

Chapter 111 No Time Too Loose

Edrick

Once again, the elevator took far too long to carry me down to the lobby. As soon as the doors opened, I shot out across the lobby and bolted toward my car, ignoring the strange looks from the concierge and maintenance staff. I climbed into my car and sped off in the direction of the Rogue district with only one goal in mind: finding Moana.

Traffic began to slow me down, but I didn't care. I broke a lot of traffic rules and would likely be pulled over later, but only cared about getting to the Rogue district in time. I could pay off the police and use my status to get out of any tickets, but I couldn't use my status and my money to save Moana if she was already dead.

I was so furious with Kelly. How could she do this? I trusted her to do the right thing and try to be a better person, and once again, she had failed me. I felt like such an utter fool for letting her trick me. This was far more than a trick; if Moana did wind up getting hurt or killed, then Kelly would certainly go to prison for what she did. I would make sure of it.

When I finally arrived at the entrance to the Rogue district, I came to a screeching halt alongside the curb and jumped out of my car without a second thought as to whether my car might get stolen or damaged. As I ran into the dark and gloomy district, I only had my goal of finding Moana

on my mind. To hell with my car. As long as I found Moana, everything would be okay.

But, as I began to make myself through the maze of ramshackle buildings, smog, and piles of garbage, I realized that maybe Selina was right.

Even as an Alpha, the Rogue district was an entirely different beast.

It wasn't unheard of for werewolves to come to the Rogue district and get lost by accident, never to be found again. No one knew exactly what happened to these werewolves that got lost, although there were plenty of ideas: trafficking, murder, drugs... The list could go on, and that was only for werewolves. For humans? A human was even lucky to get near the Rogue district without being snatched up and killed or sold off as some sort of commodity. A beautiful woman like Moana would be an easy target for Rogues. Even just the thought of the things that they would make her do here made me sick to my stomach, and compelled me to run faster in my search for her.

"Looking for somethin', handsome?" a woman cooed from an alleyway. I ignored her at first, but then stopped and turned to face her. She was clearly a prostitute, dressed in all red latex with a cigarette in her hand. She was tall and skinny with high heels that made her almost as tall as I was, and as I approached, I could tell from her gaunt cheeks and wrinkled face that she was a drug user. "You look like you can afford \$200 for an hour," she said with a grin, revealing a row of blackened, crooked teeth.

I grimaced and shook my head, but pulled out my wallet anyway. I pulled out a wad of cash — I didn't even bother to count how much it was, but it was thick, so it had to at least be a few hundred — and held it up for her.

The woman went to snatch it, but I jerked it away. "I'm looking for someone," I said, holding the cash out of reach. "A woman. Long red hair and freckles. And she's pregnant. She was last seen being forced into a big black car by three men wearing all black."

With a frown, the woman shook her head. “I ain’t seen anyone like that,” she said, staring hungrily at the cash in my hand.

I sighed and went to put the cash back in my wallet — but before I could, the woman suddenly spoke up. “Wait!” she said, dropping her cigarette. “I did see a big black car drive in here a couple hours ago. It went that way.” She pointed her long, bony finger down the street. When I looked at her, I couldn’t be exactly sure how truthful she was being, but I knew that she was my only choice right now. Finally, I tossed the wad of cash at her.

“Thanks,” I said, walking away while the woman greedily counted her money.

I kept going in the direction that she pointed. As I walked past the gaggles of meth heads and homeless people, I began to feel a new level of disgust for this city. The mayor was really allowing this? Sure, these people were Rogues, but... Most of them probably didn’t ask to be Rogues. I knew it was bad, but not this bad.

Either way, I couldn’t stop and think about it. I picked up my pace and began to run again, focusing on finding Moana even as the sky began to darken and rain began to pour. The only thing I cared about was her safety.

But the longer I ran about wildly, the more I realized that I was just reaching a series of dead ends. This district was massive; I would never find Moana like this. I cursed out loud as I ran, feeling my heart start to sink as I imagined Moana becoming one of the poor souls who got trapped here against their will. It made me so sick I thought I would throw up, but I still kept running, praying somehow that I would turn a corner at any moment and find her standing there. But I never did.

