and looked back at the eggs. Names were hard. Names were so hard! A few more minutes ticked by. All that came to mind were normal people names. Jessica, Stephanie, Kelly, Abigail, Sylar... wait... that wasn't even a girl's name, was it? Blue nudged him again. "What?" He looked around the room. Delta was gone. Echo was asleep. Charlie was watching him with interest. And Blue looked pissed again. Was he taking too long? Shit. She was going to call him lazy again. All because he couldn't think of names! "Sylar!" He said, throwing up his arms. "And... uh... Ame."

Blue nodded her head again. Then she turned and walked over to one of the desks. She let out a sharp chirp and Zach hurried to follow her. He stared down at the desk. Pens, paper, post-it note pads. Zach frowned. "You want me to write them down."

Blue nodded.
Zach sighed as he reached for a pen. How dumb did she really think he was? Like he was going to forget in the span of... however long it had been. Now... what was the first name he said?

Chapter End Notes

And OMG! I AM GETTING A PROMOTION! 8D Chas is gonna be a co-manager! 8D Means more money and more hours. Not really more responsibly, since I already do all the manager crap as a shift manager and have to run the store by myself when the boss goes on vacation. Really it's just a title promotion. XD And the more money, of course. And I get to go take more training courses. In money numbers and junk. AND WHO KNOWS WHAT ELSE! Our store has never had a CM before. SO I AM EXCITE AND SCARED AT SAME TIME! 8D
Bright Lights

Chapter Summary

OWEN!!!!

Chapter Notes

8D WHAT YOU ALL HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR! Wait... IS THAT A SPOILER? Well... it shouldn't really be. I've been saying Owen was coming soon. GOSH IT FEELS LIKE FOREVER SINCE HE WAS AROUND AND SMILING LIKE A DOOFUS! 10 chapters. O.o That is entirely too long! UGH! OWEN! HE NEEDS HUGS AND PETS AND ECHO KISSES!

And thanks for all the promotion well wishes! 8D I am so excited about it! SO EXCITED BECAUSE MONEY! And stuffs. XD Also... it feels weird to update again without RisingSun reading the last chapter yet. :( SUNNY! WHERE ARE YOU? CHAS IS WORRIED!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He opened his eyes slowly. Ever so slowly. He felt sluggish and drugged. It was so hard. He had to put forth great effort to open his stupid fucking eyes. And the moment he did, he snapped them shut again. It was really bright. Really insanely bright. And quiet. Well... mostly quiet. There was an odd beeping sound. He opened his eyes again, more slowly this time. His eyes adjusted quickly and he could tell that it wasn't actually all that bright inside the room.

He blinked a few times and sat up. Something heavy against his wrist stopped him. He glanced down. What the fuck? He was handcuffed to a bed. A hospital bed, he quickly realized. He rubbed at his face with his free hand. And nearly pulled out his IV. What the fuck!

He closed his eyes and leaped back on the bed. He could feel the bandages binding his chest. He could feel the soreness and it was a bit difficult to breathe. What had happened? How'd he gotten there? Where was he? He tried to remember. He remembered talking to Zach. Dancing like a dork in his trailer for his mate. He remembered Rexy showing up and interrupting. Then finding the nest and stealing the eggs with Echo. They took the eggs back to the science lab and set them up in the incubators. And rushed back home to call Zach and then... After that, things were a little hazy.

He knew he talked to Zack and Gray. He vaguely remembered overhearing their dad... Owen flinched slightly and let out a sigh. "Fuck..." He breathed out. He leaned back against the pillows and closed his eyes.

"Mr. Grady!" The door to the room opened and a man stood in the doorway. He looked around Owen's age. He was tall and skinny, with a mop of brown wavy hair on his head. He was wearing a white coat and a huge smile on his face.

Owen sat up again in bed, watching the man cautiously. He didn't know this guy. At least he didn't
"Hi!" The doctor waved. "Uh..." He kept waving lamely for a few more moments. Then stopped and dropped his arm to his side as he stood in the doorway. His smile seemed to widen. "I just... I'm so excited you're okay! You're so awesome! And I totally saved you."

Owen blinked and tilted his head slightly.

"Uh... I'm uh..." The doctor stepped in and let the door close behind him. "I'm Dr. Murphy... uh... Timmy Murphy..." He shook his head and quickly stood up straighter. He cleared his throat and tried to look serious. "Dr. Timothy Murphy."

That's why he looked sort of familiar. Owen tilted his head slightly. "John Hammond's grandson?"

Tim nodded his head quickly. "Yes! That's me! And you're you and... I'm such a fan!"

"Of me?" Owen asked slowly. Oh god! He didn't need another Lowery.

Tim nodded again. "You and your work with the raptors."

Owen started at him. Seriously. This kid doctor saved his life? And was now fangirling all about him?

Tim continued on talking. "I suppose now... I understand how your relationship with the raptors work..." Tim said with another smile.

Owen's eyes widened slightly. What did the guy mean by that? Owen's eyes darted to the door. He pulled against his restraints. He was pretty certain if he yanked hard enough, he could get loose and make it to the door before Dr. Fangirl could blink.

"Oh!" Tim fished something out of his pocket and stepped forward quickly. "Sorry about the cuffs. Didn't know what you'd do... in your sleep... you know?" He held up a tiny key and slowly he reached for the cuffs. This close to Owen, the doctor seemed nervous.

Owen bared his teeth and let out a low growl.

Tim's eyes darted up and widened. He jumped back a step and swallowed. "Uh... here." He tossed the key.

Owen narrowed his eyes and didn't take them off the doctor as he reached for the key. He quickly unlocked the cuffs and lifted his arm. "Where am I?"

"Hospital." Tim said awkwardly.

Owen rolled his eyes. He knew that. "How long have I been here?"

"Almost a week." Tim answered.

Owen's eyes widened. "A week?" A week had passed? A whole week!

Tim nodded.

Owen let out a sigh and rubbed at his forehead. "What happened?"

"I don't know." Tim said, sounding genuine. "Simon brought you in and you were in pretty bad shape."
"Simon..." Owen repeated the name slowly.

Tim nodded again.

Did that mean Simon knew? How’d the man find out? Owen was sure Lowery wouldn't say anything... shit! Lowery! Alone. On the island. With loose raptors and Rexy. Shit, shit, shit! Owen hoped the man was okay. Well... physically okay. Because Owen had doubts about the man's mental wellbeing. He was pretty sure they were past the eating people part with his girls, Rexy included in that now. At least, he hoped that was the case. If Lowery had been eaten, he'd feel slightly responsible. And he'd miss the guy. Maybe. A little bit. Owen swung his legs over the edge of the bed. He pulled himself forward gently.

"Wait!" Tim held up his arms and stepped forward. "Easy! You shouldn't rush yourself! You really should stay off your feet or at least let me get you a walker."

"I'm fine." Owen mumbled. "Feel great." Great wasn't exactly the right term. But he was fine enough.

"Seriously!" Tim continued on. "You've been through a lot..."

Owen rolled his eyes. "I heal fast."

"I noticed." Tim was smiling again. He straightened up a bit and tilted his head. "I was curious where that came from..."

Owen turned his glare back on the guy. He stood up quickly. His legs were a bit shaky, but he stepped towards the guy. "I don't like being threatened."

Tim's eyes widened and he shook his head. "What? No!" He held up his hands again. "No threats here."

A low growl escaped Owen's throat. He bared his teeth again and could feel his spine start to tingle. "I don't like your little threatening hints."

Tim shook his head again and took a step back. "No! No, no, no." The doctor stammered. "Look... I really think we got off on the wrong foot. Let me start again."

Owen growled lowly again. "Fast."

Tim turned slightly. "Several years back after I finished medical school, I contacted Henry Wu..."

"I just... I uh..." Tim swallowed. "I wanted to work at Jurassic World. Ever since the moment Simon announced he was reopening, I wanted to work there! The island was my grandpa's dream! But Henry, he was in charge of the science aspect. He told me I wasn't qualified. So I got a few internships at the best genetic labs I could. But no matter what I did, Henry wouldn't hire me."

"Get to the part that involves me..." Owen paused for a moment and tilted his head. "You weren't involved in..."

Tim's eyes widened and he shook his head. "No! I swear! But I have... uh... seen your files..." He admitted softly.

"Files?"
Tim held up his hands. "I'll get to that. Just... Henry kept dangling me along. Simon found out and felt bad. So... he offered me a job here. I hoped that if I changed tactics and started sucking up to Simon... he'd get me on the island." Tim sighed and crossed his arms. "I figured sucking up to Simon might be better. At least I know he likes me."

Owen stepped backwards until the back of his legs touched the bed. He sat down slowly, all the while not taking his glare off of the doctor. Just a few moments on his legs and he felt tired. Maybe he wasn't as fine as he said he was. "Tim!" He snapped, his voice low.

"Yes, sorry." The guy lifted his arm and nodded. "Simon called me last week. Said he was bringing in an injured VIP and he needed everything kept secret. He said he trusted me. Then he showed up with you and this weird file..." He trailed off and looked away.

"File?" Owen repeated.

Tim nodded. "Computer files... pictures and uh... video... that Simon confiscated off Henry's computer."

"Then..." Owen started slowly. "You know..." He tilted his head to the side. "About me..." He punctuated the words.

Tim nodded quickly. "I haven't told anyone else!" He held up his right hand. "I swear!"

Owen leaned back on the bed slightly and crossed his arms. "And Simon knows... but no one else?"

"Yes." Tim said, still nodded. "I did a full body scan by myself. MRI, CT, ultrasounds, x-rays, everything before I did anything invasive where I'd need assistance."

Owen breathed out for a moment. "So... inside..."

"Basically normal." Tim said with a nod, stepping closer. "I mean... you're a little weird."

"Weird?" Owen repeated. It was an understatement. Way more than an understatement actually. A gross and negligent way to use the word. Okay. He was being a little dramatic.

Tim nodded again. "Your skin's thicker. Your veins are... thinner. There's something weird in your... pelvic area but without getting in there, it's hard to tell what's really going on."

Owen frowned slightly. He really didn't want the man rooting around inside him, looking for things.

"Your body temperature runs lower." Tim continued on. "And you have no blood type. I tested it several times. I tried to give you a couple transfusions using universal blood donors. But... your body like... destroyed and absorbed the blood cells. Honestly, I could go on and on. There's a million tiny things I noticed on all the scans and from operating on you. One of them, would just be an anomaly. But all of them is where it gets weird. I had to be careful not to... break whatever it is that keeps you alive and functioning... and able to do... what you do... or whatever..." Tim seemed nervous again.

Owen sighed deeply and looked down at his lap. It was the first time he took his eyes off the doctor. It shouldn't have been news to him. He knew Henry Wu had somehow messed him up. He just never knew the extent. Because he didn't want to know. "You said I've been here a week..." Owen finally breathed out.

Tim nodded. "6 days."

Owen closed his eyes and rubbed at his forehead. "I can't remember what happened. Simon didn't
tell you anything more?"

Tim shook his head. "I don't think he knew anything more. They just found you and brought you here."

Owen glanced up at him. "They?"

Tim nodded. "Some kid found you... I forget the name."

"Zach?" Zach had saved him. Owen smiled at that thought. He couldn't help it. A warm, fuzzy feeling spread through him. He swore he could actually feel it. Like he'd been injected with warm water. Warm, gooey, fuzzy liquid. Or something that made more sense.

"Yes!" Tim said with a nod. "Zach found you. Then Simon left him and brought you here."

Owen's eyes slowly widened as Tim's words sunk in and his smile faltered. "Simon... left Zach? Where? On the island?"

Tim nodded slowly. "I think so."

Owen could believe his ears. "Simon left him alone... on the island..." He was going to kill Simon. That's all there was to it. He was going to kill the man! Owen couldn't even fathom the idea of Zach alone on the island. If he was hurt in any way...

Tim nodded again. "Simon didn't seem worried about it. He made it sound... like it was okay."

"Okay?" Owen snapped out.

Tim's eyes widened slightly and he stumbled over the words, nervous again. "You can call Simon and make sure."

"Call Simon?" Owen repeated.

Tim nodded again and pointed towards the table beside the bed. "He left your cell phone there."

Owen turned and glanced at the phone. "I don't have a cell phone..."

"Oh... how... retro."

"It broke." Owen pulled himself across the bed slowly. "I haven't..." The phone was sitting on the table on the other side of the giant bed. And right then, it felt like it was a million miles away. "Gotten it..." He breathed out and gritted his teeth. He was so wrecked. "Replaced yet." But he managed to pull himself all the way back up on the bed and then rolled back to the center. He breathed out as he was finally able to reach for the phone. He laid back against the pillows and held the phone in his hands. Maybe Simon had somehow replaced his phone. Or it was just some generic phone. Owen tapped the screen and swiped it open. Various colorful apps littered the home screen. But that wasn't what made him stop breathing for a moment. It was the home screen image itself. Zach, looking off to the side all aloof way too cute. Zach's phone. "This is Zach's phone..."

Tim shrugged slightly as he walked towards Owen. His eyes scanned over the monitors, checking vitals. "Simon left it with you. He was very adamant about it. I just assumed it was yours."

Owen smiled down at the phone. He held it tightly with one hand and ran the fingers of his other over it lightly. He was smiling. He knew he was smiling. He could feel it spreading across his whole face. He couldn't wait to see Zach's face. To hear Zach's voice. He actually ached for it. Or maybe
his chest just ached from all the movement. "Can I..." He started softly. He looked over at Tim. "Can you leave?" He said bluntly. "For a bit. I'd really like to make a phone call. Privately."

Tim smiled and nodded quickly. "Yes. Of course." He took one last, quick look at all the monitors. Then he turned back to Owen. "Just... please stay in the bed. You really need to take it easy for a couple days."

Owen fought back the urge to growl at him again. He clenched his jaw. "If I promise to stay in bed for the rest of the day... will you leave?"

Tim smiled again and nodded. "Fine. For now. But you really should..."

"Now!"

Chapter End Notes

Yay! Owen is awake! And yay! New doctor to play with! Now... let's just hope Delta doesn't kill this one...
Zach and Owen finally get to see each other again! Well... through a computer. But hey!

Here ya go, Sylar. Update within the timeframe I said. I think.

"It's not..." He breathed out loudly. "Fair..." He coughed out and leaned over. His chest hurt a bit as he tried to take a deep breath. "I can't... keep up... with you... on foot..." He finally got it out. He hadn't anticipated the old jeep him and Gray got started to break down again on the way to the trailer. It wasn't that far back. Maybe half a mile. Maybe he could rig Owen's jeep to pull it. Bring it back to the trailer and use Owen's tools. Maybe get it running again. Again.

He rolled his eyes at the thought. Like he had the time to do anything that wasn't dinosaur related. He blamed the whole situation on Rexy. She'd been itchy again early yesterday morning. But the second Zach climbed up on her back, she'd taken off running. Blue and Delta had followed quickly, laughing below. Zach was sure it was some sort of trick or game. So that's how he ended up at the central plaza without Owen's jeep. And when the raptors and him were ready to head back to the trailer, Rexy was on the opposite side of the island, doing who knew what.

But then the old jeep died and Echo had chirped loudly and raced off. And Zach ran after her, trying to stop her. And suddenly, they were actually racing. And of course Echo beat him. The perfect ending to what had started so ridiculously.

Echo let out a laughing sound and her tongue lolled out. She bounced in place on the porch.

"Shut... up..." He snapped. He took another deep breath and straightened up. "You didn't win." He said, shaking his head. "Not a real race."

Echo nodded her head.

Zach shook his. "Nope. Doesn't count." He said, shaking his head again as he stepped around her. He pushed the door open and stepped into the trailer.

Echo let out another laughing squeak and darted in behind him.

Zach sighed and shook his head as he watched her. She pointed her nose at the computer and Zach glanced at the clock. "Gray might be home." Echo nodded her head. Zach turned back towards the door. He peeked his head out. Blue and Delta broke the line of the trees and were making their way towards the trailer at a more leisurely pace, no doubt still laughing at him and Echo.

Echo let out an excited squeal.
Zach sighed and turned back towards her. "Echo, I said..."

She shook her head and squealed again. Then pointed at the computer screen.

Zach stepped towards it. The screen said three failed video calls. Zach frowned and tilted his head to the side.

Echo crowded in beside him and chirped.

"It says we missed three calls." He said.

She nudged his arm and chirped again.

Zach shrugged. "I don't know. Gray probably called last night or something. I told you. If we spent the night with the eggs, then we were gonna miss Gray."

Echo let out another whine.

Zach sighed deeply and shook his head, the computer forgotten for the moment. He leaned his back against the counter and crossed his arms. "I don't know..." He breathed out. "Packing up the eggs and bringing them here... might be safer... but... it's pretty far to move them... and if something happened to another one..."

Echo chirped softly and stepped closer. She rubbed her head against him.

Zach leaned into the touch. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "I know it's not my fault. But... I feel responsible." Echo let out a sad chirp and Zach smiled. "I know, I know. Maybe... maybe we..." He sighed as he pulled away and looked at Echo. "I can't believe I'm even thinking this but... maybe we should stay there... like in the lab."

Echo tilted her head to the side.

"We'll be closer to Lowery... all the time..." He added with a mumble. "But closer to the eggs, too."

Echo's eyes seemed to widen and she nodded her head excitedly.

Zach smiled. "That means we won't come back here every night to sleep."

Echo paused. She turned and looked around the trailer.

"We can take a few things." Zach said. "Nemo and your blankets and pillows. But the computer stays here. Gray can call us on the lab phone. I'm sure they still work. Just won't be able to see him."

Echo breathed out slowly.

"We can come back for a few minutes, every couple of days, maybe." Zach added.

Echo looked over at the TV and let out a squeak.

Zach shook his head quickly. "No. We can't take the TV either. But I'm sure Lowery can rig something up so you can still watch Nemo, like he did in the control room. Or..." Zach smiled. "Maybe you can just sleep up in the control room with Lowery."

Echo's eyes widened more. Then she shook her head quickly.

Zach smiled and batted her nose away. Then he turned slightly and looked back at the computer.
"Gray must have gotten home early. Or Simon might have..." Zach clicked on the call log. Three missed calls from Trip. Zach frowned again. "From Trip." He said, confused.

Echo nudged him again.

"Yeah, I know. I'm Trip. That's me." He pointed at the screen. "But I didn't call. I don't even... have... my..." His eyes widened and he let out a gasp. "I gave my phone to Simon to leave with Owen!"

Echo turned towards the computer and leaned towards it.

"No, Echo!" Zach snapped. "Get back!" He tried to push her out of the way. "Move so I can call back!" She squealed excitedly again and Zach jumped at her and tried to wrestle her away.

Blue stepped into the trailer. She stood in the doorway, watching them.

Zach glared at Echo as he stepped away from her and pointed. "We missed calls from my phone that I left with Owen. Echo won't get away from the computer so I can call it back!"

Blue let out a screech and Echo snapped back. They started bickering and it didn't look like Echo was listening to Blue either.

Zach's eyes narrowed. "No!" He finally snapped loudly. "Echo! No! Get out! Now!"

Echo's eyes widened and she ducked down, against the floor.

"NOW!" Zach screamed.

She shook her head.

Zach pointed towards the other side of the trailer. "You get over there, now! And don't move until I say so! NOW!"

Echo quickly slunk over to the corner and pressed herself to the ground again.

"Stay!"

Echo nodded her head.

Delta stepped into the trailer behind Blue, taking up all the space in the small room.

Zach turned back to the computer screen. He grabbed the mouse and hit the call back button. Nothing happened. Zach stared at the screen forever. "Damnit!" In reality, only seconds passed. But for Zach, those seconds might have as well been years. That's how long it felt like since he'd seen that goofy smile and those bright green eyes and heard that voice that sent shivers down his spine.

"Zach."

Zach's eyes widened. Owen was on the screen. Grinning widely at him. "Owen!" Owen was alive and smiling at him. Zach felt the air around him lighten. Everything would be fine now.

Echo squealed from her spot in the corner.

Zach tore his gaze and thoughts away from Owen and narrowed his eyes at her. "No!" He snapped. "You stay in the corner!" She whined again. "Because you can't listen! Five minutes! Don't move a single muscle for five minutes or Nemo is going in the oven! Delta, watch her!"
Delta moved towards Echo and let out a growl.

Zach turned back to the screen. "What?"

Owen stared at him blankly, shaking his head slowly. "What!" He snapped back sarcastically. "He says what like he's confused."

Zach tilted his head slightly. Then he leaned towards the screen and dropped his voice. "I wouldn't really put Nemo in the oven." He whispered. "It's just the best threat to use against her."

Owen looked even more confused. "Like... the movie?"

Zach shook his head. "No." He straightened up and took a step back. "Echo." He turned slightly to look at her. "Where's Nemo?"

She looked away and shook her head.

"Echo, I wanna show Owen."

She shook her head again.

Zach breathed out and shook his head. "Means she hid him." He mumbled. "Like I can't find him, Echo. The trailer is tiny."

Delta let out a squeak and stepped over to the corner. She retrieved her stuffed shark toy and tossed it.

Zach caught it and smiled. "Thanks, Delta." He stuck his tongue out at Echo. He turned back to the computer screen and held the shark up.

Owen smiled. "It's a toy."

Zach nodded. "It's Bruce. From Finding Nemo."

"Oh yeah."

"Well... what's left of him." Zach said, looking down at the toy. Bruce was missing his left eye and most of his right front fin. And his back fin was a different shade of gray on one side. "Delta's a bit rough and I keep having to patch him back up... but I found them like a month ago at the mall and I thought... maybe they'd like them."

Blue snorted and shook her head.

Zach glanced sideways at her. "You like your Dory and you know it."

Blue grumbled something barely audible and Owen let out a laugh. "She says she's not a baby like Echo." He repeated loudly.

Echo popped up and let out a loud screech.

"Hey!" Zach snapped. "You have another minute!" Zach looked back at the screen and Owen was shaking his head again. "What?" Zach asked.

Owen smiled widely. "Again... he says what to me."

"Yeah." Zach said. He turned slightly to toss the shark to Delta. She caught it in her teeth and started
to shake it. Zach shook his head. "Shouldn't of bought her something she could put in her mouth."

Owen smiled again and let out a soft laugh. "You are amazing."

Zach looked back at the screen slowly and his face reddened slightly. "I uh..."

Echo let out a loud whine.

Zach shook his head and turned to look at her. "Alright. It's been long enough. Come say hi. Just don't get too close to the computer! Don't break it! I'll uh... be right back..." Zach didn't wait for a response. He turned and ran for the door as the raptors pressed in closer to the computer. He heard Owen call his name but he ignored it as he pulled the door closed behind him.

Owen called. Owen was awake. Owen was alright. Owen was alright and awake and on the computer. Why was he freaking out?

Zach stepped away from the door and sat down on the porch steps. He leaned forward, putting his head to his knees. He took a few deep breaths, trying to calm himself. He'd been trying his hardest over the last week, to do Owen's job. To take care of the raptors and Ida's eggs and Rexy and help Lowery. He had really tried. But nothing seemed to be going right. Echo hardly listened to him. Blue didn't respect him. She and Delta enjoyed playing tricks on him. Rexy he didn't understand at all. And protecting the eggs...

Suddenly, breaking him from his thoughts, the ground started to shake. The trees started to sway and Zach didn't even look up at she walked into the clearing. He lifted his hand and waved. "Over here, Rexy." He called out.

Her eyes zeroed in on him. She took a step forward and bent her head down to nudge him.

Zach squirmed back from her, holding up his arms and shaking his head. "No licking!"

Rexy snorted and looked around.

"Trailer." Zach said, pointing behind him. "Owen's awake. He's on... the uh... phone. They're talking to him." He was pretty sure she didn't have a concept for the computer or the phone. He wasn't even sure how much she understood him. She wasn't like the raptors. Although... Zach didn't really understand anything about the raptors. How they thought, how they functioned. They seemed more like people than animals. Just like little kids. Maybe he didn't understand anything.

Rexy breathed out loudly. She lifted her head and turned towards the trailer.

Zach's eyes widened. She was way too big. "Wait!" He jumped up. "Uh... the raptors... uh... Charlie... hey! Charlie is staying with Lowery tonight. I'm gonna go pick up her and bring her back to talk to Owen. You wanna go with me?"

Rexy glanced back where he pointed. She tilted her head for a moment. Then she turned her head back towards him excitedly. Her eyes were wide and her mouth was open. She was panting and wiggling like Echo did. Like a dog. Like a giant dog.

Zach stood up quickly. "Just... wait right here." He held up his hands. "Let me tell the girls and
Owen.” He ran up the stairs and opened the door. He poked his head in. "Uh... hey Owen..."

"Zach! Finally!” Owen sounded relieved. "Hey! I can't see you..."

Zach stood in the doorway. "Yeah... uh... we'll be right back.”

"What? No, Zach!” Owen called out. "You can't leave!"

"We uh...” Zach stumbled over the words for a moment. He cleared his throat. "We're just gonna run and get Charlie.”

"Charlie?” Owen repeated. "Blue said she was with Lowery?”

"Yeah.” Zach said. "She stays with him every couple of nights.”

Owen let out a sigh. "Zach...”

"Right back.” Zach cut him off. "I swear.”

"Zach, I can see Charlie later. Right now...”

Rexy let out an impatient roar.

"Zach!”

Zach glanced back outside. "Just a second, Rexy!” He snapped loudly.

Owen let out an audible gasp. "What?”

"We'll be back.” Zach turned back and pointed at the raptors. "You girls explain.”

"What? Charlie's tail?”

"No!” Zach snapped. "That's a surprise! Explain about Rexy!” He turned and looked outside. Rexy was beside the jeep, rubbing her head against it. "Rexy! No! Owen, I'll be right back.” He pulled the door shut. "Rexy!”

Chapter End Notes

Let's see... since my last update for this... lots has happened. I got my promotion. Then got it taken away. District manager jumped the gun I guess. But I did eventually get it back and have been through training. I had to fire my first employee. That was horrible. But... hey! Don't do something wrong, that's gonna be caught on 8 cameras. So we're down a person. That's fun. One of the other employees is just... causing trouble. But being short staffed already, can't get rid of them. So... fun again.

Family wise... sister was arrested on 4 counts of meth related things. For a couple months, we were sure she was gone forever and we were gonna be getting one of her kids to raise forever. She's out now (pretty sure they lied in court and put all the blame on the husband but whatever). Her kids are still with grandparents down south (they live like 10 hours away). But we'll see what happens.

I was also sick for like a month. Really, really, REALLY bad cold/flu/fever thing.
My brother moved out of the house. That was some drama. But more for my mom. She cried. Her baby's gone.

That... might be all? I feel like there should be more. I've been whining for so long, I forget everything I've been whining about. I'm alive, I'm healthy (for a fat person at least), I have a job and a house. So... I should stop whining.

Anyways... updates should be faster. Maybe. Who knows? We will have to see.
Running Away

Chapter Summary

Owen freaks out a bit over Zach. And Zach runs away.

Chapter Notes

Stay tuned at the end for my normal whining. 8D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Owen felt his chest tighten. Zach... and Rexy... Zach was with Rexy... Zach was alone... with Rexy... outside... Why was Zach alone with Rexy outside? He winced slightly and for a moment, struggled to breathe. He held the phone tight in his fingers. For a split second, he worried he was holding it too tight. He loosened his grip and lifted the phone closer to his face. "Explain!" He snapped out though clenched teeth. "Right now!"

Echo ducked down again and Delta looked around confused. [What?] She asked, tilting her head slightly.

Owen rolled his eyes and looked at Blue. "Blue! What the hell? What's he doing with Rexy?"

Blue breathed out. [Team Raptor.] She said in a flippant tone.

Owen's mouth dropped open and he started at her blankly. "You've never said that before. Like ever. You practically roll your eyes at me every time I've ever said it."

Blue snorted and tilted her head to the side in an almost shrugging manner.

He was completely at a loss. What had been going on in the week he'd been gone? He shook his head. "But you can't leave him alone with Rexy!" He insisted loudly.

[Why?] Echo asked, peeking out from behind Delta.

Again, he was at a loss. Why did he have to explain this? Rexy had never really been on good terms with them. Just because for a couple days they roamed the same island free of the fences without killing each other didn't make them friends. Sure, before he got injure, he had hoped Rexy was coming around. But he still wasn't sure exactly where she stood with them. And a week without him there? He was certain she'd come feral again. "Rexy eats people!" He blurted out loudly.

Delta stood up straighter and shook her head quickly. [No eat people!]

Owen rolled his eyes again. "Yeah, Delta." He breathed out. "Don't eat people. Good job."

She wiggled slightly, almost like Echo, and nodded her head. She was clearly proud of herself.

Owen rubbed at his forehead. His head was starting to hurt. His chest already hurt. He was
considering calling the doctor kid again and asking for some pain medication or something. Or perhaps a helicopter. Because he really needed to get back to the island as soon as possible. Screw not being able to walk or think without pain. He let out a long sigh. "I thought..." He started softly. "After everything... you guys understood..." He looked back at the screen. "I thought you understood, Blue."

Blue snorted indignantly and shook her head.

Owen ignored her and kept on talking. "He's important to me! He's special! And he's not like me." He insisted. "He's not like us. He needs protecting!"

Echo let out a sad squeak and shook her head.

Owen continued. "I can't even... why? Why is he here?"

[Need him!] Echo said at the same time Delta said, [Family!]

"You need him." Owen repeated.

Echo nodded her head.

Owen breathed out loudly again. "But Rexy..."

[Rexy family, too!] Echo said loudly.

[Rexy no eat!] Delta added.

"You think so but..."

[Rexy is!] Delta insisted. [Family.]

Owen shifted his gaze to Blue. "Blue?"

Blue nodded her head. [Family.]

Owen shook his head slowly. It was mildly more comforting that they all believed Rexy was a part of their odd family structure. Only mildly. Because she was still a giant, monster lizard. And could eat Zach in one bite. Owen breathed out and leaned back slightly on the hospital bed. "What's up with Charlie's tail?" He asked, pulling the phone with him as he moved to get more comfortable.

Echo shook her head quickly.

He frowned. "What? Tell me!"

[Trip no!] She shook her head again.

"I don't care if he said no." Owen snapped. "Tell me!"

Echo let out a squeak and shook her head.

"I'm still in charge! Blue?"

Blue shook her head too.

"Delta?"

Delta breathed out loudly.
"You guys suck."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

He turned the wheel tightly and the jeep lurched closer to the trees. Rexy let out a growl as she lengthened her stride to keep up. Zach watched her through the rearview mirror. He smiled and turned the wheel again, this time leaving the trail completely. He weaved through the dense trees easily. Driving the route a few times a day since he'd been there had really helped his driving abilities. He had no doubt he could pass his test now and get his license. Though telling people he practice driving by playing chase with a t-rex wouldn't go over well, he was sure. Certainly not his parents. But he'd told Grey. And Grey had been excited. And asked if one day, he could come visit again and Zach could take him out and be chased by Rexy.

Rexy let out a frustrated roar and Zach zagged the Jeep back out. Rexy chased the jeep all the way to the central plaza. She pulled to a stop and blinked down at him. Zach smiled and waved at her as he shut the jeep door. Rexy bent down and nosed his shoulder. Zach shook his head and pushed her away. "No licking." He leaned over and picked up the radio receiver. "Lowery." He said into it.

"Zach? Dude, you forget something?"

Zach smiled and leaned back against the door. "Sorta. Came back to get Charlie."

There was a squeal over the radio before Lowery laughed. "You forgot Charlie." He repeated. "Thought this was my night?"

"Well..." Zach started.

"No!" Lowery interrupted. "Come on, dude! Shared custody."

Zach rolled his eyes. "Really? That's how you wanna play it?"

There was a pause. "Maybe."

"Alright. Fine. We share them then." Zach said, glancing up at Rexy. "All of them. It's your turn to watch Rexy tomorrow."

Lowery laughed loudly over the radio. "Yeah. Sure. She can come right in and watch movies with me just like Charlie."

Zach shrugged a bit to himself. "Delta can fit inside."

Another pause. "She doesn't even like me." Lowery said.

Zach smiled. "I think she likes you a bit too much."

"Gross." Lowery said. "That's some sick and twisted mental imagery."

Zach frowned. "What? I meant like... to eat... like dinner."

"Oh." Lowery answered. "Still gross."

"You're gross." Zach snapped. "They're kids."

"They're extinct wild animals."

Zach rolled his eyes and let out a sigh. "Whatever. Just let me in."
"Dude. No. We just started watching *Thirteen Ghosts*."

"No!" Zach snapped quickly. "That's too scary!"

"She picked it."

"Just open the door! Now!"

"Alright, alright. Calm down."

Zach dropped the radio receiver and stepped away from the jeep. He paused and looked around. Rexy was gone. He frowned. He hadn't even heard her leave. How the hell could she sneak off without him knowing? Zach let his gaze linger on the empty plaza for a moment longer. Then he shook his head and headed up the stairs. The doors eased open and he walked across the lobby and stepped onto the elevator.

As the doors closed, he bit his lip and thought of the time he'd been on the hotel elevator with Owen and Gray. It had been right after he'd been pushed into the raptor paddock. He leaned back against the wall and closed his eyes for a moment. That fall had felt like a lifetime ago. He could still remember the fear in Gray's voice, the air on his face as he fell, the pain when he landed, the realization of where he was and the subsequent fear. He remembered Owen's voice, the man's presence, his touch. As awful as that fall was, it was the real start of everything. It was weird to imagine how different his whole life was in such a short time.

Zach shivered as the elevator doors opened. He shook the feelings away as he stepped inside the control room.

Charlie let out a delighted squeal from her spot on the floor. She was laying on her make shift bed with a large blanket covering her.

"Hey." Zach smiled and waved at her as he stepped closer.

"No!" Lowery said. He was sitting on the edge of the bed, right next to Charlie. He had his arms crossed. He glanced sideways at the raptor. "Tell him you want to stay here with me."

Charlie let out another squeak.

Lowery looked over at Zach. "What'd she say?"

Zach shrugged. "I don't know."

"Because she said she wants to stay with me." Lowery said with a smug smile.

Zach rolled his eyes. "Whatever she said, it wasn't that."

"You're lying!"

"I told you!" Zach said loudly. "I don't understand them! Not like that! I! Just! Guess!" He said, punctuating the words slowly.

"Nope." Lowery shook his head. "Still lying."

"Charlie!" Zach looked at her. "Tell him I'm not lying."

Charlie shook her head.
Lowery tilted his head. "No like, you don't because he's lying?"

Charlie blinked him. Then nodded her head.

Lowery smiled. "So he is lying! I knew it! You can totally speak raptor."

Zach rolled his eyes. "You're confusing her!"

"No I'm not!"

Zach shook his head. "Whatever. We don't have time for this. Charlie, we gotta get back to the trailer. Owen's awake."

Charlie perked up immediately and tilted her head to the side. She let out a warble.

"He's got my phone and he called the computer a bunch earlier today while we were gone. I got him back on the screen and if we hurry, you can probably see him before his doctors make him hang up or something." Zach honestly had no blue about that. Owen's doctors or doctor... did he have more than one? Would the doctor stop Owen from calling? Or cut the call short? Would this call be the only one he could make? Zach fought the urge to sigh. He should have stayed and talked to Owen. But... Charlie deserved to see Owen just as much as he did. More, actually.

"Owen's alright?"

Zach tore his jumbled thoughts away and looked at Lowery. He nodded his head. "I think... we really didn't get to talk... I uh... came straight here... for Charlie."

Charlie let out a soft squeak.

Zach looked at her and smiled.

"This is great!" Lowery jumped up. "Let's go!"

Zach frowned, turning back to Lowery. "What?"

"Well... he's like my best friend. I gotta go say hi. He'll be totally worried about me."

Zach stared at the man blankly. Owen would be pissed if he showed up with Lowery. At least right now. Any other time, he'd be annoyed. But the first time he gets to call? "But... uh... that means... you'd have to leave." Zach said slowly. "You'd have to leave the control room." He said a bit louder. "You'd have to ride with me and Charlie in the jeep through the jungle, dude. A lot of loose dinos just wandering around." He shrugged. "And Rexy was just outside. She really loves chasing the jeep. I usually drive really fast. And I don't have my license yet. Remember that old jeep I took earlier? I actually crashed that into a tree and had to walk the rest of the way to Owen's trailer..."

