

A Friend in Need

[Bellamy]

-Thursday early afternoon-

I marched through the pack house toward the guest quarters. Stanton had gone out for the bear version of a run, I guess you would call it a ramble, yesterday and gone straight to his room when he got home. I'd just heard from one of the omegas that he had skipped breakfast and lunch today, I was betting that he'd skipped dinner the night before.

In training this morning, Jean-Claude had beaten him in a match. That shouldn't have happened. Jean-Claude was still pretty far off from being able to beat Stanton.

When I reached his door, I listened outside of it for a bit. There was some clicking like he was typing something, but no other sounds. I wondered if he had slept at all.

I knocked on his door and waited for it to open. When it did, he looked like hell. He had dark rings around his eyes and a grumpy look on his face.

"Stanton, what's going on? I heard you haven't been eating." I said.

"I forgot. I'll make sure to come to dinner tonight." He replied and tried to close the door.

I stuck my foot in the door and pushed it open.

"That isn't good enough. I have enough to worry about without you going all stoic. You're not a member of my collective, but you are my friend and ally. Let me help with whatever's going on." I insisted.

"I just need time to do my thing. I got wrapped up in it. There's no reason for you to worry." Stanton sighed.

I pushed into the room and looked around. I knew he wouldn't ght back too much, I was pregnant and all males had an urge to protect pups. At least, all the ones in my home. I looked around and saw his laptop. It was doing computery things. I wasn't the best at tech stuff.

"What are you doing, Stanton? What's got you so preoccupied?" I pressed.

"I'm... I'm trying to hack into the collective's central server. You should be proud of it. I've been trying for hours and got nowhere." He replied.

"Why were you trying to hack the collective?" I moved to the computer and exited out of what he was doing.

I waited for his answer while I accessed the collective's mainframe and input my credentials. He didn't have to hack it. I trusted him.

"I found my mate, Baby Belle." Stanton answered quietly.

With wide eyes I turned and stared at him. He looked like a bashful little boy. Nothing like the condent man I'd known since childhood.

"Why didn't you tell me? She's a member of my collective?" I asked.

"I think so. She was on the pack lands. I thought she might be in the coven, but I hacked their computer last night and couldn't nd her. She has to be in the collective, Bellamy. If she's not, I might never nd her. I only know her rst name." He said.

"She's a witch?"

"Yeah. I followed her scent when I woke up, but hit a dead end in one of the parking spots on the pack land. The guards for the day had switched out by the time I got to them and the wolves here still don't trust me enough to tell me things like guard rotations. I tried hacking the pack's computer, but I had the same problem I was having with the collective. Dillon is really good at his job." Stanton chuckled.

"Of course he is. I wouldn't have someone working for me who did subpar work. What's her name? We can search it and I'll let you know how to reach her." I told him and turned back to the computer.

For some reason, men were always trying to do things the hard way. He could have talked to me when he came home yesterday and I could have had him back with his mate by now. I wondered why she left him, though. Maybe she had something important to do. Maybe she wanted to see if he would chase.

Witches and humans had odd mating habits. They liked feeling like prey. I didn't understand it. I liked being chased from time to time, but making your mate prove that they loved you by hunting you down was just silly.

"Clover. Her name is Clover." He said.

I froze. There was only one Clover in my entire collective. I typed in her name and pulled up her picture.

"Clover Harrison." I turned to him.

He looked at the screen and his face lit up. It was really that Clover. This wasn't good. Maybe she couldn't handle being around him because of the whole dizziness and fainting thing. Maybe she was scared because of the beast issue.

What if Stanton was the beast she was afraid of? What if she wasn't ready for a relationship so soon after what happened back in her coven? She might reject him.

"Stanny-bear, sit down. I need to talk to you about her." I said softly.

Stanton looked confused. He looked at the screen one more time, then sat on his bed. I walked over and took his hands. They were huge compared to mine. Stanton was over a foot and a half taller than me. Even with him sitting, he was taller than me.

"What? Tell me, Bellamy."

"Do you know much about witch culture?" I asked.

"Not much. They were never a concern." He replied.

I took a deep breath. "When witches have multiple anities, they are usually set up with arranged marriages. That happened to Clover."

"No. She marked me. She can't be married to someone else. She's my mate." Stanton growled.

"She isn't married. A couple months ago, Clover tried to end her life when her coven pressured her to accept the man she was engaged to. She came here for a new life. On top of that, do you remember the request for help I told you about?" I asked.

"The beast that was after a witch. I didn't even make the connection when Clover told me about it. I was just so happy to nd her. I promised her I would protect her." He told me.

"And did she tell you about how she gets dizzy and faints around shapeshifters? Did she faint when she met you?"

"She didn't that was what she said convinced her we were meant to be. The goddess wouldn't make her dizzy and faint when she saw her own mate. I saved her. She was dangling from a rock face. If she had fainted, she could have died." Stanton said with a small smile. "I told her to never do that again and she told me I'd have to go out with her the next time."

"Why do you think she ran, Stanton? We would have just sent out a search party if she was late leaving. It wasn't like she would be locked up or executed or something. Something had to make her leave." I murmured.

He squeezed my hands. "She was overwhelmed and not thinking clearly. I felt her regret and sadness all night, Bellamy. Today, she's felt hopeful. I think she's looking for me too. I think she's getting closer. As soon as she marked me, I could feel her emotions. She loves me. I can feel it as assuredly as I can feel my own love for her."

"It's not like that for anyone else I've met who was mated to a witch. Have you tried mindlinking her?" I asked.