Until...

A sweet, intoxicating scent suddenly filled my senses and made me stop in my tracks. I sniffed the air, my eyes widening. I knew that smell. I had

experienced it once before when we were playing in the maze at the amusement park, and another time when I hugged Moana in the living room at the penthouse. Before, it had been weak and easily played off as perfume or the distant scent of someone else, but now it was far more powerful and intoxicating. It made my head reel, and I shut my eyes, stumbling back a bit. When I opened them again, I could feel that my eyes were glowing as my own wolf awakened. Somehow, we both knew that this was our mate's scent.

But that wasn't just it.

It was Moana. It was her scent.

I didn't have time to stand there and ponder how she had a scent as a human. All I knew was that I had to follow it if I wanted to find her.

I immediately began sprinting in the direction of the scent, letting it guide me down streets, around corners, and through alleyways. I didn't care if my frantic running gathered attention, or if I would exhaust myself, because I knew that Moana was the one who was creating this scent — and if she was the one who was creating this powerful, intoxicating scent, then I was certain that she was still alive.

When I finally turned the last corner, the scent became even more powerful. There, in the middle of the street in the dark and the rain, laid Moana.

Chapter 112 Special

Edrick

I ran with wild abandon through the winding, dark streets of the Rogue district as the rain began to fall even harder, not caring how soaked I got or whether I hurt myself running like this. As Moana's scent became stronger, I knew that she was close, and she was alive.

Finally, I managed to find Moana thanks to the powerful scent she was emanating, and I felt a weight lift off of my chest. But I couldn't be entirely certain that everything was okay just yet, because she was laying on the ground in the middle of the street, unconscious and curled into a ball. And she wasn't alone, either.

There were Rogues surrounding her. I prepared to fight them as I ran up to Moana, but to my surprise, they didn't seem to be going after her. Instead, they were backing away from her in fear, clinging to the walls of the buildings around them and hissing and snarling angrily. Somehow, she was repelling them; and I knew it had something to do with her scent.

"Moana," I murmured, feeling a wave of relief wash over me.

I ran up to her and crouched down, checking to see if she was alive as I muttered worriedly under my breath.

"Come on... Come on..." I whispered. I pressed my fingers to her neck, and let out a sigh of relief when I felt a pulse. Moana seemed completely

unharmd, as though she was just dumped here in the middle of the street. At least, that was how it seemed on the surface.

But as I crouched by her, her scent quickly faded. The Rogues, having regained their confidence now that her scent disappeared, began to close in on us from all sides.

“Hey, her scent’s gone!” one of the Rogues suddenly exclaimed in a disbelieving voice. One of the other Rogues chuckled, his face hidden by a large, black hood.

“Finally,” he said, showing only his grin beneath his hood. His teeth were black, and each of them had been filed into a point. It made me sick. “Dinner is served, boys!”

There was no other way out now, so I knew I would have to fight them off. I let out a sigh, feeling more inconvenienced than anything. I stood, letting my wolf finally take over, and felt myself shift.

The Rogues, however, shifted too. And there were three of them, whereas there was only one of me; but I was determined to protect Moana with all of my strength, and fighting had always been one of my strong suits. Without a moment of hesitation, I decided to do whatever it would take to protect Moana and our baby.

I felt my wolf’s power surge through me as I charged at the Rogues, causing them to scatter momentarily. One Rogue came up behind me and attempted to ambush me, but I knew he was coming and easily beat him off, sending him scampering away with blood dripping from his face.

Another Rogue, the one that had the sharpened teeth in his human form, tried to come at me from the side then. I felt him crash into me, knocking me off my feet and sending a bolt of pain shooting up my ribcage. I quickly swallowed the pain, jumped back up and lunged at him. We grappled for a few moments in a fury of snapping teeth and sharp claws before I finally got beneath him and kicked as hard as I could, throwing

him with even more force into the wall of one of the buildings. The Rogue whimpered as he laid on the ground, the brick cracked behind him from the impact, before he went limp.

That was two Rogues... But there had been three.