"On second thought..." Lowery interrupted. "Just tell him I miss him and hope he's doing better and comes back fast and uh... you know... I said hi."

Zach smiled and nodded. "Hi. Got it."

"Remind him the control room phones work." Lowery added. "He should call me. So he doesn't worry."

Zach nodded again slowly. That he might be able to do. "Yeah... I'll remind him of that."

"Make sure you do."
Zach rolled his eyes and looked at Charlie. "Ready?"

Charlie nodded her head.

"Oh... hey... wait."

Zach let out a sigh as he turned back to Lowery. "I'll tell him, I swear. And I'll really try to make him call you."

"Well... yeah." Lowery nodded. "Good. But not that. I uh... got a call about a half hour ago. From Simon."

The way Lowery stumbled over the words twisted Zach's stomach. Had something happened? Was Simon pulling them out? Had his parents caused more problems? Was Simon closing the island for good?

"Claire's on her way."

Zach's eyes widened. That was worse. That was way worse. "She's coming here?" Zach asked. "To the island?"

Lowery nodded slowly. "'Fraid so. Simon said he can't stall her anymore."

"It's been like a week." Zach sighed and shook his head. "She really can't let things go."

Lowery smiled and shook her head. "Nope. She can't. She needs to be in control. Honestly I'm surprised Simon's kept her away this long."

Zach glanced around the control room. It looked very well lived in. The beds on the floor, the chairs and moveable tables pushed to the walls, clothes and other various things strewn about. Claire wasn't going to be happy about any of this. His eyes fell on Charlie. Claire really wouldn't be happy about her.

Lowery followed Zach's line of sight and sighed. "It was kind of fun while it lasted."

Zach nodded. "Did Simon say anything else?"

Lowery shook his head.

"Nothing about why or her plans or anything?"

Lowery shrugged. "My guess is try to take control of everything."

Zach breathed out loudly and shook his head.

"She can try." Lowery added. "And she will try. The moment she steps off the ferry. But she can't. Not right away. Not without the construction team to repair half the island and someone to wrangle all the animals back in their pens. And that's going to require you and Owen."

Zach smiled slightly. He wasn't sure how much help he would be.

Lowery continued on. "So she can try but honestly, I don't see her succeeding. Not right away."

Zach nodded and looked at Charlie. "We should get going." He turned and smiled at Lowery. "Someone has a lot of cleaning to do."
Lowery frowned and looked around. "Think you can get Rexy to like... smash her tail through this floor or something?"

Chapter End Notes

So... yep. CHAPTER! 8D

So... day after Christmas... mom gets that BAD flu. Then 2 days after that, I get it. XD I've been affectionately calling it the Zombie Flu of Death. Because seriously... it feels like you are DYING for DAYS! I was in the emergency room (hospital bills are AWFUL!) and then dying in bed, unable to move for 8 days straight. It seriously took over a week for me to feel like a person again. And then boss went on vacation. And wife caught the flu. So boss got home. And he got the flu. So I worked for like 17 days in a row. And then... TO MAKE THINGS WORSE... a regular customer who has slowly been getting increasingly loud and annoying over the past year, got really nasty and belligerent. (Actually came in and started SCREAMING at me.) So I got permission to call the cops on him next time he came in. And then he lied to the cops and told me (in front of cops) that I was horrible and full of hate and God hates me and I'm going to hell. So we filed with the cops to get him banned from the property and blocked his phone numbers. And now he's harassing our customer service team. And then called the cops on us, pulling the race card and calling us racists. (Plus, guy is big scary loud guy. So mildly worried he might actually attempt something violet. He was arrested and jailed for a few months a couple years ago for breaking into an ex-girlfriend's house, beating her up, and kidnapping her. So... THERE IS ALSO THAT FEAR.) SO THIS HAS BEEN A FUN YEAR SO FAR.
Tail Tale

Chapter Summary

More talking.

Chapter Notes

XD Thanks everyone for the comments and well wishes and shit. Really nice to hear. Things were still the same last week. Past couple days have been pretty quiet though. But it's official. Harassing dude got his official certified STAY OUT letter from the company. XD So... we're pretty happy about that. Though our customer service center sent us his call logs. And I got to read every nasty thing he said about me for the last 3 weeks.

But whatever. Not gonna let him win and I'm gonna get back to doing what I like. 8D WRITING THIS SILLY THING! SO HERE! ENJOY! 8D

His thoughts were a jumbled mess of Claire, Lowery, and oddly enough, his parents. He moved on autopilot as he helped Charlie into the jeep, drove to the trailer, and got out. He just moved without thought, only purpose. It wasn't until he reached for the door knob that he realized he was standing there, reaching for the door knob. Zach's hand stilled for a moment and he blinked at the door. He had no memory of getting there. And that sprung more thoughts. The most prevalent was how had he not crashed into something?

Charlie let out a squeal as she stepped up behind him. She nudged her nose into his back gently.

Zach snapped out of it quickly and shook himself. "Sorry." He mumbled and pulled the door open. He stepped to the side as Charlie darted inside.

"Charlie!" Owen's excited voice carried out the door. "What the hell is that?" He said just as loudly.

Zach smiled and stepped though the door. "It's a crappy prototype." He said, stepping towards the computer. Echo let out a squeak and Zach ran his hand over her nose with a smile. "Hey. Hang back so Owen can talk to Charlie, okay?"

Echo nodded and moved back. Blue and Delta headed outside.

Zach watched them for a moment before turning back to the computer. He smiled at Charlie and she let out a squeak. "To get her used to the feeling of having something there and the weight again." He continued. Crappy was an understatement. He'd swiped several backpacks from the gift shop. "I cut them up and sewed them together with your fishing line." Zach explained. He'd attempted a tail shape. But it was more vaguely tube shaped and snapped around her with the backpack straps. "I stuffed it with... the stuffing... stuff inside the stuffed animals..." He rolled his eyes and shook his head. He sounded like an idiot, saying stuff so many times.
But Owen said nothing. The raptor trainer seemed to be staring at Charlie, almost in awe. It was hard to tell, computer screen and all.

Zach cleared his throat and continued to talk. "There's some bean bags sewn into it, to see if the extra weight helps... I think it does." He looked at her and Charlie nodded her head. "We're waiting on um... a real prototype to be made. I designed it... well... Gray helped me. And Simon contracted... the... uh..."

Owen still hadn't said anything. Or moved or reacted in any way. If it weren't for the steady rise and fall as Owen breathed, Zach would have sworn the computer screen froze.

Zach squirmed a bit. He knew it looked awful now. But he had spent a lot of time on it. "It's gonna be made out of this rubber polymer stuff, to be more flexible. We'll use pictures of her to try to get it painted... so it looks as close... and uh... we made a plaster mold of Blue's tail... I thought maybe... try to replicate the texture..." He knew he was rambling. But he felt the need to explain. Owen's lack of response was making Zach really nervous. He glanced back at Echo, sitting in the corner. "Echo really wanted to do it. But she couldn't keep still. She kept wiggling so we used Blue. But really..." He turned back to Charlie. "It's all up to Charlie. If she decides she doesn't like it, we'll scrap everything."

"You... you made... a new tail." Owen breathed out finally.

Zach tilted his head to the side for a moment. "It's just a prototype..." He said softly.

A huge smile slowly spread across the raptor trainer's face. "But you fixed her!"

Zach frowned and shook his head quickly. "She's not broken!" He snapped defensively.

Owen seemed to smile even more. "No. She's not. But still."

Charlie nudged Zach's arm gently.

Zach glanced at her. "Well you aren't!" He said strongly. "I just thought... I mean... we haven't really talked about it but..." He looked at Charlie and let out a sigh. "I noticed her... like... sitting down a lot. Or laying. All the time. I don't think the problem is just balance. I think... she would lean back more and stand... taller. To compensate for the balance. I thought..." He glanced at her again. "Maybe it was putting strain on her joints. Probably her legs and back hurt."

Owen's eyes widened slightly and he looked at her. "Charlie?"

She breathed out loudly and looked at the ground.

Owen shook his head slowly. "She's not one to complain. Ever. Just as stubborn as the rest of them, in her own way."

Zach smiled slightly "Must have gotten it from you."

Owen nodded. "Damn straight." His gaze shifted to Charlie again. He paused for a moment and shook his head. "I'm sorry I didn't pay better attention." He said softly.

Charlie snorted again and let out a few chirps and warbles.

Owen nodded his head. "I know. I still feel bad."

Zach rolled his eyes. "You were busy being all heroic and saving the island."
Owen let out a chuckle. "Basically what she just said. Except raving how awesome I am. And hot." He added with a smile.

Charlie snorted loudly and shook her head.

Zach wrinkled his nose and nodded. "Yeah, Charlie's right. That's gross."

Owen's mouth dropped open. "Gross? You think I'm gross?"

"No, but you saying Charlie says you're hot is gross. She's your kid."

Owen shrugged. "Okay, you're right. I'm the daddy." He was still smiling.

"Don't say that either!" Zach snapped. "In fact, bed time!" He said loudly and turned to the door. He pulled it open. "Say goodnight to Owen. He's gotta call Lowery."

Owen's eyes widened and he shook his head. "No he doesn't."

Zach held the door open as Blue and Delta squeezed back inside. He shut the door behind them and turned back to the computer. "Yes he does."

"NO!" Owen snapped. "He doesn't!"

Zach narrowed his eyes and crossed his arms. "Then Trip is unplugging the computer!"

Owen shook his head. "You wouldn't."

Zach inclined his head back towards her. "I'll let Echo do it."

Echo perked up at her name.

"She'll bust it in a million pieces and you'll never get to video call again."

Echo tilted her head to the side. She looked from the computer to Zach and then back to the computer again. She let out a distressed squeak and stepped back, shaking her head.

Owen smiled. "No, she wouldn't."

Zach glanced back at Delta. "She would."

Owen breathed out dramatically. "Fine! FINE! I will call Lowery. For like a minute and then I'm calling you back."

Zach rolled his eyes. "Five minutes. He's your best friend."

"Oh my God!" Owen snapped dramatically. "Don't say that!" He rubbed at his eyes. "Lowery's my best friend!"

Zach stared at him for a moment. "Stop being dramatic! He's not that bad!"

"He is!" Owen wailed. "He's just awful! How can you not know that by now?"

Zach shook his head. "Lowery is not that bad!" He insisted. "He's smart and dedicated and quick thinking... and brave in his own way. He stayed behind to help. He won't leave the control room... but he still helps where he can."

Owen stared at Zach blankly for a moment. He frowned and shook his head. "I just can't... how..."
"You got injured... and Echo figured out how to call..." Zach shrugged. "From watching you, I guess. And... I came to help."

"I get that." Owen said. "But why are you still there?"

"Echo said I had to stay." Zach said flatly.

Owen's eyes widened. "Echo!" He snapped.

Echo ducked down and let out a squeak.

Zach shrugged. "They wouldn't let Simon take you off the island unless I stayed."

"What? Blackmail?"

Zach frowned and shook his head quickly. "No! They just... didn't want to be alone."

Owen's face softened and a smile spread across his face. "Okay, that's just precious."

Zach looked away from the screen. He felt his face heat up.

"But still!" Owen strung out, his voice taking on a whining tone. "I can't believe Simon left you there!"

"I didn't give him a choice." Zach said. "I told him I was staying."

"What about your parents?" Owen asked.

Zach shrugged. "It took a lot of talking but they're... okay with it." He said awkwardly. "They actually went through with filing for divorce so... it's probably easier with one less kid there to get in their way right now. Gray's small. And likes school and studying a shit. So he stays out of their way."

"But..."

"No." Zach shook his head. "We're not talking about this anymore." He said with a finality in his tone. "I'm here, I'm staying, and no one is making me leave. It's done. And when aunt Claire gets here tomorrow, I'm telling her the same thing."

Echo, Blue, and Delta all visibly reacted, letting out snorts and shaking their heads.

"I was wondering about her." Owen admitted. "No way she'd let you stay."

Echo let out a few chirps and Charlie nodded her head.

"I was wondering about her." Owen breathed out. Blue let out a growl in answer and Owen shook his head.

Echo let out a few chirps and Charlie nodded her head.

"I'm just worried!" Owen breathed out. Blue let out a growl in answer and Owen shook his head. "You can't protect him all the time!"

"Stop!" Zach snapped. "I can take care of myself. You." He pointed to the computer screen. "Shut up." He turned to the raptors. "You, bedtime. It's getting late and I don't wanna deal with you guys being cranky tomorrow." The next five minutes was spent shuffling things around and getting the raptors settled. Echo pulled Nemo out of her hiding place and was tucked down between Blue and Delta, on the mound of pillows and blankets. Zach unstrapped Charlie from the tail tube thing and she flopped down on the pile.
Zach breathed out as he pulled a stool up to the counter and flopped onto it. He reached over and pulled the computer screen closer to him and then leaned back. He was suddenly really tired.

Owen had watched in silence as the raptors got ready for bed. He turned his attention to Zach and cleared his throat. "They uh... sleep in there... with you?"

Zach nodded his head. "Yeah. On the floor in the pile. Or if Rexy's here, a couple will sleep outside with her. But usually, yes. We all stay in the trailer."

"And you're... okay with Rexy?" Owen asked awkwardly.

Zach paused for a moment and sucked in a breath. He wanted to snap that yes, everything was fine. He was tired of this conversation. It was weird, yes. Insane and scary and the stupidest thing he's ever done, but somehow, he became... something with Rexy. He couldn't call it an owner/pet relationship. Because that was still scary and weird. But maybe, he was more of a handler, maybe. He nodded his head slowly. "Yes." He answered. "Totally okay with her."

"Really?"

Zach shrugged. "It's weird but yeah. She's like this... overgrown dog. Completely different and yet similar to the raptors."

Owen smiled and nodded his head. "Yeah, I know what you mean. But just..."

Zach held up his hand and shook his head. He opened his mouth but stopped. Echo let out a squeak, interrupting him. He turned slightly, torn away from thoughts of Rexy. "It's on the fridge."

Echo glanced at the refrigerator and then back at Zach.

Zach nodded his head. "Yeah, you can get it."

Echo chirped happily as she detangled herself from her sisters and darted into the tiny kitchen area. She stretched out her neck and gently grabbed the remote off the top. Then she turned and darted back to the TV.

Owen let out a laugh. "You put the remote on the fridge?"

Zach nodded his head. "When it's up there, no TV. And Echo knows she can't touch it when it is. But I'm too tired to get up." He glanced over his shoulder. "Not too loud, Echo."

"How do you do that?" Owen asked in a soft, wistful tone.

Zach turned to look back at him and tilted his head slightly. "Do what?"

"How do you understand them so well... without understanding them?"

Zach shrugged and looked down at his lap. "Lowery asks me the same thing every day. Several times." He added with a mumble. He breathed out loudly and shook his head. "Routine, I guess... I know Echo wants to watch TV when it's bedtime... I know she was looking for the remote..." He shrugged again. "They're just... like people. Like you said. I just... guess."

Owen stared. Several long minute ticked by as he just stared at the screen. Finally, he breathed out and smiled. "Indescribable. I can't wait to get back there."

He didn't want to call Lowery. He really didn't want to call him. It wasn't that he didn't like the guy. It was just that the guy was a lot to handle. But maybe they had grown closer in the few days they spent alone on the island. He could use a friend on the island. Owen had no clue if Barry would ever come back. He doubted he could convince the man to. Owen couldn't really blame him. Barry had been nearly eaten by dinosaurs. Several dinosaurs. That he had helped raise.

He'd need to hire someone to replace Barry. No way Lowery could do it. He smiled as he imagined Lowery trying to interact with Blue or Delta. He let out a sigh and picked up Zach's phone again. He dialed the control room number quickly and put the phone to his ear before he could psych himself out of it.

"Yo, it's Lowe. Talk to me."

Owen shook his head. "You're a dork."

"Owen?"

"Who else would call your hopeless ass?"

"Anyone but you." Lowery said, not missing a beat.

Owen let out a laugh. "So uh... just wanted to say hi and I'm good and I'll see ya when I get back."

"Aw thanks buddy."

Owen rolled his eyes but smiled. "Yeah so..."

"Zach." Lowery said suddenly, interrupting him before he could hang up.

Owen frowned a bit. "Yeah?"

"Zach." Lowery repeated the name.

"What about him?" Owen asked.

"Dude."

"What?" He snapped into the phone.

"He's pretty young." Lowery said casually.

Owen sucked in a breath. "What's that mean?"

"Just... that he's pretty young."

"So what?"

"He's only 17, right?"

"He'll be 18 soon!" Owen snapped. Then rolled his eyes and shook his head. He really should think before he opened his mouth.

"Still pretty young."

"I have no idea what you're insinuating."
"Pretty young."

Owen sighed. "Lowery, I gotta go."

"Alright, dude." Lowery said, his tone changing. "Get better soon and get your ass back here as soon as possible."

"Trying." Owen breathed out.

"Good. Talk to ya later."

"Hey..." Owen said quickly. "Uh... don't... say anything."

"Young."

"I know." Owen breathed out, his voice barely audible.

"Good." Lowery said evenly before the line went dead.

Owen pulled the phone away from his ear slowly. He stared at it as he lowered it to his lap. "Shit." He breathed out.

Chapter End Notes

XD THERE YOU GO! 8D Probably another chapter or two with them talking. Or maybe 5. 8D WHOLE KNOWS?!
Chapter Summary

Brothers and tears and flashbacks, oh my!

Chapter Notes

I wish I had more time to research stuff and plan stuff. Because I keep thinking and going back and then remember, OH YEAH! I FORGOT ABOUT THIS! STICK IT IN HERE! I really am a spacey writer. XD But I really just don't have the time I wish I had. Maybe one day I'll get better. Or prolly not. Either way, for now you'll just have to deal with my scattered skills. Hope you enjoy! Sorry it took nearly a month. Just been stressed. Again. LIFE! It'll kill you. Really will. But at least this is a bit longer than normal. 8D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"He's okay?" Gray was smiling brightly, his smile taking up the whole screen.

Zach smiled back and nodded. "Yeah. He's okay." He was sitting at the counter, leaning back slightly in his chair.

Gray rubbed at his eyes and stifled a yawn. "Did he tell you what happened?"

Zach frowned for a moment and then shook his head. "We... really didn't get a chance to actually talk... about that..."

Gray's smile fell and he stared at the screen blankly. "You didn't ask him what happened?" There was a note of disbelief in his voice. "How was that not your first question? How'd he get injured? What happened to Ida? Did he remember the raptors and the cave?"

Zach shrugged. "I didn't think about it."

Gray was silent for a beat. And then he slowly wrinkled his nose. "You didn't talk about mushy stuff, did you?"

"No!" Zach answered quickly. "Not... really..."

Gray stuck out his tongue.

Zach rolled his eyes and shook his head. "All we talked about was Charlie's tail, I swear."

Gray yawned again, not looking convinced. "You should have asked."

"I'll ask him, okay?" Zach promised. "He'll probably call back soon. I made him call Lowery."

Gray let out a laugh. "I bet he's enjoying that."
Zach smiled. "Lowery's okay."

Gray nodded. "I had fun with him in the control room."

"Yeah. Aunt Claire took you to the control room."

Gray nodded. "It was really fun. You should have gone, too."

Zach shrugged and glanced away from the screen. That was the day he first got to kiss Owen. He wouldn't have traded that day for anything.

"Tell Owen I said hi when he calls back." Gray said after a moment.

Zach turned back to the screen. "You should call him."

"Me?"

"Yeah." Zach said with a nod. "He'd like that. He's got my phone."

"Really?" Gray asked softly. "You think so?"

Zach smiled. "I do. But it's getting pretty late." He added quickly. "You should be in bed."

"I was in bed." Gray said with a smile. "You woke me up."

Zach shrugged. "Just thought you'd wanna know."

"I do!"

"See? Just don't tell mom or dad!"

"Duh."

They chatted for a few more minutes longer. Gray asked about the raptors and said a quick hello to Delta, the only one awake. Zach asked about school and how Gray was doing. It was nice when they got to visit. It was weird to Zach how much he missed his younger brother being across the hall from him.

"Oh." Zach said as the alert popped up on the screen. "Owen's calling again."

Gray smiled and waved. "Goodnight Zach. Love you!"

"You, too, kiddo." Gray's face disappeared and Zach leaned back. He felt more relaxed now, more at ease. The raptors had fallen asleep almost the second Zach told them to. Delta was the last one up and when Zach last checked, she'd fallen asleep as well. They were used to going to sleep early and waking up early. Owen's schedule. Zach remembered their first phone conversation with a smile. He was still smiling when Owen appeared on screen. But Owen wasn't. Zach's smile fell and he leaned forward, closer to the screen. "What's wrong?"

Owen looked away for a moment. "You and Lowery... get along?" His words came out disjointed.

Zach nodded his head. "Yeah. He's fine."

"Like... he hasn't done... or said... anything weird?" Owen asked, his words just as awkward.

"Define weird for Lowery." Zach said with a slow smile.
But Owen didn't return the smile. He looked away again and breathed out long and loud.

"O..."

Owen's eyes snapped back to the screen. "O? Like just the letter O?"

Zach blinked and nodded his head. "It uh... just... came out."

Owen smiled and let out a laugh. A real sounding laugh. He shook his head and rubbed at his eyes, all the while still smiling and looking like his normal self. "So, the girls asleep already?"

Zach held up his hand and shook his head. "Wait, what about Lowery?"


Zach rolled his eyes. "No, I mean... why'd you bring him up like that?"

"Like what?"

"So serious!" Zach said exasperated.

Owen shook his head. "I don't wanna talk about him. I wanna talk about you."

Zach shook his head. If they weren't going to talk about whatever Owen meant with Lowery, they certainly weren't going to talk about Zach. He quickly changed the subject again. "Hey. What happened when you got attacked? With Ida?"

Owen shrugged. "No clue."

Zach looked a bit disappointed. "Seriously?"

Owen sighed. "I don't remember anything. I remember talking to you and Gray... but I think that's it."

Zach leaned back. "Damn."

"No clue either, huh?"

Zach shook his head. "From the girls, I got the gist that they fought, you got injured, and Ida's gone. But exactly how... that's where the language barrier gets in the way."

Owen smiled. "Next time I talk to them, I'll ask."

Zach nodded slowly.

"You are amazing." Owen said after a silent moment. "You really are."

Zach let out a sigh and shook his head.

"Zach..." Owen said his name slowly, sensing the change.

"I'm not!" Zach snapped. "I've messed everything up!"

"Zach..."

"I've been trying!" A slight whine crept into his voice. He hadn't meant for it to, but it was just there and he couldn't help it. "So hard! But everything keeps going wrong!"
Owen shook his head quickly. "No it's not, Zach. You're doing great. Really."

Zach shook his head. "Echo doesn't listen and Blue hates me..."

"Hates you?" Owen interrupted. "Why do you think that?"

Zach looked away. He tilted his head back and tried to blink away the tears. He couldn't stop and he didn't want to cry in front of Owen. "She either ignores me or she teams up with Delta to play tricks on me."

Owen smiled and let out a chuckle. "Blue is..." He started slowly and paused. "I told you, they're all very family oriented and hierarchical. If Blue didn't trust and respect you... she wouldn't let you be the boss. She wouldn't let you order Echo around or make Charlie a new tail. She wouldn't have her guard down enough to sleep in the trailer with you. She wouldn't let her sister spend so much time with you if she didn't. The tricks and jokes are just their personalities. And probably mostly Delta anyways."

Zach sniffed a bit and rubbed at his eyes.

"As for Echo..." Owen kept on talking. "I mean seriously. I don't understand... but she listens to you better than she ever has for me." He breathed out. "Just in what I've witnessed and after talking to her while you were getting Charlie... it's a little upsetting for me, I guess... in a way."

Zach frowned. "Upsetting?"

Owen nodded. "I raised her but I get the feeling... that if we ever split... you'd get her in the divorce."

Zach let out a laugh at that. "I can just see, telling my parents. Here mom and dad. This is my sort of step daughter giant lizard and I've got sole custody so she's moving in."

Owen smiled. "Just means no divorce."

Zach's face turned red again as he smiled. He looked away and breathed out.

"What's the real problem?" Owen asked softly after a few minutes. "The eggs, right?"

Zach didn't answer.

"They told me what happened."

"Yeah and it was all my fault."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Three days ago.

It was his 3rd day on the island. And it was raining. It had started a few minutes into the drive back to the trailer. Not a lot, just enough to be annoying when the vehicle he was driving had no roof. He was exhausted to his core. He felt like he could sleep for days. But then Blue would call him lazy again. He felt like he was just beginning to change her mind.

When they arrived at the trailer, Zach parked the closer to the trailer than normal. He hopped out quickly and turned to help Charlie. The wind started blowing, pelting them harder with rain. Echo ran up and let out a squeak. Zach ignored her for a second until Blue appeared to take Charlie over. Then Zach glanced around. He needed to cover the jeep before it got worse. "We need a tarp or something." He yelled over the wind.
Echo tilted her head to the side. Delta walked closer and let out a chirp.

"Uh... tarp..." Zach repeated. "Like a plastic... cover... blanket..." He pointed at the jeep. "It doesn't have a roof."

The two sisters looked at each other and chirped. Then Delta dashed off around the back of the trailer.

Zach hoped she had some idea of what he was talking about. He ran to open the door as Blue helped Charlie inside. He turned and Delta returned with a large tarp between her teeth. Zach smiled and nodded. "Yes! That!" He fished the bungee cords from the back and with the help of the raptors, got the jeep covered. Owen's motorcycle was up against the trailer, where it had been the whole time because Zach was afraid to touch it. The raptors found another, smaller tarp, and they got the bike covered.

Zach was soaked by the end. He felt like he could ring out an ocean from his clothes. But before he could think about heading inside, there was a static pop from the jeep.

"Zach? You there?" Zach raced over and darted under the tarp. He pulled the radio receiver out. "I'm here."

"Hey. The storm's looking a lot bigger than I thought. I think you should..." It cut out suddenly.

"Lowery?" The radio was dead. There was a chirp behind him and Blue nudge his back. Zach nodded and the two raced inside.

It was dark. Zach tried the lights but it was no use. The raptors had covered the windows already. Zach blanked at them in amazement. He shook his head and turned for the small kitchen. He bent down to root through the cabinets. He pulled out a shoebox full of flashlights, batteries, and a small battery operated lantern. He grabbed the first flashlight and turned it on. It flickered a bit. Echo immediately darted over and pressed against his side. Zach smiled. "Scared of the dark?"

She let out an indignant squeak but didn't move away.

"Here." He held out the flashlight. "Hold this up."

She grabbed it gently between her teeth.

"The batteries are dying. Let me try the rest." Two of the other flashlights were dead. And the lantern had no batteries. Some more rooting around and Zach was able to find working batteries for them all. He turned the lantern on and rigged it to hand from the ceiling. It cast a dull light around the tiny trailer. It was more than enough to see. Zach put the other flashlights back in the box. He turned to Echo and left out his hand. But the spoiled raptor shook her head and darted over to the other side of the trailer. She stepped on Delta's tail and earned a whack with said tail.

"You could have had the flashlight." Said Zach, shaking his head. "If you had asked."

Echo tilted her head to the side and let out a soft whine around the flashlight.

Zach nodded. "Yeah, you can have it. Just try not to wear the batteries out."

Echo let the flashlight slip from her teeth and caught it with her claws. She raised it to eye level and started at the switch.

"Don't shine it in your eyes, either." Zach breathed out and leaned on the counter.
The rain was pelting the roof pretty hard. The storm didn't let up until nearly dawn. Zach slept on and off. Storms usually didn't keep him up. But the small, metal trailer seemed to amplify the noise. The raptors slept through it fine. But they'd been born here. And lived here the first few months. Maybe they'd been there since then, too. Zach could imagine Owen sneaking them out of the paddock before a storm and letting them spend the night.

He stretched and yawned as he stepped outside. The front yard looked like one giant swampy puddle. But at least the sun was out. He quickly uncovered the jeep and popped off the drain plugs. The seats were still wet. But the sun would help that. He checked the motorcycle. It was hardly wet. But he propped it up in the sun as well. He hung out a bit outside. Then an hour later, he washed up and dressed.

The power was still off in the trailer. But it was pretty far out on a remote part of the island. He needed to ask Lowery about it. The raptors were up. Blue let out a snort and pushed past him, out the door. Delta followed her. Zach stepped closer and watched them. He let out a sigh and turned back. Echo pointed at the TV and let out a squeak. Zach shook his head. "I don't know what happened. The storm must have... knocked out the power..." He shrugged.

Blue popped her head back in and let out a growl.

Zach frowned. "What?"

She snorted and darted out.

Zach followed her outside. Delta was standing in the jeep, squawking at the radio, it looked like. "Delta!" Zach stepped closer and heard the radio static.

"Zach?"

"Delta, get away."

She snorted and jumped out.

Zach opened the door and grabbed the radio. "Lowery." He said into it.

"Oh thank Thor!" The man said over the radio. "Not-Charlie was giving me a headache."

Zach smiled. "Did you just say Thor?"

"Yes." Lowery answered. "Asguardian God of Thunder."

Zach rolled his eyes. "And Not-Charlie?"

"Yeah, I only knew that wasn't Charlie. She wouldn't yell at me."

Zach smiled. "It was Delta."

"Like I said. Not-Charlie."

Zach let out a laugh. "So you survived the storm intact?"

"Yes, I did."

"We were worried after the power..."

Lowery interrupted him. "Zach, how fast can you get here?"
Zach paused for a second. "That... depends." He said slowly. "Jeep looks fine but I didn't start it..."

"Start it and get here. Something happened to the lab."

He'd never driven so fast in his life! Not that he'd done a lot of driving anyways. But certainly nowhere near the speed those words had prompted. At one point, when he'd spun the wheel too sharply, he felt the jeep lift off the ground on one side. Charlie let out a squeal like she was having fun in the back seat. The rest of the raptors were on foot. They couldn't all fit in the jeep and honestly, they would have just slowed him down.

Zach slammed on the breaks, barely coming to a stop, and shifted into park. He jumped out of the jeep and turned. He helped Charlie out and they raced inside. They stopped dead at the door. It was a mess! Over turned tables and chairs. Various computer and tech pieces. Broken glass and scattered papers. His eyes scanned the room and stopped on the incubator. Three eggs were all toppled over on their sides. They looks fine... but... there were only three of them.

"Where are the other eggs?" He whispered softly to himself.

Charlie let out a sad whine beside him.

Zach sucked in a breath as he stepped inside the lab. When he got closer, he could see the cracked shell pieces on the floor. And the smear of blood and some other... liquids. "What the hell happened?"

"I have a theory."

Zach spun around, wide eyed and stared at the man standing in the doorway with Charlie. He'd never seen the man out of the control room. "What?"

Lowery titled his head to the side. "Well... two theories actually." He shoved his hands in his pockets and took a step inside, towards Zach. "When the power came back and I was able to access the video feeds from right before the power was cut to the lab and when I was finally able to restore the video feeds, I believe it was in the middle of a turn cycle. When it came back online, the arm snapped back into its start point and... dropped the egg. It rolled off the table."

Zach glanced back at the egg shell pieces and smears on the floor. "Sunny." He said softly. But the mess wasn't enough to be both missing eggs. "What about Ame?"

"An oviraptor."

Zach's eyes widened as he recognized the name. He remembered Gray talking about the sneaky little thieves. "The egg stealing thing?"

Lowery nodded. "I think the storm washed away the predator scent and when the egg broke, one followed the scent. They've got a killer sense of smell when it comes to eggs. And they're fast little things. It must have been in and our within minutes. Ate whatever was on the floor and snatched one of the eggs off the table."

Zach glanced over at the wall. And at the very large Echo-hole in the glass. He should have repaired it better. He breathed in deeply and out again. Then he rounded on Lowery. "How?" He snapped, unable to control his anger. "How does the power to the lab go out? Aren't there like generators and backups or something?"

Lowery frowned, taken aback by the outburst. "Yeah, from here. From the lab. Run by the doctors and scientist."
"You couldn't do it?"

Lowery shook his head. "Not from the control room."

Zach continued on. "So you couldn't leave the control room for just a few minutes and check?"

Lowery shook his head again. "No, I..."

Zach interrupted and kept yelling. "Not because you couldn't, because you wouldn't! Because you're too scared of everything!"

"You're not the only one on the island!" Lowery snapped back. He turned slightly and pointed at Charlie. "They are not the only animals here. This whole place does not revive around your need to impress Owen or whatever by trying to BE him."

Zach blinked and his mouth dropped open. He was too stunned to respond.

"Simon effectively left me in charge, despite what Owen may have thought." Lowery said loudly. "I have to keep the fences up, I have to monitor the other animals, I have to keep track of weather patterns, satellite fluctuations, the power grid..." He shook his head. "I have to make sure the hydro, wind, and solar panels get retracted before they get damaged, I have to make sure the video cameras come back online, I have to make sure Jurassic Park doesn't repeat itself, I have to..."

"I get it!" Zach snapped loudly, holding up his hands and interrupting the man. "I get it. You do a lot."

Lowery let out a sharp laugh. "We have teams dedicated to each task. When there's threat of a storm, there's hundreds of people with hundreds of little jobs to do. Right now? It's just me. And I'm not trained for 99% of this shit. I've had to learn as I go."

"Okay!" Zach threw up his arms. "I understand, alright? I'm sorry!" He breathed out. "You're awesome."

Lowery nodded. "Damn right."

Zach glanced back again at the eggs. "I just..."

A shrill scream pierced through the hall, followed by a loud thud.

Lowery let out a groan as he turned around. "Echo's gonna put another hole in the wall."

Chapter End Notes

Mushy Stuff. Cuz eggs go mushed. 8D OMG I'M SO MEAN! XD Sorry! But not sorry.
**Chapter Summary**

Owen and Zach talk more. UGH! Stop being so whiney, Zach! And go do something! Oh... he does.

**Chapter Notes**

... IS THIS ANOTHER UPDATE?! WHY YES. IT IS! 8D Double update! If you haven't read the Mushy Stuff chapter, with mushy stuffs happening... then STOP! AND GO BACK! 8D So I haven't had a chance to read and reply to the few reviews I got last night. XD BUT I STILL WILL! And OH! I meant to comment in last chapter about chapter 19's comments. XD I thought it was funny that EVERYONE was happy Lowery noticed Zach's devotion and put 2 and 2 together. Everyone wants him (and other people maybe) to give poor Owen a hard time. :( POOR OWEN!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Owen shook his head slowly. "You did nothing wrong, Zach. The Ida DNA... I honestly don't think was very stable."

Zach tilted his head to the side as he leaned forward a bit, closer to the screen. "How do you mean?"

Owen shrugged. "I can't even begin to understand everything Wu did but... my basic understanding is... mostly t-rex and velociraptor. I told you about the raptors that came before my girls."

Zach nodded. "Yeah. You said most died before hatching. Or right after. Except that one... Lulu?"

"Lala." Owen corrected.

"But... you said Wu like... damaged them?"

Owen shrugged again, looking away from the screen for a moment. "I suspected... I accused him. But... maybe he didn't. Maybe their DNA was just defective. And me... being me... after whatever Wu did whatever to me... that helped our girls to survive."

Zach suppressed the urge to smile when Owen said our. He wondered if the man even realized he said it, in such a casual, doesn't mean anything sort of way. After only a week of chasing them around, he was thinking the same thing. "You uh... you really think that?"

Owen sighed and shook his head. "No clue."

Zach glanced back at the sleeping raptors on the floor. They were still piled up, half lying on top of each other.

"As for the t-rex aspect..." Owen continued on talking. "He couldn't successfully recreate another t-rex. Rexy's still all we have."
"Oh yeah." Zach tore his gaze away from the sleeping raptors and looked back at the computer. "I wondered about that. Gray talked about her a lot. Why wasn't there another one?"

