

Relaxing Day Off

At the end of the night, Emmalyn and I closed up the shop. Auntie Tonya had been right, that was the most money we'd made all week. Apparently, Maya and Nixie would trade of the nights that they worked it so they could have a chance at the large tips. Maya made a few hundred dollars in tips.

We headed up to the apartment and I lent Emmalyn something to sleep in. We sat up for another hour or so talking about our struggles with the men who wanted us, our plans for our futures, and the team that was coming together to nd my beast.

"You know, you should do something to relax on your day off next week. Why don't you apply to go to the pack lands and gather ingredients?" Emmalyn suggested.

"I do love a good hike. Do you think it will be safe for me, considering how I react to shapeshifters?" I asked.

"It's not like the land is lled with them. I'm sure if you register the area you're planning on being in, they will make certain you won't run into any. You said it's worse when they're in their wolf forms, right?"

"Yeah." I nodded. "I get a little dizzy when they are in their human forms, except when I met Bellamy and Lucien. That was the only time I've ever fainted when meeting werewolves in their human form. They are super powerful." I chuckled.

"Rogues are a lot more connected to their wolf side, too. I think it will be ne. You should do it. A gathering trip will help with the chaos in your mind and the pack lands are the safest place to do it. They're well protected." Emmalyn told me.

"Alright. I have Wednesday off." I got up and pulled out my laptop.

Emmalyn helped me with the process of getting registered for it. She suggested some areas where I could nd good things. I included some of the more rugged places, I knew there were plants that only grew in that sort of terrain.

We put away the computer and went to bed. I was excited that the night had gone so well and that I had something to look forward to. I sent off a quick text message to Josh, letting him know that I was going to go gathering on Wednesday.

He was still awake, because he messaged back right away. I spent some time messaging back and forth. He told me he would be by on Monday with some things he wanted me to take with, so I wouldn't get lost or hurt.

I thanked him and accepted. I didn't have a lot for hiking and some gear would be appreciated. He asked about coming over the next day, but I turned him down. I wanted to spend the day working on replacing some of the potions and spells that had sold well during the week.

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After breakfast the next morning, Emmalyn asked about staying another night. She was planning to go get some stuff from her apartment, but wanted to stay away from her home for another night. I told her she should just let Queen Bellamy know, but there was only so much she could do.

"If he gets kicked out of the collective, he can still nd a way to sneak back in. I don't really know what to do. He can nd me if I move. I really don't want to leave. My whole family is here and I just started working with you. I really love the shop." She sighed.

"We could get the stuff together for a hiding spell. He wouldn't be able to even see you unless he knew about the spell. I can special order the ingredients." I offered.

"It could help. Maybe he would lose interest if he couldn't see me anymore. Let's do it. I want to be able to get on with my life." Emmalyn said.

I told her to go get her things. She could stay for a couple nights. It would be nice to cook for someone else and have something to occupy my mind so I didn't focus on the Steven issue or the beast.

She asked me to go with her to her apartment to get her things. I agreed. We loaded into my truck and headed out. Emmalyn gave me directions as I drove.

When we arrived, I went into the building with her. It was a fairly nice apartment complex. I was impressed.

"How can you afford this place?" I asked.

"Oh. I'm one of the witches who provides a service to the collective. If you work for them, you're eligible for a free place to live. You just pay utilities and extras. It's one of the perks of being part of the collective." She replied.

"That's cool. Do you know where the vegan market is? I wanted to do some shopping before I get to work." I said.

"I think so. It used to be a family market until a couple years ago. They were driven out by competition with bigger stores. That's the down side to the city growing. I'm pretty sure Amelia told me that it was a vegan market now." Emmalyn said as she unlocked the door to her apartment.

I stepped inside after her. It was very modestly decorated. There was a little love seat and a recliner in the living room situated around a coffee table.

On the wall were two large bookcases lled with books. There didn't seem to be a television or anything aside from the books for entertainment. I liked reading, but sometimes I liked to veg out to some movies.

Emmalyn came out of the back a little while later with a due bag. She gave a slight smile. I felt badly for her being forced from her home by an ardent suitor.

"Ready to go?" I asked.

"Yeah. Thanks again for letting me stay with you for a couple days. I can help with getting some of the spells and potions restocked today. Free of charge, of course. I need something to take my mind off all of this." She replied.

I nodded and we headed out. At the market, I was thrilled to see all of the different options. I stocked up on my favorite snacks and loaded up my cart with things for dinners.