I spun around then to see that the final Rogue, a smaller and scrappier one, was hungrily sniffing at Moana. A low, thunderous growl rumbled in my throat as I stalked closer to him. At the same time, a loud lightning strike lit up the sky. The Rogue slowly lifted his head, his dopey eyes shifting back and forth. When he realized that he was the only one left and that his leader was possibly even dead, he quickly turned tail and ran like a coward without even a moment of hesitation.

For a moment, I just stood there, waiting for more Rogues to come. But thankfully, none did; any Rogues who were watching and considering trying to get to Moana likely realized that they wouldn't stand a chance against an Alpha, and we were alone again. Once I was certain that it would be safe, I approached Moana again and leaned down to nudge her with my muzzle. I was relieved once again to feel her flinch in her sleep. She was still alive. But there was no more time to waste; more Rogues could get brave soon, and Moana was already soaked from the rain. I had to get her out of here before anything else stood in our way.

Now that the Rogues were taken care of, I quickly shifted back then and scooped Moana up off the ground. The rain was coming down even harder now, and Moana was still unconscious. I saw her eyelids flutter slightly as I picked her up — she mumbled something under her breath, but it was incoherent, and I didn't have the time to be deciphering her half-conscious utterings. I didn't know exactly what happened to her when I found her. She needed to be seen by a doctor, not only for her own health, but for the baby's health.

Quickly, I began to run. The Rogue district was a maze, but I was somehow able to retrace my steps as I raced through the streets with Moana safely in my arms.

When we finally made it back to the car, Moana was a little more conscious.

“Edrick...” she whimpered, reaching out for me as I laid her down in the back seat. “I was so scared...”

“I know,” I said, swallowing hard. “It’s okay. I’m here.”

I then climbed into the driver’s seat and began to speed off toward the hospital. As I drove, I kept looking at Moana in the rear view mirror, petrified that she had gotten too hurt and that she would pass out again or even die at any moment, but thankfully she seemed okay — shaken up and exhausted, but okay. There wasn’t a scratch on her, except for a bruise on her arm where I assumed that one of Kelly’s hooded men grabbed her.

Moana’s scent didn’t return just yet. But my wolf, Eddy, had been able to experience the scent long enough for him to recognize exactly what it was.

“She must be our mate,” Eddy said, his voice echoing through my skull. “I know it from her scent.”

I couldn’t help but smile a bit as I drove. I took one last look at Moana, who was rubbing her head as she laid in the back seat, and felt relief wash over me. Even though I could already feel my own temperature rising from exhaustion and from the rain, I didn’t care. I was just happy that I found her.

“I know,” I replied, looking back at the road. I wasn’t at all surprised that Moana was my mate. Ever since I had met her, I knew deep down that she was too special to just be a regular human.

Chapter 113 Alone & Helpless

Moana

When the three hooded men came and ripped me out of the car, the only thing on my mind was Ella's safety. Even as they zip-tied my wrists, put a sack over my head and shoved me into a van then sped off with me as their hostage, I only thought about Ella. If anything happened to her, I would never forgive myself.

The men were speaking to each other in hushed tones, which I could hardly hear over the sound of the car speeding and my own heavy heartbeat.

“Where are you taking me?!” I shouted, struggling against the zip ties around my wrists.

“Shut up.” One of the men smacked the side of my head through the sack, causing me to see a flash of light and leaving my head reeling. It wasn't hard enough to leave any lasting damage, but it still hurt. It scared me and made me whimper out of fear, but even then, I kept prodding for answers.

“You'd better not hurt that little girl,” I snarled. “Her father will kill you.”

One of the men groaned. I couldn't see his face through the fabric over my head, but I could see his form moving in front of me. None of them said a word, causing my anxieties to skyrocket. When I began to struggle even harder, I suddenly saw the man's form lean toward me. He ripped

the sack off of my head as the van swerved around a corner, then leaned into my face. His teeth were black and sharpened to points, and there was a tattoo of some sort of gang symbol on his cheek.

“If you don’t shut the hell up, we’re going to make this a whole lot more painful for you,” he growled, his breath reeking of cigarettes and alcohol. “Got it?”