"Because Wu just couldn't do it." Owen answered. "I spent a lot of time in the science labs for a while. I overheard a lot. There was talk of trying to directly clone Rexy, see if that would take. But I never saw or heard of any results."

"That's a bit... sad." Zach said. He rather liked the giant, noisy girl.

Owen shrugged. "Anyways..." He said after a moment. "My point is... Ida's DNA... started really, really... flawed. And there's no way Wu purposely made her... like that... to lay eggs on her down. Some genetic anomaly or something weird. She was never meant to lay eggs. I was trying to be positive about the whole thing... because Echo really wanted more sisters... but I'll honestly be surprised if even one of the eggs hatch and live past the first month."

"That's really depressing." Zach said dejectedly.

Owen nodded slowly. "Yeah. But remember, we are talking about a dinosaur who ate her sibling when they were babies and managed to destroy the whole island."

Zach rolled his eyes. "Hardly the whole island." He mumbled out.

"She wrecked everything!" Owen insisted.

"The island's still intact." Zach pointed out. "She didn't like... blow it up."

"But she killed half the animals." Owen countered. "And investors. And tried to control my raptors."

Zach tilted his head at that. "She shoulda left them alone."

"Exactly!" Owen snapped, throwing his arms up in the air and jostling the phone.

Zach smiled for a moment and then let out a sigh. "So... you're saying it's not my fault Sunny died."

Owen shook his head. "Like you can really anticipate a storm knocking out the power. Just bad luck."

"And Ame?"

Owen paused for a moment and shrugged. "That was more Echo's fault, for wrecking the wall. Maybe Lowery a bit, too. For being so scared shitless of a small oviraptor."

"I don't think he saw the oviraptor." Zach said. "It was just a theory."

Owen shrugged. "Whatever. He still could of done something."

Zach shook his head quickly. "No, Lowery was right. He has to keep the whole island under control. He can't worry about a couple eggs."

Owen snorted and let out a laugh. "Whatever. He could have done both. But... whatever. Point is? Not your fault. In the slightest."

Zach looked away for a moment and breathed out slowly. Hearing those words, it was like a huge weight lifted off his shoulders.

"Zach..." Owen said his name softly, barely a whisper.
Zach breathed out again and then took a deep breath. "So... you think it's safe to bring them here?"

"To the bungalow?" Owen nodded his head quickly. "Oh yeah. I did. Smaller, younger eggs. And remember, I already moved the Ida eggs once. In my jeep, across half the island, speeding and trying to avoid being caught by mommy."

Zach looked back at the screen and smiled. Then he sighed, once again, and leaned back. He crossed his arms and pouted slightly. "I just can't believe aunt Claire's gonna be here tomorrow!" He whined out. "She's gonna ruin everything!"

Owen let out a laugh. "I'm surprised she wasn't there the next day."

"Simon was keeping her away, I think." Zach said. "She's so gonna try to drag me away."

Owen laughed again. "Wish I could be there to see her try."

"I wish you were here with me..." Zach said softly.

Owen pulled the phone a few inches closer to his face. "Me too, babe. Me too."

Zach squirmed a bit under the intense stare. He coughed softly, clearing his throat. "So moving the eggs..." He changed the direction quickly. "Lowery gave me like... an island manual and Gray's helped me some. But I don't think I can take apart the incubator..."

Owen shook his head quickly and held up his hand. "Don't worry about the incubator. Get like... a big box or... desk drawer or something and an electric blanket. They have them in the supply closets at the lab. The eggs just have to be kept warm and stable. They don't need a machine to turn them and measure, weigh, scan, whatever the hell they do. The girls didn't have all that. And half the time I had them out of the incubator."

Zach smiled. "You carried them around." He said softly. "In a sling against your chest."

Owen nodded. "Yes I did. And they turned out great."

Zach nodded slowly. Then he paused. His eyes narrowed for a moment and he nodded his head sharply once. "Okay. That's it." He said softly. Owen was right. He needed to have the eggs here, all the time, so he could take care of them like Owen did. So he and the raptors could. He had to protect the ones left from Claire. Because if she found out? That would be bad. He jumped up quickly.

Owen frowned. "What's it?"

"I have to go get the eggs." Zach said dismissively.

"Now?"

Zach nodded. "Yeah. If Claire's coming tomorrow, I have to get them moved and set up before she finds out and tries to stop me."

"Zach..." Owen started.

Zach stood up, still talking softly. "Knowing her, she'll be here at dawn."

"Zach."

"Or before. She's probably on her way now."
"Zach!"

Zach turned and glanced around the small trailer. He could do this. He was sure. "I wouldn't put it past her showing up at midnight and then whining that it's too dark to do anything!" He said with a smile.

"Zach!" Owen snapped a little louder that time.

Zach paused and turned back to the screen. "What?"

"Are you... are you okay?" Owen asked slowly.

Zach nodded his head quickly. "I'm fine." He said.

"Then why do you keep running away from me?"

Zach stopped. He opened his mouth and then closed it. He glanced away from the screen. His eyes widened a bit. Had he really been doing that? He didn't mean to. And he didn't really know why he was doing it. Well... that was a lie. He did know. Fear over disappointing Owen. Of somehow messing up so horribly that Owen rejected him again. He felt like his whole existence centered around Owen, the girls, and the island. And he just knew he was going to mess everything up. Zach bit his lip. "I'm not... running away." He said finally, still not looking at the screen. "I just have to do this."

"Zach, look at me."

Zach shook his head and turned his back to the computer. "No. I have to go now." He said softly. "Delta." He stepped closer to the pile of raptors and bent down. "Hey Delta." He whispered.

She opened her eyes and blinked at him.

"I need your help."

She craned her neck around and look at the other still sleeping raptors. "Just you." Zach said. "I need your help with the eggs."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Delta was a weird choice, he knew. He'd never been alone with her before. But Echo was too excitable, Charlie was still out, and Blue was left in charge. So that only left Delta to help. He needed to do this fast. Because he really had no clue when Claire was showing up. For all he knew, she was here already. "Come on." He whispered as they headed towards the jeep. "We're gonna put the jeep in neutral and push it away from the trailer. Don't wanna wake up Echo."

Delta nodded her head quickly, like she understood. Zach opened the door. He reached over and opened the passenger door. Delta stuck her head in and pushed it the rest of the way open.

Zach shifted the jeep into neutral and slipped back out. He gripped the steering wheel. Delta lowered her head and pressed against the door. They two of them started pushing the jeep into the jungle. After about 10 minutes, Zach pulled up and stopped. "I think that's far enough."

Delta let out a snort and stepped back. She quickly pushed the door shut with her tail and then climbed in.

Zach smiled as he slid into the driver's seat. He shut the door and turned the jeep on. He hit the high
beams and pressed on the gas.

Delta was the perfect little soldier. She did exactly what he asked, without question or delay, without thinking about it. She trusted his judgment. Zach glanced sideways at her, watching as they got out of the jeep. It was dark out and she immediately was on guard. She held herself taller and glanced around.

It was easy to overlook her in their odd family dynamic. Echo demanded the most attention. Charlie was injured. Blue was the one he tried hardest to impress. And that let Delta on the bottom. Sure, she was scary. They all could be, in their own ways. But Delta... Owen had said several times that she made comments about eating people. And she had killed Dr. Wu while under Ida's influence. But she was also the most quiet of the bunch, when they were all together. She seemed almost like a contradiction of herself.

She fell in step behind him as they walked towards the building. Zach pushed on the door and it clicked open.

Lowery hadn't been happy when they woke him up. "So... you're taking the remaining eggs." He said over the radio. "And just hiding out at Owen's. Permanently."

"You know her." Zach breathed out softly, bringing the radio closer to his face. "The second she gets off that ferry, she's taking over. She'll lock me up in a hotel room and shoot the raptors with tranq guns. And once she finds out about the eggs? She'll destroy them herself."

"Well... yes. Of course." Lowery answered quickly. "But if they aren't in the science lab... and you're hiding from your aunt... then you won't be hanging around here anymore."

Zach let out a sigh. "I think the raptors and I have to stay away."

"Okay. Cool." Lowery answered with a clipped tone. "I'll just stay up here."

Zach has sighed as he drove. "Keep the island running and fix everything Aunt Claire messes up."

"She'll mess everything up." Lowery said.

Zach smiled. "Once Owen is back, everything will be better."

"You really think so?"

"Yes." Zach answered quickly. "He'll figure everything out. He'll talk to Simon and Simon will make Claire listen. Then you can come over and we'll all hang out."

"Yeah." Lowery answered flatly. "We will."

Zach stepped inside and Delta followed. They didn't waste any time, just in case they didn't have a lot of time to waste. They headed straight to the lab. Zach glanced around and pointed at a large filing cabinet. "We need an empty drawer."

Delta nodded her head and turned. She stepped closer to the largest of the cabinets. She grabbed the handle to the bottom drawer with her teeth and yanked it out. Then she lifted her head and tilted it, turning the drawer upside down and spilling out its contents. While she did that, Zach found one of the supply closets. It was unlocked and he pulled it open. He found the blankets inside. And a small, battery operated generator. He pulled the generator closer and flipped on the switch. It still had a charge, just over half. Zach smiled and pulled it out. That would really help.
Delta brought the empty drawer over to the incubator. Zach followed and set the generator and blankets down. He plugged the blankets in and turned them on. He spun the dial up to 86 and then started fitting the blankets inside the drawer.

Delta bent down to watch and nosed at the generator.

"It's a battery." Zach explained as he fluffed the blankets. "And these blankets, they're electric. So they'll be warm enough that the eggs won't need the incubator. And the battery will make sure that even if the power goes out, they'll stay warm." He peeled back the blankets in the corner of the drawer and stuck the battery in. Then he stood up and stared at the eggs left.

Delta let out a soft, almost purring sound for a moment as she stood up and followed him.

Zach looked glanced back at her and smiled. He stepped closer and reached out to touch the eggs. The post-it notes with their names had been scuffed in the oviraptor attack. He'd taken a permanent marker and scrawled the names across the tops of the eggs, just to make sure he wouldn't mix them up. "We're taking the eggs home. Like we should have before the storm." Delicately, he picked up the eggs, one by one, and set them in the make-shift incubator.

The drive back to the trailer was just as uneventful. The eggs sat in the back seat and Delta leaned over the front, keeping her eyes on them. The rest of the raptors were still asleep when they arrived. Zach quickly brought the eggs in and then turned to Delta. He touched his finger to his lips. "Just go back to sleep." He whispered. "We'll show them tomorrow, alright?"

Delta nodded her head.

Zach smiled. "Thank you, Delta."

She breathed out and touched her nose to his chest. Then stepped back and settled on the floor without disturbing her sisters.

Zach climbed over the couch, still blocking the entrance to the small bedroom. The eggs were in their drawer, in the center of the bed. Zach breathed out as he ran his fingers over the names written on the shells. "Okay." He breathed out. "We do this right."

Chapter End Notes

As always, thanks for reading and commenting and keeping me company while I attempt to write and not pull my hair out. 8D
Her fingers flew over the phone. It was new, the latest model and bigger. It didn't seem that much bigger when she purchased it. But the app buttons were spaced slightly farther apart. It was throwing off her reaction time by at least 3 seconds. And it was driving her crazy. She would adjust, she knew. It would take her a few days. But right now, it was annoying. She glared down at her phone for the millionth time that morning.

"Miss Dearing."

She turned at the voice and looked up as the captain approached her. She lowered her phone and turned to give the woman her full attention.

"We're about 15 minutes out." The captain said.

Claire turned her head and glanced out at the ocean. She could just make out the island on the horizon. This far away, it really was beautiful. And peaceful looking. For a split second, she smiled. A real, genuine smile only reserved for her fiancé. Then just as quick, the smile was gone and she turned back to the captain. "Thank you." And then she was back to her phone, the captain forgotten.

Claire went over her schedule, checking her itinerary for the morning. Top priority was checking on her nephew, who should be in the control room with Lowery. So first stop was the control room. She still couldn't believe Mr. Masrani just left her teenage nephew on the island! Wait... she tilted her head to the side. Zach was still a teenager, right? How old had Owen said he was? 17? Yes, yes. She nodded to herself. She was almost certain he was still a teenager. It had only been a few months and his birthday... might have been recently... or in a few months. Did he turn 18 already?

She shook her head again and swiped at her phone. She would worry about that later. She sent a quick text to Zara and another to her sister. A third text was sent to Simon, confirming their conference call for 10:30 am. That should leave her about two hours to check out the control room and gauge the damaged done, estimate repair costs, get a count of the living assets, and sketch out a timeline to reopening. And checking on Lowery. And Zach! Of course checking on Zach. He was top priority.
At least Simon promised her that her nephew was staying in the hotel, far away from anything dangerous. She still had her doubts as to how he was actually helping Lowery. But Simon had insisted. And promised to use his connections to help Zach with college. Assuming Zach was old enough for college. She wasn't entirely sure Owen had been right when he said 17. Zach couldn't have been that old already! Or maybe he was.

Her sister hadn't helped. Karen hadn't pushed the matter too hard. She didn't put up too much resistance. And Zach had been able to convince her to let him stay rather easily. Claire spared one second to think about her poor sister and how bad the divorce had to be for Karen to let Zach stay. But he was safe. Simon had said he was safe.

Once again, her fingers were flying over her phone. She didn't look up as the ferry started slowing. They docked without problem and a hush fell over the deck. The whole crew stepped out and watched, waiting for something to happen. But nothing happened. There was nothing there to greet them. Claire finally slid her phone into her pocket and stepped down, off the ferry.

She spared exactly 30 seconds to glance around and evaluate the docks. Large tree limbs, leaves, various plants and debris dotted the ground. She'd heard about the giant storm a few nights ago. She'd have to get the cleaning crew back sooner than anticipated to assess the full damage and start on the repairs. Her eyes settled on a rather large, muddied footprint. Just as soon as she confirmed all the assets were back in their pens.

"Miss Dearing." She turned again as the captain once again approached her. "We've unloaded your car." The captain said. She held out the keys and dropped them in Claire's open hands.

"Thank you. That'll be all." Claire said with a dismissive nod. "You can leave now."

The Capitan hesitated. "Are you... are you sure?"

Claire nodded her head. "Yes."

The captain still hesitated. "Miss Dearing..." She started.

Claire cut her off. "No one else is setting foot on this island until I can confirm their safety."

The captain nodded. "Yes ma'am."

"I will consult with Mr. Masrani. You will be getting a call."

She nodded and turned back to the ferry.

Claire turned for her car.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Lowery watched the brief exchange through a cracked, fuzzy video. The lens had been damaged at some point. He wasn't exactly sure when or how. It would need to be replaced. It should have been replaced. But he wasn't going out there to do it. And he had to give Claire credit for just standing there. Rexy could have been there, waiting for her. She wasn't, of course. Lowery glanced at the map. Rexy was still at Owen's trailer. She'd been there since early that morning. Or late last night. Either way, she was far enough away that they were safe.

Lowery let out a sigh as he leaned back in his chair. He took off his glasses and rubbed at his eyes. He pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes for a moment. Claire was here. She was on her way. She was here and on her way to the control room. This shouldn't feel so weird and devastating.
It wasn't like it was a surprise. It wasn't like he expected this to last. Or even that he really wanted it to, if he were honest. The end result was the same now as when he first volunteered to stay. He was to help Owen keep the island under control until it could reopen.

He opened his eyes and slipped his glasses back on. He glanced around. He really should have cleaned. He checked the dock camera again. Surprisingly enough, Claire's car was still there, even as the ferry was pulling away. Or maybe, it wasn't so surprising. She was probably sitting behind the wheel, with her phone in her hands. He zoomed in on the camera. And that was exactly what she was doing.

Lowery jumped up and started scrambling around the room. Everything went in the board room down the hall. He'd just finished dragging Charlie's mattress in and let it drop. Then he raced back to the control room. Claire's car was pulling up to the gate. He could let her sit there for a few minutes and wait. He should let her sit there. It would be funny. She'd get angry. And he could secretly laugh.

Lowery smiled to himself as he ignored the honking car and started pushing the desks and chairs back into place. He waited 3 minutes and then opened the doors. He made her wait again when she arrived at the building. But only a minute then. He knew he was pushing it. But that would probably be the last fun he'd have in a long time. For a moment, he felt jealous. He looked at the map, his eyes on Owen's little isolated corner of the island.

Zach was there with the raptors. And Rexy. But at least Rexy couldn't fit inside the trailer. With them there, they effectively saved Zach from Claire. She'd be crazy to try to take him away from them. She'd be crazy to try. And Lowery knew she was going to try. And fail. He kind of wanted to see that.

Lowery breathed out as he looked at the tiny dot of the trailer on the map. His first inkling that something wasn't exactly normal about the relationship between Owen and the kid had been after the storm. The clear panic the kid had, not from the loss of the eggs but from disappointing Owen, seemed way over the top. Lowery had started to think back on a few other things. The way Zach tried so hard. The way Zach talked about Owen, in this soft, awe-like manner. The way Zach always smiled whenever Owen was mentioned. A tiny million little gestures and actions that Lowery dismissed as adulation or infatuation. A crush was one thing. But this seemed like so much more than a crush. And then last night, when he accused Owen in a thinly veiled, off-handed way, and Owen didn't deny it, and instead begged for silence... Lowery was certain now. He didn't know the extent, but there was something romantically going on between Owen and Zach.

He didn't care about the gay thing. That was fine. Be whoever you want to be. It was none of his business and he was cool with that. The age gap wasn't such a bad thing either. Age was really only a number and a state of being. The problem was that Zach was still too young. He wasn't even legally an adult yet. If he'd been 25 or hell, even 20 would have been better. But to be 17? That was the worrying part. And the fact that clearly Zach was already so invested in this whatever-it-was relationship. Just how long had this been going on? And exactly what was it?

Maybe it was worrying. Maybe it wasn't. He just wasn't sure. And he wasn't sure what to do about it. Because he really liked Zach. And he'd been trying to be Owen's best friend for years. The elevator chimed, tearing him away from his thoughts, and opened. Lowery spun his chair slowly and smiled widely as she walked in. "Welcome back, Boss."

Claire wrinkled her nose as she strutted in. "It seems like a locker-room in here."

Lowery shrugged. "Sorry. No cleaning crew."
She glanced around. And while it looked more like the control room she left than it did earlier that morning, it still looked off. And she picked up on that fact right away. "You're living in here, aren't you?"

Lowery shrugged again. "Half the animals are loose on the island. You really expect me to just walk around outside? Plus, if something happens in the middle of the night, there's no night crew to handle it. Just me."

"So that's a yes?" She asked, straight-faced. "You are living here?"

Lowery nodded. "Affirmative."

"At least you kept it..." She paused, looking around again. "Relatively clean."

"Don't look in the board room."

She raised an eyebrow. "What?"

"Just me!" He emphasized, pointing at himself.

She breathed out and nodded. "Yes. You are correct. Thank you for your dedication."

Her sincerity made Lowery sit up a little straighter in his chair. "You're welcome, boss."

She shook her head and rolled her eyes. "Alright. Where's Zach? I'd like to say hello real quick before we get started."

Lowery turned towards the screen. He lifted his hand and pointed at the map. "Right there."

Claire frowned as her gaze followed him. She stepped closer and stared. "Where?"

"Owen's trailer." Lowery answered, looking back at her.

Her eyes slowly widened. "He's not here?"

Lowery crossed his arms and shook his head as he leaned back. "Nope. He's at the trailer."

"How long has he been there?"

"Since he got here." Lowery answered honestly.

"Since he got here." Lowery answered honestly.

Her eyes snapped back to Lowery. "He's been living at Owen's trailer? This whole time?"

Lowery nodded.

She opened her mouth slowly. "Simon said he was staying at the hotel."

"Well yeah." Lowery nodded. "That was the original idea. And I'm sure Simon still thought he was. We don't get a lot of time to talk to Simon. He half-lied. Simon was busy. But they'd had plenty of time to talk to him. Lowery was pretty sure he knew Zach's sleeping arrangements. Lowery continued on talking. "He's rather busy. But Zach pretty much just sleeps there. He spends most of his time here, in the control room with me. And outside, with the raptors. And Rexy. And these two triceratops sisters that Owen trained to help feed Moe."

Claire took a deep breath. Then another. She looked like she was seconds from passing out. Or from blowing up. Neither of those things sounded good at the moment. "You're telling me..." Her voice
shook a little. "That he's been out there... alone with the animals... the whole time?"

Lowery nodded his head quickly. "Yep."

She spun around and started stomping towards the elevator.

Lowery glanced back at the map. "Uh... I might rethink the family visit. Rexy's still there."

"I'm going to bring my nephew back." The doors opened and she stepped into the elevator.

"Yes." Lowery called after her. "Wonderful idea." He let out a sigh as he turned back to the map again. "Sorry, Zach." He said softly. He did feel genuinely sorry. He switched to the cameras and watched as Claire's car disappeared from all the video feeds. He let out another sigh and reached for the phone. "Mr. Masrani." He said as the line clicked.

"Lowery!" The man said happily. "Call me Simon."

"Yes sir. Simon."

"See?" He laughed. "That's better. Much better. Now what can I do for you?"

Lowery hesitated for a moment. He felt compelled to tell. This was a dangerous line the two were playing at, Owen and Zack. But if he did tell, he could be making enemies of both. He breathed out and shook his head.

"Lowery?" Simon said after the silence began to stretch on. "Is something wrong?"

"I think Zach's become too comfortable." He blurted out a portion of the truth before he could lose his nerve completely.

"Too comfortable?" Simon repeated.

"Yes." Lowery said, nodding his head. "He's too... comfortable with the raptors... and being here... and he seems to... behave as if... he's never leaving. He... expects Owen to come back... and that they..." He faltered. He didn't want to come out and... out them. He really wasn't sure of the extent of their relationship. "Zach just acts as if he's staying for good and he'll be on the payroll when we reopen."

Simon let out a sigh. "You may be right." He said after a moment. "He's young and impressionable."

"Yes!" Lowery said quickly. "He's done a wonderful job, but he's really young. Like really young. And we talked about him going to college and maybe coming back and working here."

"I wouldn't be against it." Simon said. "He's done amazing work with the animals already in such a short time."

"Yes." Lowery agreed. "And that's none of my business who you guys hire. But..."

"But you are right." Simon finished. "He is really young. The liability alone... it was a big mistake to let him stay. And a bigger mistake to let him remain so long. The raptors though... were very adamant that he stay. I felt it was my only option to save Owen and keep his secret."

"Of course." Lowery said quickly. "Rock and hard place."

"Thank you for your concern." Simon said. "I will give it some thought. Keep up the good work and keep an eye on Zach."
"Thank you, sir. I will try. But that will be impossible." He said quickly before Simon hung up. "He's not here."

"Zach?"

"No." Lowery glanced up at the map. "He's isolated himself at Owen's trailer with the raptors and the T-rex. To hide from Claire."

"That makes it a bit more pressing."

"Yes."

"Alright. Thank you."

"You're welcome." Lowery said flatly. He pulled the phone away and let out a sigh. He didn't feel good about tattling. He felt like it was the right thing to do. But he didn't feel good about it.

Chapter End Notes

Woohoo! Second chapter without either Owen or Zach. XD (Though they did get mentioned a lot. 8D) The first was in Raptor when Claire took Gray to the control room and then they and Simon went to meet Ida. I said back then I wanted to do another non-Zach/Owen chapter. XD Because it was fun. Took a really long time to do it.

Love, Simon was awesome, by the way. XD And I'm so obsessed with Zach and Owen that it's hard to see Chris Pratt or Nick Robinson and NOT see Owen and Zach. XD I was like... THIS IS SO MY LITTLE PRECIOUS ZACH! XD

Also, random. But if anyone's as bored as me and has Skype or Discord and wants to yell at me between chapters, let me know. 8D
Skype: brycechasyn
Discord: Chas#0048
Also made a Discord Server: https://discord.gg/JGgeWp3
"So... she's just out there?"

Zach nodded between bites of microwave frozen pizza. One good thing about Claire's return would be her getting the park ready for reopening. That meant more people. Which meant the restaurants and park food vendors would open. And there would be much better food options than Owen's freezer. He was putting a dent into those frozen pizzas.

"She's just out there... standing around." Owen continued on.

Zach nodded again.

"And you're not scared of her?"

Zach shook his head quickly. "I'm terrified of her."

"Oh good." Owen breathed out. "Cuz for a few minutes there, you sounded insane."

Zach swallowed his mouthful and stared blankly at Owen for a moment. "Me? I sound insane?"

Owen nodded. "You just told me you scratched her back. Twice."

Zach shrugged as he sat up in his chair. "Her stitches were itchy."

Owen shook his head. "You shouldn't know that!"

"Well I figured it out!"

Owen sighed and shook his head. "Zach..." He started softly.

"I'm careful!" Zach said, rolling his eyes.

"Careful? Careful!" Owen let out a sharp laugh and shook his head again. "He says careful!"

Zach rolled his eyes. "I swear!"

"He swears!"
Zach frowned. "Stop that."
"What?"
"That weird 3rd person thing about me."
Owen smiled. "It's fun."

They chatted a bit more. About nothing really. The morning. Claire fears. Owen talked about his doctor. Zach mentioned the eggs. At that, Echo piped up, interrupting them loudly. The other raptors were outside with Rexy. Only Echo stayed inside, watching Nemo. For the billionth time, it seemed. But at the eggs, she stopped.

"She's mad." Owen said with a smile.

Zach shrugged. He crossed his arms and leaned back slightly. "You're too noisy."

Echo let out an indignant squeal. Then she ran out the door, making as much noise as she could and squealing just as loudly.

Owen chuckled. "Temper tantrum. You really pissed her off."

Zach shrugged again as he pushed off the stool. "She'll get over it and apologize if she wants Nemo." He walked over to the TV. The remote and plush Nemo toy were sitting on the floor, forgotten. He must have really upset her for her to forget her toy. She always hid it. Zach pushed away the twinge he felt at that. He collected the two items and stashed them on top of the refrigerator.

"I can't believe that works." Owen said when Zach appeared back on screen.

Zach opened his mouth but before he could answer, Blue can through the door. Zach sighed and shook his head. "Whatever Echo said I did, she's being a baby."

Blue narrowed her eyes for a moment. Then exhaled loudly and nodded.

Owen laughed loudly. "She agrees with you."

"That much I understood." Zach busied himself with picking up the small trailer. He didn't know why he felt the need to clean. But he did. It didn't take long. It was really small. When he returned to the kitchen area, Blue was standing near the computer screen, obviously talking to Owen. It was still weird. But it was less weird. And it was almost comforting, listening.

"She wants you to hunt with them." Owen said suddenly and loudly.

Zach tilted his head a bit as he stepped closer again. "Hunt?"

Owen nodded as Blue said something else. "But... slow?"

Blue nodded her head.

"Slow." Owen repeated. "She says you're too slow."

Zach glanced sideways at Blue and fought really hard not to glare at her. He breathed out and crossed his arms. "It's not my fault!" He said a tad more sourly than he meant. But it wasn't his fault. He was fast, for sure. He'd done well on the track team at school. But he was still human. Completely human. He couldn't race around the jungle like them. Not unless they wanted to go on
what would be a leisurely stroll for them. But he doubted Blue would be interested in that. "I can't keep up with you." He said softly.

Owen slowly smiled. "You remember that night I got drunk and you drove me home?"

Zach nodded quickly. "Yeah. You threatened to kick Blue's ass."

Blue snorted loudly and let out a low growl.

Owen rolled his eyes. "Whatever, Blue. I've beaten you like a million times now. Get over it." He looked over at Zach. "Now... I had a dream that night about you."

Zach tilted his head. "Yeah?"

Owen nodded. "The girls and I were racing through the jungle and then you showed up on my motorcycle."

"Your motorcycle." Zach repeated.

Owen nodded. That was the image that stuck with him then, that wouldn't leave him.

"You want me to ride your motorcycle."

"Yeah." Owen nodded again.

"I'll crash it."

"Then I'll fix it."

Zach shook his head. "I'll really crash it."

Owen stared at him. "You drove it before."

"For like a minute with you behind me." Zach countered. "And you jumped off and I immediately crashed it."

Owen let out a laugh. "Driving up a rampaging killer dino's back is pretty different that weaving through trees. You can do it. And Blue can help, right?"

Blue exhaled loudly and nodded her head.

"See?" Owen said smugly. "Problem solved. You'll have plenty of time to practice now."

Zach let out a sigh and shook his head. He'd have the time, sure. Being stuck at the trailer permanently now. But something about the motorcycle scared him. He'd think about it later. "Okay. It's bath time."

Blue nodded her head and raced out of the trailer.

Owen frowned and tilted his head to the side. "Bath time?"

Zach nodded. "They went out hunting with Rexy in the middle of the night. They girls halfway cleaned up so they wouldn't track blood and dirt in the trailer. But Rexy's usually always covered."

"So you give her a bath?"

Zach shrugged again. "It's not really like giving her a bath..." He said a bit awkwardly. Because it
was such a weird, awkward thing. "More like watching her try to roll around in the water."

Owen was silent a moment. He glanced off screen and breathed out a sigh. "Can I watch?" He asked softly.

Zach frowned and opened his mouth slowly. "How?"

Owen looked back at the screen. "There should still be some really long cords in the kitchen cabinets. I used to hook the monitor up outside when the girls were eggs."

Zach blinked at him. "You really want me to unplug all this shit and rig it up outside so you can watch Rexy try to take a bath. She has to go pretty far out. I doubt you'd be able to really see anything on a phone screen."

"It's not just her I wanna see." Owen admitted softly. "I've got that... itch, you know?"

Zach's face reddened a bit and he looked away quickly.

Owen's eyes widened and he shook his head and arms frantically. "No! No, no, nononono! Not that!" He said. "I meant... literally. I can feel... my other skin... my raptor skin." He whispered.

Zach was pointedly looking at the floor. He lifted his hand to his face and bit at his thumbnail absently.

Owen breathed out. "I just... I wanna see outside." He said after a few silent minutes.

"You've been awake for a day." Zach mumbled around his thumb. "How are you so stir crazy already?"

Owen shrugged his shoulders. "Fast metabolism."

Zach pulled his hand away and looked back up at the screen. "That makes no sense."

"Just do it. Please!" Owen's bottom lip stuck out in a pout and he fluttered his eyelashes. "Come on, Zachy."

Zach rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Fine." He quickly unplugged everything. He quickly pulled everything out and after about fifteen minutes, had the monitor set up outside. He really had no clue what he was doing. But Blue had come over as he set the stuff on the porch. "Owen wants to see outside. He said he used to hook this stuff up outside, years ago."

He flipped it back on and ran back inside the trailer. He grabbed a large, colorful towel and changed into his stolen swim trunks. Then he headed back outside and called Owen.

"Can you see anything?" Zach asked, crouching down to get eyelevel with it. He waved at the screen. Echo crowded in beside him and Zach pushed her away.

Owen smiled. "I can see you. And those are hot." He pointedly looked down at Zach's swim shorts, covered in Echo's face.

Zach shrugged. "I stole a pair with Rexy on them. But they disappeared and the Echo ones appeared."

At her name, Rexy stepped closer. Zach glanced back. Rexy nosed closer and bent down to nudge him. "Owen." Zach said, pointing at the computer.
"Hey Rexy." Owen waved on screen.

Rexy leaned closer and Zach jumped in front of her, waving his arms. "No touching!" Rexy turned her head slightly to blink at him. Then she opened her mouth and her large tongue lolled out. Zach's eyes widened and he darted away as she tried to lick him. "No licking!"

"Zach!"

"It's okay." Zach ran by the screen and waved. "It's a game. I think." He added quickly. "Pretty sure Delta told her to."

From the sidelines with her sisters, Delta whistled loudly.

Zach zigzagged around and under her feet. He was too fast for her. And it felt good. He'd missed his track conditioning. Maybe he needed to race with Echo more. He slid under Rexy's tail and jumped up. Then grabbed the tip and quickly pulled himself up. "Rexy!" He waved. She swung her head around and let out a low growl. Zach laughed and slid back off. "Okay." He waved his arms again and pointed at the water. "Bath time." He breathed out, a bit out of breath.

Rexy turned and followed his line of sight.

"Bath." Zach repeated.

Rexy turned completely and stepped towards the beach. Echo let out an excited squeal and raced off after her. The others followed at a slower pace.

Zach strode back to the trailer. He picked up the towel off the porch and slung it over his shoulder.

"That's my towel." Owen said.

Zach pulled it off and looked at it. "It's got the Ninja Turtles on it."

"So?" Owen shrugged. "It's my beach towel."

"We're at the beach." Zach stated. "And every towel you own is a beach towel."

"I live on the beach."

Zach stared at him. "What are we even talking about?"

"Ninja Turtles are awesome." Owen said flatly.

Zach rolled his eyes and stepped closer to the screen. He tilted it slightly and stepped back again. "Can you see them?"

"Not really." Owen answered.

Zach shrugged. "Your lame ass idea." Owen might have said something. Zach expected him to. But Zach couldn't make out the words as he ran towards the beach. The raptors let out squeals as he joined. He pulled his shirt off and tossed it on the beach before stepping into the water. He dunked the towel into the water and swam towards Rexy. She was a bit farther out than the raptors. She had to be. "Rexy."

She looked over at him and immediately ducked down, submerging herself more in the water. It still didn't cover all of her. But it was a start. Zach climbed up her back easily, dragging the towel with him. Then he preceded to actually wash her, dragging the towel over the scales on her neck. It wasn't
the most practical way of bathing the oversized lizard. Although, to be honest, Zach didn't think there was a practical way. It served no real purpose. Sure, she looked slightly less terrifying when she wasn't covered in dried blood. A very miniscule difference. But Rexy actually seemed to like it. So Zach stuck with their weird, almost daily bonding ritual.

He was so focused on that, he didn't hear the car engine. It sped right down to the edge of the water, tires spinning the loose dirt and sand. The car stopped abruptly and the brakes squealed in protest. The door opened and Claire raced out. She splashed into the water until she was wet up to her waist. "Zachary Phillip Mitchell!"

He finally heard her. "Claire!" He screamed her name, forgetting the formalities. "Don't move!" He slipped down Rexy's back. More like he fell. He splashed back into the water and started swimming towards the shore. The second his feet reached the ground, he started running through the water. He wasn't surprised. He shouldn't have been surprised. He knew she was coming to the island today. He figured she'd be there as early as possible. And her first stop would be the control room. And there was no way for Lowery to lie his way out of it. Zach wasn't there. He wasn't staying at the hotel. And of course Claire knew where Owen lived. For a split second, she slipped his mind and he just went about his day.

Echo watched and let out an excited squeal. She thought it was a game! She darted towards Claire.

Zach's eyes widened. He was still too far away to get between them. "No! Stay!"

Blue let out a growl and started to chase after Echo.

"Stay back!" Zach yelled.

But Echo still didn't hear. Or just didn't listen. She reached Claire first and let out another squeal. Claire's eyes widened. She stumbled backwards and fell in the shallow water. She tried to scramble backwards but Echo was already half on top of her. And Claire screamed. Echo's eyes widened and she let out a surprised squeak. She stumbled backwards, very much like Claire did, and landed with a similar splash. Then suddenly, Blue was there. She stepped between the two, her back to Claire. She bent down over Echo and let out a loud growl. Echo shrunk down and whined.

"Claire!" Zach reached her and hooked his arms under her. He pulled her away and helped her up. He pushed her towards the car and turned back to Echo and Blue. "Echo, stay!"

"ZACH!" Claire screeched.

Zach turned back to her and tried to steer her farther away, towards the trailer. "My middle name isn't Phillip." He said, steering the conversation a different way.

Her eyebrows furrowed. "It's not?"

Zach shook his head. "Scott. After dad."

"Oh." She paused and look away for a moment. "I must have confused yours with Gray's."

Zach shook his head again. "Gray's middle name is Michael. After grandpa Mike. Your dad."

Claire looked back at him and tilted her head to the side. "Who's name is Phillip?"

Zach shrugged. "Probably a few million people around the world."

"No one in our family?"
Zach shook his head. "No one I know."

Claire stared at him a moment longer and then shook her head. "What do you think you were doing?"

"Giving her a bath." He said deadpanned.

