

Taking Wing by Clemency Crow

Excerpt

Enna looked down at his hands, which were clasped together above the quilt. Freya felt like she might have intruded on something she had no business with.

"I'm sorry," she said as she got up to leave, but Enna laid a gentle hand on her arm. Looking back, she saw that he wasn't angry, or even upset, but accepting. The smile had returned, although it wasn't as broad as it had been.

"Please sit with me for a while." The tone of Enna's plea was impossible to refuse. "I'm out of place. The nurses don't like having me here."

Freya smiled, knowing it was Enna's unpredictability that the Crows disliked, and he had no control over that.

"Now you're awake," she grinned, "you can get out of the hospital. Come for a walk with me."

Enna glanced around as if he feared something.

"They won't notice," Freya laughed, seeing that there were no nurses around. "Please, I need some company."

Uncertainly, Enna got out of the bed and put on the cloak which had been draped over the bedside table. He seemed a little unsure on his feet, so Freya allowed him to lean against her as she guided him out of the hospital room. Once outside, Enna drew in a deep breath and let out a sigh, ecstatic at being outdoors.

"You seem different, you know," he said as they wandered beneath the large ash trees.

"You only met me for a few brief moments," Freya laughed, but Enna seemed serious.

"I can get the measure of people relatively quickly. There's something different about you. Something's changed."

Freya didn't speak but gestured to the luxurious garden around her.

"It's more than that." Her companion shook his head. "It's something..."

"Darker?" Freya finished off the sentence as Enna trailed off. He made no attempt to disagree or reassure her.

"What happened?" he asked. Before Freya could face the question, she sat down on a seat carved out of stone, with something that resembled a crow as chair arms.

"I've seen things, Enna," she whispered, and the eagle looked intently at her. "There are things I'd never thought possible. But they are. I've always known there was this darker side to me, but I managed to hide it. Now I'm not sure I can."

"You know how I saw this in you?" Enna sat next to her. "It's what I feel inside of me all the time."

"There is this...shadow."

"That shows you how to do things? To protect yourself?" Freya nodded at Enna's question. "It is the same for all of us. Some are just more inclined than others."

"How do I stop it?" Freya could not help the tears that welled up in her eyes. It wasn't sadness, it was fear and desperation.

"You can't," Enna replied. "It's part of you."

Freya looked angrily at Enna. If he was so unwilling to help her, there was no point to this conversation.

"You learn to control it," Enna sighed, "but it takes time, years, to become successful. I still struggle, but only when I am not entirely in control of my actions. Like when I'm unconscious."

Yes," he added when Freya looked up, "I'm very well aware of the damage I did when I wasn't in control."

"I had a strange dream last night." Freya whispered, almost too afraid to confide in the eagle. "There was a man in the castle that wanted to hurt us. I dreamt I...I dreamt..."

Enna looked hard at her and, for a few moments, remained silent.

"Not a dream," he said at last. "That's what happened to me to begin with. I would remember my actions in dreams. That was until I realised that they were memories."

This is an excerpt from Taking Wing by Clemency Crow. This book is being published on 12th July 2019 and will be available from Amazon, among other booksellers.

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