I slowly nodded, stifling a gag at his stench. The man rolled his eyes and put the sack back over my head. I could feel the van picking up speed as I wondered where they were taking me, and a million questions began to whirl around inside my head. Would I ever go home? Would I ever see Edrick or Ella again? Would my baby be okay?

As the men drove, I couldn’t help but feel like an i***t for falling for Kelly’s trap. Surely she planned this all along; this was all her doing. I knew she was up to something as soon as she started driving in the opposite direction of the hospital. I never should have let Ella come along, either; in fact, I should have stayed at home with Ella as soon as I saw how Kelly’s demeanor changed as soon as Ella appeared. I should have known that something was wrong, and I should have trusted Ella’s sixth sense. Clearly she knew that something bad might happen, and I should have followed her instinct. But I didn’t, and now I was not only in danger, but Ella may have been in danger, too. I could only hope that Kelly would at least do the right thing right away and take Ella home, rather than pulling some other trick on the little girl.

Suddenly, the van came to a screeching halt and caused me to lurch forward where I sat. I heard the sound of a door opening, and then one of the men grabbed me roughly by the arm.

There was no way for me to get my footing as he dragged me out of the van. My foot slipped, and I tumbled to the ground with a whimper — but he didn’t care. He just let me lay there, alone and helpless.

“Please,” I said, feeling myself begin to sob, “I’m pregnant. Please don’t hurt my baby.”

But the men didn’t care. Two of them grabbed me by either arm now and hoisted me up, dragging me along the pavement.

“Cut her ties,” the man with the black teeth said. “I like it when they fight back. It makes it more fun.”

While the men cut my zip ties, my mind began to race. What were they going to do to me? Suddenly, I heard Mina’s voice in my mind.

“I can protect you,” she said. “Let me borrow the baby’s strength so people can find you.”

“Will it harm the baby?” I replied.

Mina was silent for a moment before answering. “...Possibly. I’m not sure.”

“No, then,” I responded. “I don’t want to risk the baby’s life.”

“So you’ll just let them kill you instead?” she asked.

But by that point, the men had removed my ties and yanked the sack off of my head. I looked around wildly, taking in my surroundings: I was in a dark alleyway in the Rogue district. The sky was darkening, and the first droplets of rain were beginning to fall down on us. The entire place reeked of garbage. When I tried to see if there was anywhere for me to run to, I knew it was a futile effort with the men surrounding me. Even if I could have made a run for it, they would have caught me. Three huge Rogues against a small pregnant woman with no real werewolf abilities? They would have caught me and killed me within seconds.

I tried to back away, but I only bumped into a man behind me, who laughed and shoved me forward. His shove was so hard that he made me fall to my knees. I began to sob there as the men closed in on me.

One of the men shoved me again, forcing me down onto the ground. I screamed, but no one came, and my voice was raw and hoarse from screaming earlier. All I could see around me were the three men laughing and towering over me, licking their lips hungrily as they stared down at me.

This was it; I was going to die here.

“That’s enough,” Mina suddenly said. “I don’t care what you say. I can’t just let this happen.”

One of the men pulled his leg back to kick me, and then...

I wasn’t entirely sure what happened after that. I felt myself begin to lose consciousness as Mina borrowed both my power and the baby’s power. Whatever she did caused the Rogues to be pushed back, as though an invisible force was protecting me on all sides. The last thing I saw before I lost consciousness was the Rogues snarling and clinging to the wall, covering their noses.

After that, I fell unconscious again with only tiny shreds of memory. I felt the rain pouring down on me at one point, soaking me as I laid in the middle of the dark alley. I heard the sound of someone calling my name, and footsteps running up to me.

I heard the sound of snarling, fighting, growling.

And then, in a brief moment of lucidity as my eyes flickered open, I saw Edrick’s scared face and felt his arms wrapping around me. He lifted me off of the ground and held me, staring down at me with worry in his eyes.

Just before I lost consciousness again, I realized how safe I felt in his arms. That is the moment I knew that I really had fallen for him.

Chapter 114

Moana

Edrick rushed me to the doctor. I felt myself slowly returning to consciousness in the back of his car as he sped through the city streets. There was a pounding in my head, but thankfully no other pain, although I couldn't quite explain why I had gone unconscious. I thought that it had something to do with Mina borrowing mine and the baby's power to protect us, but I couldn't be exactly sure, and her own energy was too low after the ordeal to be able to communicate well.