Her mouth fell open. "A bath." She repeated dryly, like it was the most absurd thing ever.

Zach shrugged. "She's... a messy eater. She's can't... clean the back of her neck."

Claire narrowed her eyes. "That's the most insane thing I have ever heard."

From behind her, Owen's voice rang out. "He also climbs up there to scratch her itchy back."

Claire turned around, seeing the computer screen for the first time. She was momentarily stunned into silence.

"You're not helping!" Zach snapped.

Owen smiled. "Didn't say I would."

"Her stitches are itchy!" Zach said, as if it were a plausible explanation to a normal person. "You're the one who gave them to her!"

Owen let out a sharp laugh. "We've already established that I'm insane."

"Owen?" Claire stepped closer to the porch, seemingly ignoring Zach for the moment. "You're okay?" She asked softly.

Owen nodded his head. "For the most part."

And just as quickly, the concern friend was gone and the angry boss slash aunt was back. "And you knew about this?" She snapped angrily.

Owen held up his hand. "I know nothing! I swear, I just woke up!"

"Yesterday!" Zach added.

"I'm like halfway around the world!" Owen snapped. "How can this be my fault?"

"Indirectly, it is." She straightened back up and turned to Zach. "You're coming back with me now." She said in her boss voice.

Zach shook his head. "I'm not going anywhere.

"You're staying in the hotel." She insisted. "Or... my place. You're staying at my place until you leave."

Zach shook his head again. "No, I'm not."

"Zach."

"No!" He snapped louder. "You can leave and go back to the resort. But I'm staying out here."

"Zach!"
Behind them, Rexy stood up. She turned and had the towel hanging between her teeth. And she didn't look happy.

"Aw shit. No!" Zach turned towards her and waved his hands in the air. "Rexy. Hey!" She took a step towards him and Zach raced back towards the water.

"ZACH!" Claire practically wailed his voice.

Rexy stopped and bent down as Zach moved closer. He reached out and touched her nose. Then he grabbed the edge of the towel. "Let go." He tugged on it gently. She opened her mouth and he pulled it free.

"ZACH!"

Rexy snapped up and let out a loud growl. She opened her mouth and a roar erupted from her throat.

"No, no, no." Zach ran back over to Claire, waving his arms. When he reached her, he grabbed her arm and held it up. "Family. Friend."

Claire wrenched her arm away. "I am certainly not that thing's friend."

"That's not helping!" Owen called out behind them.

"I don't care!" Claire snapped.

Rexy let out another roar, this one louder. The trees and even the trailer seemed to shake.

Claire's eyes widened.

"Please, just get in the car." Zach begged. "Just get in and go back."

"But..."

"No, aunt Claire. Just... once in your life. Please listen to someone else."

Claire opened her mouth for a moment. But she seemed glued to the spot.

"Trust me."

She looked at him. She wanted to argue more.

Zach took her hesitating moment to grab her arm. He turned her and pushed her towards the car. They were inadvertently moving closer to Rexy. But she just seemed to watch them with curiosity. "Everything's fine. I swear. I'll call you as soon as you get back to the control room."

"Call." She repeated.

Zach nodded.

"I don't have your number."

"I don't have my phone."

She frowned. "Then how..."

"Lowery will show you. We use the radio in the jeep."
She glanced back at Owen's jeep. She let out a sigh and shook her head. "This is crazy."

"I know. Please don't tell mom."

She snapped her gaze back to him. "Oh no." She shook her head. "Your mother is never finding out. She'll kill me."

Chapter End Notes

It's not... 100%. XD But... you know. Lack of time and brainpower and I've decided I'm done with it and wanna work on the next so... there ya go! 8D

Also, once again, if you're on Discord or wanna be on Discord and join me and a few other readers on a chat server, let me know! I'm Chas#0048.
New Tactic

Chapter Summary

The other horny one.

Chapter Notes

Short. But... the other half of this chapter... just didn't feel right with this chapter. So... I chopped it. Also, if I spent any more time thinking about it, Snuggie was gonna kill me. Threatened me with knives. So...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Claire pulled the door shut and touched the steering wheel. The car was still on. The air conditioner was still on. The radio was still on. Some awful, high-pitched bouncy song was playing. She turned that off first, then put the car in reverse and backed up. She swung the car around and stopped. She looked out the window and Zach was waving her forward. Her nephew, standing next to one of the velociraptors like it was nothing. And he was waving her away. Like it was no big deal for her to leave him alone, in the middle of nowhere, with these animals. A sigh escaped her lips as she pressed on the gas pedal. She kept her eyes on the rearview mirror until Zach was out of sight.

It was wrong. This was wrong. All wrong! She felt it in every fiber of her being. How could she just leave him? And why? Why was he so connected to these animals? She was going to have some choice words for Simon Masrani. He clearly lied to her. About everything. And he'd tricked her into tricking her sister into letting Zach stay. She arrived back at the resort in record time. This time, the door and elevator were both open. "Explain." She said as she stepped inside the control room.

Lowery spun around slowly in his chair. "Explain... what?" He asked just as slowly.

Her eyes narrowed. "Whatever it is that everyone is keeping from me."

Lowery turned back to his computer. "No clue what you mean, boss-lady." His eyes were back on the screens, scanning everything.

He was lying. She knew he was lying. But she didn't know why. Or about who. Who was Lowery being loyal to? Zach seemed unlikely. The two had just met. At least she thought they just met. The day she'd taken Gray to the control room when the brothers were on the island, Zach had stayed behind at the hotel. There'd been no other opportunity for the two to meet. Simon was a possibility. But from the business stand point, and Simon was a businessman above all else, than he shouldn't have any secrets from his operations manager. Claire needed to know everything about the island to run the island. So Simon shouldn't be keeping things from her. Owen was obviously a contender. Claire knew how much Lowery idolized the man. But if what he said over the computer was true, he'd been in a coma. If he'd just woken up, there was no way for him to have such influence over her employee and her nephew. But clearly, she couldn't get any more from Lowery. Not directly, at least.
Claire breathed out and stepped across the room. It looked cleaner than it had. The desks dusted and the floor vacuumed. The trash cans were empty and it smelled like some flowery spray she might find annoying if it didn't mask the man cave scent. Lowery had tried. That counted for something. She grabbed a chair, pulled it out, and sat down beside him.

Lowery looked over at her. He opened his mouth and closed it. The question, what are you doing, seemed to flash through his head. But he didn't ask it. He smiled and looked back at the screen.

"Tell me about the raptors." Claire said.

Lowery glanced at her sideways. "The raptors." He repeated.

"Yes, Lowery." She said with a nod. "Tell me about the raptors. Surely you must have spent some time with them."

"The raptors." He repeated again.

She stared at him for a moment. "Yes."

"You want to talk about the raptors."

"Lowery!" She snapped.

"Sorry!" He said quickly. "Just making sure. You've never asked about them before. Or any of the other dinos."

She shook her head. "I have, too."

"No." He shook his head. "Unless you're calling them assts, you never have. And even then, it's in a general thing, never about themselves. Like... why are all those assets running in circles? They look like they're chasing their tails."

Her mouth dropped open. "I have never said that before!"

Lowery nodded his head. "Yeah, ya did. About the Gallimimus flock. Or the time you asked why the assets were headbutting. And the time you called the one that looked like a triceratops the other horny one."

Her eyes widened and she shook her head again. "Oh I certainly never said that."

Lowery nodded his head again. "You certainly did. Your first week here. You didn't know the difference between a triceratops and a nasutoceratops."

She narrowed her eyes at him. "That was a long time ago."

"You still know nothing about them." He said with a shrug. "You treat them as things and refuse to learn anything about them."

It was very close to what Owen had said to her, too. They might have a point. A very small, tiny point. But she had a couple thousand employees' safety to worry about. She had a resort to run, a business to handle. Studying up on the assets... the animals was really low on her list. It was just as extinct as these animals actually were. She breathed out. She could try. When everything was back up and running, she could try. But in the meantime, Lowery was still rambling on about the dinosaurs, talking about the size differences in the different raptor species. "Lowery!" She snapped his name louder that time. "Enough! I get it!"
"Yeah. Okay." He held up his hands as he leaned back. "Zach did actually spend a lot of time here with them. And Owen did, too. But one of them, Charlie, she was injured real bad in the Ida fight... the Indominus Rex."

Claire nodded quickly. "I know Owen gave it a ridiculous name."

"Her." Lowery corrected. "You really need to top seeing them as assts and start seeing them as animals."

She stared at him blankly. "That animal... ate part of my staff."

Lowery tilted his head slightly. "Okay fine. Ida's exempt."

"Charlie..." Claire prompted.

Lowery nodded. "Charlie was injured and laid up for a while... and... we stole a mattress from the hotel and moved everything in here around and Charlie spent like a whole week in here... with me."

Claire's eyes widened slightly. "Alone?"

Lowery nodded.

"Tell me about that."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Rexy wandered off almost as soon as Claire left. In the opposite direction, Zach watched in relief. He had no clue if the T-Rex understood. He never knew. But he hoped she got the point to stay away from the resort part of the island. He doubted it. He'd have to ask Lowery to keep an even closer eye on her tracker. He watched until the trees stopped swaying and breathed out. "I definitely don't want the job of telling her she has to go back in her pen."

Owen had laughed. "We'll let Claire handle that."

Zach laughed as well. Because he could see Claire trying. Because she was just stubborn enough to do it. And Rexy tilting her head because she didn't understand. Then Claire would get angry and loud. And Rexy would get confused and impatient. And possibly hungry and murderous. To just shut Claire up. "Bad idea." Zach said after a moment.

Owen seemed to follow his train of thought and nodded. "Yeah."

They were still outside. Echo was rolling around in the dirt, trying to get Delta to wrestle with her. Delta was ignoring her, standing near the porch and seemingly staring off into nothing. Blue and Charlie were sitting and watching. And laughing, Zach was certain. The sun was high and there was a glare on the computer screen. But Owen said he could see them just fine.

"It feels really nice to be outside."

Zach raised his eyebrows at that. Then rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Whatever. I'll be right back." He went inside to check on the eggs. They were fine, right in the middle of the bed where he'd left them. Of course they were. They windows were all shut and secure. And the whole place smelled of predator, the raptors assured him. There was no way anything was sneaking inside. But just to be sure... he shouldn't leave them alone. He grabbed the drawer and brought it outside. He settled down on the porch, the egg drawer beside him. Echo stopped her rolling and darted over. She barely fit but she stuffed herself between the drawer and the door. Zach smiled as he draped his arm
over the drawer.

"I can't see everyone." Owen's voice said. "They all here?"

"Yes." Zach answered.

"Okay, Charlie." Owen said. "You start."

Chapter End Notes

So... that's it. Hope you enjoy it.

As always... if you wanna join some of us in our Discord Chat: https://discord.gg/H2e3B
Chas#0048
Most Teeth

Chapter Summary

Echo can Nemo!

Chapter Notes

I'm braving my Nameless-induced headache to finish editing this. UGH! NAMELESS! WHY YOU TRY KILL ME WITH YOUR VOICE?! And Snuggie's trying to kill me, too. Also, this chapter only involves dinos. And dinos talking to other dinos so... just using quotation marks.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A few weeks earlier...

Alpha didn't hear. He was distracted as he pulled the door open and reached for her. She hadn't heard either. Not until the albino monster was looming above them. Why hadn't she heard? For just the briefest moment, she let her guard down. "Dad!" She screamed.

He turned too slowly. Ida struck him like lightning, moving faster than Charlie had seen her before. Owen didn't have time to react. Ida sunk her teeth into him and tore him away from the jeep, away from Charlie.

"Dad!" Charlie screamed again. She watched in horror as the monster whipped her head back and tossed him away, like he was nothing. Charlie scrambled out of the jeep, panic and fear gripping her. She ignored Ida completely, no longer seeing or hearing her. Only one thing was on her mind. "Alpha! Dad!" She stumbled as she ran to where he'd fallen.

Inside the building, Echo was halfway across the room, heading for the science lab. Blue was closer to her and Delta was still near the door. Buildings like this made the second oldest raptor nervous. She didn't like when she couldn't see the sky. The trailer was different, that was home. She didn't mind being in there. But Delta hated being in the big building. So she always lagged behind when inside. She'd wait until everyone was in and fall in behind. She followed Blue inside, but now she'd wait for Alpha and Charlie. Like a good girl.

Delta turned back to the door. She'd heard Charlie's scream. The door was about to close. She knew once it did, it would lock and the Mole man upstairs would have to unlock it. She darted forward without any real thought. She just knew the door had to stay open. She had to know why Charlie screamed. She lunged for the door, smacking her head right into it. She slid to the ground as pain radiated through her head. But her body had blocked the door, keeping it open.

Blue turned at the noise. "Delta!" She called out, running forward.

Delta closed her eyes for a moment and shook her head, the movement an immediate mistake. "Charlie." She rasped out. "Help Charlie."
Blue jumped over Delta and flew down the stairs.

Echo ran back over. She stared down at Delta, confused. "Delta okay?" She asked, rushing over.

Delta shook herself and stood up slowly. Echo stepped closer and touched her gently. Delta breathed out and nodded. The two ran out the door.

Blue didn't spare a second thought. She let out a growl and launched herself at Ida. She leapt clear over the jeep and sunk her teeth into Ida's arm. Ida barely flinched and whipped around, shaking Blue loose. Blue let out another growl and ran at her again. Delta joined in and lunged at her from the opposite side.

Ida spun around and snapped her much larger jaws at her. "Eggs!" She screeched. "Mine!"

"No!" Echo screamed from behind them, her voice carrying louder than any of them. She stood on the steps of the building, watching as Ida turned towards her. "MINE!"

Ida let out a tree shaking roar. None of the sisters flinched. None of them seemed to even hear her. Blue, Delta, and Echo circled Ida. Every time the larger dinosaur turned, one of them would dart in and snap at her tail, legs, belly, whatever they could get to. Ida grew angrier. She turned quicker and managed to grab the tip of Echo's tail. Echo dug her claws into the ground as Ida pulled her.

Blue jumped up on Ida's back and Delta darted up under her and grabbed her arm. But Ida was too big and too strong. She let go of Echo and bent and twisted forward enough to grab Delta. Delta let out a surprised, terrified squeal as she was ripped off the ground and flung through the air. She landed with a hard thud, the air knocked out of her.

Blue screamed again and rushed at Ida, Echo right behind her.

Charlie had found Owen. The raptor trainer was lying in the rubble of a broken bench, very close to the railing surrounding Moe's tank. "Dad!" She reached for him slowly. She grabbed his shirt between her teeth and gently pulled him free from the twisted wood and metal. He wasn't moving. She got him flat and rolled him over on his back. "Dad?" She whispered. She reached out gently and touched him with her nose. He was breathing, she was sure. At least she thought she was sure. It was just really shallow.

Charlie had been too focused on Alpha to pay attention to the fight. But when she felt the thud on the ground close to her, she whipped around, a snarl on her lips. If Ida touched Alpha again... her eyes widened and she rushed over to her fallen sister. "Delta!"

Delta lifted her head. "Alpha?"

"Broke." Charlie answered.

Delta lifted her head higher, trying to see around Charlie. "Dead?"

Charlie glanced back. "Don't know." She said honestly.

Delta picked herself up slowly. "Ida die." She ground out between clenched teeth. "Now!"

Charlie breathed out. She turned to watch Blue and Echo still circling Ida. "Get Rexy!" She said suddenly.

Delta paused. "Rexy?"
Charlie nodded her head. "Delta fastest now. Get Rexy."

Delta glanced at Charlie and nodded her head. She turned and took off sprinting.

Charlie ambled back to Owen. She resumed trying to clear his wounds.

Delta ran, as fast as she could. Her feet practically flew over the ground. Rexy might be home. Delta hoped she was at home. The T-Rex had spent a lot of time at their trailer the last couple days. If she wasn't there, maybe she'd be somewhere close. "Rexy!" Delta called a she ran. "Rexy, Rexy!" She slowed suddenly and stopped. She could hear the footsteps and the trees parted. "Rexy!"

The larger dinosaur blinked and bent down closer. She tilted her head. Rexy had been on her way to the resort. She'd gone to the trailer and found it empty. She knew the next place to look would be where the normal human was.

"Ida!" Delta squealed loudly. "Ida attack control. Alpha broke! Rexy help!"

Rexy nodded her head and took off running. Delta turned quickly. She let out a snort and raced off to followed. Rexy couldn't just give her one moment to catch her breath? Delta immediately felt guilty over that thought. No. They needed Rexy's help now. And they needed to hurry. They slowed as they reached the central plaza.

"Blind." Delta said. "Ida broke eye." Rexy nodded her head and Delta slipped out in front of her. They crept closer silently and watched.

Blue and Echo still circled an angry Ida. They were faster, more agile. Echo was bleeding from marks on her tail and Blue had similar ones on her back and neck. But neither seemed unfazed as they darted around, under, and even over the larger predator. All the training sessions with Owen over the years, he'd given them an advantage. They didn't just think like animals. They thought like humans, like soldiers. They signaled to each other, using signs they'd picked up, things Ida didn't understand.

"Wait!" Delta hissed lowly to Rexy. Rexy bent down beside her, low to the ground. She shifted her head back and forth, keeping the fight in her line of sight. She wasn't exactly as hidden as the small raptor. In fact, she was very visible, the gift shop not even covering half of her.

But Ida was preoccupied, her attention on the small raptors. She didn't look over. She reared up suddenly and let out a loud roar. She was angled so that her blind side faced the hiding dinosaurs.

"Now!" Delta hissed. "Surprise!"

Rexy lunged forward. Blue let out a roar, keeping Ida's attention as Rexy slammed into her. The T-Rex threw the younger dinosaur to the ground and pinned her. Blue, Echo, and Delta ran forward, snapping at her exposed, vulnerable areas. Ida twisted in Rexy's hold and kicked with her legs. She caught Echo and the youngest raptor stumbled back.

They still weren't enough! Charlie watched from her spot guarding Owen. She breathed out and glanced around. She wanted to help! But she knew she couldn't fight. She could barely walk upright. But they needed help. They needed... Charlie's eyes widened and her attention snapped back to the fight. "Echo!" She yelled. "Echo!"

Echo turned towards her and darted over to her. "Dad?" Echo tried to push past her.

Charlie shook her head. "Moe."
Echo tilted her head. "Moe?"

"Get Moe!" Charlie insisted. "Ida not breathe water."

Echo's eyes widened. "Not Nemo!"

Charlie nodded her head.

"Dad?" Echo said, a touch softer.

"Broke. Fix later."

Echo nodded again and turned.

Charlie glanced back at Owen. She hoped she wasn't lying. She took a deep breath. "Here!" She called out, trying to get the wrestling dinosaurs' attention. "Over here!"

Echo ran to the edge of Moe's tank. "Moe!" She called out loudly. "Moe!"

The dark shadow in the tank was already near the top. Moe had felt the vibrations of Rexy's entrance and was on her way up to investigate. It had been rather quiet about her part of the island lately. And she rather liked it. Her favorite thing to do was lie at the bottom of her tank and sleep. She couldn't well do that when someone big was up top, shaking the ground.

Echo wiggled a bit in anticipation. She glanced over at Charlie. "Moe come!"

"Now!" Charlie called out.

Ida twisted again, trying harder to get loose.

Moe breached the surface. She blinked her eyes lazily and opened her enormous mouth in a yawn.

"Moe! Moe!" Echo bounced.

"Sleeeeeeep." The deep voice boomed, the water rippling from her movements.

"Help!" Echo said. "Ida!" Echo turned and looked back.

Rexy lifted Ida up and slammed her down again. But the old girl was getting tired. Keeping the younger dinosaur pinned was taking a lot out of her. She hadn't meant to, but her grip slacked just the tiniest bit. Ida felt it. She twisted hard, rolling on her back underneath the T-Rex. Sharp teeth cut into her as she did but she barely felt it as anger coursed through her. The weird, soft raptor had stolen her eggs. She let out a roar and kicked Rexy.

The T-Rex was thrown and she stumbled back, falling on the ground. Delta and Blue jumped at Ida. But she stood and turned sharply. She caught them both with her tail and sent them flying. She'd rip this whole place apart! She knew they were around here somewhere! Her eggs. She would get them back! No stupid puny raptors or old T-Rex was going to stop her.

"Mine!"

Ida turned towards the voice. Her eyes narrowed and she focused in on that one, on the fat, loud raptor. Her scent had been all over her nest. That one and the weird raptor. They'd stolen her eggs. She lowered her head slightly, a growl on her lips.

"Mine!" Echo taunted again. "Echo eggs!" She was standing right in front of the railing, pressed as
Ida ignored the others around her. She only saw the bouncing raptor. And she was going to rip the annoying thing to pieces. She roared again and raced forward. But before she reached Echo, the raptor turned and climbed over the railing. She disappeared over the edge. Ida slid to a stop, frowning. She leaned over the railing, looking at the water below. She didn't see Echo. She didn't see anything. She let out a frustrated snort and lifted her gaze. She scanned the whole weird lake.

Ida didn't see the shadow rising to the surface again. Moe was slow most of the time. Because she was lazy. But when she needed to be, she was fast. She moved through the water smoothly and silently. She breached the surface, her momentum propelling her high enough to grab the surprised I-Rex around her neck. Moe clamped her jaws shut and as she fell back into the water, she dragged Ida down with her.

"Echo!" Charlie was the first to the railing. She leaned over. Blue, Delta, and Rexy followed and all four leaned over. There was no sign of Moe or Ida. The Mosasaurus had taken her deep. But they spied Echo. She was swimming near the edge.

"Ida no Nemo!" Echo said proudly. "But Echo can Nemo!"

Rexy turned to the side and lowered her tail over the side. Echo grabbed hold and was lifted out. Rexy lowered her to the ground and Echo started shaking herself.

Blue ran up to her and snapped at her. "Echo!"

Echo's eyes widened and she ducked down. "What?"

"Echo dumb!" Blue snarled.

Echo pouted a bit and breathed out as she pressed herself to the ground. "Echo Moe friend." She said softly, like that was a fact.

Delta peered into the water once again. "Ida really dead?" She mused more to herself. She watched but there still was no sign of movement.

Blue snorted loudly and nodded her head. She snapped her jaws at Echo again before turning to Charlie. "Alpha?" The four raptors and Rexy turned to the still unmoving human. Charlie had tried her best but his wounds were still bleeding. Blue bent down and nudged him gently. They had to get him somewhere safe. Somewhere where they could protect him, until he got better. They couldn't take him into the building. Despite Charlie's attachment to Mole, they couldn't talk to him without Alpha. And Blue doubted the excitable human could actually help. They couldn't take him back to the trailer. They couldn't all fit inside. Not without breaking something. And breaking was bad.

Chapter End Notes

Only a couple chapters left! 8D
Lowey had surprised him the next day by actually showing up at the trailer. "She's driving me crazy!" Lowery snapped loudly as he got out of an island jeep. He slammed the door loudly.

Zach stepped down the porch steps towards him. He held his arm out behind him, signaling to the raptors to stay put. All the girls had been outside. Zach had grounded them to the front yard, as he had taken to calling it. Echo and Delta had gotten a bit too rowdy earlier than morning. And they managed to knock over the TV. So they were outside and Zach had been inside, trying to clean up and figure out just how broken the TV was. Delta had heard the approaching jeep first. And Zach had come running outside, fearing Claire's return. But it wasn't Claire. "You actually left." He called out as he approached.

Lowery nodded his head. "She's really driving me crazy." He stopped and looked around. "Wow! So this is Owen's place!" He said, an air of awe in his voice.

"Yep." Zach said with a too casual nod.

"Awesome."

Zach rolled his eyes. But he couldn't take the smile on his lips. It was sort of awesome.

"Before I forget..." Lowery turned back to the jeep. He reached in and pulled out a small box. He turned and handed it to Zach.

"What is this?" Zach asked as he took it.

"Crappy employee phone." Lowery said with a shrug. "Claire said she'd leave you alone if you have a real phone that she can call all the time."

Zach glanced down at the box and sighed. But he nodded his head. "Yeah, okay."

"And you have lunch with her at the resort every day." Lowery added quickly, all in one breath. Zach's eyes snapped back up and widened. "What?"

Lowery shrugged. "Give it a couple days and she'll forget. Now show me around!"
Zach blinked and glanced back at the small trailer. The four raptors were still standing in front, watching them. Echo was bouncing and Charlie was standing in front of her, as if trying to keep her back. Blue and Delta didn't seem interested. But they still kept still. "This is it." Zach said, looking back at Lowery. "This is seriously it. Just a trailer and a yard and... the ocean." He turned and pointed.

Lowery followed his gaze and smiled again. "Amazing."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Lowery had told Zach not to worry, that Claire would forget. Zach didn't think she'd simply forget. He just thought she'd get too busy. But she didn't. Claire bounced around the whole place, a bundle of never-ending energy that Zach didn't recognize. She had her fingers in everything she could. She took a park jeep out and checked a few of the underground fences. She called up one of the maintenance technicians and he walked her though replacing the damaged cameras. She drove around, checking on some of the less aggressive animals without once using the word asset.

She even talked Lowery into explaining some of the things he did. Which prompted his continued breaks from the control room. He'd taken to driving out to the trailer every evening, even the one night Rexy was there. That night, he stayed in his jeep. And attempted to have a conversation with Zach by yelling.

Zach was actually enjoying Claire being there. She seemed to really grow in the last week. And she'd forced Lowery to grow, as well. This could work, he thought as he smiled at her. It would be better for the park, better for Owen and everyone, if Claire relaxed more and understood the animals better. And she was trying. She was really trying. For the first time in at least Zach's short life, she was trying to connect.

They were sitting on a blanket, in the middle of the central plaza, on the ground. Claire on one side, Zach on the other, and a very still Charlie directly behind him. It was a picnic of sorts. Claire had eaten her lunch in total silence, her eyes never leaving the prone raptor. Zach had sighed a lot and picked at his sandwich. Okay, so while she was trying, she still wasn't ready for a play-date. He was glad he tricked Echo into staying back at the trailer. He picked another piece of his sandwich and let it fall to the plate. Peanut butter and jelly. It wasn't bad. It was just the situation was making him nervous. He didn't feel like eating. He turned slightly and held it out to Charlie. "You want it?" He asked curiously. He'd seen them eat other human foods. Echo always felt she needed a bite of everything he ate.

Charlie reached her neck out and sniffed at it. She opened her mouth slowly and took the sandwich between her teeth. She chewed on it just as slowly.

Zach smiled and looked back at Claire. Her face had gone white. "It's okay." He said softly, in a tone an adult would use to comfort a scared child.

Claire tilted her head a bit, looking past Zach. "I don't think she likes it."

Zach turned. Charlie's mouth was open, her tongue out. She moved her jaw back and forth and smacked her tongue against the roof of her mouth. Zach smiled. "Hang on." He turned and dug in the basket. Claire had brought a real basket. It was nice, how hard she tried. He pulled out a water bottle and turned back to Charlie. He uncapped it and motioned for her to tilt her head back. "This works better with milk." He said as he poured the water into her mouth. "Sorry. I should have warned you peanut butter can be really thick and sticky."

Charlie swallowed the water. She let out a snort and nodded her head. Zach smiled again and turned
to Claire.

She swallowed and cleared her throat. "Back to what we were discussing this morning on the phone."

Zach nodded. He knew it wouldn't last long. Claire seemed uncomfortable whenever she wasn't in work mode. Zach was pretty sure she didn't have another mode. He rubbed his hands together, brushing off the crumbs, then turned to Charlie. It was a bit weird, her sudden interest in Charlie. But if it took her attention away from him and the fact that he lived alone fulltime with four raptors and part-time with a T-Rex, then he was all for it. "Stand up?"

Charlie nodded her head. She stood up, moving with more speed and grace than since her injury. She turned slightly and stepped away from Trip. Her movements brought her no closer to Firelady, she was very careful about that. But they moved her into the redhead's full line of sight. She'd been half hidden behind Trip.

Charlie's new prototype tail had arrived a few days ago. It was a lot better than the one he threw together. Inside, it had gears and joints. It moved like a tail would, if Charlie swung her hips hard enough. The outside was covered with a thin polymer latex. It moved and stretched like skin should. Overall, it worked okay. "Her tail was completely blown off." Zach explained. "The loss was creating strain on her legs and back. She was standing differently, more leaned back, like a human."

Charlie snorted and nodded her head.

"You saw the first prototype I made." Zach continued on. "It wasn't good, but it got her used to the weight again. And to see if she could tolerate something touching her skin."

Charlie snorted again and shook her head.

Zach smiled. "It was uncomfortable but it did help. This one's a little better. And it sticks to her stump pretty well. So less intrusive to keep strapping her in. She's been practicing with it all day."

Charlie craned her neck back to look at him.

Zach nodded. "You can show her."

Charlie let out a delighted squeal and took off running. No slow start or preamble. Just shot off like a bullet. She raced around the plaza, creating a large circle around them. She still knew to keep her distance from Firelady.

Claries' eyes turned to follow the raptor and she actually smiled. "You designed it." She said softly.

Zach shrugged. "I guess so. I had help. From Gray. And Simon used his connections."

Charlie slowed, her breathing a little labored. She hadn't regained her strength and stamina yet.

Zach waved at her. "That's enough. Come get a drink." She finished the rest of the water and Zach dropped the empty bottle into the basket.

Claire stood up, a look of awe still on her face. "Karen told me you talked about college for the first time in your entire life. I didn't realize how much they affected you. In such a short time."

Zach glanced at the ground. Claire had no clue. Charlie nudged his arm softly and he touched his hand to her nose with a smile. "Anyways, it's just the second prototype." He said, trying to steer Claries' train of thoughts away from his odd attachment.
"Second?" She repeated, glancing back at him.

Zach nodded. "Simon has an engineer friend who really wants to get involved. Some longtime investor." He shrugged. "Simon said he's working on some fancy thing."

The picnic was wrapped up after that. Claire had too much to do. The cleanup and maintenance crews were arriving later that day. Two weeks and she was planning the big reopen. Zach really wasn't sure it was possible. But Claire had her lists and spread sheets and was positive.

Zach and Charlie arrived back at the trailer. Zach slammed the door and Charlie jumped out. Delta and Blue were outside. "She inside?"

Blue lifted her head. She let out a low, irritated warble and nodded her head.

"Echo!" Zach called. He ran up the stairs and pulled the door open. "Echo?"

She let out a squawk.

Zach rolled his eyes. "I told you. You weren't invited! You can whine and pout all you want! I told you, you weren't going."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

It was early a few mornings later. Really early. Zach rolled over and blinked in the morning light streaming in from the small window. It probably wasn't that early. No earlier than what was normal for his life now. But the plan had been to sleep in. They all agreed. They'd been up too late last night.

Lowery had stayed later than normal. The man had shown up with s'more supplies and they'd built a campfire. Echo had to have one. She made a sticky mess of herself and spit it out. Charlie shook her head at them and Blue had growled when Lowery offered her one. Delta, on the other hand, had become obsessed with the marshmallows. And stole the bag when no one was looking. And they had all laughed. And dammit, Lowery really was an okay guy. Zach could actually imagine being real friends with the guy. Zach and Owen could invite him over for cookouts or just to hang after work. Maybe for drinks, when Zach was old enough. A future Zach kept imagining more and more every day, it seemed.

Zach flopped over on the bed. Just a few more hours! His hand hit the make-shift incubator drawer and he pulled it closer. He curled up against it and willed himself to go back to sleep. He'd settle for just an hour! Or a half hour. Anything more! And then something touched his hand. Zach opened his eyes slowly. He blinked the sleep away and lifted his head. There was a piece of shell against his hand. Zach shot up quickly, suddenly wide awake.

A large piece of the largest egg was missing, the first half of the name Indigo was visible. Had something happened? Had she hatched? Had he missed it? Or was that what woke him? He pulled the drawer closer and peered down inside. Large, pink eyes blinked up at him. He'd settle for just an hour! Or a half hour. Anything more! And then something touched his hand. Zach opened his eyes slowly. He blinked the sleep away and lifted his head. There was a piece of shell against his hand. Zach shot up quickly, suddenly wide awake.

A large piece of the largest egg was missing, the first half of the name Indigo was visible. Had something happened? Had she hatched? Had he missed it? Or was that what woke him? He pulled the drawer closer and peered down inside. Large, pink eyes blinked up at him. She was small and tucked into a ball in the bottom of her shell. Zach remembered what Owen had said about Echo, hatching late and looking dead. He wasn't like Owen. He didn't know what to do if the same was wrong with Indigo.

But she had blinked at him. And he had no clue what to do! "Hey... uh... girl... Indigo... are you... stuck?" He felt stupid. The moment the words left his mouth. He couldn't talk to them like Owen. And they were too young to have learned to understand him like the raptors. If they even could. If they were as oddly smart as the raptors. But at his voice, Indigo tilted her head. She blinked at him again. "What?" He asked. She uncurled slowly. Zach smiled slowly as it dawned on him. "You
know my voice?"

Indigo hopped out of her egg. She let out a soft squeak and bounced into Zach's lap. Zach straightened up a bit and stared down at the baby dinosaur in his lap. She rubbed her head against his shirt. "Hi." He said softly. He lifted his hand, moving slowly, and touched her back. Her scales felt so soft and delicate, like a newborn baby... with really bumpy skin.

"I'm... uh... Trip, I guess. That's what the raptors call me. But I didn't trip. I was pushed. Just so you know."

Indigo watched him. Then opened her mouth.

"Yeah..." Zach nodded. "Duh. Hungry." He shifted his legs under him and wrapped his arms around her. Gently, he pulled himself to the edge of the bed and stood up. He held the newborn baby against his chest as he crawled out of the bedroom. For once, it was really quiet in the trailer. The TV was still broken. Zach hadn't managed to fix it. And Echo had pouted. And fallen asleep outside. All of the raptors had. So for once, the small trailer wasn't filled with snoring.

He smiled as he walked into the kitchen area. He quickly hit the power button on the computer and turned towards the refrigerator.

Chapter End Notes

Oh yeah. This reached 1,000 comments last week. I was happy last week. Only a couple chapters left.
Hospital Woes

Chapter Summary

Not everything that sounds like a threat is a threat.

Chapter Notes

Happy 4 days off in a row week for me! 8D I SO EXCITED! GONNA GET ALL THE WRITING DONE!

Owen glared at the slightly smaller man. He was only shorter by a few inches and younger by a couple years. But Owen had been perfecting his menacing tough guy stance for years. And the raptor inside greatly improved this. There was fire in his eyes and a growl in his chest. He could make those around him shrink back with just a look, just his mere presence. He'd done it many times before.

So it was frustrating that his doctor was bouncing around everywhere, not giving him a moment of rest. Tim was literally bouncing around him with more energy than Gray. His lack of fear was really annoying. Owen had to physically resist the urge to smack him.

"Oh stop glaring at me." Tim said with a smile. "Even you can't dampen my mood!"

Owen narrowed his eyes even more. He crossed his arms, trying again.

But Tim only seemed to smile more, his whole face lighting up. "Oh my god! Wait till I tell you! It is just amazing!"

He could see he wasn't having the wanted affect on the doctor. Maybe more than just his body had been injured. Maybe his skills had been as well. Owen breathed out a sigh and let his arms fall to his sides. A week. It had been a whole week since he woke up. That means about two weeks since he was injured. Two weeks since Zach set foot on the island. Two weeks since he was on the island with his girls. And two weeks of being cramped up in this stupid room! Owen was going insane! And this damn doctor was bouncing around, taunting him with some secret.

"I'm going to the island!" Tim blurted out loudly.

Or maybe not such a secret. Owen tilted his head slightly. "You're going to the island?" He repeated, his full attention on the doctor now.

Tim nodded, a huge smile lighting up his face. "Simon just asked me this morning. He wants me in charge of the genetics lab!" He bounced again. "This is like... my dream come true! Like you don't understand! I was hoping to work under Wu's team, maybe work my up to being on the team itself."

Owen couldn't help the small smile tugging at the corner of his lips. They had spent many hours talking over the last week. Well... Tim had spent many hours talking. All he talked about was the
island. On and on and on. For hours and hours. He was happy for the guy. He sort of liked him. Maybe. If he would stop bouncing and just let Owen out.