My kitchen skills were limited, but they had some cookbooks that I browsed through and found one that gave me good options that weren't super intense to make. Most witches could cook, because it was just like doing spells and potions. I was good at fairly simple things in the kitchen because my focus outside of my workshop was usually pretty spotty.

I liked nding new things I could make, since I'd grown up picking around meats and eating a lot of salads. My family always balked when I tried new vegetarian recipes. I was thrilled that I didn't have that to worry about anymore.

When we returned home, Emmalyn helped me take everything up and she put her things away before coming to help me put the groceries away. She told me how much she looked forward to the dinner I was planning for the night. I was going to try and make those BBQ seitan sandwiches.

We went to the workshop in the back of the store downstairs and started getting to work. I'd done this with my family a lot, but I had never made potions and spells with another witch outside my family. It was actually fairly peaceful.

After a few hours of working, we went back upstairs for lunch. Emmalyn was looking pretty happy. I reheated some of the soup and added in some extra stuff. We sat at the table in the dining area and ate quietly for a while.

"So.... What's the deal with you and Josh? Is he your boyfriend?" Emmalyn asked.

I chuckled. "No. More like friends with benets. I don't know that I have it in me to deal with a boyfriend right now."

"Is that why he didn't seem jealous when those guys were dancing with you the other night?"

"Yeah. We aren't in a relationship that allows for jealousy. I don't belong to him and he doesn't belong to me." I told her.

"I wish I had it in me to have that sort of relationship with someone. I know witches have a reputation, but I've never been like that." She said with a blush.

"You don't have to bend to stereotypes. I'm like this because it's part of my personality. It doesn't have to be part of yours. I like you no matter what. I love that you've opened up to me." I smiled.

"I lost a lot of friends when Amelia came home with Finn and I didn't rebuke her. She managed to nd her soulmate all on her own. I would never disown my sister for nding her happiness." Emmalyn replied.

"They weren't really friends then. Everyone deserves love and happiness. I think it's really interesting that she is bound to a vampire. The goddess doesn't make mistakes. If she made Amelia and Finn soulmates, then they were meant to be. I thought they were really cute together." I said.

"They really are. Both are fun and irty. They both love the idea of traveling and not settling down. Mom and Dad are a little sad they won't have grandchildren from her and they're beginning to lose hope that I'll ever do my search. They're going to be so happy when I nd my soulmate." She told me.

"Are you planning to start a family right away?" I asked.

"I don't know. It would be nice to have kids while I'm still pretty young, but I've only just started my life. I guess it will all depend on what I decide with my soulmate." Emmalyn shrugged. "What about you? Once the beast is gone and you can nd yours, are you going to have kids?"

"One or two. Maybe wait for things to settle a little. With the help I'm getting, I expect to have the beast dealt with very soon. Then I can do my search for real and nd the man of my dreams." I winked.

"I wonder if your soulmate is ever not what you think you want. There are a lot of people who think they want something, but need something different." She said.

"I think, if he's meant to be with me, that will be enough. I'm really hoping the goddess gave me a man like your sister's though. I wouldn't even care if he wasn't a witch. A big strong man who dotes on me would be heavenly." I sighed.

Emmalyn got up and pulled out a bowl. She lled it with water and got a candle. She settled them down in the middle of the table.

"Did you ever play this game when you were young? Drop wax into the bowl of water and it will form in the shape of something your future husband uses for work."

I laughed. "I had friends who did that. None of them ever saw anything but a blob of wax."

"It's fun. Come on. Take the candle." She insisted and handed it to me.

Emmalyn lit the candle and we let it burn for a while. When it had a decent buildup of melted wax, I tipped it over the bowl of water. We looked at the shape it made.

"That looks like a claw." I sighed.

"Maybe he's an animal witch with a veterinary practice." Emmalyn suggested.

"Maybe. Your turn." I smiled and handed the candle over to her.

I shed out the little clawed wax shape and watched her pour the wax in. It looked like a blob of wax. I looked up at her.

"I have no clue what that is." She groaned.

"Maybe it's a cloud and your soulmate is a pilot." I offered.

She laughed. "I'm a total homebody, so that would be terrible."

"He could be a water witch who sees things in steam instead of dishes of water." I suggested.

"That would probably t me a little better. This is just a silly child's game though." Emmalyn said and blew out the candle.

I nodded. We spent the rest of the day making plans for the shop. I got an email that my trip to the pack lands was approved. Everything seemed to be going smoothly, but I wasn't fool enough to think it would stay that way.