Either way, I just hoped that the baby was okay.

"Where is Ella?" I muttered once I was able to speak.

Edrick shook his head from the front seat. "She's fine," he said. "She's at home." As he spoke, I felt a wave of relief wash over me. I was glad to know that Kelly hadn't done anything sinister to Ella, but at the same time, thinking about Kelly reminded me of the fact that I was fairly certain that this was all her plan.

"Kelly..."

"Shh," Edrick interrupted as he pulled into the hospital parking lot. "Don't worry about that right now."

Edrick parked, then jumped out of the car and came around to the back. I tried to sit up and get out myself, but Edrick quickly stopped me and

instead scooped me up and carried me to the doors. Being in his arms made me feel safe and protected, and the sense of love that I felt when he saved me in that dark, wet alleyway never faded.

I was still out of it as I heard nurses shouting. I felt myself being lowered into a wheelchair before being whisked away to get checked.

“Edrick,” I said, holding out my hand. “Don’t leave me.”

“I won’t.” Edrick reached out and took my hand, jogging alongside the wheelchair as the nurses pushed me through the doors to an examination room. He held my hand tightly, even when I was laid on a hospital bed and the nurses began to take my vitals and draw blood.

Finally, the doctor came in. The very first thing she did was perform an ultrasound on the baby to make sure that everything was okay.

Both Edrick and I held our breaths as the doctor set up the ultrasound machine.

“What happened?” the doctor asked, concern drawn across her face. It was the same doctor from before; the one who did my first ultrasound.

“It’s a long story,” Edrick said. His hand was still wrapped tightly around mine, and as he spoke he looked down at me with worry in his eyes. He gently reached up and brushed some hair out of my face as he gazed down at me.

During those moments, the look in the Alpha billionaire’s eyes was unlike anything I had ever seen before. It almost felt as though the cold, indifferent CEO died in that dark alleyway, replaced by only warmth and love. His eyes searched my face worriedly, only finally tearing away once the doctor began to examine my belly. But Edrick’s hands stayed intertwined with mine.

“Let’s see...” The doctor muttered to herself, pushing the probe around on my belly until a smile finally spread across her face. “There’s your baby!” she exclaimed, turning the screen so we could see the tiny little

thing growing inside of me. “Healthy as can be. We’ll just wait for those blood test results to come back, and then you can go home if you want. But if you’d rather stay here for the night just in case, we can prepare a more comfortable room for you.”

Edrick opened his mouth to speak, but I knew what he was going to say; he was going to suggest that I spend the night in the hospital, and I didn’t want to do that. I shook my head vehemently.

“I want to go home,” I said sternly.

“But—” Edrick began, but I cut him off.

“I’m going home.”

The doctor chuckled. “She’ll be fine, Mr. Morgan,” she said as she wiped the ultrasound jelly off of my stomach with a towel and helped me sit up. “I’ll go look at those blood test results right now. Be back in a jiffy.”

When the doctor was gone, Edrick’s shoulders slumped. He let go of my hands for the first time and passed a hand over his tired face, pacing over to the window and peering out worriedly. It was as though he expected the Rogues to suddenly show up and attack me again. When he turned back around, I could see that there were already big, dark circles forming under his eyes, and his face was ghostly white. He looked sick.

“Are you alright?” I asked worriedly. “You don’t look well.”

Edrick shook his head. “I’m fine. Just tired. That’s all.” His voice sounded gravelly and strained, as though he really was suddenly getting sick, but I decided not to pry any further. By then, the doctor had already returned with a smile on her face.

“The blood tests came back perfectly normal,” she said. “In fact, both you and the baby are incredibly healthy. You and the baby both seem to be very well taken care of.”

Edrick let out a huge sigh of relief. The doctor looked over at him and furrowed her brow. “I’d really appreciate it if either of you would tell me what exactly happened,” she said. “You missed your appointment, and now you show up and you’re both soaked and covered in mud.”