"But to head up the team myself!" Tim kept on talking. He breathed out and shook his head, turning towards Owen again. "Maintenance and cleaning crews will be arriving there today and once they deem everything operational, we'll get to go!"

"We?" Owen repeated.

Tim nodded his head. "Yes!"

"How long will that take?" Owen asked.

Tim shrugged. "A week? Maybe more?"

Owen heaved out a sigh that sounded more like a growl. "A week?"

Tim nodded. "At least."

"At least?" Owen repeated, rolling his eyes and shaking his head. "At least another week?"

Tim nodded again.

A week. Another whole week. At least! Another week of the stupid hospital and stupid room and stupid doctor and his stupid tests. No. No, no, no, no. Owen shook his head. "Fuck that. I want out of here today."

Tim finally stopped bouncing. He turned to look at Owen and shook his head. "Can't."

Owen stepped closer, glaring again. "What do you mean... I can't?" People didn't just tell him he couldn't. Well... Claire did. All the time. But she was kind of his boss. So he couldn't really do anything about her telling him no. Half the time he didn't listen anyways. Hoskins tried to. Wu did, too. At least he didn't have to worry about Wu anymore. He had no clue about Hoskins. But he liked to think Simon wouldn't let him back on the island.

"You can't." Tim repeated. "Simon said everything had to be confidential... hidden."

Owen shrugged. "Yeah, so?"

"So..." Tim paused for a moment. "People saw you."

Owen frowned. "Saw what?"

"People saw you unloaded from Simon's jet and stuffed into an ambulance." Tim said. "Then whisked away inside a hospital. People with cell phones. Pictures and videos were taken before security could stop them. Pretty much the whole world knows who you are. And the whole world saw how torn up and pretty much dead you were. You walk out now, a lot of questions will be asked. Actually..." Tim paused and tilted his head to the side. "You probably can't walk out anyways. We should wheel you out... with like a body cast or something."

"Is that a threat?"

Tim rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Why is everything a threat with you?"

"Because it sounds like a threat." Owen snapped.
Tim stared at him for a moment. "Not everything that sounds like a threat is a threat."

"In my experience, it is."

Tim sighed and shook his head. "It's not a threat. It's... like a cautionary warning. You wanna keep all this under wraps, right? Simon said secrecy. You stroll out of here, looking like nothing's wrong, someone will see! Someone will take a picture and the world will see it and someone will put two and two together and know something's different about you. And suddenly, you'll be stalked because they'll think you're some super hero like Captain America or a god like Thor!" Tim paused again. "You aren't, are you?"

Owen rolled his eyes and shook his head. "No, I'm just a normal, everyday, ordinary human."

"Who was subjected to genetic experiments."

Owen shrugged again. But he could see Tim's point. Sort of. If he really thought about it practically. He just didn't like being cooped up like this. In a sterile, white hospital room, where he couldn't see or feel the sky or trees. He was boxed in, caged, imprisoned. And every day, he swore he could feel his other half lurking just under his skin, just under the surface, angrier and more restless. To be free, to be outside, to run home to his mate and sweep the kid off his feet and hold him against his chest. That's what he wanted more than anything. Just to hold Zach. Just for a moment. Owen let out a sigh and ran a shaky hand through his hair. "A week..." He repeated for what felt like the millionth time.

Tim was silent for a moment. "Maybe." He finally said. "I can't lie. As much as I want to go, I'm really doubting Miss Dearing will be able to get everything up and running so fast."

Owen breathed out again and nodded. He wasn't sure if Claire being in charge was a good idea or not. She was one of the most stubborn people he'd ever met. But she knew nothing about anything! Add stubbornness and lack of useful knowledge together... it wasn't a productive mix. Plus, Ida had killed half of the animals on the island... Owen paused. He tilted his head to the side. "Ida killed at least half of the dinosaurs."

"The Indominus Rex."

"Oh! Yes, of course." Tim said with a nod like it was a fact he'd just overlooked. "Another reason to get back as soon as possible. So I can start on baby making."

Owen wrinkled his nose and shook his head. "Don't say it like that."

"Miss Dearing's assistant... I forget her name..."

"Zara." Owen interrupted. "And stop saying Miss Dearing. Call her Claire."

Tim nodded. "Yes. Claire. Anyways, Simon told me Zara's been working on some ideas to help keep the island funded while we get the babies going."

Owen nodded slowly. "Alright. So... we wait a week. Then... wrap me up like a mummy or whatever... and we can go to the island."

Tim nodded. "I think so. Simon said Claire seemed adamant that you get back and help."

Owen stared at him blankly for a moment. "Claire wants my help?"
Tim nodded again.

Owen let out a laugh. Needs it, was probably the case. Maybe she finally realized she couldn't put on her high heels and clack her shoes against the pavement and demand the T-Rex get back in her pen. Because that certainly wasn't going to work. Owen tilted his head back and looked at the ceiling for a moment. Okay. At least he had a time table now. A week. He would be back home with his girls and his mate in a week.

Tim watched him for a moment. Then he smiled again and pointed towards the door. "So... treadmill again? I'd like to test your stamina and monitor your heart rate."

Owen rolled his eyes but he nodded his head. At least that would get his blood pumping and provide a distraction. And get him out of the room. But first... there was one question he kept wanting to ask... and putting off. "Hang on a second."

Tim turned back to him. "What?"

Owen glanced away for a second. "You said you've... tested my blood..."

Tim nodded. "Yes."

"Thoroughly?" Owen added.

Tim nodded again. "It's fascinating. I'm still piecing things together and trying to understand."

"Is it... whatever I am... can it be... transferred?" It was an awkward question. And it came out just as awkward. Owen internally hated himself for the awkward.

"Transferred?" Tim repeated, looking a bit confused.

"Through contact." Owen asked. "Like a virus."

"Oh." Tim shook his head immediately. "No, I don't think so. When I tried to give you blood transfusions, your blood attacked and absorbed the new blood. When I took existing cells and added your blood to them in small amounts, your cells simply... broke down themselves. Rather intriguing."

"What about... sexually?" It was something he considered before in briefly. He knew it couldn't be passed through saliva. That he was certainly of. But in the handful of sexual encounters over the last couple years, condoms were always used. Safety, of course, was always on his mind. One-night stands and random hook ups couldn't be trusted. But also, he knew semen was highly susceptible to contamination where diseases were concerned.

Tim shook his head again. "I'm not entirely sure what it is that you are, but I'm certainly it's not transmittable. Not through blood, saliva, or semen. I can take samples and do more thorough testing, if you'd like. To be sure."

Owen nodded. "Yeah, I'd like that." He breathed out a sigh of relief. Sex was inevitable, he knew. He felt it in the air around him the moment Zach stepped on the island, the moment the kid touched his leg, wrapped his arms about him and kissed him... Owen had the willpower to wait until Zach was an adult. Until he said he was ready. But being 100% certain he wasn't going to hurt his mate was very important to Owen.

"Do we need to have the safe sex talk?"

Owen's gaze snapped to the smiling doctor. His eyes widened slightly. "No." He said stiffly.
Tim shrugged. "Good. You're kind of old to need it."

Owen stared at him for a moment. He opened his mouth and stopped. The phone started ringing. Owen turned and reached for it, ignoring the protesting squeak from the doctor. He hoped it was Zach. He hadn't heard from his mate since early yesterday morning. Worry pricked at him like it did every day. Zach was busy, Owen told himself. Busy with Claire or the raptors or school work. Or he'd fallen asleep early. Or the power had gone out again. Or he'd fallen into Moe's tank or a pachy attacked him or he was trampled by a stegosaurus or Rexy had turned on him.

Owen was being ridiculous, he knew. He could trust his girls to keep Zach safe. At least... he was pretty sure he could trust them. He glanced down at the phone display. Gray. He smiled and put the phone to his ear. "Hey kiddo."

"Hey Owen!" Gray practically squealed. "How are you?"

"I'm going great." Owen answered.

"You got a minute?"

"I have several." He answered.

"Owen..." Tim started.

Owen waved him off and turned slightly. "What's up?"

"I have a question." Gray stated.

"Okay. Shoot." Owen backed up and sat down on the edge of his awful hospital bed. "I have an answer."

"Yesterday, Zach said..." Gray started.

"You talked to Zach yesterday?" Owen interrupted. He couldn't stop himself. "When?"

"I... uh..." Gray stuttered for a moment. "Around dinner time, I guess."

"I... uh..." Gray stuttered for a moment. "Around dinner time, I guess."

"Everything alright?"

"Yeah... I think so." Gray answered. "He had to get off because Lowery showed up with s'mores."

Owen blinked for a moment. Then breathed out and chuckled softly. Yeah, that sounded plausible. "Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. Just got a bit worried." Owen glanced sideways at Tim for a moment. The doctor was rifling through a cabinet on the other side of the room. Owen dropped his voice when he continued. "I haven't talked to him since early yesterday morning."

"I understand." Gray said softly.

Owen wondered just how much Gray understood. But those questions would have to wait for another, more private time. "So what was your question?"

"Yesterday, I asked Zach how Charlie was doing with her new tail. He said she was fine but that she was just practicing. Because another one was being made? He mentioned Simon had an engineer working on something else?"

Owen nodded his head. "Yeah, he mentioned that to me. If it'll help Charlie, I'm all for anything."
"I was just wondering if you knew who it was?" Gray asked. "Simon's friend?"

"No clue, kiddo."

Gray let out a sigh over the line. "Zach and I were working on it together." He mumbled. "I was having fun..."

Owen opened his mouth but before he could get a word out, the phone was suddenly snatched from him. Owen's eyes widened as he spun around. Tim put the phone to his own ear. "Hello whoever this is. This is Owen's doctor. We're in the middle of some very important testing. He will have to call you back." He pulled the phone away from his ear and tossed it on the bed.

Owen's eyes narrowed. "You do not touch my phone." He practically growled.

Tim shrugged. "It's not your phone."

Owen tilted his head to the side for a moment. Tim was right. It wasn't his phone. It was Zach's phone. Oh, that just made it so much worse in his head. "Fine. You do not ever touch Zach's phone." That time, he did growl.

Tim rolled his eyes and turned. "Come on. We have testing to do."
Pillow Nest

Chapter Summary

Babies! <3 And pillows. And flailing.

Chapter Notes

So... remember that 4 day break I talked about? I was called in twice. 8D Yay. I hate everything.

Zach frowned as he pulled the crappy cell phone away from his ear for the third time. Failed video call from the computer and three unanswered calls from the crappy phone without a camera. Zach honestly didn't even know they made cell phones without cameras anymore. What was the point? It was torture that he couldn't take selfies with the girls. And now with Baby Indigo and just hatched baby Minnie, Zach really missed his phone.

He'd been in the kitchen, heating up the gross baby dinosaur food Owen had instructed him to make when Indigo had swiveled her tiny head. Zach frowned, watching her. "What?" Indigo turned her large eyes to him. She let out a tiny squeak. And damn. If that wasn't the cutest thing ever. Zach smiled as he scooped her up. He hurried back to the bedroom.

Minnie's egg was starting to crack. Zach set Indigo down and she waddled over to the drawer on shaky legs. She then proceeded to help her sister be born. Minnie came out identical to Indigo. The only way he could tell them apart was if they stood right beside each other. Indigo was clearly bigger. Again, it was the cutest thing he'd ever seen and he really hated that he didn't have a phone. He smiled again and remembered the stories Owen told him of the raptors being born. His eyes widened, as he thought about the girls. Echo was going to be so mad! Well... it served her right, sleeping outside and pouting.

Zach grabbed both newborn I-Rexes and carried them to the kitchen area. He got them settled on the counter with bowls of the gross slimy stuff and they both pretty much inhaled it. "Uh... okay..." He opened up the refrigerator and pulled out another container. "I guess you two are bigger than the raptors." He heated it up and filled the bowls again. Then he turned to the computer. He tried to call Owen again. No answer. Once more on the crappy cell phone, too. Still no Owen.

Zach breathed out and glanced at the newborns. Who were both trying to eat their plastic bowls. Zach shook his head. "No." He pried the bowls away. "No eating the dishes." Indigo tilted her head and Minnie squeaked at him. This was going to be hard. At least with the raptors, he could guess. They'd leaned human mannerisms. These newborns, starting at him with wide, pink eyes... they were mildly terrifying. In a one day they'll be bigger than the hotel at the plaza kind of way.

Those eyes followed him as he moved about the small kitchen area, cleaning up. He finished and turned back to them. He smiled awkwardly. "Uh... you're fed. That's good. Uh..." He wasn't really sure what to do with them next. It was still pretty early. The raptors were still asleep. Owen was
probably still asleep. Gray was hopefully still asleep. The kid had a test first thing at school. Zach didn't want to wake him up. Zach leaned back against the counter for a minute. He breathed out a sigh and crossed his arms. Babies. Because he was going to treat them like babies. Just as Owen had. Feed, sleep, change, spit-up. So... not completely like human babies. But in theory... yeah, he could handle it.

"We should go check on Sylar." He said with a nod. He scooped them up and held them against his chest. And he swore they felt heavier. Like a lot. "Damn." He dropped them on the bed and Minnie bounced a bit and let out a squeal. Zach smiled as he climbed up beside them and pulled the drawer closer. He inspect the last egg. But there wasn't any cracks or signs of hatching. Zach let out a sigh. He picked up the drawer and scooted to the edge of the bed. He intended to move the drawer and then come back for the twins. But as he stood up, they hopped off the bed to follow. "Uh... okay. Follow me."

They followed him into the living room. He couch was still missing, the floor empty. Zach set the draw down off to the side. Then he headed back into the bedroom to grab the pillows and blankets. And the couch cushions. And Echo's pillow and blanket. He moved around the small trailer, collecting everything he could find and throwing it in a pile in the living room. The twins followed him everywhere, occasionally tripping over their own feet. They were like little ducks, following their mom around. The thought settled in his head and his chest as he dumped the last soft thing he could find on the top of the pile. It was an overly large, overly fluffy, completely unmanly pink robe. In Owen's defense, it looked more faded red than pink. But still. It was closer to pink now. And it was hilarious.

Minnie hopped onto of the pile and squeaked. Indigo tried to follow and slipped down.

Zach smiled as he pulled both of them off. "Hang on, let me finish." He pushed the pillows into a large circle and started draping the blankets overtop them. The fluffy robe he spread out across the bottom. When it was done, the make-shift nest took up most of the floor. He paused after he finished and stood up. He made a nest. Why did he make a nest? Zach glared down at it and crossed his arms. He wasn't entirely sure what had possessed him to make a nest. But he had. And it would work fine.

Indigo let out a squeak and looked up at him.

Zach blinked for a moment. Then he let his arms drop and shrugged. He pulled the incubator drawer close to the blanket nest, within reaching distance. Then he settled down inside. Minnie scrambled up and stood on top of one side. Indigo followed and bumped into her. Minnie let out an indignant sounding squeal as she tumbled down inside. Zach smiled and picked her up. "You're fine." He said, pulling the squirming I-Rex into his lap. Indigo squealed as well. Zach reached over to grab her, too. Minnie snapped at her sister and Zach poked her. "Stop it."

They settled against him, curling up together. And fell asleep nearly immediately. Zach stared down at them and smiled. He felt it again, the weird feeling settling in his chest. This was weird. Was it weird? Surely, it was weird. And it wasn't supposed to happen yet. Owen was supposed to be here. They were supposed to imprint on Owen. That was the plan, that was how Owen was going to make up for having to destroy Ida. Zach breathed out a sigh and leaned back against the wall of pillows. The weird nest was actually pretty comfortable. And he had stayed up late. And woken up early. And the I-Rexes were heavy to carry around. He closed his eyes for just a moment.

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The sun was high. Well not that high. But it was getting high. And bright. And annoying. Echo opened her eyes and squinted. She closed them quickly and rolled over. She stretched her legs and tail out. And earned herself a kick. She craned her neck around and snapped at the still sleeping
Delta. [Up!] She said. [Sun up!] She kicked Delta again, this time on purpose, and then scrambled up and darted away.

Blue was already awake. She had been for the last few hours. She had an idea of what was going on in the trailer. She'd smelled the new additions to their odd family and listened at the door. When all got quiet again, she moved away from the trailer. She was standing tall and alert, her eyes and ears on the line of trees. There may not be a killer dinosaur after them anymore, and Rexy was their sister now. But there were other threats on the island. Other dinosaurs Mole and Firelady hadn't gotten back in their pens. And other humans. Blue was smart. She understood the words Trip and Mole said. More humans were arriving this day. Many more humans after that, Blue was sure. They would come for Trip and her sisters. It was nice, while it lasted. Being free. Even if Alpha was stuck in the fixing place. She had hoped Alpha would be back before all the humans.

So Blue would stand guard. No one would come any closer. Not without Trip's permission. Echo zipped past her, braying laughter. Blue narrowed her eyes and snapped her teeth. [Echo! Stop!]

Echo slid to a stop. A very sudden stop. Her momentum kept her going and she ended up toppling over. She rolled over in a heap.

Behind them, Delta let out a loud snort.

Charlie walked up beside Delta, her head tilted. [Echo?]

[Echo kick me!] Delta snapped angrily, lowering her head.

[Not mean to.] Echo scrambled up and shook the dirt off. [Echo sleep!]

[Delta sleep!] Delta snapped. [No good.] She stuck her tongue out and shook her head. She hadn't slept well. Her stomach felt funny.

[Sick?] Charlie asked softly.

Delta nodded her head.

[Delta too many squishy clouds?] Charlie asked.

Delta let out a groan and nodded her head.

Echo laughed. [Delta get fat!]

Delta's gaze snapped over to her. [Echo fattest!] Her eyes narrowed into a glare.

Echo let out a squeal. [Echo sit on you!] The youngest raptor took off towards Delta who ran the other way.

Blue watched them for a moment and breathed out. She shook her head as she turned towards Charlie. She stepped closer. [Charlie watch?]

Charlie nodded her head.

[Check Trip.] Blue said, walking around her.

Charlie straightened up, clearly trying not to wiggle in excitement just like Echo. Her fake tail moved with her. It had been a while since she was left to guard.

Blue turned for the trailer.
He hadn't meant to fall asleep. But the moment he laid his head back, he'd fallen right asleep. He woke quickly when he heard the door creak open. He opened his eyes and sat up, jostling one of the twins. They were heavy in his lap and one let out a squeak. Zach glanced down at them, placing his hands on them. They quieted quickly. "I got you." He glanced up at the door. Blue's head was poking in. She tilted to the side, watching them. Zach smiled. "Just you?" He asked softly.

Blue nodded her head.

"The rest up?"

She nodded again.

Zach was still smiling. "Come on in. We'll start with you."

Blue pushed the rest of the way inside slowly. She pushed the door closed with her tail, never taking her eyes off of the babies. She moved slowly as she stepped closer. Indigo let out a whine and Minnie snuggled closer against Zach. Blue lowered her head as she continued forward, even slower.

"Uh... this is Blue... She's... uh..." Zach glanced up at her. "Your big sister, sorta. I guess. Though you're gonna get a lot bigger than her." He said with a smile.

Blue let out a huff.

"Well it's true." Zach pointed out.

Blue snorted and tilted her head.

"Fine." Zach said, rolling his eyes. "You explain it better. Pretty sure they don't actually understand me like you guys. They just know the sound of my voice."

Blue snorted again and breathed out, sounding like a laugh. She was close enough Zach could reach out and touch her. She bent her head down, just a couple inches from the babies. She stopped. Indigo tilted her head. She looked up at Zach and then turned back to Blue, like she was trying to figure the larger reptile out. She seemed almost confused.

Zach breathed out. They probably were confused. He was certain they had imprinted on him. Yet he looked nothing like them. Not even close. And here's this other dinosaur, who at least looked closer to them. Yeah, it was confusing. He hoped they could understand Blue, that she could explain it as they grew. He lifted his hand from Indigo and reached out to touch Blue's nose.

That was all it took. The moment he touched her, Blue was deemed safe and it was enough for both of the tiny I-Rexes. Minnie moved first, stretching out her tiny neck to touch her nose to Blue's. Not to be ignored, Indigo let out a squeal and bumped into Blue, a little more roughly. Blue let out a low warble and the twins cooed back. The twins bounced off his lap and hopped up on the wall of the pillow nest.

Zach smiled as he stood up. He yawned and stretched his arms. He walked over to the door and opened it crack. There was no sign of Echo or Delta. Charlie was standing not too far away. "Hey Charlie!" He hissed lowly. "Come here."

Charlie turned and looked at him. She tilted her head to the side.

Zach laughed and waved at her. "Come on." Zach stepped aside and waited until she walked inside
past him. "Two of them hatched." He said, walking around her.

Blue stepped back and let Charlie get closer. Charlie let out a few noises and the twins rubbed against her. Zach smiled at crossed his arms. Damn. He wished he had his phone!

Charlie barely had an introduction before there was a loud crash. Zach and the raptors turned to look but it happened so quick. The door burst open and Delta came flying through, Echo right behind her. Delta tried to stop but she slid into Blue, who slid into Charlie, and Echo slammed into them all. Suddenly it was one giant pile of flailing raptors.

Zach managed to dive in front of them, pushing the incubator drawer out of the way and grabbing the twins. He held them tight against his chest. "Damnit, Echo!" He snapped. "No running or wrestling inside the trailer!"

Echo wiggled from her spot on the top and rolled off. She lifted her head and her eyes settled on Zach. Her eyes widened and her mouth fell open in a very human-like manner.

Chapter End Notes

I didn't get everything I wanted in this chapter. So... anticipate another baby chapter.
Don't Know

Chapter Summary

The rest of the raptors meet the twins. Then Owen meets the twins. 8D

Chapter Notes

OMG! It's been a month! WHY DID YOU GUYS LET ME TAKE A MONTH?! So... this was supposed to be finished and posted yesterday, in celebration of me going to see the new movie, Fallen Kingdom. But... I didn't get it finished. XD So posting it the day after.

Echo scrambled up, kicking all her sisters as she did. Blue snapped at her but Echo paid her no mind. Her full attention was on the two babies in Zach's arms. She let out a squeal and started forward.

Zach turned to the side, attempting to shield them. "No!" He snapped. "You need to calm down or you'll hurt them!" The anger in his voice startled the twins and they pressed closer to his chest.

Echo stopped immediately. She ducked down and let out a soft squeak. The other sister's slowly and carefully detangled themselves behind Echo.

"Okay." Zach continued. "You interrupted Charlie's moment. So Delta and Echo, back outside. Wait on the porch until I call you." Echo let out a whine and Blue snapped at her. Delta stepped outside and Echo followed, looking dejected. Zach felt bad, he really did. But he also wanted to make sure the youngest and most excitable of the raptors understood that babies needed protecting and gentleness. At least until the baby I-Rexes were big enough to handle Echo. At that point, he may have to worry for Echo's safety. He glanced down at the babies in his arms. He guessed it wouldn't be too long. He swore they felt heavier. How could they feel heavier? It'd only been a few hours.

Zach breathed out and stepped over to Charlie. Charlie's introduction went smoothly after that. The twins rubbed against her legs and tried to climb on her weird tail. Delta's introduction was next. She snorted loudly and snapped playfully at Minnie's tail. Minnie snapped back and Indigo joined in. Echo was last. She let out a loud whine at the door. Zach smiled and pulled the door open. "Okay. Gentle, Echo."

Echo stepped inside the trailer slowly. She was clearly trying not to bounce. And it was adorable. She dropped to the floor in front of the twins. She was pretty much laying down. The twins let out excited, tiny squeals and started climbing all over the larger reptile. Damnit! Now Zach wanted his phone more than ever.

The employee phone started ringing. Zach picked it up, answering it quickly. He hoped it was Owen. He didn't bother looking at the crummy display. "Hello?"

"Zach." It wasn't Owen. It was aunt Claire.
"Oh. Hey aunt Claire." He tried to not sound disappointed.

"I have to cancel on you today." She said, either not catching his disappointment or not caring.

"Oh... everything okay?" He asked.

"What?" She sounded distracted for a moment. "Oh yes. Everything's fine. Just busy. A lot of staff arrived today."

"They get here okay?"

"Yes, of course. I'm sorry to cancel..."

"It's fine." Zach said quickly.

"I really have liked our lunches together."

Zach smiled and looked down at the floor. "Me, too."

"Tomorrow, then. For sure. No canceling. I promise."

"Sure. Tomorrow." He hung up and turned back to the raptors. "Firelady is too busy with the people that arrived today." He explained. "So... I get to stay here! Don't have to go to town."

Blue exchanged a look with Delta and warbled something. She answered back and Charlie turned towards them, commenting as well. Moments like this, Zach felt left out. It was becoming easier and more natural to treat the raptors like people. But when they were chittering to themselves, he was reminded that they weren't. He sighed.

Blue turned to him. She tilted her head to the side. Then she turned and nodded towards the door.

"Outside?" He asked.

She tilted her head to the side again.

"Something outside."

Blue nodded.

"You want me to do something outside." He stated.

She nodded her head again.

"Away from the trailer?" He asked and got another nod. He glanced down at the twins, still rolling around on top of Echo. "Can't leave them alone." He said. "One of you will have to stay with them."

Echo lifted her head and let out a squeak.

Zach shook his head quickly. "No, not you."

She squealed again, sounding insistent.

Zach looked at Blue. "What do you think? Yes or no?"

Blue glanced at Echo. Her eyes narrowed and her lips wrinkled, pulling back in a snarl. It didn't sound like she actually said anything but Echo nodded her head quickly. Blue snorted loudly and turned to Zach. She nodded her head.
"That's a yes." Zach said. "You think Echo can babysit."

Blue nodded and tilted her head a bit and pointed her muzzle at Zach.

Zach breathed out slowly. Blue was letting him decide. At least he thought that was what she was saying. "Fine."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

"Sorry about the treadmill." Owen said, a tone of genuine regret in his voice. He really hadn't meant to break it.

Tim shrugged as he walked in behind Owen. He pulled the door shut and leaned back against it a moment. "It's my fault really. I shouldn't have pushed you."

Owen smiled as he turned for the too small hospital bed. He stepped towards it, his eyes on the phone. He couldn't believe he'd left it. "I told ya, I don't tire easily."

"Where does all that energy come from?"

Owen reached for the phone, shrugging a bit. "I eat a lot." He grabbed the phone and straightened up. He glanced back at Tim, smiling. "That's a hint."

Tim pushed off the door, nodding. "Cafeteria or should I go get something?"

"What do you think?"

Tim let out a laugh. "Mexican place again? Or something else?"

Owen shrugged. "Just feed me. Before I get angry. You wouldn't like me when I'm angry."

Tim let out a loud laugh.

Owen smiled again as he looked at the phone display. His eyes widened and his smile fell. So many missed phone and video calls. "Shit." He pressed the recall button and put it to his ear. No answer. He tried again. "Shit!"

Tim paused and turned back to him. "What's wrong?"

"I missed a call." Owen snapped.

Tim frowned. "So... call whoever it was back."

"I did! He's not answering!"

Tim looked confused. "Then... wait a bit and call him back. What's the alarm?"

"He called a lot."

"Then good chance he'll call back."

"Something's wrong!"

Tim stared at him for a moment. Then he shrugged and turned towards the door. "Okay... you stay here and freak out... I'll get food." He hurried out the door.

Owen glared after him. Then pressed the redial button and put the phone to his ear.
[Mom.] Echo told the twins. [Mom small squishy. Alpha dad big squishy. Dad broke. Dad get fixed on box.] She pointed to the computer. The twins their heads to the side, almost in unison. Echo snorted loudly. Once dad called, then big sister Echo could explain better. She was a good big sister. She was a good babysitter. She dug out all their stuffed Nemo toys next and put them in the pillow nest. She went through their names, introducing the twins to them. [Nemo best.] She explained.

She also kept checking on Sylar, the unhatched egg. She nudged it gently with her nose. She snorted and shook her head. The egg didn't smell right. She was pretty sure it was broken. But mom kept taking care of it. Maybe Echo was wrong.

Next, she took the twins outside. They waddled behind her, sticking close and bouncing through the tall grass. She took them closer to the water. Not too close, she was sure. They stayed back enough and wrestled around in the sand. That's where they were when the low rumble of the motorcycle reached them.

The bike jerked to a stop and Zach anchored his feet into the ground to steady it. But it was already starting to tip. Delta appeared at his side and helped him keep it standing while he applied the kick stop. Driving he was fine at. He could steer through the jungle with no problem now. He'd taken to it faster than driving a car. But the stopping, he wasn't so good at yet. At least he didn't run into the side of the trailer again.

Zach swung his leg over and dropped to the ground. He brushed himself off. Then looked up as he heard the tiny squeals. The baby I-Rex twins were running towards him. Zach smiled as he knelt down. Then suddenly, they were jumping, practically flying in the air towards him. They bowled Zach over and he landed on his back as they bounced on him. He let out a laughed and pushed them off gently. "Easy." He said. "Echo." He called, standing up and brushing himself off again. "We brought you lunch since you missed the hunt."

It was the second time he'd been hunting with them. He knew he really wasn't helping. If anything, the sound of the motorcycle made things worse. It echoed through the jungle. But the raptors were fast and the wild pigs were slow and dumb compared to them. Zach knew him being included didn't help any from a practical stance. But the raptors liked it. Some pack bonding thing, he was sure. And it made him smile. Because he was pack.

He turned as Charlie zipped past him towards Echo. She dropped a large chunk of bloodied meet at her sister's feet. The twins turned and sniffed at the air. They turned to watch Echo with large, curious eyes. Echo tore off a small piece and they had to try it. Then they rolled in the dirt and blood. Zach wrinkled his nose and smiled at them. "Okay everyone, bath time. Then we can go see Rexy."

He ushered all of them towards the water.

In the end, Zach had to go in the water with the twins to get them to go. He was soaked head to toe but he laughed the whole time. "Okay." He said, turning towards the trailer. "Let me go get changed and we'll go." They hadn't seen Rexy in a couple days, not since she was put back into her enclosure. It was harder to sneak over there, with Claire on watch all the time. But with her being preoccupied with her cleaning and maintenance crews, maybe they could sneak into the enclosure.

Zach ran into the trailer and headed straight to the bedroom. He pulled out a clean Jurassic World shirt, a large picture of a stegosaurus on the front. He changed quickly and ran a towel over his head. He was about to head back outside when the temporary phone rang. He paused, listening to it a moment too long. It finally registered in his head and he darted towards the counter and grabbed it. Missed call. Several missed calls, actually. He smiled as he turned towards the computer. He opened the video calls and hit his number. Then he opened the trailer door. "Hey, bring them in here."
"Zach?"

"Yeah, hang on." He called, holding the door open. Echo zipped in past him, letting out a loud squeal. "Don't say anything yet."

"About what?" Owen asked loudly. "Hey Echo."

Zach watched the twins hop up the stairs slowly. Blue followed close behind, nudging them when they wavered a bit. Zach smiled as they bounced up to him. He bent down and picked them up.

"Zach?" Owen's voice called out. "What's going on?"

"Just a second." Zach called out, straightening up.

"You called a lot." Owen said. "I was worried. What's wrong?"

"Nothing." Zach said as he held the twins against him and walked towards the computer. "Just have to make introductions."

"Introductions?"

Zach stepped in front of the screen, the twins plastered against him. Their eyes widened as they looked at the shocked man on the screen. "They hatched way early this morning." Zach said with a smile. "I tried to call you."

A smile spread across Owen's face. "Uh... yeah... we were... doing tests..."

"Tests?"

"I broke a treadmill."

"You broke a treadmill?"

"Hey little cuties." Owen said, waving at the screen. Echo pushed in closer to Zach and let out a few warbles to the twins. Owen laughed and shrugged.

"What?"

"She introduced me as squishy alpha." Owen said. "Who's being fixed in the box. Echo, that is a ridiculous way to explain it."

Zach smiled and let out a laugh. "Sounds good to me. I wasn't sure how to explain this. I figured they could better. Here." Zach turned and dropped the twins in the pillow nest. Then he reached for the computer monitor. He pulled it closer to the edge of the counter and angled it down.

"Did you make a nest?"

"Maybe."

"That's adorable."

Zach smiled sheepishly. "I'll be right back... just... letting the others know... change of plans..." Zach turned for the door.

Owen smiled as he pulled himself backwards on his hospital bed. He leaned back and breathed out a content sigh. It really did something to him, seeing Zach so comfortable in his home, with his girls
and the new babies. It really was something. And he couldn't wait to get back.

[Mom!]

Owen frowned as he stared at the screen. No. No, no. He had to be mistaken.

Echo zipped by the screen. [Mom! Mom!]

Owen's mouth dropped open. Echo! Of course it was Echo that said it!

"Echo!" Zach snapped, coming back inside. "No running inside!"

"Uh... Zach..."

Zach stopped and looked at the screen. "Sorry." He heaved out a sigh. "It is literally a mad house in here. I'll get it cleaned up, I swear."

"No!" Owen shook his head quickly. "I don't care about the bungalow."

Zach smiled at the name. "Dork."

Owen wasn't smiling. "I just... can I talk to Echo? Alone?"

Zach's smile fell and he frowned. "Echo? Alone? Why?"

"Just need to... for a couple minutes."

"What'd she do?"

"Please?"

Zach didn't look happy. "Echo! Get in here! Owen wants to talk to you." Zach bent down and scooped up Indigo and Minnie. "How are you so heavy?"

Echo zipped back in. She tilted her head to the side as she looked at Zach.

Zach shrugged slightly. "I don't know what you did." Zach said. He nodded towards the computer. Then he took the twins outside and shut the door.

Echo turned to watch him. Then she turned back to Owen. She tilted her head to the side again.

[What?]

"Don't what me!" Owen snapped. "What did you just call him?"

Echo glanced at the door. [Trip.] She answered softly.

"No. No, no, no. I heard you!"

Echo ducked down, going off-screen.

"No! Echo!" Owen snapped louder that time. "Get back up here! I'm talking to you! Answer me!"

Echo let out a snort and poked her head back up. [Mom!] She said defiantly. [Trip mom!]

"Trip isn't your mom!" Owen said loudly. "Trip... is a boy... uh... man... Trip is male! Males aren't moms!"
"Mom!" Echo insisted. "Echo's mom, sister's mom, and baby's moms! Trip is mom!" She used more words than normal, speaking more clearly and more human-like than she ever had before.

Owen sighed and shook his head. "Echo..." He said softly. "He's not your mom."

"Yes!"

"Why?" Owen asked. "Why do you think he's your mom?"

"Alpha dad!"

Owen shrugged. He'd tried to dissuade them over the years. But it was a term he answered to. And one he was finding harder and harder to oppose. "Fine." He breathed out. "I'm your dad."

"Dad's mate is mom!"

"He's not your mom!" Owen insisted. "He's not a girl!"

"Yes!"

"If he's anything... he's like... your other dad..."

"Nemo Mom!" Echo snapped.

Owen rolled his eyes. "Nemo's mom got eaten by a barracuda." He pointed out. "Echo! You can't..."

The door opened and Zach stepped inside. "Are you almost done?"

Owen sighed. "We're not done with this." He whispered to Echo. "Yeah, something wrong?" He called louder.

"The grass outside is too tall." Zach said.

"Tall?"

"Yeah. These two..." Zach stepped closer and dropped them in the center of the pillow nest. "Were hiding in the grass. They gave me a heart attack! And Delta just laughed!" He paused and straightened up. "Well... I think she was laughing."

Owen smiled. "Probably."

"No more outside until they are bigger!" Zach breathed out.

Owen shrugged. "You could probably cut it."

Zach glanced over at the computer screen. "What... like... mow it?"

Owen shrugged. "We had a grounds crew. I'm sure Lowery could find where their equipment is stored. I'm sure they got some heavy duty mowers."

Zach glared at him a moment. "You want me to mow the lawn." He let out an exaggerated groan and threw back his head. "You're giving me chores!"

"Hey, you said the grass was too long."

Zach shrugged and Echo bumped into him and let out a soft squeak.
"Stop it!" Owen snapped.

Zach glanced sideways at Echo. "What's going on?"

