

Chapter 216 Worried Sick

Moana

“Moana... What happened?” Selina asked as she looked around at the mess in my room with wide eyes. Scattered all around us were countless violent, graphic drawings that I somehow scribbled out in an unconscious state, even though I had absolutely no recollection of any of it. I didn’t know how to respond, because I didn’t even know what happened. All I could do was stand there, frozen, and stare at Selina.

Selina slowly came into my room and set the tray of food down. “Are you okay?” she whispered.

I nodded. As I did, I already felt that all-too-familiar sensation of hot tears pricking at the backs of my eyes. “I don’t know what happened,” I finally managed to say. “One moment I was just sitting in my bed and drawing in my sketchbook, and then it was like I blinked and my whole room was just covered in... whatever this is.”

The old housekeeper looked around with a wide-eyed gaze for a moment. “I’m so sorry,” I said quietly as I began to stoop to pick up all of the discarded papers. “I made a huge mess.”

However, Selina just shook her head and took the papers out of my hands. She set them down beside the food and then guided me over to my bed. “I’m calling the doctor,” she said. “Stay here.”

Within half an hour, the doctor was standing by my bedside. Selina had already cleaned up all of the papers. She didn’t say anything in particular

about the contents of the violent and graphic images, but I could tell that she was deeply concerned by them. The doctor looked at a few after he took my vitals, and sighed.

“Your vitals are fine,” he said gently as he flipped through the drawings. As he did, I felt my face go red from embarrassment. It did seem, at the very least, as though Selina hid away the drawings that were the most graphic to save my dignity, which I appreciated more than anything.

When the doctor was finished looking at the drawings, he handed them back to Selina and then gave me a worried look. “I can only reiterate that you need to see a therapist,” he said. He paused, then made a sound to himself under his breath and pulled out his notepad. I watched as he scribbled on the pad, then tore the piece of paper off and handed it to me. On it was a name and a phone number.

“What’s this?” I asked, looking up at him.

“It’s a therapist that I’d highly recommend,” he replied. “He specializes in post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. His methods are a bit... out there, so to speak, but he’s very good. I’d highly recommend giving him a call.”

I furrowed my brow. “What sort of methods are you referring to?” I asked.

“Hypnotherapy, mostly,” the doctor replied. “Some people see it as more of a fringe science, but his clients have all had very good results from what I’ve heard. Give it a try; you never know.”

I nodded slowly as I held the paper firmly in my hand. Hypnotherapy... It wasn’t exactly something that I had ever thought of trying, but I supposed that it wouldn’t hurt any to give it a shot.

...

The doctor left after that. I thought I overheard him speaking in hushed tones to Selina outside of my room in the hallway, but I couldn’t make out what was being said and I didn’t have the physical or emotional energy to

get up and try to eavesdrop. All I knew was that, five minutes later, the old housekeeper was coming back into my room with a glass of warm milk in one hand and two pills in the other.

“Here,” she said, handing me the milk and holding her hand out for me to take the two round, pink pills.

“What are those?” I asked as I pointed nervously at the pills.

Selina shook her head. “It’s just your sleeping medicine,” she replied. “Some rest will do you some good right now, I think.”

I nodded and took the pills. Selina was right; sleep was important right now. At the very least, if I was asleep I couldn’t have another episode. I didn’t even want to imagine what it would be like if I had another episode, especially if it happened in front of Ella. I didn’t want to scare her after everything.

Once I finished taking the pills, Selina tucked me into my bed and headed back toward my door with a drawn and tired look on her face. But before she could leave, I suddenly sat up and called after her.

“You’re not going to tell Edrick, are you?” I asked, feeling my heart start to race. If Edrick found out about this, he was certain to take it very poorly. What if he never wanted me to go back to work? What if he was even more scared of me now? What if he got too worried and became sick himself?

Selina slowly turned back around and gave me a stern look that told me everything I needed to know before she even opened her mouth; I had no say in this matter. No one could trust my mental state anymore, and therefore my opinions were invalid because of whatever sickness was taking over my brain. I felt helpless.

“He needs to know,” she said, her voice low and even.