The Alpha billionaire opened his mouth to speak, but closed it again. He seemed too stunned still from the whole ordeal to speak, but I knew it was necessary for the doctor to know what actually happened.

“It was Rogues,” I said, feeling my voice shake and seeing the doctor’s eyes widen as I recalled the horrible experience. “I got attacked by some Rogues.”

The doctor’s face went pale. She was silent for a moment, looking back and forth between Edrick and I, before she finally spoke again. “Well in that case, you’re very lucky,” she said. “For someone who was attacked by Rogues, there’s hardly a scratch on you.”

I nodded, feeling a lump rise in my throat. Just then, I finally felt Mina’s presence for the first time since the attack. She felt weak after the ordeal, but was there at the very least. Admittedly, I was a bit mad at her for taking the baby’s energy to ward off the Rogues, but it had turned out okay in the end. Because of her, the Rogues couldn’t even get close to me for some odd reason.

As we drove home with strict orders from the doctor for both of us to rest in bed for at least the remainder of the day, Mina’s presence strengthened. Finally, she was able to explain what happened.

“Tell me what happened,” I said to her in my head. “Why were the Rogues so repelled by me?”

“I only used a bit of the baby’s energy to release a scent so Edrick could find you,” Mina explained. “Beyond that... I’m not exactly sure. In those moments, I don’t think it was only the scent. I think that the baby protected you from being harmed.”

As Mina explained what happened, I could feel butterflies begin to form in my stomach. I put my hand over my belly protectively as I stared out the window.

But then, I felt Edrick's hand slide over to my leg and hold it tight. I looked over at him to see him driving with his eyes fixed solemnly on the road ahead. And as I looked at him, feeling his hand on my leg and feeling my belly that contained my healthy baby beneath my own hand, I felt incredibly lucky that Edrick found me.

Chapter 115 Fever

Edrick

As I drove Moana home from the hospital, I was too stunned by everything that had happened to even notice that I was holding her leg until we finally pulled up to the curb. I paused for a moment, my eyes searching Moana in the passenger seat as my heart pounded in my chest, before I finally pulled my hand away and got out of the car.

While we took the elevator up to the penthouse, however, I couldn't help but want to be as close to her as possible. Knowing now that she was my mate, I didn't want to let her out of sight for even a moment.

"Moana! Daddy!" Ella exclaimed as the elevator doors slid open. She practically leaped up off of the couch and flew to us. Moana, with tears streaming down her cheeks, crouched and pulled Ella into a tight hug. "I was so worried about you," Ella cried into Moana's shirt. "I cried and cried all day!"

"It's okay, love," Moana said. "I'm okay, and so is your daddy. He's my hero."

Ella smiled up at me then. At some point, I would have to tell her the story of how her big, strong dad saved Moana, but for now, I needed to make sure that Moana was okay. Not only that, but I felt my own temperature beginning to rise. I had begun to feel sick from the exhaustion in the

hospital room, but somehow managed to hold myself together. Now, however, I felt like death.

And of course, the nanny noticed this when she looked up at me. So did Ella, but Moana quickly sent her away to be with Selina again, who was standing in the doorway with relief washed across her face and tears in her eyes.

“You look like hell,” Moana said, taking me by the arm. “You need to lie down.”

I shook my head, but Moana persisted and pulled me toward my bedroom. Even when she had just been through hell herself, she was still fully focused on others. I loved that selfless side of her, but at the same time it made me worried that she wouldn't get enough rest of her own.

When we made it into my room, I watched as Moana scurried over to the bathroom. I heard the bathtub start to run, and when she reemerged, she stared intensely at my dirty clothes.

“You should get out of those wet clothes and take a hot bath,” she said, placing her hands on her hips.

I couldn't help but chuckle, but even chuckling sent me into a coughing fit. “Don't you need to get clean, too?” I asked once I finished coughing. I gestured to her clothes, which were even more dirty and wet than mine. As I did so, Moana blushed and stared at the floor.

“You're right,” she said. “I'll go change and take a bath myself.”