"Nothing." Owen said quickly. Echo stuck her tongue out at the computer screen and rubbed her head against Zach's arm. "Stop it!" Owen said. Echo squealed again, louder. "It's not healthy!"

"What?"

Echo let out a whine and attempted to duck behind Zach.

"He's not your mother!" Owen snapped. His eyes widened and flittered to Zach for a moment. He hadn't meant to say it out loud. Damnit. "He's not." Owen said softer. "Tell her you're not."

Zach stared at the screen for a moment. He blinked and looked away. It wasn't that big of a stretch. Not really. If he and Owen were dating or whatever... and Echo was like Owen's daughter or something... and the twins clearly imprinted on him... it had been less than a day. Zach breathed out. He turned slightly and glanced over his shoulder at Echo. "I don't care." He said softly, reaching out to touch her neck. "She can call me mom."

Owen rolled his eyes and shook his head. "No! Do not encourage her!"

Echo let out a happy squeal and Zach threw his arm around her neck. "Call me mommy if you want. Don't listen to daddy."

"Don't say that again."

Zach smiled again. Then cleared his throat and pushed Echo away. "Alright. Go outside and run around or something. Wear out that energy before you drive me crazy. We'll try to see Rexy tomorrow."

Echo let out another squeak and ran out the door, the door banging loudly behind her.

"Echo!" Zach let out a sigh but he smile and turned back to the computer. He pulled up a chair and sunk down in it. The twins had fallen asleep in the nest and it was cute. Zach sighed again as his eyes drifted to the drawer incubator that was still on the floor in the corner. "Sylar still hadn't hatched." Zach said softly

"That's not your fault." Owen said gently. "Zach, you're doing a great job. Really you are." A small smile tugged at the corner of those lips. So soft and sweet. Owen glanced up at the screen and quickly looked away. Yeah, so sweet. Owen would give anything to be there right then. He really just wanted to hold Zach and comfort him. Owen could feel the urge deep within him. He breathed out and smiled. "You're adorable."

Zach's shy demeanor vanished quickly. He rolled his eyes and shook his head. "Whatever. You have my phone."

The topic change caught Owen a little off guard. "Phone?"

Zach groaned loudly and grabbed the employee cell phone. "This thing doesn't have a camera." He whined. "How can a phone not have a camera?"

Owen smiled and nodded. "Yeah, employee phones are shit."

"I want my camera and you have it!"
Owen nodded slowly. "I guess you didn't find it then."

Zach tilted his head to the side. "Find what?"

Owen shrugged. "I just assumed you'd snoop through everything."

Zach's eyes widened slightly. "Uh... not... everything..." He mumbled out.

Owen let out a laugh. "You can. I don't care." He shook his head slightly, still smiling. "All the camera equipment is still there, from when they were younger. Not as easy and convenient as a cell phone camera. But it's in the kitchen... in a box in one of the cabinets."

"So... old equipment?"

Owen frowned. "Not old. Vintage."

"Seriously? Vintage? Just a fancy was to say old."

Owen rolled his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

I didn't skip the hunt, Sylar. I'd just rather write it as an extra story thing. So it can be nice and awesome. Same thing with the grass thing Snuggie wants, for whatever reason.

Anyways... if anyone has Discord and wants to join my chat server, give me a poke.
Chas#0048
**Little Weeds**

Chapter Summary

Zach plays with the camera.

Chapter Notes

I didn't wait another month! 8D I waited almost a month! I have a day! 8D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Owen's doctor, Tim, interrupted with lunch. Owen grudging hung up before Tim found out he was sort of dating a 17 year old. Zach held in the laughter as Owen brought the phone closer to his face and whispered, "That might be awkward." He hung up with a promise to call later when Tim left him alone for the night. As much as Zach wanted to talk to Owen for hours, of course, he didn't mind. He had stuff to do. Find the camera, figure out the ancient camera Owen called vintage, take lots and lots of pictures and videos, figure out how to send them to Gray - email, he guessed - and visit Rexy.

So it was really only two things. Camera and Rexy. He actually missed the giant theropod. In a terrifying, she could still eat him kind of way. Zach pushed off the stool and ducked down in front of the cabinets. There weren't that many. It was extremely small. But he remembered seeing a box when he was looking for batteries and flashlights the week before. He opened the door and dug inside. The box was right there. Yeah, how did he miss it? He quickly and delicately pulled the box out.

"Wow." He pulled the camera out. It was a real camera, shaped like an actual camera. His parents had one, or something like it when he was younger. But who actually used real camera's anymore? Zach pulled it and the cords out. He hit the power button. And smiled. It still had battery power. And the memory was half empty. He could definitely have fun with this! He opened the gallery and scrolled through the pictures on the memory card. Various pictures and videos of the raptors. Inside the trailer, outside, in their enclosure. Some where they looked not too much different than now and many more when they were younger. Owen was dotted here and there in the photos and videos and Barry even made a few appearances. Some videos were more instructional. Owen showing different things the raptors could do and how well they bonded with him and listened to him. Other videos and most of the images were more... family oriented, Zach felt. Eating together, playing, wrestling, bath time, hanging out, watching TV.

Zach smiled as he scrolled through every single picture and video. A very few he'd seen before. Ones Owen had on his computer or that he'd sent Zach. But it was amazing seeing them all together, in chronological order. It was the next best thing to actually being there. He'd have to talk to Lowery and see if he had a memory card or stick or something that Zach could copy the whole camera memory bank to. Because he needed it. And he'd need copies of whatever he ended up taking as well. He'd pick out a few to send to Gray later that day, too. He knew his little brother would get a kick out of them.
He checked on the twins. They were still sleeping, curled up together in the pillownest. Zach held up the camera and snapped a few dozen pictures of them. Different angles and zooming in and using filters. Then he raced outside, waving the camera around and gathering the raptors. They all knew what it was. Echo bounced excitedly and started posing immediately. Charlie wagged her fake tail and turned to the side for Zach to get good images of it. Delta looked indifferent the whole time, bored even, but she still seemed to sneak into the background of nearly every picture. Blue... Zach swore she rolled her eyes the second she saw the camera. But even she humored him and joined in on the photo session.

Zach lost count of all the pictures he took. And then all the selfies he took with them. While he was finishing up with more detailed shots of Charlie's tail, Echo tiptoed inside the trailer to get Nemo. She wanted pictures with the stuffed toy. Well over an hour passed and picture after picture was taken. Zach didn't stop under the battery completely died and the camera turned off.

Zach pulled it away from his eyes and stared at the black screen. "Oh. I guess we're done for now." He headed back inside to plug it in. The twins were just waking up and making noises. "Hungry?" They blinked at him and Zach smiled. "I'll take that as yes."

An hour later, the twins were fed, the raptors were outside taking a nap, and the camera was half charged. The plan was to try to sneak out to see Rexy later that night. Zach wanted a few pictures of her, too. He unplugged the camera. He pulled the stool closer to the pillownest. He angled it down to the twins and then paused. He straightened back up and glanced at the incubator drawer. Still no sign of hatching. Zach breathed out as he stepped closer to the egg. He bent down and gently lifted the unhatched egg up. He cradled it for a moment before glancing down. The twins had crawled over, looking up at him curiously. They let out little squeaks. Zach set the egg back down gently.

Indigo turned immediately and tried to climb into the drawer incubator. "No, no, no." Zach bent down and picked her up. Minnie hopping in place and he picked her up, too. He smiled as he set them back into the pillownest and hit record on the camera.

"Okay." He said, looking at the camera. "So... there were five eggs but two were destroyed during a power outage. After... I decided to bring them here with me, so I could watch them all the time. I rigged up this incubator." He briefly explained making the incubator and how it worked. He pulled back the corner of the blanket and showed the small, battery operated generator. Then he checked the camera and watched the video of him talking. He rolled his eyes but the twins trying to climb on his lap the whole time was cute and distracting. He really wished he could have filmed the birth. Or at least gotten pictures. That's what he really wanted to show Gray. Owen, too. Simon, Claire, and Lowery. He wanted to show everyone. Because it had been amazing and he was certain if they could just see it, just see how the twins imprinted on him and how they interacted with the raptors, after only a few hours... Zach was certain even Claire could accept them being part of the park.

Zach's eyes slowly widened. That was brilliant! That was exactly what he was going to do. He knew Gray had a big test today. And something or other to do after school. It would probably be late when the kid would call. That gave Zach plenty of time. He scrambled around the small trailer for a moment. He found a couple old whitish pillow cases in the back of the closet that would work. Indigo and Minnie followed him around and watched him. He ushered them back to the pillownest.

Zach checked the camera angle again and hit record. Then he grabbed Indigo. "We're gonna show Uncle Gray how you hatched. Indigo blinked at him and tilted her head. He wrapped her up in one of the pillowcases and set her in the nest. She immediately tried to wrestle out. "No, no, no." Zach shook his head and wrapped her back up. "Just sit still for a minute." She let out a little squeak but stayed still and watched as Zach wrapped up Minnie. After a bit more wrestling, and a lot of praising when they didn't wriggle out, Zach stood up and backed up a step.
It looked rather silly, two wiggling lumps covered in pillowcases, surrounded by pillows. But it was cute. And it was recording. And when Zach prompted, Indigo burst from her pillowcase and let out a squeak. Minnie did it seconds later and Zach shook his head. "No, no, no." He set them up again and this time, Minnie popped out first and Indigo let out whine and snapped at her. It took four tries to get it right. Indigo popped out of her egg-pillowcase first with Zach pretending to sleep in the nest with the eggs. Then Zach feigned waking up and greeting Indigo. Minnie let out a squeak from under her egg-pillowcase and Zach let her hatch, too. They laughed and giggled and rolled around together in the nest.

Blue was roused from her nap on the porch by the ruckus inside. She pulled the door opened and peeked inside. Zach quickly explained what he was doing. She seemed to stare at him for a moment. Then breathed out and stepped inside to meet the twins on camera, like she'd done earlier. Charlie, Echo, and Delta got in on the reenactment. It was all silly. And Zach knew it was going to look silly on the camera. But he knew at least Gray would enjoy it.

When he finished, Zach shooed the raptors and the twins outside. Echo promised to watch the twins again. Blue promised to watch Echo. Charlie and Delta promised to help. And Zach went inside to play on the computer. He downloaded the videos, opened the editing software, and got to work.

Zach was just finishing when the phone rang. He glanced at the display and smiled. "Perfect timing."

He said as he put the phone to his head.

"Huh?" Gray sounded confused.

"Hang on. It's saving."

"What is?"

Zach smiled again as he leaned back. The video file was going to take a few minutes to save. "I'll tell ya in a minute. How'd your test go?"

Gray was silent for a moment. But finally, he answered. "Fine." He said.

Zach rolled his eyes. "Fine? Seriously? Just fine?"

"It was just a test." Gray mumbled out.

"Just a test?" Zach repeated. "Since when is any test... just a test? Did you do badly or something?"

"No." Gray said quickly. "It was easy."

"Ooooooh." Zach said, stringing the word out. "Too easy again?" He knew Gray's frustration with his school. He was smarter than everyone there. He'd taken all the advanced classes the school had available. But they couldn't hold his focus. Gray needed a more advanced school, something to really keep his drive. A few years back, there had been talk of sending Gray to an advanced academia school. Zach had overheard his parents talking and fighting about the potential costs of what his father called "the nerd school." But all whispers of that stopped when the fighting got bad. Gray got silent again on the line. But the video had saved. Zach smiled as he opened up his email. He attached the file quickly, along with a zip file containing way too many pictures, and sent it. "You got your laptop?"

"Uh... it's in my backpack."

"Get it out. I emailed you something."
Gray let out an actual squeal, one that could rival Echo's.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

It was three days later when Claire called again. It was afternoon and Zach was sitting in the pillow nest with the twins. The raptors were out hunting without him. That was fine with him. Whenever Echo was left in charge, there was a mess to pickup. Zach smiled when he glanced down at the phone display and saw Claire's number. "Hey aunt Claire." He said, pressing the phone to his ear. He was actually starting to miss her.

"Oh good." She sounded relieved. "You're okay."

Zach frowned and sat up a bit straighter, earning a whine in protest from Minnie. "Yeah, I'm fine."

"I just got off the phone with your mother." She explained. "She was very demanding. She asked me if you were eating well, sleeping enough, keeping out of trouble, studying... and it occurred to me that I hadn't seen you in..." She trailed off.

"Umm... 3 days when you called to cancel lunch." Zach supplied.

"Yes... well..." Claire paused for a moment. "You're clearly fine so I obviously didn't lie and I've certainly seen you with my own eyes so this will not be discussed with your mother. Ever."

Zach smiled. "No ma'am."

Claire let out an indignant squeal. "Don't ma'am me!"

Zach laughed. "Well... everything really is fine." He said, leaning back on the pillows. "Mostly just been hanging out here. Keeping to ourselves and out of the way."

"And sneaking into the T-Rex pen." Claire added with a touch of arrogance in her tone.

Zach's eyes widened slowly. "Uh... you saw that?"

"No." She asked. "We're still working on upgrading the surveillance system in her pen. Lowery's been tracking her movements while the sensors and cameras are being installed. One of the guys was in there late last night. It seemed Rexy was distracted at the far side of her fence."

"Oh... she was?"

"I asked Lowery."

"Oh."

"He caved."

Zach sighed. "We were just saying hi." He mumbled softly.

"For 10 minutes?"

It was actually closer to an hour. Zach smiled. Lowery was at least getting better at his deception, telling Claire the half truth. It was probably a good idea. Keep her satisfied enough so she wouldn't look into it more. "Sorry." He mumbled out.

She sighed. "No, I get it... Well... I don't get it." She correctly quickly. "Whatever weird relationship you have with these... animals... I can't even begin to understand it. But if you're serious about
working here after college... you have a deal."

Zach smiled to himself.

"Alright." Claire continued talking before Zach could respond. "Lunch today? Oh wait..." She added almost as soon as the words left her mouth. "Zara's arriving today. Tomorrow I have an all day meeting with a high level investor... that man is exhausting... how about in two days... early... breakfast?"

Zach let out a laugh. "Sure." He glanced down at the twins, asleep in his lap. "I have something to show you..." He said softly.

"Oh? You do?" She sounded interested. "Important? I can try to make time tonight... Zara can wait..."

"No!" Zach said quickly. "It's alright, I can wait. You should take the night off with Zara." He highly doubted she could even take a night off while she was on the island. They said their goodbyes and hung up. Then Zach glanced down at the twins again. They were curled up together in his lap. He would introduce them to Claire. He decided. She should know and it would okay. He would show her the pictures and videos and it would be fine. He was certain.

Maybe.

Chapter End Notes

Also it's my birthday! And I got a new kitty. Her name is Echo. 8D She is VERY distracting. Because she's 3 months old and has so... much... energy!

As always... if anyone has Discord and wants to join my chat server, give me a poke. Chas#0048
"We gave her a sister!" Claire said with a sharp laugh. "She ate her!"

Zach finally accepted that the final egg wasn't going to hatch. Echo said it smelled funny and the other raptors confirmed. Zach had gotten quiet through the rest of Owen's video call. Owen tried to cheer him up, tried to convince him that it wasn't something Zach did, that he didn't do anything wrong. Zach just stared off into space. Owen tried to make him laugh but got nothing. Owen even tried to sing to him again.

But nothing work. "Meeting aunt Claire early." Zach mumbled, reaching for the computer. No goodbye or anything. He didn't even give Owen the chance to respond. He ended the call and shut the computer down. Then he turned the ringer off on his temporary phone. He didn't want to talk to anything.

That night, after the twins and raptors were asleep, he took the egg outside and buried it away from the bungalow. He sat for a while, losing track of time. He knew it was silly. Getting so attached to the egg. So attached to everything on the island, really. It had only been a couple weeks. He couldn't explain it. He just felt drawn to them. He felt like they were a part of him. Like everything here was a part of him. A part of his... of his being... part of his purpose for existing. Like there was nothing for him anywhere else but there. On the island.

Zach rolled his eyes and shook his head. That sounded stupid in his head. But... Echo called him mom... He breathed out and stood up. He had the twins. They were alive and healthy. At least as far as he could tell. He'd make sure it stayed that way.

He turned. Delta was standing a few feet away, watching him. Zach breathed out again and glanced over his shoulder. He hadn't heard her. Of course he hadn't. Without a word, he turned again and headed towards Delta. She turned and they walked back to the bungalow. He took apart the make-shift incubator. Unplugged the electric blanket and turned off the generator. Delta watched him again, not making a sound. When Zach was finished, the two of them curled up in the nest with the twins and they all fell asleep.
He woke up slowly. His eyes were still shut as he lifted his head slowly. He didn't want to wake up. He didn't want to open his eyes. Because he remembered last night. And if he stayed asleep just a little bit longer, maybe he could pretend Sylar wasn't a dud. And that he didn't have to introduce the twins to Claire. The latter he didn't really have to do. At least not yet. He and Owen could keep them hidden and safe at the bungalow for a little while longer. Maybe.

But... at the rate they were growing... Zach really wasn't sure how long that would be anyways. They were already almost at his hip. They practically doubled in size since their birth. He could hardly carry one of them around, much to their dismay. He shouldn't have spent that first day carrying them everywhere. And the couple days before they hatched, when he carried the eggs around like Owen had done with the raptors.

Zach really had no clue why they were growing so fast. The only thing that made sense to him, and nothing made sense anymore, was the growth hormones Ida had been pumped with. That it somehow got into her DNA and was passed along to the twins. Or Wu had actually put it in her DNA, ingrained it in her core so she'd grow faster. Maybe he did intend her to lay eggs. And for them to grow fast, as well. Though why... Zach couldn't fathom a guess. Because the only guess that came to his mind was to make an army. An army of giant, intelligent beasts that could camouflage and followed orders.

Zach sighed. In his half-sleep state, it turned into a yawn. He needed to get up. Check on the raptors, feed the twins, call Owen and apologize for being so abrupt, get in the right mindset and headspace to meet Claire. Zach felt another yawn coming and failed to stifle it. Okay. He really needed to wake up. Because he was just going to fall asleep again. He knew it. He rolled over slightly, the side of his face brushing against something rough and bumpy. He reached out and felt claws. And then a low rumble of laughter.

Zach finally woke up as Delta laughed at him. He hadn't meant to. He pulled up off her, blinking in the low light. Which one of them had opened the damn curtains? It was too bright! Zach leaned back. He lifted his arms over his head, stretching and popping his neck and back. Sleeping cramped and curled up with Delta and the twins...

Zach opened his eyes and straightened up. He was fully away now. The twins were gone! He glanced around quickly, trying not to panic. Had they wandered off? Had another dinosaur gotten them? Had Claire shown up? Had they drowned in the ocean or got lost in the jungle or one of a million other ridiculous thoughts that raced through his mind. Each one seemed more ludicrous than the next. But he couldn't stop the panic as it set in.

Delta let out a squeak. Zach suddenly remembered she was there. Literally right behind him. He turned towards her and blinked. She glanced towards the door. She inclined her head and then looked back at him. "Outside?" Zach asked. Delta nodded her head. "The twins are outside? With the other raptors?" Delta nodded again. Zach breathed out. He'd gotten so worked up for nothing. Of course they were okay.

"Thanks Delta. Sorry about last night." She let out a huff in answer, sounding bored. Zach smiled and detached himself as he stood up. He brushed himself off and stretched. Delta followed, standing and stretching just like him. Zach let out a soft laugh as he stepped out of the pillownest. He reached for the phone, laying discarded on the small counter. It was still off. With a sigh, he turned it on. Three missed calls and two missed voice messages. One call was from Gray. The rest from Owen. "Owen called." Zach said, leaning back against the counter.

Delta hugged again and tilted her head.

"You think I was being childish turning it off?"
She snorted and shook her head.

Zach smiled as he looked down at the phone. He checked the messages quickly. Just Owen trying to comfort him again. And then saying good morning. The second call was only a few minutes before Zach had woken up. He would call later. He checked the time. He had a little over an hour before he had to meet Claire. He breathed out again. Yeah, just a bit melodramatic. He dialed her number quickly and put the phone to his ear before he could change his mind.

Claire answered after only one ring, completely surprising him. "Are you calling to cancel on me?"

"Uh..." He stuttered for a moment, taken aback.

"I guess I deserve it." She continued on talking. "I've canceled on you or changed plans enough." She breathed out. "You let me know when..."

"No!" Zach said, regaining himself. "No, no. Not canceling."

"Oh! Good!" She breathed out. "I was really looking forward to it and I already assured your mother that we do this every day. Right?"

Zach smiled. "Right."

"Okay. So... what do you need?"

"Need... oh!" Zach sat down and leaned on the small counter. "Yeah, I was calling to see if you'd mind coming here."

There was a pause. "To Owen's trailer?"

"Yes." Zach said.

"With the raptors..." She said slowly.

"Yes."

"The... loose raptors..."

"Yes." He said, the hint of a laugh in his voice. "You're family." He glanced back at Delta. She was just standing there, watching him. "They won't hurt you."

"Family." She let out a huff. "Fine. I'll pick up breakfast and be there as soon as I can."

They said their goodbyes and Zach hung up. Now he'd done it. He had no choice but to introduce the twins to Claire. He wasn't really worried. Well he was worried. But... he'd also seen the change starting in Claire. She was trying to do better, trying to be better with the animals. She deserved to know. And there was little she could really do anyways. She'd realize that. There was too much money invested in the raptors. Upsetting them would be bad. And Ida had killed a great number of the other animals. Claire may be trying to change. But the bottom line for her would still be money, Zach was sure. And he would remind her of that if he needed to.

Although... having help wouldn't hurt. Zach smiled as he hit Lowery's number and put the phone to his ear. "Lows!" He said in a rather chipper voice.

"What do you want?" Lowery asked in a suspicious tone.

"Just wanted to invite you for breakfast."
"Breakfast." He repeated. "Uh huh. No."

"Why?"

"Because your aunt told me you guys were hanging today."

Zach rolled his eyes. "She's coming to the bungalow."

"Really?" Lowery sounded vaguely interested.

"Yeah. To meet the twins."

"Oh. Uh huh. No." Lowery said dismissively.

Zach rolled his eyes. "Oh come on!"

"No."

"You gotta meet them sometime."

"No."

"Why not?"

"No."

"You're no fun." Zach whined.

"Uh huh. You still haven't sent me those videos."

Zach rolled his eyes again. "You won't come see them but you want the videos."

"Yep." Lowery answered. "I'm safe from the teeth when I watch videos."

"Their teeth are only a couple inches long."

"Only!"

"They're small compared to how big they're gonna get."

"Uh huh. No. You're not selling it like you think you are."

Zach let out a laugh.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Claire breathed out slowly. She pulled the phone away from her ear and set it down on the countertop. She blinked at it for a moment. She just agreed to being around all four of the raptors. At once. All together. With nothing between them and her. Being around one was hard enough. Charlie was daunting enough and Zach had called her the motherly one.

"So serious." Zara swept into the room, silently and gracefully. "What did the phone do to offend you so?" She sat down across from Claire and leaned on the counter slowly.

Claire smiled as she leaned back in her seat. "It didn't offend me. It does its job adequately."

Zara piqued an eyebrow. "Adequately?" She smiled. "Love, you spend more time with that phone
than me." Claire's eyes started to widen and Zara lifted her hand. "I'm only teasing you." She said quickly. "But your phone deserves more credit than simply adequate. It had earned it."

Claire let out a laugh. "You are being ridiculous."

Zara smiled again. "Maybe. Now tell me."

Claire breathed out and her gaze dropped to the counter. "Zach... asked me... to come to... the bungalow..." Her voice wavered a bit while she spoke.

Zara tilted her head to the side. "And?" She prompted when Claire didn't continue.

"The raptors." Claire admitted softly.

"You still worry about the raptors?" Zara asked. "You've seen the way they are around him."

"Zach has some... weird connection with them." She shook her head slowly. "He says they're smart. Owen always said they were smart..." She breathed out and looked away. "But they're still animals. It doesn't matter how well they are trained or controlled. At their core... they're just wild animals that can eat you."

"Well..." Zara leaned forward and grabbed Claire's hand. "They're very hierarchal. You just make sure they know you could eat them first."

Claire wrinkled her nose.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

The twins heard the car first. They were all outside, sitting around the porch. Zach was on the steps, the twins sitting on either side of him. The raptors were gathered around and Echo and Delta were bickering about something. Zach had sighed and leaned back. He'd simply asked them to explain Firelady to the twins. And shortly after, they started bickering or something. Zach had no clue why or what about really. Or if they succeeded in explaining anything to the twins. He highly doubted it.

Minnie turned first, standing up tall and looking towards the road. Indigo followed seconds later, mimicking her sister. Zach frowned, watching them. Blue noticed as well. Then Charlie. The three of them turned slightly, following their gazes. It wasn't until the car pulled out of the line of trees that Delta and Echo finally stopped and joined the group in turning. Zach breathed out and looked down at the twins. "Stay here." He told them, wrapping an arm around here and pulling them close. He was just going to act like there was nothing weird going on. Nothing out of the ordinary. Just hanging at home with dinosaurs. Yeah. Totally nothing weird at all.

Claire parked her car near the jeep. She got out quickly and fished a basket out of the backseat. Then she paused for a moment, collecting herself.

"Morning aunt Claire." Zach called loudly. Indigo let out a chirp and Zach pulled her tighter against him for a moment. "Shhh." He hissed to them. "Be quiet, okay?"

Claire turned quickly, a smile on her lips. It looked genuine, as she trudged over. She eyed the raptors wearily as she got closer. She stood up straighter as she approached Blue. She tried hard not to waver as she nodded at the beta raptor. "Good morning, Blue." She said in a bright tone.

Blue stared at her. She narrowed her eyes and tilted her head to the side. Everyone else was quiet, the other raptors and twins watching. It felt like an eternity before Blue snorted loudly and nodded her head. She turned and clicked to Delta. Delta lowered her head and breathed out loudly. Charlie
let out a soft rumble in her throat, almost a purr. Echo let out a high pitched squeal.

"Echo!" Zach snapped her name sharply. "You move, you go back inside.

Claire let out a laugh and smiled as she peered around the raptors to Zach. "Safe to approach?"

Zach nodded. "Yeah. Just ignore Echo. She'll get the point that you're not here to play with her."

Claire laughed again softly as she stepped towards the porch. "Oh." She stopped, a frown spreading across her voice. Her eyes settled on the two albino looking raptors plastered to Zach's sides. "Who's this?"

"Indigo and Minnie." Zach answered evenly.

"Where... did they come from?" She asked slowly.

"Owen found a nest of eggs." Echo snorted loudly and shook her head. Zach rolled his eyes. "Echo found a nest of eggs. Owen took them and put them in incubators."

"A nest of eggs." She breathed out. "Like before..."

"Not quite." Zach said quickly. "Owen never found any more. Just the one."

Claire nodded. "I guess you're right. Our thermal scans would have found any more wild hatchlings running around untagged."

"Oh. You have that working again?"

"Yes." She answered with a nod. "Yesterday morning. We found a couple pachy's in the mountains that shorted out their tracker chips..." Claire stepped closer as she spoke. Her eyes were on the twins the whole time. "When... when did Owen find them?"

"The day before he got injured, I think." Zach answered.

"They're pretty big."

"They just hatched." He answered. "A couple days ago."

"A couple days?"


Claire sucked in a breathed. "They're... white..."

Zach nodded again. "Yeah."

"They're growing fast..."

"Just ask."

Claire took a deep breath and shook her head. "I can't." Her voice shook a bit and took a deep breath. "That thing... laid eggs... how did she lay eggs?"

"Gray said uh... patho... gen... partho... genesis?" Zach shook his head. "Something like that. It's like that one Godzilla movie with the earthworm guy. She was born pregnant or something. Or got
herself pregnant." Zach shrugged. "I don't know how it works.

"Gray knows?"

"Yeah." Zach breathed out, leaning back slightly. "He helped me a lot. Understanding how the incubators work."

Claire nodded slowly. "Two..."

"There were five." Zach said.

Claire's eyes widened. "Five..."

"The rest died."

"Died?"

Zach nodded. "Two in a giant storm that knocked out the power and the other never hatched and just... died, I guess." Claire was silent for a few minutes. Her eyes never left the twins. And they were being very well-behaved. Maybe the raptors had been able to explain who Firelady was. Either way, they were staying perfectly still, watching Claire with apparent interest. It was Zach who started squirming a bit.

"People died." Claire finally said, her voice barely a whisper. "People died and she wrecked half the island. She almost ruined everything." Her voice rose a little. "We made a mistake when we created her and now you're sitting there..." She shook her head. "No!" She said loudly, dropping the basket and shaking her arms. "No, no, no."

Echo let out a growl and Blue snapped her jaws at her sister.

Claire turned, practically jumping back towards Zach as the two sisters started bickering.

"Claire... I know." Zach said. "Ida..."

Claire turned slowly to look at him. She leaned back against the rail, gripping it tightly with her hands.

"She was after Gray and Me..." Zach continued on. "She tried to eat us... I sometimes still have nightmares about that." He admitted softly. "Gray woke up screaming for a week straight after we got back..."

"Zach..."

"They're babies." He said.

"They'll grow." She countered.

Zach shook his head. "But they're different! Owen said Ida grew up alone, in a way too small pen. She had no one."

"We gave her a sister!" Claire said with a sharp laugh. "She ate her!"

"Well... I'll make sure they don't eat each other."

Claire turned towards the raptors. They were standing together, watching her with interest. "You guys are smart, right? That's what Owen and everyone keeps saying. You understand, right? Ida
attacked Owen! She almost killed him!” Blue let out a soft growl and nodded her head. Claire turned back to Zach and pointed to him. "They'll get bigger! And they'll..."

"No!” Zach insisted loudly, standing up. "I promise. I won't let that happen.”

"They'll turn on you and they'll hurt you!"

Echo let out a whine and surged forward. She darted up the steps and behind Zach. She knelt down between him and the twins. Zach honestly had no clue if it was to protect him or them. But either way, he appreciated it. "They won't.” He said.

"She did!” Claire insisted, her voice rising again.

"They're not her!”

"She's their mother!”

"I'm their mother!” Zach snapped back.

Chapter End Notes

I'm tired. I go sleep now. I have no afterthoughts. 8D Other than sorry I still haven't replied to comments/reviews yes. I will get around to it! I swear!
"She just left?" Owen let out a sharp laugh as he stared at the phone screen in his hands. He had no clue Zach was really going to tell Claire. And he really had no clue what he expected her reaction to be. Yelling, ranting, raving, flailing all seemed like viable options when Claire was involved. But to just clam up and storm out? Without real yelling? "You got off easy." Owen said, smiling.

Zach snorted. Then he shook his head and let out a sigh. "I had this whole speech planned, too." He mumbled out.

Owen cocked an eyebrow, intrigued. "You did?"

Zach nodded. "Yeah. About how much money they invested into Ida and how with the twins alive and functioning, that money wasn't a waste." He said. "They could still be scary when they get bigger and scare all the adults like Simon wanted."

Owen nodded. "That's a very good argument."

"Instead... I started whining about nightmares and that they're different and I told her..." Zach trailed off and looked away.

Owen straightened up a bit, his heart suddenly beating faster. "You told her what?" He asked slowly. He knew Zach didn't mean he told her about them. Because that would be ridiculous. There was no way Zach said anything to Claire about that. But still, that was the first thought in Owen's head.

Zach sighed, still not answering and still not looking at him.

"Zach!" Owen said his name louder.

Zach shook his head. "I told her I was their mother!" He snapped.

"Oh... ohhhhh." Owen breathed out, stringing the word. That was a relief. Though he knew Zach wouldn't say anything.
"Oh." Zach mimicked. "Like that's a normal response from a teenage boy."

Owen smiled at him. "You aren't a normal teenage boy."

Zach stilled. His eyes widened slightly and Owen could swear he could hear the gears in the kid's head turning. He wished he knew what Zach was thinking. Owen hadn't meant anything bad by the comment. Before Owen could ask, Zach simply shrugged. "What's normal anyways? I'd rather just be me."

Owen smiled again. That was a wonderful answer and he wanted Zach to know that he actually felt proud of him. He opened his mouth to repeat the thought and stopped. Unknown Number flashed across the display. But Owen thought he knew that number. "Hey babe. Can I call you back later? I think Barry's calling."

Zach frowned for a moment. "On my phone?"

Owen smiled. "My phone now."

Zach rolled his eyes. "Yeah, bye."

Owen disconnected from the video call and answered the unknown number. He put the phone to his ear with a smile. "Hey."

"Owen?" It was Barry's voice and he sounded confused.

"Yeah." Owen said, leaning back on his bed. "Who else?"

"Did you get a new number?"

"Temporary." Owen said slowly.

"Temporary?" Barry repeated.

"Yeah." Owen answered. "Echo destroyed mine."

"Ah. It was only a matter of time." Barry said. "You let her get away with too much. She's spoiled rotten."

Owen snorted loudly at that. He wanted to argue. But he knew he had no legs to stand on with that. Echo was beyond stubborn and spoiled. And he did pretty much let her do whatever she wanted. Within reason. And eventually. At least he tried to hold out. Sometimes.

"How is all that going?" Barry asked after a moment.

"What?" Owen asked.

"The island." Barry answered. "I saw a news report last week that Miss Dearing arrived. But there's been no cameras or media allowed. She and Mr. Masrani refuse to give any information other than a generic statement about rebuilding."

Owen rolled his eyes about Barry's proper use of last names. Even when the two in question were far from chance eavesdropping, Barry still wouldn't use their names. Owen would tease him about it at another time. But now, something else Barry said required his attention. "Rebuilding. That's it." He stated.

"Yes." Barry answered.
"You think I'm still there?" Owen asked and then shook his head. "Uh... here? On the island?"

"Yes." Barry answered quickly and then paused. "Why? Where are you?"

Owen ignored his question. "So there's been nothing about what's really going on there?" Damnit! "I mean here." He correctly.

"No. Are you... not on the island?"

Owen let out a laugh and shook his head. "That lying little shit."

"Who?"

"My doctor." Owen breathed out. Though he couldn't really blame the guy.

"Doctor? " Barry sounded really confused. And concerned. "Owen, what's going on? Where are you? Are you okay?"

"Whoa there." Owen said quickly. "Slow down. Too many questions."

Barry sighed over the line. "What's going on?"

"Well... what you say is right." Owen answered. "They're on the island rebuilding. Claire and Simon are probably keeping everything quiet. It'd be a PR mess, I'm sure. But I hear it's going good and they plan to reopen soon."

"But... you are not there?"

"Nope." He said with a laugh. "Haven't been in weeks."

"You left the island?" Barry practically gasped. "I cannot believe you left the island, my friend. It was your greatest fear."

"It still is." Owen said. "One of them, at least." He hadn't left. Not since the first time he set foot on the island, what felt like an eternity and a different lifetime ago. He was pretty sure he had a lid on his raptor side. But every time he thought of leaving, he heard Henry Wu's voice in his head, telling him he wouldn't be able to control it. He'd given up on ever leaving a long time ago, of ever leading a normal life. He never had any reason to, anyways. He didn't want to leave his raptors. They were his real family. "I didn't have a choice." He finally said.

"What happened?"

Owen breathed out. "Ida tried to eat me."

"Tried?"

"Bit me or something." He answered. "It was really bad."

Barry paused for a moment. "How did you survive?"

"The girls got me away safely." Owen answered. "Then phone obsessed Echo figured out how to call someone using the computer. Who called Simon... and he brought me here."

"Where?"

"Uh... I'm not... entirely sure." Owen said slowly.
"How can you not know?"

Owen shrugged a bit, despite being on the phone. "I honestly have no clue. It's some giant hospital or something. They have me like... quarantined on the top floor."

"Locked in?"

"I guess." Owen answered. He really hadn't thought about it. He'd been so focused on trying to behave and get all better for the doctor so he could go back to the island. "I've only seen the one dude."

"You haven't gotten stir crazy yet?" Barry asked.

Owen let out a laugh. "I went crazy after the first hour." Barry joined in and they laughed together for a few minutes. It felt nice, it felt normal. Owen had really missed his friend. "I've had a good distraction." He said softly after a moment.