I felt my palms start to itch with anxiety as my eyes began to well up with tears again. “Please,” I begged. “Please don’t tell him. I don’t want him to get worried—”

“That’s enough, Moana!” The old housekeeper’s voice was suddenly sharp and rigid, much like how she used to speak when I first moved in. For a moment, her body straightened and became hard as she gripped the handle of the door. My eyes widened slightly at her stern appearance, but after a moment, she let out a deep breath and relaxed once more. “He deserves to know the truth,” she said gently. “I’m sorry, but we can’t keep this from him. It’s for your own good.”

Before I could say anything else, the old housekeeper suddenly swung the door open and left. Sniffing, I sank back down into my bed and stared blankly up at the ceiling as all of the worst possible outcomes floated through my mind. I imagined Edrick coming home and hearing about my episode, seeing my horrible drawings, and immediately sending me off to a psychiatric facility. I imagined my baby being ripped away from me in a padded room because the doctors thought that I would be a danger to my own child. I imagined Ella growing up thinking that I was a scary person, someone who only made a year of her childhood a living hell because I was constantly causing trouble or putting her in danger...

But then, the medicine quickly began to kick in. Everything suddenly started to feel warm and fuzzy as the ceiling began swirling and drifting above me, and nothing felt quite so bad anymore. In fact, everything just felt distant and foggy, like nothing but a bad dream.

Within minutes, I found myself floating off into a dreamless sleep without a care in the world.

Chapter 217 The Dark Images

Edrick

I hated to leave Moana behind, but I missed too much at work while she was in the hospital. Now that she was safely at home, I only needed to go to the office for a couple of hours to deal with some meetings.

Unfortunately, those couple of hours quickly turned into a full day of work. By the time I headed home, it was already starting to get dark out. All I could think about was getting home to Moana and my daughter and spending the rest of the evening with them.

However, when I got home things seemed incredibly... off.

The penthouse was dark and quiet when I arrived. It wasn't that late, which was a bit confusing. But as I started to make my way through the penthouse and found Selina sitting in the kitchen by herself with only a lamp illuminating the room, I quickly realized why everything felt so strange.

Selina was sitting with her back turned to the kitchen door, but I could tell instantly from the way that her shoulders were shaking that she was crying silently. She stopped when she heard me coming, but I knew that she was crying. No matter how quickly she tried to wipe away her tears and smile, it was too obvious.

"Hungry?" she asked, getting up and wiping her hands on her apron. "Sit down. I'll make you something."

I slowly walked into the kitchen and sat down, watching as the old housekeeper scurried around and began preparing a meal. It was strange to see her acting so emotionally; she was normally such a stoic and stern person as long as I had known her, and yet since she met Moana that seemed to change. It seemed as though she was beginning to see Moana as something like her own daughter, and it was clear that the warehouse incident and the three day long hospital stay were both getting to her. But I could tell that something else was wrong.

“What’s going on?” I asked suddenly, unable to contain my curiosity.

Selina made a face as she clicked on the burner on the stove and spread butter on some bread to start making a grilled cheese. “What are you talking about?” she said. It was clear that she was hiding something, judging by the look on her face.

“Tell me what it is, Selina,” I said. “Is something wrong?”

The old housekeeper paused, then sighed. She set the bread down in the pan, then put a few slices of cheese on top before wiping her hands on her apron once more. I watched as she nervously withdrew a folded piece of paper from the pocket on her apron with shaking hands.

“Moana had another... episode,” she said, shakily handing me the paper. I took it with a furrowed brow and unfolded it. My eyes widened as I saw the contents of the page. It was a drawing made with dark, heavy strokes that depicted a strange knife with a slightly curved blade and a wolf’s head on the handle. It looked oddly familiar to me for some strange reason, but the pressure of the lines and the way that the drawing seemed so chaotic indicated that it was not drawn while Moana was in a normal mental state. What especially gave that away was the fact that it was drawn over the picture that Moana drew of Ella and I on the ferris wheel. I knew that she would never want to draw over that picture.