She went to scurry past me then, but suddenly, my own instinct took over and I stopped her. Our bodies were close as she slowly looked up at me. Even now, covered in dirt and mud, she looked beautiful. I wanted to kiss her so badly... But I couldn't bring myself to do it. Not yet. I wasn't sure if I was ready to reveal what I knew about us now, and I wanted her to tell me about her lineage herself.

“Um... Stay with me,” I said quietly, taking a step back and averting my gaze as I felt my face go red. “You can use the bath first.”

Moana’s face turned an even brighter shade of scarlet pink. She opened her mouth as if to speak, but promptly shut it again and instead nodded. I watched then as she turned on her heel and disappeared into the bathroom, shutting the door behind her.

The primal part of me wanted to follow her. Now that I knew that she was my mate, I wanted to be as close to her as possible at all times... And I had to admit that I wanted her badly now, more than ever. But I knew that I had to control myself, so while she bathed I went to her room and retrieved her robe and nightgown for her. I returned just as I heard her stepping out of the bath.

Next, she made me bathe. I wanted to keep my eyes glued on her at every moment, but I knew that I needed to listen to her, so I did as she asked. And when I was finished, I stepped back out into my room in my pajamas and saw her sitting on a chair next to the bed. She had a worried look on her face, but I couldn’t get over the way that her red hair cascaded down over her shoulders in her robe.

Suddenly, however, I felt myself become weak. I staggered a bit where I stood, leaning against the doorframe as my vision began to flicker in and out.

Moana suddenly jumped up and ran to my side.

“What’s wrong?” she asked.

I shook my head, holding my hand over my face as I tried to steady myself. “I’m fine,” I replied. “Don’t worry about me. Worry about yourself.”

Moana frowned. I felt her come up beside me and put her arm around my waist just as I started to teeter again, and she somehow supported me while she led me over to my bed. She peeled the blankets back, then guided me onto the bed. I felt weak as the room spun around me; why now? When I

only wanted to take care of Moana, why did it somehow turn out that she would have to take care of me?

“I’m sorry,” I said as I felt her pull the blankets up around me. I shut my eyes, trying to shut out the feeling of the room spinning around me.

“Just rest,” she replied, almost sternly. “I’ll be right back.”

I tried to stop her, but it was too late. I heard the door open and close. As I laid there with my eyes shut, I felt horribly guilty for making her take care of me at a time like this... But at the same time, there was something endearing about it. To think that this kind, sweet woman was actually my mate brought a bit of a smile to my face.

And yet, I still didn’t understand it. I had thought that she was human all along. How could it be?

Suddenly, Moana returned. I cracked my eyes open to see her approaching with a tray, which she set down on the bedside table. On it was a cup of tea, a thermometer, and a washcloth in a bowl of water. I watched silently as she wrung out the washcloth and placed it on my head, then took my temperature.

Her eyes widened as she looked at the thermometer a moment later.

“Your temperature is really high,” she said, taking it out of my mouth. “Shouldn’t we call a doctor for you?”

I shook my head. “Werewolves get much higher temperatures than humans during a fever,” I explained. “I’ll be fine in the morning. Besides, you’re the best doctor I could ever need.”

Moana’s face turned red as she sat down on the chair beside me. I closed my eyes again, relishing in the feeling of the cool washcloth on my forehead, and felt my heart skip a beat as I felt her slender hand slip into mine.

There were so many questions I wanted to ask her, but there was only one that I could manage to get out just then.

“Will you sleep with me?” I asked. I cracked my eyes open to see Moana’s shocked face. “Please. I can’t sleep well without you.”

Moana was silent for a moment. I half expected her to refuse, but instead she stood and took the washcloth off of her face. Without a word, she walked around the bed and slipped her robe off before pulling the covers back and climbing in.

She laid on her side, facing away from me on the edge of the bed, just like she used to do during our old sleeping arrangement. But I wanted more than that; I needed to feel her. I rolled over and wrapped my arms around her and pulled her close, feeling her body pressed up against mine. She trembled a little at first, probably from her nerves, but quickly relaxed as I nuzzled into her hair.

And within moments, I felt myself slipping off to sleep. Just before I drifted off, there was one last thought on my mind.

Why did she have not only this powerful ability to make me sleep when nothing else worked, along with her intoxicating scent that made even the Rogues go away?