

## Mistake - 17

Driving slower than I'd like, I followed the directions coming from my phone. My head throbbed and a big part of me wanted to lie down and bury myself under blankets, but I couldn't. I had to put as much distance between me and Mike. With that in mind, I kept on driving even after I left Black Mountain territory. The plan was to not stop, even as night fell, but after a few hours my head hurt so badly, I could hardly focus on the road. I was nauseous and feverish. I needed to stop and take a breather. Once I was feeling better, I'd get back on the road.

After parking the car, I got out and sat at a picnic table. The cold rubber covered bench sent a shiver down my spine. I hunched up and leaned over, resting my head on my arm. And waited for the sickly feelings to pass.

I wasn't sure how long I had sat there when I heard someone ask, "Are you alright?"

Startled, I jerked upright. My head swam and my vision tilted as it blurred. Next thing I knew, the girl who looked about my age was by my side, pulling me upright back onto the bench.

I swallowed the acidic bile in my mouth and said, "Thanks, but I'm fine." The airy light tone of my voice didn't even convince me, so the look on her face that said 'right and I'm the next Beyoncé' was no surprise. I also realized when her eyes widened as she looked me over that I didn't change my clothes before I left.

"I think," she said, pushing a pink streaked piece of blond hair out of her face, "You should go to the hospital. That's a lot of blood."

Yeah, like hell was that going to happen. They'd call Mom and, not



understanding the situation, she would just take me right back to Black Mountain. "Nah, I'm good. I've seen a doc already." I pointed to my stitched up head then pulled at my blood stained hoodie. "This is nothing new. See, it's dried up. I just didn't have a change of clothes at the hospital."

"Yeah, I can see that," she said, still looking skeptical, and sat next to me. "But I also see you are not all right. You should rest or something."

I started to shake my head, but stopped when it throbbed. "No, I'm fine," I insisted. "There is a place I need to be. When I get there, I'll rest."

She nodded, clasping her hands together and placing them between her knees. "Right, uhm..."

"Brook."

"Brook," she continued. "Whatever this place is you're trying to get to, you will not get there today. Right now, you can't even sit up straight and honestly, you'd make Casper seem bronzed if he was next to you. You may have seen a doctor already, but you need to be checked on again, just to be safe."

To be safe? I couldn't help but laugh at that one. That was what I was trying to do. "Trust me..."

"Kara."

"Kara," I replied. "To be safe, I need to keep going." I stood, my legs shook, and the world tilted a little.

Kara put a hand on my shoulder. "I can't in good conscience let you get back into that car. If not for you, then for others. What happened if you crashed, Brook? You could hurt someone else too."



The air whooshed out of me as if she had sucker punched me and I fell back down onto the bench. Memories of the cop on our porch rushed over me and tears burned my eyes. Oh God, she was right. I could've... I could've sent a cop to someone else's door. Tears blurred my vision, and I slammed my eyes shut. I'd rather be dead before I was the reason someone lost a person they loved. "Okay," I said, defeated. "I'll go to a hospital."

In a very Harry like fashion, Kara put her hand on my shoulder. "It's okay, Brook. Everything will be all right."

Just like I did with Harry, I nodded, though I believed her even less than I did Harry. Instead of going to my car, I followed her to a dark green truck of some kind. Kara opened the door and helped me into the passenger seat. "I know the head nurse," she said, holding open the door. "She can cut through the red tape when we go to see her. No one has to know."

I stared at her, surprised. "Thanks," I said, hearing the uncertainty in my own voice. Why was she helping me so much?

With another bright smile, she closed my door. As she walked around the truck, I heard her on the phone with someone. When she got in the driver's seat, she offered yet another smile. "Okay, all taken care of. She knows we're coming and my boyfriend is going to take care of your car."

"Thanks," I said again, more than a little suspicious. I felt as if I had gone from the frying pan straight into the fire.

A half hour later we pulled up to the hospital, but instead of parking at the front of the building, Kara drove around back. Again, the sneaking sensation that I was heading right into a trap wouldn't leave me as I followed her inside. Through a maze of identical halls, Kara took me to an empty exam room. She made another call and after a few minutes, an



older woman joined us.

Like Kara, she offered me a bright smile. "Hello ladies. Thank you Kara and you must be Brook," she said, looking first to the other girl, then to me. "My name is Emily. Let's see what I can do for you today." After putting on a pair of gloves, she looked over the stitches. "Nicely done and they don't appear torn or infected," she said, then took a small light from her pocket.

After shining the light in my eyes which my head didn't like, and asking me to move my eyes there or here, or follow the light, she nodded. "I'd say everything looks as it should, but I would like to run some other tests to ensure the inside is as good as the outside."

"Uhm, okay," I said with a half groan. My head was not happy about the whole light thing.

"It may take a while for me to get you in, but I will try to make it as quick as possible. Until then we can turn down the lights and you can lie down, but please don't sleep until I have the results." Actually, laying down sounded great right about now so I gave her a thumbs up and laid down.

It felt like only a minute had passed when Emily tapped me on the shoulder and helped me sit up. "It's time. I'll need you to take off your hoodie and put this on," she said, handing me a thin, paper-like gown. "Do you mind if I help? I wouldn't want you to lose your balance or anything like that."

"Sure," I said, and pulled up my hoodie when I heard them both gasp. Embarrassment flooded through me and I lowered it back down.

"No wait. Let me look at them," Emily said.





"These have nothing to do with my head. They're just bruises," I said, realizing I had no explanation for them.

"Still, I want to examine them," she insisted before she helped me take off my hoodie. As she examined the bruises on my torso, her expression became angry. When her eyes turned an icy blue did I realized how right I had been with the frying pan analogy.

"You're a..." I breathed, unable to hide my terror, and pulled away from her.

"Easy, Brook," Kara said, rushing over to my side and catching me before I fell off the bed.

With a sigh, Emily nodded. "Yes, we are werewolves, but you're not in danger from us."

Not in danger? That was the understatement of the year. "I'm not going back," I told them. "You can't make me." I reached for my pepper spray and realized I'd left it in the car. Damn it!

"No one in this room or in this territory is going to make you go back to Black Mountain," Emily said.

"Especially after seeing those," Kara chimed in, dropping her gaze down to my stomach. "Ryder said they mistreated you, but..." she whistled and shook her head.

"You know Ryder?"

"Oh, I'd say so," Kara said with a smirk. "We've been friends since pre-school and this is his mom." Again, she used her chin to point at Emily.

My jaw dropped, and I froze and once more Emily sighed. "Kara, dear.



We're trying not to freak her out."

I asked with a meek voice, "What are you going to do to me?"

"Exactly what I said. I want to make sure you don't need further medical treatment. Once I have the results, we'll go from there."

Not sure if I should believe her or not, I asked, "And if I want to leave right now?"

Emily gave me a sympathetic grimace. "I'm sorry, Brook but it's my responsibility to ensure you're okay, health wise, and if not, do what I can to get you there." I expected that answer, but it still sucked. "This is not Black Mountain. You will not be treated the same here. I promise to do everything in my power to keep you safe."

I swallowed as I looked up at her. She seemed genuine, but I had no way to be sure. In the end, did it even matter? There was no way I could escape her and her pack. So my only response was a shrug.

With a sigh, Ryder's freaking mom said, "Let's get that CT Scan done."



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