“She said she doesn’t remember anything,” Selina continued. “She said that she was just sitting in her bed, and then when she came to she was

surrounded by dozens of similar pictures. I found her like that, and I believe her... But I think she needs help, Edrick. Serious help. Help that we might not be able to provide for her here..."

Suddenly, I looked up at the old housekeeper with my eyes narrowed. "What are you trying to say?" I growled.

Selina, seemingly unfazed by my anger, sighed again. "I don't know. Maybe she should be in an institution for a while where they can keep a close eye on her and take better care of her than we can here."

"You're suggesting that I send the mother of my child away to a psychiatric facility?" I said, standing suddenly as I gripped the paper tightly in my hand. "I won't do that. I won't send her to one of those places."

Selina narrowed her eyes at me. "What do you suggest, then?" she murmured. She pressed her lips into a thin line and glared at me for a few long moments before she hastily turned around and flipped the sandwich over in the pan, causing it to sizzle. As she did, I looked back down at the drawing in my hand and studied it even more closely. There was indeed something familiar about it, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. All I knew was that I had seen it somewhere before, meaning that it wasn't just a violent image that Moana made up in her own head. At the very least, I wouldn't assume that right away. I had to give her the benefit of the doubt before I jumped to conclusions and sent her away, which would likely only make her symptoms even worse. No... I had to do some research on this knife before I did anything else.

"Where is she now?" I asked.

"She took some of her medicine and she's sleeping now," Selina replied. "I called the doctor and he came and checked on her. He says that her vitals are fine, but he left the name and number of a... hypnotherapist who can supposedly help. But I don't believe in that sort of stuff. I think she needs a more straightforward approach."

For a few moments, I stared at the back of the old housekeeper's head, at the perfectly round, gray bun that rested just at the nape of her neck. She tersely shoved a spatula under the grilled cheese that she was cooking and moved the sandwich to a plate before clicking off the stove and turning back to face me. But by the time she did that, I was already gone. I ignored her calls and stormed into my office, where I shut and locked the door.

My mate wasn't crazy. I had seen this knife before, and I was sure of it. I could sense it; it had to have some sort of significance. Yes, Moana's trauma in the warehouse was sure to cause her plenty of problems, and I was still going to get her some help, but this felt different. That night in the warehouse, she had marked me. I remembered when I finally healed and I stood up, Ethan picked her up by her throat and was choking her when a bright golden light burst out of her and blasted him backwards, throwing him to the ground. That night, it was very likely that her Golden Wolf abilities were beginning to surface; and maybe this drawing was a depiction of more of her abilities coming to light.

It seemed to me that Moana may have begun having visions, and the depiction of this strange knife with the wolf head handle could be significant to her future.

Chapter 218 On Your Side

Moana

The medicine that Selina gave me must have made me sleep for a long time, because it was bright outside when I finally woke up. When I rolled over to glance at my clock with my bleary eyes, I saw that it was eight o'clock in the morning already even though it felt as though I only slept for five minutes. Yawning, I rolled back onto my back and suddenly felt a comforting presence beside me. It was Edrick.

Moving slowly in order not to wake him, I slowly rolled over to face Edrick and couldn't help but smile. He was sleeping soundly beside me. I hadn't been dragged off to a psychiatric facility in my sleep; at least, not yet. Slowly, his eyes cracked open and he turned to face me. His hand came up and stroked my hair for a moment before he pulled me in tightly and let me bury my face in his chest.

We stayed like that for a long time, just holding each other. I breathed in his scent in big, deep breaths, and felt myself relax a little more with each one. When we finally pulled away, I felt a little bit better. But the concerned look on Edrick's face made my comfort turn into more worry.

"Selina told you, didn't she?" I asked quietly, feeling my heart start to race as I started to fear the worst.

Edrick slowly nodded. Instantly, I felt tears begin to well up in my tired eyes. “Are you going to send me away to a mental institution?”

Suddenly, Edrick pulled me close again and shushed me. “Of course not,” he whispered, stroking my back while I quietly cried into his chest. “I wouldn’t do that unless there was absolutely no other choice, and even then it would take a lot to convince me to send you away like that. I’m always on your side, Moana.”