"Yes, but she can't hear me or can't respond. Maybe the emotions thing is because she's got an animal anity. She could hear me when I was in my bear form. She might have to be very close to be able to hear me. That would make sense. We'll spend time getting to know how her powers mesh with our bond. Are you going to tell me where to nd her, Bellamy?" Stanton pressed.

"You're sure she didn't run away because she wasn't ready for this?"

"Absolutely. If nothing else, I can let her know how to contact me when she is ready. She's mine and I'm not going to give her up. She wears my mark and I wear hers. We're bonded for the rest of our lives." He insisted.

I let go of his hands and returned to the computer. I copied and pasted her contact information into a notepad on the desktop. I signed out of the collective's computer and turned back to him.

"She's one of my people until you ocially establish your sleuth. If you hurt her, you're subject to punishment from my collective. We take care of our people. You know that. Go slow and be gentle with her. I can't imagine how badly her coven messed her up before we got her." I told him.

"I will. Thank you, Baby Belle. I'll start looking for a place to be my base of operations and get my sleuth established so I can claim my Ursa properly." Stanton grinned as he scooped me into his arms and gave me a big hug that made me squeak. "Sorry, Baby Belle, I'm just so happy."

He set me down and I patted his arm. I was hopeful that his excitement wasn't ill placed. I left him on his own and headed off to see my Alpha.

When I reached Lucien's oce I linked him to see if he was available. He replied that he was, so I walked in. He was sitting on his couch, reading from a le.

I climbed on the couch beside him and rested my head on his shoulder. Lucien set down his paperwork and moved so his arm was around me and I was resting against his chest. It was comforting to be curled up against him... as much as I could with my massive belly.

"What's wrong, chouchoutte?" Lucien asked.

"You remember the witch we met a couple weeks ago?"

"The one who fainted?" He chuckled.

"Yeah. Clover. She's Stanton's mate." I told him.

"Seriously?"

"That's what he says. He met her while she was on the pack lands yesterday. I guess she doesn't faint around him." I answered.

"Are you sad about losing your friend, chouchoutte?" He asked.

"No. I'm just worried. She's been through a lot in the last few months. What if she's not ready to be his mate. let alone his Ursa? Being the partner to the leader of a group of people is not something you can easily slide into." I sighed.

"I understand that. Being your mate has given me an insight into what most Lunas go through. Being a triple anity witch will keep her busy enough that she won't need him around all the time. She runs a business, so she should understand the work he'll need to do to run his territory. They'll work it out. You don't want to end up doing to them what your parents did to us, do you?" Lucien chuckled.

"Oh, dear goddess, no. I was just trying to give him an idea of what he'd be dealing with. I swear, I didn't do what my parents did to you. Or, if I did, he wasn't a malnourished, beaten, and overly sensitive Alpha. He's running toward her, not away." I giggled.

"Rub it in that I made the wrong choice when I wasn't thinking straight. Don't make me punish you, chouchoutte." He purred.

"Promises, promises." I replied. "Sadly, that's not going to be an option for us tonight."

"You're withholding s*x, Bellamy? That's not like you." Lucien said.

"I've been having contractions for a couple hours. I think we should head to the pack hospital soon." I sighed.

"I told you last time that you need to tell me sooner! You should have told me right when they started!" He shouted and moved to stand.

"I had things to do. You would have had us at the hospital all day. There was no need for that. It's a ve-minute drive, maximum. Help me up. I'm all turtled and you don't want me having your pups on the couch." I laughed.

"How are you always so relaxed about these things?" Lucien sighed as he scooped me into his arms.

"This is the third time we've done this, saucisson. I'm a queen. Panicking isn't in my DNA. You aren't planning on carrying me to the hospital, are you?" I asked.

"You haven't stopped teasing me from the rst time I did that." He answered as he made his way out of the oce and down the hall. "Maybe we should wait a year before we try for the next ones. Give ourselves a little time without regular doctor visits."

"Only two more after this, Lucien. Come on, you aren't giving up so easily. We said ve pregnancies. Are you saying you can't handle it, Alpha?"

"I can handle it. I just thought you might want a break. You're young. Don't you want to spend more time out having fun with your friends?" Lucien asked.

"Have I ever struck you as the party type? Plus, Dilly and Jean-Claude have four kids now. They never have time for that. Cara and Caleb are thinking of having another pup. You know how we are. Have pups with them, then enjoy your children and grandchildren while you're still young enough to have fun with them."

He put me in the car and ran to the other side. I buckled my seat belt and tossed a my overnight bag into the trunk before we left. I hurried maid rushed out and sent out a quick link to the pack to clear the roads to the hospital. They all knew Lucien was a crazy driver when I was in labor.

"I guess starting late has affected me. I linked your grandparents. They will join my mother at the house to help take care of the pups while we're gone. I love you, Bellamy." He smiled at me.

I reached out and tucked some of his black hair behind his ear. "I love you, too, Lucien. Watch the road. I don't want you to get in an accident."

"I'm an excellent driver." Lucien huffed.

"Tell that to Madame Russo's bicycle." I snorted.

"It shouldn't have been in the middle of the road."

"It was in the middle of the sidewalk! Honestly, maybe you're getting to old to drive." I giggled.

"I'll get you for that one later, chouchoutte. Let's bring these babies into the world rst." He said.

I focused on breathing through the next contraction. When they got close, it was harder to ignore them. They never got really bad until after my water broke. Rogue born wolves tended to have easier and quicker labors than pack wolves. I was grateful to the goddess for that blessing.

Stanton's relationship was all on him now. I would be busy with all my babies and getting the house settled with a new schedule. I hoped these ones were better sleepers than Elisabeth and Helene.