"What?"

Owen paused. "Do you believe in fate?"

"Fate?" Barry repeated.

"Love at first sight, soul mates, all that mushy gooey stuff."

"You telling me you met your soul mate?"

Owen smiled. "Yeah, I did." He answered genuinely.

"Where?" Barry asked. He sounded curious.

"On the island." Owen answered honestly. "A while back... few months." He added in a vague, dishonest fashion.

"Who is it?" Barry asked. "Do I know them?"

Now Owen hesitated. He wouldn't tell Barry. At least not yet. Maybe eventually, once Zach was older and Owen could get Barry to understand. Maybe. "I'm... not ready to share that yet, my friend."

Barry let out a laugh. "So I do know them."

Owen smiled again.

"Will you at least tell me which gender you settled on?" Barry asked. "Or in." He added.

Owen let out another laugh, loud and hearty. "He has kept me sane over the past couple weeks."

"I hope one day I can meet him."

"One day," Owen agreed. "In a few years." They chatted a bit more after that. Mostly about what Barry had been up to since he escaped the island. Which wasn't a lot. Owen asked him if he was coming back.

"I don't know yet." Barry had answered. "Ask me again when it's ready to reopen."
Owen understood. Barry wasn't as tied to the island as Owen was. And being attacked and chased and nearly killed by dinosaurs was a pretty big deal. So Owen dropped it. He'd let Barry deal with it in his own way and Time. Owen just hoped his friend would come back at some point.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

"You just left?"

Claire was visibly shaking as she leaned heavily on the counter. A mug of something steaming was set down in front of her. She gripped it with unsteady hands and pulled it closer. The heat was nice against her skin. She breathed in deeply the aroma of the tea. It was nice, too. She felt the tiniest bit better. "I felt all their eyes on me." She said sotly. "I wanted to run. I was afraid... and I wanted to yell... a lot. I wanted to stomp my feet and shout and throw things. I wanted to grab Zach and shove him in my car." She paused for a moment and breathed out. "None of those things are good ideas in front of the raptors."

Zara sat down beside her, a smile on her face. "No, they are not."

"Am I overreacting?" Claire asked softly, looking up at Zara. "That thing... Ida..." She sneered at the name. "She wasn't even fully grown and she destroyed everything!"

"Yes." Zara said softly. "That's all true. But... Wu, he kept everything secret. No one was equipped to handle her or could guess her reactions. You're better prepared now."

Claire tilted her head to the side a bit. "You... you think so?"

Zara nodded and leaned forward. "Be honest. That enclosure was too small for her."

Claire nodded right away. "I know that now." She said. "It was way too small. She just... she was bigger and grew faster than Wu said... we didn't have enough time to build a better one. And Wu assured me she was under control."

Zara nodded and reached out to touch Claire's hand. "It's not your fault, what happened."

"I know." Claire said softly.

"Do you?"

Claire nodded again. "Yes, I do. It was a series of events no one could have predicted. Although... I am a little at fault."

Zara rolled her eyes and leaned back a bit.

"Several people were a little at fault." Claire continued quickly.

"Anyways." Zara said, squeezing Claire's hand. "The twins will have a family. They already do. When Zach leaves, just let Owen do... whatever it is he does and taught Zach to do."

Claire looked down at the table. "They were so tiny..." She sighed deeply and leaned back, pulling away from Zara. "So I did overreact."

"No." Zara said quickly. "Fear is a powerful emotion and your feelings are valid. Honey, I don't think you really processed what happened to you. You helped me but you never let me help you. You never say anything about what happened. You act as if nearly getting eaten had no effect on you." Zara paused for a moment. Claire shook her head and started to pull away more. Zara leaned
forward, chasing her. She grabbed Claire's hand again, harder this time. "No!" Zara snapped, pulling Claire forward. "You're not doing this. You're not going to pretend like nothing's wrong and sweep it under the rug again. You're going to have to deal with this or you'll never get over it."

Claire looked up at Zara. She looked like she wanted to argue. She opened her mouth like she was. Then Claire sighed deeply. "How..." She started softly. "How do I start?"

"Call Zach." Zara said. "Apologize and ask him to come to the park. Invite the injured one... Charlie. You can handle her."

"Charlie..." Claire repeated.

"Or Blue, the leader one." Zara added. "If you want to try to win her oven. Either way, invite him to bring one of them, so he doesn't feel like it's a trick where you'll throw him in a car and kidnap him."

Her lips curled up in the tiniest hint of a smile. "I will not deny that the thought has crossed my mind a few times."

Zara's smile was larger and she let out a soft laugh. "I know it has."

"Then what?" Claire asked after a moment.

"Talk to him." Zara answered. "About what you're feeling and your worries. Discuss it like adults and listen to him. Really listen."

Claire let out a sigh. "Alright."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Tim didn't knock on the door. He walked right in. Again. He'd been doing that a lot. Just barging in. Although really, Owen was okay with it. He was actually growing to like the demanding, annoying doctor. And he was looking forward to the man moving to the island. Tim would be a much better doctor than Wu. A lot more excitable, too. And he should never be introduced to Lowery. The two would no doubt create an Owen fanclub and he'd never have any peace and quiet.

"Okay." Tim sad, clapping his hands together. "Ready?"

"Ready?" Owen repeated. "For what?"

"You said you'd shift for me."

Owen sighed and shook his head. "Yeah, I did say that."

"So... now?"

"Yeah. Fine."

Chapter End Notes

On yeah. Still haven't replied to comments. I think my inbox has like 86 messages in there now. Too depressed to reply. Maybe at some point. Sorry I fail.
Wait... what?

Chapter Summary

Today was the day! Yes, today was the day! Tim had promised, that today would be it. And he was holding the doctor to it or he was ripping the doctor in half.

Chapter Notes

Soooo... I accidently wrote this pretty much all yesterday, in one sitting. It was weird. I haven't been inspired to actually write Raptor... in a looooonng time. Not like this. XD Does this mean faster updates? Maybe. Probably not. But it's a possibility. 8D

Also... discord.
Chas#0048

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He was bouncing in the elevator. Then it stopped and he tried not to bounce as he stepped out. He tried again not to bounce as he walked down the hall. But it was hard. He managed a weird half-hop-skip thing. Until he tripped down the stairs. "Shoulda stayed on the elevator." He mumbled, scraping himself up off the floor.

"Dr. Murphy!"

He waved off whoever it was with a smile. "It's cool." He said. "I'm good." Then he hurried along down the hall, careful to actually walk this time. He walked right up to the laboratory counter and smiled at the young blonde. "Hey May. Can I get my samples from yesterday?"

She raised her eyebrows and stared at him. "You know whatever tests you're running on all these samples of yours, we're all capable of doing for you."

Tim opened his mouth slowly. Too slowly, he knew. "Uh... yes... but... you are all busy... and I only have the one patient..."

"Yes." She strung the word out equally slow. "Some rich celebrity's Shiatsu or something fancy."

She smiled.

Tim looked away quickly. "Something like that." He mumbled.

"I knew it!" She smiled and leaned forward on the counter. "Who's it belong to? Tessa Thompson? Chris Pratt? Oh!" She lifted her hands animatedly. "That one singer with the hair?"

Tim pointed looked at the floor. "I'm not at liberty to say."

She stuck out her bottom lip in a pout. "You're no fun."

Tim sighed and looked back at her. "Can I get my samples, please?"
May leaned on her elbows and tilted her head to the side. "Did they come here to drop it off?"

"May..."

"Oh! Are they gonna come pick it up?"

"May!"

"Just tell me who!" May kept on talking. "I promise I won't tell! Tom Holland? Nick Robinson? OMG! Is it Tony Stark?!" She let out a gasp. "I bet it is! I heard he has a cat!"

"MAY!" He snapped her name louder. "Samples, please!"

"Alright, alright." She turned towards her computer. "You don't have to yell!"

"Sorry." Tim mumbled as he listened to the click clack of the keyboard keys. May frowned at the screen. "When did you say you brought the samples in?"

"Yesterday." Tim answered.

"Hmm. Hang on." May got up from her computer and disappeared from view.

Tim leaned over the counter a bit, trying to see where she'd gone. But he couldn't. So he sighed and stepped back. He shoved his hands in his pockets and rocked back a bit on his heels as he waited. Several long minutes ticked by. Tim pulled out his phone, idly checking his emails and messages. Because it was taking a long time! He sighed loudly and shook his head.

"Mr. Murphy?" May was back and walking towards the window. She bit her lip and didn't look at him. "I've checked and... I can't find your samples." She said awkwardly.

Tim blinked at her for a moment. Because no. There was no way that they lost his samples. He'd just dropped them off yesterday. And Owen was going to growl and snap at him again if he asked him to shift again. "You can't... find them." He repeated slowly.

May nodded, still not looking at him. "I looked up when you logged them in... everything was fine. And no one came in since last night... it's been pretty quiet in here today... but... they're not there."

"You're sure?" Tim asked.

May nodded. "I checked every sample we have on file. Everything else is accounted for. Except what you brought in." She added softly.

"What about my samples from last week?"

May shrugged. "Everything you've dropped off is gone."

Tim blinked again and opened his mouth slowly. But right then, his phone rang. He sighed loudly and pulled out his phone. It was Simon. Tim's eyes widened. "Uh... thanks, May. Don't worry about it. But if they turn up, let me know?"

May finally looked at him again. She nodded her head quickly. "Yes, Dr. Murphy! I'm sorry!" She called after him.

Tim turned and hurried down the hall as he put the phone to his ear. "Hello?"
"Timmy, my boy!" Simon said, excitement in his voice. "How is everything going?"

"Great, sir!" Tim said. "All uh... going as... uh... great."

Simon paused for a moment. "That didn't sound very convincing, my friend."

Tim sighed and ran a hand through his hair. "I got samples from Owen yesterday..." He glanced around the hall quickly and stepped onto the elevator. It typed in his special access code and the elevator started moving up to the top floor. "...while he was shifted. Blood and tissue samples of the dino version, to test against the samples I took of him as a human."

"Oh yes! We discussed that the last time we talked." Simon said, sounding genuinely interested. "How did it go?"

Tim sighed and leaned back against the elevator wall. "All my samples seem to have disappeared."

"Really?"

Tim sighed as the elevator stopped. The doors opened and he stepped out. The hall was empty, it always was. He was the only one with access to the floor. But he still looked around. "Yeah. I have no clue what happened. But they can't find them. Just... gone. I'm on my way to see Owen. See if he might be willing to shift again. Although..." He mused with a sigh. "Should just wait until we get back to the island. That way I can be sure they're kept safe."

"Hmm." Simon hummed over the line. "Yes, that would make the most sense. But... if he wanted to again..."

Tim paused in his steps when Simon didn't continue. "If he wanted to... what?" He prompted.

"I have just arrived at the hospital." Simon said. "I am on my way up. And if Owen wanted to shift again for you, I would love to see it."

Tim let out a sigh. "We can ask." Though he really didn't have high hopes for it.

"I will be right up." Simon said. "Wait for me."

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Today was the day! Yes, today was the day! Tim had promised, that today would be it. And he was holding the doctor to it or he was ripping the doctor in half. Okay, so he really wouldn't do that. Of course he wouldn't. But the idea made him smile. Because today was the mother fucking day! Just a matter of hours and he'd be home on the island, with his mate and his girls and his mate and his home and his mate... more and more lately, that word kept sticking in his head. Mate. Soulmate, other half, love, significant other, boyfriend, sweetheart, precious, beloved, honey, sweetie pie, and a million other stupid pet names ran rampant through his head.

He hadn't told Zach that today was the day. And since he hadn't gotten any calls, he was pretty sure Simon hadn't told Claire. Or if he had, she hadn't mentioned it to Zach. Owen had no clue who knew he was returning to the island today. He was just pretty sure Zach didn't know. And Owen couldn't wait to see his face! He couldn't wait for the surprise! Although, the idea of telling Zach, and him waiting at the docks for Owen was just as heartwarming. Owen could just imagine, sitting at the window, looking down from the jet as the island came into view. And slowly, his mate would come into view.

The door opened, forcing Owen away from his Zach laced thoughts. Simon and Tim came walking
in. Simon was smiling and Tim was a couple steps behind him, looking less thrilled than him. "Owen!" Simon clapped his hands together.

Owen smiled at the man and slipped off the hospital bed. He held out his hand. "Hey, Simon."

Simon scoffed at the offered hand and reached out to wrap his arms around Owen in a friendly hug. He clapped Owen on the back and pulled away. "The last time I saw you, you looked like shit, my friend."

Owen let out a laugh and nodded. "I will have to take your word for it. So yeah, I bet I did."

"Quite literally, too." Simon laughed as well. "Your girls had you covered in muck and twigs."

Owen shrugged slightly. "They tried."

Simon nodded. "They did, they did."

"So how are things going?" Owen asked. "On the island?"

"Good, good." Simon said with a nod. "I spoke with Claire this morning. Everything seems to be on schedule."

"Does she know we're coming today?" Owen asked slowly. "The plan is still we're going today, right?" He added.

Simon nodded his head quickly. "Oh yes. We're set to leave shortly." He answered quickly. Owen breathed out loudly, smiling. Simon let out a laugh and reached out to clap Owen on the shoulder. "A bit antsy to get back to your girls, yes?"

Owen nodded. "You have no idea."

Simon laughed again. "Well, I think I might have forgotten to tell Claire we are arriving today." He tilted his head to the side for a moment. "It will be quite a surprise, won't it?"

Owen smiled, shook his head, and rolled his eyes. "She's gonna flip. But it'll be awesome to watch."

"Yes." Simon was still laughing. "It will be amusing." He recovered quickly after that and turned slightly, looking back at the thus far silent doctor. "Tim, didn't you have something to ask Owen?"

Tim blinked for a moment. Then he sighed and shook his head. "It can wait."

"We got time." Simon said. He glanced back at Owen. "The jet is being refueled and the pilot is on break."

Owen looked over at Tim curiously. "What'd ya need?"

Tim breathed out again and shook his head. "Really, it can wait until we're back on the island."

"What?" Owen insisted.

"Really." Tim said. "We can do it on the island."

But Owen wasn't letting up. "Do what?"

Tim shook his head. "All the samples I took?" He said, sounding reluctant. "For testing?"
Owen nodded. "What? Need more?"

Tim blinked for a moment. Then nodded his head. "Yeah, sort of. They uh... all seem to have gotten misplaced."

"Misplaced?" Owen tilted his head to the side.

Tim shrugged. "I guess. They're all gone."

"That sucks." Owen breathed out and shook his head. He knew how excited Tim had been to study him. He could feel the disappointment radiating off of the doctor. And he felt genuinely bad for the man. "But yeah, of course!" He said, nodding his head. "Anytime." At that moment, he would agree to just about anything to get out of the hospital and back on Simon's jet.

"Right now?" Simon asked, sounding a bit too eager.

Owen glanced over at him and smiled. "Tim said on the island."

"And I said right now." Simon pointed out. "Because I'm here now."

Owen let out a laugh and shook his head. "Okay, you swear we're leaving? Today?"

Simon nodded his head. "Yes. I can call my pilot if you need confirmation."

"Nah, I trust you." Owen said. "Okay, sure. Why not? Stand back." Owen pulled off his shirt and tossed it back on the bed. Then he quickly pulled off the sweatpants he was wearing and they joined the shirt. He was standing there, in a pair of thin boxers. He bent at the waist and smiled as he looked up at Simon. It was still weird, so many new people knowing. It used to just be Henry Wu and Barry. And he suspected, Vic Hoskins knew. The man had hinted at it enough. But now... Zach, Lowery, Tim, and Simon will have all seen him. But, maybe, he was okay with that. Maybe it wasn't so scary anymore. And none of them had sent him off to be studied and dissected. Well... at least not dissected.

Owen closed his eyes and concentrated. He bent forward more and held his arm out, to touch his fingers to the ground. But as he reached, his nails grew and talons touched the floor. His spine shifted and his tail grew in. His skin stretched and hardened. Until all trace of Owen was completely gone and the large, golden raptor stood in his place. The raptor tilted his head to the side. Then opened his jaws, exposing the row of pointy, sharp teeth, and let out a roar.

Tim flinched slightly and Simon just stared. "Oh my god..." Simon gasped. "Owen?"

Owen snapped his jaws shut and snorted loudly. It was a bit harder than normal. Being stuck in the hospital and not being able to run in the jungle was hard on him. But Owen still had control. He concentrated on Simon's words and nodded his head. Then turned slightly and flicked his tail.

Simon breathed out and shook his head. "Incredible." He glanced over his shoulder at Tim. "This is incredible."

Tim nodded. And then let out a gasp and pointed. When Simon turned back around, Owen was right in front of him, his large green eyes following him. Simon stumbled back a step and fell on the ground. Owen opened his jaws and let out a weird warbling sounding laugh. Tim bent down to help Simon up.

"Never turn your back on a raptor." Simon mused as he stood back up and dusted himself off. "I was told this." He said. "By the Mitchell brothers. My apologies, Owen. I will remember from now on."
Owen let out another weird laugh and nodded his head.

Simon lifted his hand and held it out. "Can I?"

Owen snorted and snapped at the hand. His teeth came a few inches from Simon's fingers. But Simon barely flinched. And Owen was just playing around anyways.

Tim rolled his eyes and shook his head, as if reading Owen's thoughts. "Stop playing around, Owen." He said, crossing his arms. He stepped up beside Simon and glanced sideways at him. "He did the same thing to me yesterday. Then chased me around the room after I pricked him with the needle. Then when he was himself again, he said he was just playing."

"Ah." Simon said, nodding his head. Owen tossed his head to the side and shook it. He glared at Tim for a moment before breathing out loudly. He stretched his neck out towards Simon. Simon reached his hand out again and touched Owen's nose. Owen's nostrils flared a bit and he breathed out against Simon's hand. But the man didn't flinch. He smiled, large and goofy, and let out a laugh. He drug his hand up Owen's face, over his eye and moving down along the spine. Owen lowered his head a bit and turned as Simon moved, walking all around him. Then Owen turned a bit, spinning and waving his tail again.

Owen was mindful of where Simon was, of how close the man was. He knew from experience how much power his tail had. Simon spent a lot more time walking around Owen than Tim had. And, for not the first time, Owen wondered just how crazy this guy was? Tim had been curious and terrified the day before. But that could also have been because Owen snapped at him and chased him and growled a lot. But it had been a long time since he shifted! And he'd been having fun!

Finally, Simon stopped and stood back beside Tim. He was still smiling. "This really is incredible. And he can understand everything and at least attempt basic communication."

Owen nodded his head.

"So this is how you taught the raptors, right?" Simon asked.

Owen nodded his head again.

"You weren't born like this." Simon was sure he knew the answer. But he wanted confirmation anyways.

Owen shook his head.

"Wu did this." Simon stated. "And it made you be able to communicate with the raptors. And teach them some human mannerisms."

Owen breathed out and nodded his head again.

"Hmm. Interesting." Simon mused before he resumed his questions. "Can you communicate with the other dinosaurs?"

Owen tilted his head to the side a bit and dipped his head slightly.

Simon frowned for a moment. "Does that mean a little bit?"

Owen nodded his head.

"Incredible." Simon mused.
"Can you shift any time?" Tim asked, stepping closer.

Owen turned his gaze upon the doctor and nodded his head.

"For any period of time?" Tim asked.

Owen nodded his head. Then for the next half hour, he answered more yes and no questions. He darted around the room as he did so. It wasn't the wide expanse of the jungle for him to really stretch his legs, but it was something at least. He jumped on the hospital bed and let out a loud squawk. Then he rolled off it, pulling it down on its side and clawing at it with his back legs.

"Okay, okay!" Tim held up his hands. "Maybe we should call it quits before you destroy more hospital property."

Owen shook himself and let out a snort. Then he slid out from under the mangled bed and shook the debris from his body and nodded his head.

"Yes, we should get going." Simon said, a touch sadly. He pulled out his phone and checked it. "The jet has been ready for about 20 minutes."

Owen let out a loud, happy chirp and bobbed slightly, very much like Echo.

Simon let out a laugh and turned to Tim. He patted the doctor on the shoulder and steered him back towards the door. "Come on. Let's leave Owen to change and dress. We will wait out in the hall."

Owen watched the two exit the room. He waited a moment longer, looking around the room. He wasn't sad to be leaving. Not at all! The weeks he spent locked in here had been torture! He couldn't wait to get out of there! He breathed out and shook himself. He shifted quickly and pulled the sweat pants and shirt back on. He grabbed Zach's phone and charger and shoved them in his pocket. Then he darted out into the hall. "Now?" He asked, excitedly. "We're leaving now?"

Simon let out a laugh and nodded. "Yes, yes. Do you need to pack? Or... is that all you have?"

Owen glanced down at the sweats and shrugged. "Kinda." Tim had supplied him with clothes. But none of it was stuff he wanted to take back with him. "Can't exactly wear what I was wearing when I came in."

Simon laughed again and shook his head. "No, no you can't." He turned and headed down the hall. "Well... if you two are ready to go, we will stop at a store somewhere and find you something better to arrive home in."

Owen smiled and hurried to keep up with the men. He couldn't believe it! He was going home! His girls were home! His mate was home! Zach was his home. And his skin actually tingled as he thought about it.

Simon was still talking, his eyes on Tim as they walked together, a step in front of Owen. "You are packed up?" Simon asked him. "Or do you need to return here in a few days?"

Tim shook his head. "No, sir. I'm packed and ready to move."

Owen leaned forward slightly, between the two men, and smiled. "He's been packed to move since the first second he got the job."

Tim turned slightly and pushed Owen back roughly. "You shut up!"
Owen let out a laugh. He couldn't help it. He felt excited and giddy and also nervous. He couldn't wait. He just couldn't. His whole body was practically vibrating and he knew he was being ridiculous. But he just couldn't help it! He was going to see his mate. In just a few hours! Well... he wasn't sure how many hours honestly. But still! Today!

Tim glanced back at him. "What's the face for?"

"Excited to get home?" Simon asked.

Owen nodded. "You have no idea."

"Actually, I do." Tim said. "I've been listening to you whine for weeks."

Simon laughed and the three stepped on the elevator Owen bounced a bit. This was farther than he'd ever been. He'd been all over the top floor but he'd never set foot on the elevator. He'd been trying really hard to behave and play along with whatever the doctor wanted. Tim and Simon were chatting idly. Owen hardly heard them. He couldn't really focus on them. He glanced around the elevator. There was a weird posted on the wall. *Spay and neuter your pets.* Owen frowned. What an odd thing for an elevator.

It came to a stop and the doors opened. Owen followed the two men off and down the long, white hall. As they went, Owen noticed more odd posters. One about gum disease in dogs, another about coat patterns of cats, the dangers of ticks, worms, and fleas, and rat bites. Feline leukemia and cancer screenings. Then paintings and murals of playing kittens and puppies dotted the walls between the posters, with sayings like, *You had me at meow, Happiness has four paws,* and *Love is a four legged word.*

Owen reached out and grabbed both Simon and Tim by their jackets and forced them to stop. "Exactly what kind of hospital is this?"

Chapter End Notes

Good news? I've like 500 words of the next chapter done! 8D
It's True

Chapter Summary

Is it monkey lizard? Or lizard monkey? This needs discussion and reflection.

Chapter Notes

Here, Snugs! 8D I said next chapter was for you!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

With Lowery's help, he'd succeeded in borrowing a large, commercial style lawn mower. The thing was huge, nearly the size of the jeep, and Zach had to actually ride it to the Bungalow and back. But the goddamn tall grass around the trailer was now cut short. Way too short, he was sure. Actually he was certain he'd killed it with how short it now was. But at least the twins couldn't get lost in it and hide from him anymore. Because honestly, they did it every chance they got. They found it funny to watch him flail about, all in a panic. Zach was sure Echo had something to do with that. She probably told them to do it.

Zach back on the porch, staring at the front yard, as he called it. There was a large pile of grass clippings in the center. Really large. Like crazy large, larger than the jeep and half the size of the trailer. It had taken him nearly an hour to gather it together. And now that he had and it was just sitting there... he had no clue what to do with it. There was no way he was bagging it all up. What the fuck would he do with all the bags?

No, he was just going to let it sit there. Forever. He should of... just... left... Zach tilted his head as he watched the pile. Part of it shifted. Just the tiniest bit. He watched the spot longer. And he swore he saw a tail tip poke out. Zach got to his feet and jumped down the stairs. "Echo!" He shouted. "Echo, I know you're in there! I saw your tail!" He snapped, stepping closer to the pile.

Echo popped her head out of the top and let out a happy chirp. Then two small, white heads popped out near the bottom and let out chirps. And then Delta's green head poked out. That was a bit of a surprise.

"How the hell did you all sneak out here?" Zach snapped. "Without me knowing?"

Then suddenly the pile exploded as Blue jumped out. She rolled over Echo and the two wrestled as Delta ran after, snapping at them. Charlie popped up in the center of the ruined pile. And Zach stood there, dumbfounded into silence as he stared. He couldn't fathom how they all had fit inside the pile of grass. Or why? And all of them? Echo, he understood. And the twins. "You, too, Blue?"

Blue detached herself from Echo and looked over at Zach. She breathed out loudly and dropped her gaze to the ground.

"Nah," Zach said. "It's fine." He sighed and shook his head. "You guys can stay out here and play. I'm going to call Firelady."
Echo let out a squeak.

"It's fine." Zach said, waving his arm. "Just gonna talk."

Blue snorted and nodded her head in approval.

"Blue, you're in charge." He said as he turned towards the trailer. He heard her let out an indignant snort and he could imagine it meant something along the lines of, "Duh!” Or, "Oh really?” Zach hurried back inside. He checked the computer first, making sure he hadn't missed anything from Owen. He hadn't. Then he picked up the crappy phone. Also nothing from Owen. But he had missed a call from Claire. He blinked at the phone for a moment. There was a message. He sighed and bit his lip as he hit play and put the phone to his head.

"Zach..." She started softly and paused. Then she let out a sigh. "I wanted to apologize. I reacted... well, that's just it." She sighed again. "I reacted. Without thinking and without listening. I just... did. And I'm sorry. I'd like to.. try again. To talk and to understand. As adults. I was hoping you'd come to the plaza today... or whenever you have time for. And bring Blue? If... she wants to come. Tell her... I'm inviting her, alright? If you can, call me and let me know. Uh..." The line clicked off.

Zach pulled the phone away from his ear. We... that will work. He smiled as he headed back outside. "Hey Blue!"

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

"This is a veterinary hospital!" Owen accused loudly.

"The largest in the country!" Simon boasted with a smile.

Owen's eyes narrowed. "Animals!"

"One of the top rated." Simon continued. "Caters to celebrities. That's why the top floor exists, all walled off. Private floor. Though... I will admit to suggesting Tim remove all the animal props. To make you feel better.."

Owen rolled his eyes at the man and glanced at Tim. "You're a veterinarian?"

Tim dropped his gaze to the floor and scratched at the back of his neck. "Well... yeah. I specialize in reptiles and genetics..."

Simon nodded his head. "How else would he be qualified to run the lab and take over for Dr. Wu?"

Owen didn't know. He actually hadn't thought about Tim a lot, past being his doctor and needing to listen to him about doctorly things. He rounded on Simon. "I'm not an animal!" He snapped.

Simon tilted his head to the side. "You sort of are." He pointed out. "Half animal." He added.

"Fuck you!" Owen snapped.

"Calm down, Owen." Tim said softly.

"Calm down?!!" He snapped louder. "You brought me to a..."

"So what?" Tim snapped, his voice rising. "Shut up! Stop your whining!"

Owen jerked back slightly and blinked at the doctor. He'd never seen Tim get angry before.
"Simon did what he thought necessary to save your life! Uh... your... dog's life!" He added quickly. There were other people in the hall suddenly, coming out to see what the commotion was. "What's done is done. Everything went well. And now... we should remember where we are and keep our voices down!" His voice dropped as spoke. "Now!" He snapped lowly.

"Dr. Murphy is correct." Simon said solemnly.

"Yes." Tim nodded and started back down the hall. "But first, I have a stop to make."

"Stop?" Owen let out a whine. "Why?"

Simon glanced back at him. "At the blood storage place."

"The lab." Tim corrected.

"Why?" Owen asked.

Tim stared at him for a moment and blinked. "Were you listening to anything we said?"

Owen tilted his head. "When?"

"The elevator ride?" Tim asked.

"The hall?" Simon added.

Owen shrugged. "No, not really." Simon and Tim both rolled their eyes. Both looked a little perturbed with him. But he couldn't help it. He wouldn't explain it. He couldn't focus. He just... he needed to get back to the island. Back to his jungle and his girls and his mate. His home. But Simon and Tim were still staring at him. "Sorry." He mumbled out. "I think I've been away too long." He said softly with a shrug. "I haven't been off the island since I first came. Hard to concentrate, now that I know I can go home." He sighed and shook his head. "It's weird to explain."

Simon nodded. "I think I understand what you mean." He smiled and reached out to pat Owen on the shoulder. "It's alright, my friend. It's been a rough month."

Owen sighed again and crossed his arms. "Yeah, understatement."

"I have to stop by the lab." Tim explained. "Simon and I were talking about the missing samples. I want to speak with the lab tech again, before we leave."

"About the missing samples?" Owen asked.

Tim nodded his head.

"I told you." Owen said. "I'll let you have more."

Tim smiled. "I appreciate that. And will take you up on the offer once we're on the island and settled. But the problem is... the missing samples themselves."

"Oh... oh!" Owen's eyes widened. "Shit... I didn't really think about that... does someone know?"

Tim shook his head quickly. "No, probably not."

"Probably?" Owen repeated.

"Just..." Tim shrugged a bit. "Maybe... mislabeled or lost?"
"Seriously?"

Tim shrugged again and they continued down the hall. They talked in hushed tones as they went, pausing whenever someone walked by. "I honestly don't know. Just wishful thinking. But... Simon got a hold of your last blood work up from when you were first hired on the island, which should be what the Navy has on file for you. And before that, if you've had testing or something before that."

Owen nodded. "Yeah, when I was younger. Fell out of a tree and broke my leg. Lost a lot of blood."

Tim nodded. "Your base genetic profile has changed enough that it no longer resembles your old blood profile."

Owen tilted his head to the side, trying to follow. "So... that means... whoever messed with it... can't tell it's me?"

Tim smiled a bit and nodded his head. "Correct. And I labeled them differently. Your human samples, I labeled as an orangutan."

Owen's eyes widened. "A monkey?"

Tim nodded again. "Your raptor was labeled as a bearded dragon, a lizard species."

"So you're calling me a monkey lizard?" Owen asked.

"Yes." Simon answered straight faced.

Tim smiled and shrugged. "If another scientist or geneticist got a hold of it, if they didn't know what they were looking at or what exactly to look for... they'd just assume human contamination."

"You think so?" Owen asked.

Tim nodded again. "I do. Not everyone is going to think 'human can transform into dinosaur.' If anything, alien should be the first thing that comes to mind."

Owen laughed. "I'm totally part alien." They all laughed as they turned the corner and came to the lab window.

"May!" Tim waved as he approached.

"Hi Dr. Murphy." The blonde said solemnly.

"This is Simon Masrani and Owen Grady." Tim introduced them. "Friends of mine. Stopped by to aide in my transfer."

May nodded her head and smiled at the men. "From Jurassic World. Fun!" Then her face fell again and she looked back at Tim. "I continued looking when you left." She said. "I called our supervisor in, too. She's on her way. We'll find out what happened."

Tim smiled and nodded. "Pen?" May nodded and handed him a pen and pad of paper. Tim quickly scribbled on it. "This is my cell phone." He said. "Let me know either way, alright?"

May nodded and grabbed the paper. "I will personally, Dr. Murphy."

"Thank you, May. Really. For everything." He said earnestly and she smiled. "If you do find them, have them sent to be destroyed, alright?"
Her eyes widened slightly. "Destroyed?"

Tim nodded again. "I'll be too far away to use them."

May tilted her head. "We can do whatever tests you wanted done and send you the results."

Tim shook his head. "Not necessary."

"But... that's a waste!"

Tim smiled. "Assuming you find them."

May blinked for a moment and then nodded. "Yes, of course. If we... find them..."

Tim smiled again and shook his head. "it's fine. Really. Thanks, May."

May smiled weakly and nodded. "Oh!" She said suddenly as they turned to leave. "If you're leaving... who's taking over for you?" She leaned slightly on the counter, her head on her hands. "Like, who's gonna be in charge of your... client?"

Tim turned back to smile at her. "My client is no longer upstairs."

May's mouth dropped open. "No! The famous person came and picked it up?"

Tim shrugged slightly. "Maybe."

May frowned slightly and folded her arms. She leaned back in her chair and pouted. "That is soooo not fair!" She whined loudly.

-Zach pulled the Jeep into the parking spot and put it into park. He sighed as he leaned back and glanced in the rearview mirror. Blue was perched in the backseat, looking around. "Ready for this?"

At his voice, she looked in the mirror, back at him. She nodded her head. Zach sighed as he opened the door and slipped out. Blue hopped out the back and darted around to stand beside him. She immediately glanced around again. Zach smiled and reached out to touch her neck. His fingers grazed her rough hide for a moment and she leaned back into his touch. "I think we're safe."

"It's Firelady, but she invited both of us here. I don't think it's a trap." Blue turned to look at him. She let out a loud snort and looked away again. But she nodded her head. She agreed. She didn't think Firelady was capable of laying a trap for them. She didn't think Firelady was stupid enough to attempt a trap or trick. Firelady may think she was in charge. Blue snorted again and glanced around again, her eyes darting for any signs of anything off. But Firelady wasn't her boss.

Zach smiled and his eyes followed Blue's as she looked around. They'd just agreed to meet at the fountain. But so far, Claire wasn't there. But it was Claire, after all. Running late was like her thing. There were others milling around. Workers or whoever. Some stopped to stare and point at the kid who arrived in a jeep with a loose dinosaur. Some were wide eyed, some were on their phones, some were pointing. Zach stepped closer to Blue. "You wanna go, we'll get back in the jeep right now. I can meet her later."

Blue snorted again and craned her neck back to glare at Zach. She wasn't afraid of these stupid humans. And she wasn't leaving mom. Blue snorted again and shook her head. She was going to bite Echo when they got back home. Hard! Now Echo had her calling him mom! It was easy to do, with
Echo shouting it all the time. And the twins, too. Charlie had uttered the term earlier that morning. Delta hadn't cared one way or the other. She simply nodded her head and had yelled for mom like Echo had.

Zach leaned against her slightly as he pulled out the phone. He dialed Claire's number and put it to his ear. She hadn't forgotten. She swore for 5 minutes straight as she packed up whatever it was that she wasn't doing while Zach laughed over the line. Then she raced out of the building and across the plaza towards the fountain. Zach walked around the jeep and smiled and waved at her as he saw her. Blue followed him and stood right beside him. She pressed in closer, her hide brushing against his side. Her eyes followed Firelady as she approached. The human's eyes settled on Blue but she didn't seem to waver. Blue dipped her head slightly.

Claire slowed as she reached the fountain. She paused for a moment, pulled herself up, and started towards the two, trying to convey confidence. She could do this. This was one raptor. On her own territory. There was no reason to think she was in any real danger. There were too many people around. And she'd seen the restraint the animal had. Standing so close to her nephew, like the raptor was guarding him or something. "Sorry!" She said, coming to a stop a foot from them. She smiled at Zach first before glancing at Blue. Then she smiled and nodded at the raptor. "Hello, Blue. Thanks for coming." She spoke evenly, trying to just imagine Blue was human. That's what Owen always did. Talk to them like they were people. She could do that.

Blue nodded her head again and Zach smiled. He loved that Claire was trying. And maybe it hadn't been fair of him to spring the twins on her like he had. He should of warned her. Maybe. "So..." He glanced around. "You wanna chat here or..."

Claire glanced around. They had quite the audience. "I didn't think this through..."

"Let's walk." He said. "Down around the tank. I wanna show you something."

Claire tilted her head slightly. "Last time you said that, it didn't go so well."