I slowly looked up at Edrick, who looked down at me with nothing but love in his eyes. It was comforting to know that he wasn’t going to send me away, but at the same time, I was still scared of myself. As the memories of my drawings slowly floated back into my groggy mind, I felt more and more guilty and afraid by the horrible images that I drew when I was unconscious. While many of the images were just violent nonsense, depicting things like blood and gore, the one picture that really stuck in my mind was the picture of the same knife from my dream about Michael; the one that had the slightly curved blade and the wolf head handle. There was something strange about that knife, like I had seen it a thousand times before even though at the same time I felt as though I hadn’t seen it even once in my entire life. In a strange and unfamiliar way, it felt like some sort of omen.

As I looked up at Edrick, too, I could tell that he had seen the drawing of the knife. He seemed to have a puzzled expression on his face, as though he was also trying to rack his brain over it.

“That knife,” I said quietly, sitting up and rubbing my tired eyes. “Have you seen it before?”

Edrick slowly sat up beside me and leaned his back against the headboard of my bed. When I looked over at him, I saw that he was repeatedly running his hand through his dark hair and had a far away expression on his somber face.

“It does look sort of familiar,” he said quietly. “But I don’t want you to worry about it, alright? Maybe you just saw a picture of it somewhere and forgot. If you’re really worried about it, I can look into it for you; but I just want you to relax and stop stressing about these things. Okay?”

I nodded slowly. Of course I trusted Edrick, and he was right; stressing over it wouldn’t help any. Sighing, I reached over to my bedside table to get a drink of water, and as I did my hand ran across the note that the doctor left for me with the therapist’s name on it. I paused and picked it up, then handed it to Edrick.

“The doctor gave me this—”

“I know,” Edrick interrupted. “Selina told me. Do you want to see that therapist?”

For a few moments, I just looked down at the note in my hand and pursed my lips, thinking. I had never heard much about hypnotherapy, but it sounded interesting. And if it could get to the bottom of these strange occurrences I was having, then maybe it would be helpful in more ways than one. Maybe this therapist could help me realize that the dream about Michael and the violent drawings were just created by my stress and didn’t have any tangible meaning, or maybe he could use hypnotherapy to help me understand whether there was actually a deeper meaning behind these things and could potentially help me prepare just in case the dream and the drawings were some sort of omen.

“I... I’ll give it a shot, I guess,” I finally said, still holding the small piece of paper in my hand. “If you think it might help...”

Edrick nodded. “I think it would be good for you to talk to someone with experience,” he said. “I won’t force you to do it, but I do think that you should try. But... I have to ask you something.”

“Of course,” I replied. “What is it?”

For several long and silent moments, the Alpha billionaire seemed to be at a loss for words before he finally licked his lips and spoke. “When you were in your coma, did you see anything?”

As Edrick asked me this question, my eyes widened. I didn’t want to mention it to him — I thought that it was just a bad dream caused by stress, and that I would forget it. But I still remembered it so vividly, and it seemed as though this knife that I drew was completely connected to the dream. It couldn’t just be a coincidence.

Finally, I nodded and decided to tell Edrick everything. I told him about my dream, about Michael and the knife. When I was finally finished, his steely gray eyes were wider than I had ever seen them before, and his face was as white as a sheet.

“It’s probably nothing,” I said. “Like you said, maybe I just saw a picture of that knife somewhere and forgot, and combined with my stress about being the Golden Wolf...”

Edrick suddenly shook his head and stood. He had a far away expression on his face again, like he was thinking deeply. I couldn’t tell if he suddenly had an idea or if I offended him by mentioning such a violent and horrible dream about his father. I opened my mouth to ask him if I said something wrong, but before anything could come out, he suddenly turned on his heel and disappeared from my room.

Once again, I was left alone and confused. Did Edrick know something about this knife and the dream that I had about Michael, or was it something else?

Chapter 219 Dr. Rhodes

Moana

By the next morning, Edrick had already called the therapist for me and I was scheduled to have my first session right there in the penthouse that very morning. I was nervous, but also excited in a strange way. I wanted to get to the bottom of these strange occurrences, not only to figure out why this knife seemed to be so prominent in my mind and to see if it had any real, tangible significance, but I also wanted to get better so I could return to work.

