

You're Mine

"Can you please stop hovering?" Charlotte asked her brother with a huff. "I promise that I'm ne."

They had arrived at the Seattle pack house, which was actually an apartment building called the Crescent, about four hours earlier and Greg hadn't given her a moment alone since. She loved him, but if that was the way he was going to be for however long she ended up staying in Seattle with him, then she might have ended up killing up.

"I just want to make sure you're okay," he replied with a sigh.

"You don't know how scary it was to see you like that," he admitted in a whisper.

"I'm sorry," Charlotte apologized, feeling like an ass for snapping at him when he was just trying to help. "I could just use some time alone is all," she explained.

After sitting on a bus full of werewolves she didn't know and with Greg's helicopter-style brothering, she could have used a few minutes of peace and quiet.

"Alright," Greg agreed reluctantly.

Charlotte smiled in response from the couch she was lying on.

"I need to go buy a new phone and some clothes for you anyway," he admitted. "But then I'm coming straight back," he insisted.

"Okay, okay," she replied with a teasing roll of her eyes. Greg really was a good brother, and the truth was that he had been a great parent to her as well.

"Need anything before I leave?" he asked, picking up his wallet and keys from the small table next to the front door of his apartment.

"Maybe a glass of water," Charlotte asked. Her throat was feeling a bit dry.

His eyebrows furrowed in confusion and she followed his gaze to the glass of water sitting on the coffee table next to her. It had a straw in it because she couldn't exactly pick it up with two broken arms.

"When did you bring me that?" she asked, not remembering Greg placing it next to her.

"You asked for it about ten minutes ago," he replied with a frown.

"Oh... I guess I just forgot," Charlotte murmured. Much as she wracked her brain, she couldn't recall asking for it or Greg bringing it to her. Claire had been right about the memory problems apparently.

"Maybe I should stay," Greg suggested, reaching into his pocket to take out his wallet.

"No, I really do need some clothes," Charlotte argued with as assuring a smile as she could manage. "I'll just watch some tv until you get back," she told him, slightly lifting the remote she held in her hand.

He hesitated but eventually agreed with a nod. "You sure you don't need something to eat?" he asked.

"Greg, you've already made me two bowls of soup and three cups of tea. I promise that I'm covered on food and beverages," she said with a chuckle.

"Just trying to look out for you," he said with a smile. "Love you, Charlie. I'll be back soon," he told her while opening the door.

"Love you too," she called out to him before he closed the door behind him.

Once she was alone, she let out a big sigh and threw off the blanket Greg had placed over her— well she didn't so much throw it off as clumsily shove it off with her hands. Much against Greg's continued demands that she stay on the couch and rest, she had decided that she was long overdue for a shower or bath. She was actually surprised that her brother hadn't been more eager to leave the apartment with the way she smelled.

So, after checking Greg's bathroom and conrming that there was in fact a bathtub in there, she went in search of Claire. Charlotte couldn't exactly clean herself, but she wasn't going to stoop to asking Greg for help. That would have been about as awkward as it could get. The only person she could think to ask for help was the doctor who had treated her, and luckily Charlotte even knew where to nd her.

Opening the front door was a bit of a challenge, but from there it was easy to retrace her steps back towards the pack hospital where Claire had changed the bandage around her head just after they'd arrived in Seattle. Before she could get there though, she ran into the Luna and Alpha of the pack.

"Oh, hi Charlotte," Lily greeted her warmly when the doors of the elevator Charlotte was in opened up.

"Hi, Lily," she replied with an awkward smile as she stepped out of the elevator.

The last time she'd seen Lily was when her elbows were being shattered by Erikson, but according to Greg, Lily had been in the middle of getting Charlotte out of the pack house when Finn and the others had attacked. She wasn't sure what to say to Lily, but a thank you didn't seem like it would suce.

"This is my mate, Finn," Lily said before Charlotte could say more, gesturing to the tall dark-haired man beside her.

"Nice to meet you," he said, to Charlotte with a small wave of his hand.

"Nice to meet you too," Charlotte replied with a nod.

"I need to go speak to Dillan quickly, but I'll meet you upstairs soon, okay?" Finn said to his mate.

"Sure," Lily agreed, lifting up on her toes to give her mate a brief kiss.

There was something about the intimacy of the moment that made Charlotte avert her eyes and look down at her feet.

"See you around, Charlotte," Finn called over his shoulder as he stepped onto the empty elevator.

"Bye."

"Are you looking for Claire?" Lily asked, her eyes ickering down to Charlotte's arms with what looked like guilt.

"Yep, I just needed her help with something," Charlotte admitted, her cheeks turning a bit pink.

"I know she's busy with a few patients right now, but can I do anything to help?" Lily offered.

"I umm... you really don't need to worry about it," Charlotte murmured in embarrassment. She wasn't about to ask a Luna to help her bath.

"Please, I'd like to help," Lily insisted, and Charlotte couldn't help but see the truth in her green eyes.

"Well, I just wanted to...you know, get clean," Charlotte explained with a wince. "And I can't do it without some help."

