

The Last Spirit Wolf

by Elena Norwood

Chapter 26

Vera-

“But isn’t it a little, I don’t know, gross?” Asks Lucas when I’m done explaining the events of the Pyre Ceremony.

“It’s not gross, it’s za honor, Lucas.” I’ve had to point this out to them a few times already.

“Ok but did you have to pick up and keep all of them?” Asks Noah.

“I mean how did you want me to pick which ones to leave? That’d be a very big insult to all of the people that gave me their canines.”

“Well and how are they going to hunt now, toothless?!” Eli chimes in, and all three Lycans burst out laughing.

I roll my eyes; the joke isn’t even funny.

“They’ll grow back, obviously.”

They’ve all stopped laughing and are looking at me, so I explain further.

“I’ve done hundreds of canine removals, guys. If you lose a tooth in wolf form, it grows back.”

They’re all staring at me in disbelief. I smirk, turning my back to them to continue packing. How’s that for being the superior species?

We all proceed to pack what we will need for the trip back to the Lycan territory. The Lycans have decided to stay a few more days, conferring with our elders about what they have found out about the chimera.

The elders have dissected the beast and concluded that such a fantastical being was created purely by magic; when they opened up its insides, the beast was comprised of many gruesome body parts of all kinds of creatures. The light that was shining at the top of its head ended up being a mythical stone used in very ancient witchcraft, hence when it was cracked, the link to the magical source of its power was broken.

I, for one, need to make sure everything around the clinic will be running smoothly once I leave. After everything that happened, Violet has been named interim Head Physician, even though she's a nurse. She knows this clinic and its doctors like the back of her hand.

I'm on my way to see Dr. Owens now and check on his progress. I enter the physical therapy room and just as I suspected, he's already walking on his own.

"See?! This old man still has the strength of a youngling!" He declares triumphantly.

Sam is holding his cane to one side as Dr. Hartman overlooks Dr. Owens's recovery.

"Quite remarkable, I must say. At this rate, you won't even need the cane."

"Did I not tell you?! Oh!" He spots me, "Vera, come Jook! A little nick to the artery won't be enough to hold this old man down!"

"I didn't expect anything less." I smile and go over to him, watching as he takes a few more steps on his own. Dr. Hartman intervenes and grabs his arm.

"Ok, ok. That's enough for today. It's clear you're making a fast recovery but don't get ahead of yourself."

Sam passes the cane to Dr. Owens, who doesn't seem to want to take it but eventually relents. Even if he's already walking again, his young years have indeed long passed, and he is aware of it.

“Sam, it’s ok I’ll head back with Vera.”

With that, Sam takes off to her rounds and I go over to Dr. Owens, offering my arm for added support.

“You’re the only one I’ll accept this from.”

“I won’t tell if you don’t.” I wink at him as he places his hand inside my elbow.

We walk outside the pack house towards the inner gardens. Since he’s been in recovery, Violet and the other staff members barricaded his office so he couldn’t go in and work.

Once we reach the gardens, we sit on one of the benches in front of the fountain. The gardens are modest, but oh so beautiful. The fountain in the middle is made from green tiles, reminiscent of Jade Waterfall. There are hanging plants, benches, and all sorts of flowers adorning every corner.

“I’m glad you came to see me today, I don’t know how long until you guys start on your journey.” He reaches for something in his pocket. “I wanted to give you this during my farewell party, but well, I didn’t get the chance.”

“Oh. Dr. Owens, you don’t have to...”

“Vera, you can call me Michael. You know that.”

He’s always preferred I use his first name but, at least in the clinic, it feels too informal.

“This belonged to my wife,” he opens a little jewelry box, “It was given to her by her mother, who received it from her grandmother, and so on, you get the point.”

I’m looking at the opened jewelry box. Inside there is a dainty, gold necklace with what appears to be an emerald pendant.

“I don’t understand...”

“Vera, you know my wife and I... our Moon Mother never blessed us with a child... and then my wife passed away and nothing made sense to me anymore. Until I met you.” He clears his throat, the emotion getting to him, “Anyway, if we’d had a daughter, this would’ve been hers. My wife and I never had that luxury, but I did.”

I can feel my eyes rim with tears, I’m speechless.

“I can’t possibly take this, Michael. I’m flattered, I love it, and I love you, but I can’t... this was your wife’s.”

“And she’d want you to have it. Had she met you, she’d see in you exactly what I see. You are the daughter we never had.” He takes out a handkerchief and hands it to me, even though at this point we’re both tearing up.

This is goodbye for us, for who knows how long.