Zach let out a laugh as he stepped back a step. "Just trust me." He stepped back again and Blue turned slightly and followed. Claire breathed out and nodded. Zach turned and Claire fell in step beside him with Blue on his other side. The three headed over to the railing around Moe's tank. Blue popped her head over the edge and let out a loud squeal.

Claire flinched slightly, surprised. She peered over as well. "What's she doing?"

Zach glanced over at Blue. "Moe?" Blue nodded her head and Zach turned back to Claire. "Seeing if Moe is close enough to say hi."

"Oh." Claire nodded her head. "The Mosasaurus."

Zach nodded as he turned. He leaned his back against the railing. "Do you know how Ida was killed?"

Claire settled against the railing beside Zach. She turned to look at Zach and shook her head. "No, I don't."

"Owen told me." Zach lied. "Once he woke up. He started remembering parts after a couple days."

"Really?" She asked, sounding genuinely interested.

Zach nodded. "It was right after they found the nest." He explained. "Owen packed up the eggs and brought them to the lab. Ida followed them and she..." Zach paused for a moment and pointed out
across the plaza. "She was over there somewhere, in front of the science building. She picked up Owen and threw him over here somewhere." He said.

Blue snorted and nodded her head. She took a few steps away from them and snorted again.

"Over there?" Claire asked, watching Blue.

Zach nodded and Blue returned to his side as he continued. "The raptors are smart. And they work together really well as a team. Charlie was injured and she watched over Owen, keeping him safe. Delta ran off to find Rexy. Blue and Echo kept Ida busy. They fought her, even though they were much smaller than her. They're smart, aunt Claire," He tried to stress. "They hatched out a plan by themselves. They brought in Rexy and then tricked Ida into chasing Echo right to the edge of Moe's tank. Right here." Zach turned slightly and looked over the edge. "Echo jumped right in."

Claire's eyes widened. "Really? Echo jumped in?"

Zach nodded. "She swam to the edge and kept out of the way. She taught herself to swim because of the movie Finding Nemo."

Claire frowned and tilted her head to the side. "The cartoon? With the orange fish?" She vaguely remembered times when she overheard Owen say something about Nemo. Or catching a flash of it on a screen in the raptor paddock.

Zach nodded again. "She loves the movie." He smiled. "Nemo is her favorite. I bought her a stuffed toy of him when I found out I was coming here. She loves it and sleeps with it. And the way to punish her or get her to listen to me... is threatening to stick the toy in the oven."

Claire stared at him for a moment. "Seriously?"

Zach nodded his head. "If you would come and really spend time with them, you would understand."

Claire nodded a tad stiffly. "What about Ida?"

"Yes." He nodded. "Moe like... jumped out of the tank and grabbed Ida." Zach shrugged slightly. "That was it." He said. "Moe pulled her down and I assume ate her."

Blue let out a snort and nodded her head.

Zach continued. "But they came up with a plan and followed through. I'm telling you this... because maybe... you will understand. I have to get you to understand. These animals... the raptors... they aren't just ordinary animals. And Ida was made using the same DNA as them." He paused and tilted his head to the side. "Now... I know Ida didn't turn out well but..."

"Mistakes were made." Claire said, interrupting. "I know." She said. "The enclosure was too small, she ate her sister instead of bonding, she didn't have a family. Captivity and isolation..." She let out a sigh. "I didn't understand. Henry Wu kept so many secrets. And I let him. I didn't push him for the truth. I didn't regulate him. I gave him full control over creating the dinosaurs because... because I thought he was a trustworthy, honest, good man." She breathed out. "I never once doubted him."

Zach blinked and stared at her as she talked. He was a little taken aback by her honesty and guilt. "Uh... yeah. All that... and uh... the money..."

Claire looked at him and tilted her head to the side. "Money?" She repeated.
Zach nodded. "Yeah, all the money that was invested into Ida..."

Claire sighed and turned to look out at the plaza. "26 million."

"Yeah... well..." Zach was fumbling a bit. He had the whole thing planned in his head. Claire had interrupted and now he was off track. "The twins..." He started again after a moment. "They got Ida in them. But... they got the raptors, too. They understand, they communicate, they play and they... they imprinted on me." He said softly. "Like little ducklings, you know? Following around the first thing they see."

Claire didn't say anything. She sucked in a sharp breath and turned around. Her eyes fell on the dark shape rising slowly to the surface.

Zach continued. "They could still be scary." He said. "Just like Simon wanted. Owen and I..." He bit his lip and cleared his throat. "We uh... could work together with them. With Ida killing half the animals... you need all you have left to make attractions. And... we really think the twins are worth the effort.

Moe breached the surface. She lifted her head for a moment. Then rolled on her side and lifted her giant flipper in an almost waving fashion. Zach smiled and waved his arm wildly in the air. Then he cupped his hands over his mouth. "Hey Moe!" He shouted. Blue let out a loud squeal.

Clair pushed away from the railing. She smiled as she watched the aquatic dinosaur. She turned towards Zach slowly. "What are their names?" She asked.

Zach turned towards her, smiling. "Indigo and Minnie."

Claire wrinkled her nose a bit. "Really?"

Zach smiled and opened his mouth. But before he could reply, the sound of an airplane stopped him. All three looked up and their eyes widened.

Chapter End Notes

Just 2 more left! 8D Also I'm super tired. XD I should have waited until tomorrow to do this. But I didn't.
Sweet Home

Chapter Summary

It's a bird! It's a bat! No, it's a plane. For real. It's just a plane.

Chapter Notes

HAPPY BOOKS RETURNED DAY! Because after over a year (I think, I can't remember) Books is back! And really, this whole story is all because of Books! Because back when I started Raptor, and the original story had only like 11 chapters planned, Books kept telling me how awesome it was and that it needed to be longer. And that there should be a sequel. 8D Books seriously was my weird muse. 8D I actually cried today when they came back! LIKE SO MUCH! SO HERE YOU GO! LAST CHAPTER! (Before the short little fun epilogue.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Claire rolled her eyes as the small plane came closer. She spied the insignia on the side. "It's Simon's." She breathed out, leaning closer to Zach and Blue.

Zach glanced at Claire. "Did you know he was showing up today?"

Claire shook her head. "He didn't tell me." She looked back up. "What is he thinking? He can't land an airplane on this part of the island!" She quickly pulled out her phone and hit Simon's number as the plane slowed.

"Hello, Claire!" Simon said her name excitedly as he answered.

"Simon! What the hell are you doing?" She asked loudly. "You can't land a plane on the island!"

Simon let out a laugh. "It's a small plane. It's fine."

"Not on this side of the island!" She snapped, watching as the plane started lowering. "There's no runway!"

"We don't need one." Simon said.

"There's no room!"

"You have no faith, my dear girl."

Claire rolled her eyes and shook her head.

Zach smiled as he just barely made out Simon's voice. "Is it just him?" He asked.

"Who's that?" Simon asked over the line.
"Zach." Claire answered.

"Ah... uh... no, not just me today." Simon answered. "I'm dropping off your new head of the
dinosaur making lab."

Claire let out a sigh. "Simon... I wish you had discussed this with me. In private."

"He is qualified." Simon insisted. "And has been dedicated to the island nearly his whole life!"

"Yes, but..."

"No butts, Claire." Simon interrupted. "Give him a chance. He will be great. Alright, landing now."

He hung up.

Claire pulled the phone away from her head and quickly shoved it in her pocket. She breathed out
and shook her head. The small plane had touched the ground and slowed significantly. It turned in a
slow arc and started taxiing closer towards the plaza. "He is ridiculous!" She snapped, shaking her
head and starting forward, towards the plane.

Zach let out a laugh as he hurried to catch up, Blue following a step behind. "Who'd he hire?" He
asked.

"Tim Murphy." Claire answered.

"Tim Murphy?" Zach repeated. "Why does that name sound familiar?"

"John Hammond's grandson."

Zach's eyes widened. "From 20 years ago?"

Claire nodded her head. "Yes. He's a well respected veterinarian and geneticist. And he's been
studying dinosaurs since he was practically born. But he's applied to work at the island for years and
Henry always turned him down."

Zach smiled. "Few minutes ago, just pretty much said Wu was the villain here."

Claire tilted her head a bit. "True."

The plane had come to a complete stop then. The door opened and the ladder dropped down. Simon
was the first one down, waving at them. Tim was next and he waved with both arms. Then he
stopped and his eyes widened as he caught sight of Blue, standing so calmly beside the two humans.
Simon laughed and clapped the excited man on the back. "Don't be nervous." He leaned closer to
say into Tim's ear. "Show respect and talk to her like she's human." Then he turned back and waved
again.

"Mr. Masrani." Claire greeted as she lifted her hand to wave. She stepped towards them and held her
hand out to Tim. "Claire Dearing." She introduced herself.

Zach and Blue hung back as the adults introduced themselves. Blue stretched her neck out and her
nostrils flared. She tilted her head to the side and then turned and nudged her nose against Zach's
arm. "What?" He asked.

"Zach! Blue! Come meet Tim!" The man said excitedly.

The pair turned their attention back as Simon waved at them. Zach rolled his eyes and shook his
head as he started forward, Blue right beside him again. "It's not me he wants to meet." Zach glanced
sideways at Blue, who's eyes were still on the plane. Zach frowned slightly, wondering exactly what she was so focused on. He wondered if planes made her nervous or something. He wasn't exactly sure if she'd ever seen one before. But Zach looked back at the man who was a couple inches shorter than him. He stepped up closer and smiled. "Hey."

"Zach is Claire's nephew." Simon explained. "He became pretty close with the raptors during his visit. He offered to stay and help when Owen was injured."

Tim nodded slowly and reached out to shake Zach's hand. "Nice to meet you, Zach..."


Tim tilted his head to the side and nodded. "So he was the one."

Zach shrugged. "Too long for me." Gray had tried a few times, to show Zach the diagrams Tim had sketched of the different dinosaurs and wrote about behaviors he observed. The basics he understood. But Zach didn't have the patience to sit down and read everything.

Simon smiled as he crossed his arms. "That will have to change." He said. "Lowery mentioned to me about you going to college? For some advanced zoology degrees so you can work for me?"

"For me." Claire corrected.

"And you work for me." Simon countered.

"Really?" Tim asked, looking at Zach. "If you need any help or references, let me know. Owen's told me about the work you've done with the raptors in his absence."

Zach's eyes widened slightly. "He... uh... has?"

Tim nodded. "He's shown me pictures of the prosthetic you created for... Charlie, right?"

Zach nodded. "Yeah." He breathed out and smiled. "We're working on a better one at the moment. Simon's got an engineering friend who's making something fancy. Something to give her better range of motion and control. And hopefully eventually, more aesthetically accurate."

Blue, oddly enough, was forgotten as the humans started to talk. Zach had stepped away from her. But it wasn't his fault. He didn't have her sense of smell. And she couldn't communicate with him well enough to tell him what she had realized the second the plane door opened. And he was suddenly on the steps, walking down. For the moment, Blue forgot about the talking humans, just as they had about her. She zipped off towards the plane and didn't stop until she bumped her head against the man standing and smiling. He threw his arms around her neck and hugged her hard against his chest. "Hey, Blue."

Zach turned. Even standing the 15 or so feet from the plane that they were, Zach heard his voice. Clear as if they were right beside each other. And his breath caught in his throat and for a moment, he couldn't breathe. Owen was standing there, at the base of the plane ladder. He was wearing fancy slacks and a button up shirt, looking like Simon had dressed him. And he was smiling. Zach wanted to yell and scream at the man, for not telling him, for not warning him. Because Owen was standing there, looking perfect! And Zach was standing there, in stupid Jurassic World clothes that were dotted with dirt and grass. He'd attempted to brush himself off before he left to meet Claire. But he honestly hadn't cared that much. And his hair! Had he even looked in a mirror that day? He was pretty sure the answer was no. Life just wasn't fucking fair!
Owen's eyes were on Zach. And he was still smiling. He shoved his hands in his pockets and rocked back on his heels for a moment. Blue shook her head and let out a snort. Then she turned sharply, smacking Owen in the back of the legs with her tail. He turned slightly and glared at her. He stuck out his tongue and started towards the group.

Zach wanted to run. He wanted to run and fling himself at Owen and jump into the Alpha's arms. He lifted his foot, fully intent on doing just that. But he stopped himself. It was probably the single, hardest thing he'd ever done! Because he couldn't, not in front of the people standing just beside him. Who still hadn't seemed to noticed. Claire, Simon, and Tim were all so deep in conversation. Zach couldn't hear them, could barely see them out of the corner of his eyes. All his attention was on Owen, who was way too slowly strutting towards them, like he hadn't a care in the world, like he hadn't been nearly killed and in a coma and just simply gone for weeks! And Zach just wanted to slap that smug grin off his face! Or punch him! Punching him sounded really good to Zach right then! For not telling him! "Hey Owen!" He called loudly, lifting his hand to wave lamely. "Welcome home!"

That did the trick. Claire's attention was pulled away from Tim and Simon. She turned slightly and walked around the small group, practically running to meet the man. Then she surprised everyone, including Owen, by throwing her arms around him and hugging him tightly. Owen staggered back a moment from her momentum. He fumbled before he quickly found his balance and awkwardly wrapped his arms around her in a hug.

Zach stared, glared was probably a more adequate term, while Claire continued to hug his Alpha. For a really, really, obscenely long time. Because Claire was touching what was his. She was pressed against his man. And Zach couldn't just run up and pull her off by her hair. Equal parts because she was his aunt, Owen's boss, and the fact that his and Owen's relationship was very much secret. So Zach just continued to glare for a moment longer, making sure Owen saw.

Owen finally detached himself from Claire. He stepped back, scratched at the back of his head, and smiled awkwardly. "Well... uh..."

Claire collected herself quickly and straightened up. "Sorry. Right. Welcome back. You were missed and uh... I'm... I'm really glad you're okay." She stumbled over the words a bit and let out a sigh. "I'm sorry. Just... it's been an emotional twenty-four hours." She rubbed at her forehead for a moment.

Owen let out a laugh and nodded.

"Plus, you're an ass for not letting me know you were coming back today." Claire added, smacking him in the arm. Then she turned and pointed at accusing finger at Simon. "You, too!"

Simon quickly held up his hands. "Owen said I couldn't!" He said loudly, passing the blame. "He said it would be a fun surprise."

Zach glanced at Simon but when the man finished, he was once again glaring at Owen. Because yeah. Punch. To the nose. Sounded great. Zach watched for a moment as Claire stalked back towards Simon and Tim, ranting about something. Zach was hardly paying attention. Because Owen was smiling at him again. Zach could feel his glare melting. Because honestly, as annoyed as he was, he wasn't actually angry.

"Hey kiddo." Owen said easily and lifted his arms. "You gonna hug me, too?" He tilted his head to the side.

Zach, again, wanted to run. Just as Claire had. Which was so not fair! But instead, Zach rolled his
eyes, feigning annoyance and stepped closer to Owen. He wrapped his arms around Owen and the raptor trainer held him close and lifted him off the ground. For a moment, Zach buried his head against Owen's neck and he felt Owen do the same. Zach wanted to wrap his arms around Owen's neck and his legs around the man's waist and he wanted to trail kisses up his neck. But he didn't. And Owen set him back down and stepped away. And Zach was back to glaring. Because it just wasn't enough!

"Damn." Owen breathed out after a moment. He lifted his hand and ruffled Zach's hair. "Did you grow a few inches since you were here in the summer?"

Zach ducked away from his hand and batted him away but he was smiling. "Maybe." He answered. Honestly, he hadn't been paying attention.

"You look like you're about as tall as me now." Owen said.

Zach straighten up a bit and smiled.

"He is." Simon said, looking over at them.

"Yes, you have grown." Claire smiled.

Zach rolled his eyes and crossed his arms. He slouched slightly, not wanting to be the center of attention. "Like you really noticed." He mumbled out. Then his eyes widened. He hadn't actually meant to say it out loud.

Claire had just laughed and nodded. "You're right. I didn't notice."

Owen laughed as well. "And did the gift shop like throw up on you?"

Zach turned back to glare at him. He lifted his hand and flipped him off.

"This is great!" Simon said, clapping his hands together. "And I wish I could stay longer. But I need to get going soon. I have an investor's meeting back home, later today. Zach, are you ready to go?"

Owen and Zach both looked over at Simon, surprise on their faces. "What?" They both said together.

Simon nodded. "Yes. Now that Owen's well and back, he can resume his job taking care of the raptors. We really appreciate the work you've done in his absence, Zach. But I really need to get you back home before your parents cause me problems."

"But... I... uh..." Zach's brain stumbled over his words as his heart screamed at him to shout no. Because no! There was no way he had to leave! Not now! NO! He wasn't ready!

Claire let out a sigh and nodded her head. "Zach, Simon's right. You've done amazing work here and what we discussed, I understand. The twins will be safe here."

"Twins?" Simon asked.

Claire nodded. "I will explain later, when you have time to call."

"Fantastic!" Simon said excitedly. "I can't wait!"

"Bye!" Zach blurted out the word. "I need to go back to the trailer and say bye to the raptors!"

Simon nodded his head quickly. "Yes, I think we have time for that." He nodded his head again.
"Yes, that will give me a chance to pop in and say hi to Lowery." He turned to Claire. "I assume he's still here."

Claire smiled and nodded her head.

"Owen has to come with me!" Zach said a bit too loudly and quickly. He tried to keep the desperation out of his voice. "I have to introduce him to the twins!"

Simon nodded his head. "Yeah, that's fine."

"It's his home." Claire added.

"Great! Zach, we will meet here in an hour." Simon turned and the three started towards the plaza, talking and laughing.

Owen stepped up beside Zach and bushed his shoulder against him. Zach sucked in a breath and refused to look at him as they followed a few steps behind the rest. Blue fell in step on Zach's other side. They didn't speak as they walked past Moe's lake and the fountain. Zach steered their small group towards the jeep. He climbed into the driver's seat automatically and pulled the door shut. Blue hopped in the back and Owen climbed in the passenger's seat. Zach gripped the steering wheel tightly with both hands and he felt tears in his eyes. "Zach..." Owen's voice was barely a whisper.

"Not fucking fair." Zach breathed out.

Owen glanced around quickly. But there was no one close to the parking lot. He reached over and placed it on Zach's knee. He squeezed slightly. "Just drive."

Zach blinked and stared at the steering wheel for a moment. He leaned to the side to pull the keys out of his pocket. Then he quickly started the jeep and drove off the lot. The drive to Owen's trailer was silent. Zach could feel the man's eyes on him, just as easily as he could feel the hand still on his knee. But he couldn't say anything. He waited weeks to be with Owen again. There was so much he wanted to say and do and it just wasn't fair! He pulled the jeep to a stop outside the bungalow, put it in park, and turned it off.

"Blue, go get your sisters." Owen said. Blue nodded her head and jumped out of the jeep. Owen turned slightly in the seat. He lifted his hand off Zach's leg and touched his arm. "Zach..."

Zach wrenched away. He opened the door, slipped out, and slammed it shut. He just couldn't right then. He stalked towards the bungalow. He'd gotten to the bottom of the steps just as the door banged open loudly and Echo zipped past. Delta and Charlie were a few beats behind her. The twins popped out, Blue just behind them. Zach looked down at them and they looked up at him, their eyes wide and curious. And it hit him. He wasn't only being torn away from Owen and the raptors. He was being torn away from the I-Rexes! And they were being torn from him! He'd been with them from the day they were born! They only knew him! How the hell was he going to explain to them that he was leaving? That mom was leaving? His eyes widened slightly. He was leaving! Now! When was he going to come back? Would his parents let him come back? Would Claire? After everything he pulled to get there... he was certain to be grounded clear through college!

"Zach." Owen said hello to all the raptors and wrestled a bit on the ground with Echo and Delta. He'd scuffed up the way too fancy clothes Simon had dressed him in. But it felt good! And then he looked up and saw Zach just standing on the porch. He rushed over, the raptors right behind him. Owen stepped up and reached out to touch Zach's arm. "Hey."

Zach pulled away from Owen again. He stepped around the twins and turned. "There's the twins."
He breathed out.

Owen glanced down at them and smiled. Then he knelt down in front of them. "They really have gotten big." He said, shaking his head. "When I was last here, you were still tiny eggs." He said, holding up his hands and cupping them, like he was holding an egg. Indigo let out a chirp and Minnie answered with a few of her own. Owen smiled and nodded his head. "Yeah, that's me!" He said and Blue let out a chirp and shook her head.

"What?" Zach asked.

Owen straightened back up, still looking down at them. "Box dad."

Zach started to smile but it fell quickly into a frown. Why did he have to leave this all behind? It was weird. He couldn't imagine his life without them anymore. And yet, it hadn't been that long! How was he going to go back to going to school and doing homework and chores? Zach turned and wiped at his eyes. He couldn't do this...

"Zach." Owen said the name again. He glanced over at Blue and then back at the rest of the raptors behind him. "Can you girls take the twins and... hang out a bit? Out here? Let me talk to mom alone."

Echo bounced a bit excitedly that dad had said mom. She let out a squeal, turned, and ran towards the ruined debris of the grass pile and started jumping around. Blue let out a snort and moved closer to the twins. She chirped at them and nudged them gently with her nose. Then she headed down the stairs and they followed. Blue led them after Echo and the other two raptors joined.

Owen turned and walked slowly up the stairs towards Zach. He reached behind the kid to open the door. Then he steered Zach inside.

Zach didn't put up a struggle. But once inside, he looked around and threw up his arms. "It's a mess!" He snapped. "I didn't get to clean or do anything because you didn't tell me!" He turned sharply and pointed at Owen. "You didn't tell me and everything is wrecked!" He whined loudly. "And now I have to go home and it's not fair!"

Owen smiled. He stepped closer and lifted his hands to cup Zach's face. His thumbs brushed Zach's cheeks and he watched as the angry brown eyes softened and filled with tears.

"I don't want to leave." Zach whispered out. Owen smiled again. He pulled Zach's head down an inch and leaned up to plant a soft kiss on his forehead. Zach pulled Owen's hands off and wrapped his arms around him. He buried his head against Owen again and hugged him tightly. "Just got you back." He mumbled against Owen's shirt. "Don't wanna let you go!"

Owen breathed out. He understood the feeling. Because it was mutual. He wanted to never let Zach go. He wanted to just hold him forever against him. Because Zach felt so right in his arms. Owen held him tighter and for a moment, just breathing in Zach's scent. "Zach." He said softly after a moment, still holding him. "Come on, sweetie. It'll be fine."

"No it won't!" Zach whined.

Owen let out a soft laugh as he untangled them and pulled away. He ran his hands down Zach's arms softly. "Did you really think you could just stay?"

Zach looked down at the ground and shrugged slightly. "I guess I didn't really think about it." He admitted softly. "I didn't really let myself think about it. I made up the college shit to make my mom happy and keep them off Simon's back about the whole sorta kidnapping thing... but..." He sniffed.
"I guess... I thought I'd have more time."

"We'll have all the time in the world." Owen said, moving closer. "One day." He leaned forward and touched his lips to Zach's. It was bittersweet. Finally reunited only to have to be separated again. But, Zach decided then, he wasn't going to let that spoiled their last few minutes together. He pulled himself closer to Owen and fist his hands in the Alpha's hair. Zach parted his lips and Owen's tongue touched his, licking into his mouth. And it felt so good, so right as their mouths moved together.

Owen pulled away first, flushed and breathing heavily. Zach smiled and tilted his head to the side. "Too outta shape to kiss me?" Zach asked, his voice flirty.

Owen cocked an eyebrow for a moment. Of course he wasn't. But he shrugged slightly. "I've been trapped in a hospital bed for a couple weeks."

"Poor baby!" Zach reached for him again, pulling Owen against him. He pressed tiny, sweet kisses to Owen's lips. Then trailed over his jaw and down his neck. Owen wrapped his arms around Zach and spun him around. Zach let out a giggle as he moved with him. "What are you doing?"

"Someone promised to dance with me when we were on the same continent." Owen stated.

Zach rolled his eyes and let out another giggle. "I recall saying maybe." Owen started humming as he pulled Zach close and started swaying. Zach sighed happily in that moment, deciding again to block everything out but Owen and that very moment. Swaying back and forth together, in the half destroyed trailer. Owen's humming grew louder and it seemed to be rumbling from his chest. Zach placed his head on Owen's shoulder and closed his eyes. "What exactly are you humming?" He asked as they swayed. The melody was slow and pretty. But he didn't recognize it, assuming it was something and not just Owen making random sounds.

Owen let out a soft chuckle as he stopped for a moment. Then he opened his mouth and started singing softly. "Like strawberry wine and seventeen. The hot July moon, saw everything. My first taste of love, oh bittersweet. Green on the vine, like strawberry wine."

Zach lifted his head. He still danced slowly with Owen as he pulled away enough to look at the man. Man, he really had grown over the start of the school year, hadn't he? He could actually look Owen in the eyes. "What the hell are you singing?"

Owen smiled as he grabbed Zach's hand and actually spun him around. Zach rolled his eyes twirled for a moment before encircling his arms around Owen again. "Strawberry Wine." Owen answered. "It's an older country song."

Zach frowned slightly. "Why?"

Owen shrugged. "First song that came to mind."

"Seriously?" Zach stared at him for a moment. "The first song we dance to is about wine?"

Owen shook his head. "No. It's about a seventeen year old girl, falling in love for the first time with an older guy who worked on her grandpa's farm."

Zach blinked at him. "Are you calling me a girl?"

Owen smiled and continued to sing, "I still remember... when thirty was old..."

Zach let out a laugh. "Thirty is old, you goober."
"Fine!" Owen breathed out, shaking his head. "How about... that ABBA song? You are the dancing queen!" He sang even louder that time. "Young and sweet, only seventeen! Dancing queen, feel the beat from the..."

"STOP!" Zach snapped. "Go back to the wine song!"

Owen let out a laugh as he started singing *Strawberry Wine* again. Then they twirled around the tiny space again. Owen dipped a slightly protesting Zach. And when Zach tried to do it back, he stepped on a pillow that had fallen off the nest and slipped. Then fall down, landing right in the center of the pillownest. Zach wanted to be annoyed. The whole thing was ridiculous. Dancing to nothing and tripping and falling into a pile of pillows and blankets. But Owen let out a giggle and pulled Zach down against him and Zach joined in. Zach laid his head on Owen's chest and Owen ran his fingers though the brunette's hair.

Owen started humming the old country song again and they laid there like that, as several minutes ticked by. But all too soon, Zach sighed and pulled away. Because he knew if he didn't get up right then, he never would. Because he just wanted to lay there with Owen forever. He breathed out again and looked away. "You'll uh... you'll take care of the twins?" He asked softly.

Owen sat up beside him and nodded his head. "Yeah. Of course. You don't have to ask."

Zach didn't. He knew that. He just wanted to hear it. "You'll explain, right? Somehow?"

Owen nodded again. "I'm sure Echo will help."

Zach smiled sadly and nodded. "Yeah, she will." He had no doubt about that. He sniffed and rubbed at his eyes and prayed silently that he wasn't going to cry again. He stood up quickly and glanced at the computer. "We can still like... video call, right?" He asked. "So they can see me and not forget me?"

Owen stood up quickly. "Of course! Zach." He reached for Zach's hand and held it tightly. "Nothing's gonna change. I promise. You'll just... not be here. Like I wasn't here. We're just... switching places, right?"

Zach tilted his head for a moment. "Yeah, I guess."

"Oh. Here." Owen reached into his pocket and pulled out Zach's cell phone and charger. "Thanks for letting me borrow it."

Zach sighed as he took the phone. He held it for a moment. It was still warm. He quickly wrapped the charger cord around it and shoved it in his pocket. He pulled out the crappy phone Claire had given him. "This is the shit thing Claire gave me. But it can't do shit."

Owen grabbed it from Zach and then actually tossed it over his shoulder. "Simon bought me a new phone." He said with a smile. "Got it all hooked up and shit. Same number."

Zach's eyes widened. "Really?"

Owen nodded. "He bought me a ton of stupid shit before he actually let us on the jet. Probably grateful I didn't try to sue or something. Since his dino tried to eat me."

Zach smiled and nodded. "Probably."

"I think it's with Tim's luggage." Owen mused as he tilted his head to the side. "I will text you when I find it."
"You better."

Owen grabbed Zach's hand again and tugged him back towards the door. "Come on. Better get you back to the plaza."

Zach's bottom lip jutted out in a pout. "I dun wanna!" He whined loudly. But he let Owen pull him out the door and down the stairs. Then for nearly ten minutes straight, all the girls were all over him. Blue had explained to them what had happened with the other humans. They knew now that Zach was leaving. And while Echo had been the loudest about it, they all had let out whines and sad chirps. And Zach had hugged each one. Because he was going to miss seeing them every day and taking care of them.

"Come on." Owen said, pulling on Zach's hand once again, this time towards the jeep.

Zach took one last look at the raptors and the twins. They were all standing together, watching him. Echo was bouncing and it made Zach smile. He lifted his hand and waved. "Don't worry!" He called. "I'll be back!"

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for sticking with me for part 2! I really hoped you enjoyed it! And yes, there is a part 3! (It will involve dates! 8D) I hope to see you there for it! I LOVE YOU! ALL OF YOU!
He agreed to this. Why had he agreed to this? Wait... had he actually agreed? He couldn't remember agreeing.

"Because you're a vital part of Team Raptor!" Owen had said. "They even gave you a nickname! Mole!"

Owen had tricked him! That was the only thing that made any sense. Owen had tricked him and that's why he was sitting at the counter in Owen's trailer, staring at the sleeping, tiny I-Rex twins who were curled up in the pillownest. Lowery took a deep breath. In and out. He could do this. Sure he could! He was part of the Team! Lowery rolled his eyes and shook his head. What a load of dinoshit! He wasn't really a part of the team. Not like Owen. Or hell, not even like Zach! Zach wasn't part raptor! How did he fit in so well? Was it just the fact that he was maybe dating Owen? Lowery couldn't do that. Well... he could. He wasn't exactly gay. But he could admit that maybe he had a tiny man crush on Owen. But the guy was just so awesome! And maybe taken.

So no. Lowery wasn't like Owen or Zach. He wasn't a real Team Raptor member.

A tiny, while tail moved. Just a tiny, little flutter.

Lowery held his breath and didn't move. Please don't wake up! Please don't wake up! Please don't wake up! Please don't wake up! Whoever it was, he couldn't tell them apart, just snuggled up more against the other. They both stayed asleep. Lowery breathed out deeply and leaned back slightly. On the stool. That he forgot was a stool. It toppled back and Lowery couldn't right it. He fell back as the stool slipped out from under him. He landed on the floor with a loud thud. "Ow..." He rolled over slowly and came face to face with wide, pink eyes. Lowery's eyes widened and he attempted to scramble back away from them. But the place was small and there was no room and he hit the counter.

One of them tilted her head to the side and stretched her neck out. And Lowery closed his eyes, like he was certain she was going to attack. Which was stupid. He knew it was stupid. They were little. They were babies. Babies with large teeth. That were going to get bigger. Much bigger. Really fast. Because Zach had said they were growing faster than they should.

Lowery opened his eyes quickly. And felt stupid. They were both still just staring at him curiously. Probably because he fell off the stool. Maybe they were showing concern for him. Or thinking him stupid. Whatever it was, they weren't plotting to eat him.

Well... maybe they weren't. Lowery hoped they weren't. He really had no clue. At all.

There was a loud bang. Lowery literally jumped up to his feet. The twins just stared at him. One of
them looked back, towards the door. And Lowery heard the knock that time. He blinked. "Uh... that was the door." He said lamely. "Someone is knocking at the door."

The twin looking at him nodded her head. The one staring at the door chirped loudly, sounding excited. The other turned and joined in. Then together, they ran towards the door, chirping.

"Uh..." Lowery followed behind them. He frowned down at them and waved his arm. "Back up, back up!" He said. "I can't open the door if you're blocking it." The twins seemed to understand. They both took a step back and Lowery reached for the door. He pulled it open barely a couple inches before they were in the way again, trying to push it the rest of the way open. "Serious?"

"Oh!" There was a startled squeak.

Lowery got the door completely open finally and Claire stood, blinking at him. The twins let out squeals and dashed behind Lowery. "Uh... hi."

"Lowery?"

"Yes." He turned slightly and looked at the twins behind him. "Are they hiding from you?" He looked back at Claire.

Claire blinked for a moment and shrugged her shoulders. "I honestly have no clue."

Lowery nodded and tilted his head to the side. "Kinda cool."

Claire rolled her eyes. "Is Owen here?"

"Nope."

She looked disappointed and breathed out. "I've been trying to call him. He said he got a new phone with the same number."

"He's out hunting." Lowery said. "Probably... turned it off. Or can't hear it over the motorcycle." Owen hadn't taken the motorcycle. He hoped she didn't notice the motorcycle behind his and Owen's jeeps.

"Hunting?" She repeated. "Like in the jungle. With the raptors."

Lowery nodded. "Yep."

Claire breathed out and shook her head. "Well... what are you doing here?"

"Babysitting."

"Seriously?"

Lowery nodded again and then shrugged. "They're babies, aren't they?"

"I guess you have a point." She said slowly, glancing down at them again. "Uh... hi." She said, lifting her hand to wave at them. "Remember me?"

One of the twins let out a loud squeak. Then they both darted off and jumped into their pillownest. They ducked down, hiding completely from view.

"I guess that means yes." Lowery said with a smile.
Claire straightened up and sighed. "How are they okay with you?"

Lowery shrugged. "Owen told them to listen to me."

"And it worked?" She asked.

Lowery shrugged again. "Maybe."

Her voice dropped. "How are you okay with them?"

"Because I'm awesome." He said. "I'm totally just like Owen. We're all a team."

Claire raised her eyebrows and stared at him.

Lowery fidgeted for a moment. "Well... I can tell him you stopped by..." He trailed off.

Claire shook her head. "No, this is fine." She pushed past him, walking into the trailer.

"What is fine?" He asked, his eyes following her.

"I promised Zach earlier today that I would give them a second chance." Claire stated like it was an important fact.

Lowery tilted his head to the side. "What exactly... does that mean?" He asked slowly.

"That means I have to join the club, too."

"Clue?"

"The Raptor Club."

"Team." Lowery corrected. "Team Raptor."

"Whatever." She said, stepping closer to the next. She tilted her head to the side and smiled. "Cute."

She bent down and smiled at them. "Hello. Again." She said. "I think we got off on the wrong foot. Claw." She corrected. "Let's start over. I'm aunt Claire." She smiled and waved again. "Now, let's see... Minnie?"

The slightly smaller one let out a squeak.

Claire nodded and looked at the other one. "That makes you Indigo."

Indigo nodded her head, like she understood and was answering.

"Alright." Claire said, breathing out slowly. "Indigo is slightly bigger." She said. "And her eyes are a lighter pinkish color. Minnie's tail looks shorter. I will try to remember that." She nodded her head.

"Huh." Lowery had closed the door and stepped closer. He crossed his arms and watched.

Claire glanced over at him. "What?"

"I'd forgotten how Owen told them apart. It didn't occur to me to ask them."

Claire shook her head slowly. "That's why I'm the aunt and you're the babysitter."

Lowery frowned. "Hey!" He snapped. "I'm more than just the babysitter! I can be the uncle! Hey!" He knelt down beside her. "Uncle Lowery, alright?"
Claire smiled and let out a laugh.

"Don't trust her!" Lowery said, pointing sideways at her. "She's been body snatched!"

Claire rolled her eyes.

The two humans started bickering back and forth. The twins looked at each other for a moment. Minnie snorted and curled up, wrapping her short tail tightly around herself. She was still tired. Uncle Mole had woken them up and cut their nap short. She let out a soft whine and Indigo answered before curling up beside her sister. They both blocked out the still bickering humans and went back to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

This has been done for a couple weeks. But I wanted to wait until I could post the first chapter of part 3. 8D So I can tell you guys, I posted the first chapter of part 3. It's called, Raptor 3: Periphery. https://archiveofourown.org/works/16938024/chapters/39799914

Please [drop by the archive and comment](https://archiveofourown.org/works/16938024/chapters/39799914) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!