"Right, of course," Lily replied with an understanding nod. "I really don't mind helping if that's okay with you?"

"Sure," Charlotte said gratefully after a moment's hesitation. She really really wanted that bath "That would be great."

Which is how Lily ended up in the Luna's bathroom. It was a bit awkward and embarrassing to have a woman she barely knew scrub and wash her, but Lily was as professional as a nurse would have been, and Charlotte felt so much better afterward that she didn't even care that Greg's Luna had seen her naked. Lily had even managed to wash Charlotte's hair, just keeping the patch of hair around her wound dry.

Unfortunately, the red marks from where she had been repeatedly injected with wolfsbane still stood out sharply on the upper part of her right arm, and the bruises on her wrists from where Erikson had grabbed her were still an ugly dark purple. Lily had glanced at them with a sad look on her face but didn't say anything about them, which Charlotte was grateful for.

"You have no idea how much better I feel now," Charlotte told Lily with a contented sigh. Washing off the dirt and grime from her skin had been more than just about getting clean — she felt like it had helped remove some of the bad memories as well.

"I can imagine," Lily replied with a pitying smile.

They were sitting on the barstools in Lily's kitchen drinking soda— luckily Lily had some straws stuffed right at the back of a kitchen draw, so Charlotte could drink hers without lapping it up like a dog.

"I'm sorry by the way," Lily added with a swallow. "What happened in that room with Erikson was my fault."

"You don't need to apologize," Charlotte argued. "Besides, from what my brother told me, you were the one who was busy getting me out of there when the battle started. If anything, I should be grateful to you."

"It was the least I could do," Lily replied with a heavy sigh. "You wouldn't have even been there in the rst place if it wasn't for me."

"I really don't blame you," Charlotte assured her. She might have been hurt that Greg chose Lily and her baby's life over hers, but she didn't blame the woman for that. "And based on the way I treated you in high school, I'm surprised you were willing to help me," she said with a self-deprecating scoff.

"You were one of the few who didn't bully me," Lily pointed out, looking confused.

"Maybe, but standing around while others did makes me just as bad," Charlotte told her. It didn't matter that she had wanted to step in and help Lily. She had just watched as their peers bullied her, making her the kind of coward she hoped she would never be again.

"It sounds to me like we're both feeling guilty and sorry," Lily noted with a chuckle.

"Pretty much," Charlotte agreed in amusement. "So, I think we can both move on and call it even, right?" she suggested.

"Right," Lily replied with a nod.

"I should probably get going before Greg gets back and has a hemorrhage because I'm not there," Charlotte told her as she stepped off the barstool. Not to mention that she was feeling exhausted. Just a month ago, Charlotte had been able to go hours standing on her feet in a kitchen, but now she could barely sit up for a single hour without feeling drained, and she absolutely hated it.

"Alright, I'll see you around though," Lily responded, standing up as well to walk Charlotte to the door.

"Thanks for everything," Charlotte said before walking out into the hall. "I'll bring the clothes back to you tomorrow," she promised. Lily had lent her a pair of comfortable leggings and a baggy shirt that they had managed to t her splinted arms through.

"No rush," Lily said with an easy wave of her hand. "Let me know if you need anything else," she called out once Charlotte had already walked to the elevator.

"Will do," Charlotte replied gratefully over her shoulder, though she wasn't sure if she would actually use the offer after everything Lily had done for her already.

She heard the doors open and tiredly stepped into the elevator without looking, gasping when she walked into a warm and very hard chest.

"I'm so sorry," she apologized, looking up into a man's face that had the most interesting pair of eyes she'd ever seen. They were an amber color with ecks of gold in them— almost the exact same shade as his light golden-colored hair— reminding her of the eyes of a tiger.

"Charlotte," he whispered, sending a pleasant shiver down her spine and making her glance down at his soft-looking lips. Charlotte was so caught up in her examination of him that she didn't even think to ask him how he knew her name. She had felt ready for a nap seconds before, but her whole body felt energized now as if an electrical current had been run through it.

She could smell that same scent of oranges and black pepper that she had smelled in her dreams, only it wasn't quite as strong this time. It was a strange combination, but the sweetness of the orange and the spice of the pepper somehow worked together. She brievely wondered if the orange-avored cookies she loved so much could be improved with some freshly ground pepper, but she shook off the ridiculous thought to take in the rest of the man in front of her.

With his striking face and those amber eyes, he might have been the most gorgeous man she'd ever seen. The stubble along his sharp jawline made his face look older, but Charlotte guessed that he couldn't have been more than twenty-six. He was taller than her, which wasn't that surprising, but for some reason, she didn't feel dwarfed by him like she did with most tall men. The more she took him in, the more certain she became of who he was.

"You're my mate," Charlotte said, searching his amber eyes for a sign that he felt it too.

His lips tipped up into an amused smile and for a terrifying second, Charlotte thought he was going to laugh at her. Instead, he simply said, "And you're mine."

Charlotte didn't know if he had meant for the words to sound so possessive. All she knew was that she loved hearing him say them— they made her feel wanted.