When the therapist walked into my room, I immediately noticed that he seemed like a nice man. He was older, tall and thin, and had a completely bald head with a gray mustache on his upper lip and a pair of round wire-rimmed glasses sitting on his nose. He had a warm smile on his face and wore a tweed suit, and carried a notebook in his thin hand.

“Hello, Moana,” he said, holding his hand out for me to shake. “I’m Dr. Rhodes. Are you ready to get started?”

I nodded nervously. Edrick had moved a small loveseat into my room that was placed across from my armchair by the window, and I gestured for the therapist to sit on the armchair while I sat down on the loveseat. It felt strange to have a therapist in my bedroom, but it was also comforting to be doing this in a comfortable space that I knew well.

“So,” Dr. Rhodes said as he opened up his spiral-bound notebook, “can you start with telling me what’s been going on recently?”

I took in a shaky breath, then began.

“A few weeks ago, I was kidnapped and held at gunpoint...”

Over the course of the next half hour, I explained everything to Dr. Rhodes. I told him everything about the kidnapping, about Kelly and Ethan, about witnessing the fight between Ethan and Edrick, and about Edrick almost dying. I told him about Ethan choking me, the incident at the police station, and finally I told him about the dream that I had in the hospital. Of course, he asked a lot of questions about my relationship with Edrick. Earlier, Edrick had told me that it was okay to be completely truthful about our fake engagement with Dr. Rhodes, as it would be illegal for him to reveal the truth to anyone else. And so, by the end of the thirty minute mark, I had explained everything to Dr. Rhodes from beginning to end.

When I was finished, the therapist leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes for a moment, processing what I told him while I nervously fiddled with my hands on the loveseat. When he finally opened his eyes again, he smiled at me.

“I think I’d like to hypnotize you,” he said. “If you’re comfortable with it, I mean.”

I nodded and took in a deep breath. “Will it help me figure out what that dream was about, and why I blacked out and drew those pictures?”

Dr. Rhodes shrugged lightly. “There are no guarantees,” he said. “Not everyone is susceptible to hypnosis. If you’re not open to it subconsciously, it might not get you anywhere. There’s also a possibility that the dream and the drawings don’t actually mean anything more than a simple machination of stress in your mind after the traumatic events.

Perhaps you subconsciously view Edrick's father as the last remaining threat to your physical safety now that Ethan and Kelly are behind bars. Or, maybe..."

"Maybe they're visions?" I blurted out.

The therapist looked at me blankly for a few moments before standing. "I won't say anything in regards to that just yet," he said. "I don't want to make assumptions before our session is done."

I nodded uncomfortably. The therapist directed me to lie down on the loveseat. He closed the curtains and dimmed the lights in my bedroom, then began the session. He started by playing a low, droning tone on a singing bowl in his hand for a long time while he repeated a mantra, then had me repeat the same mantra for a long time while he circled around me with the singing bowl, causing the low tone to emanate around me from all directions. With my eyes closed, it felt a little disorienting. After that, he began to ask me questions.

But I didn't really feel any different. Even after almost half an hour of attempting to get me into a trance, I still felt perfectly conscious and found myself entirely incapable of delving deeper into my subconscious mind.

After half an hour of trying to hypnotize me, Dr. Rhodes finally ended the session. He opened my curtains and helped me sit up, then sighed deeply.

"I think that's all we'll be able to manage today," he said, sounding regretful. "I'm sorry. But I don't think that you're subconsciously prepared to go into a trance."

"Oh." I felt a little disheartened.

"But don't worry," Dr. Rhodes said. "It doesn't mean that this session wasn't helpful at all. I'm glad that we had a chance to talk about everything that's getting to you, and it's helped me to better understand your mental state. Sometimes just talking about these sorts of things is

enough to help the brain unwind. Do you feel any more relaxed than before?”

I paused for a moment, thinking, but finally nodded. “I do feel a little better,” I said.

Dr. Rhodes shot me a wide grin. “Good. I’ll come back next week and we can have another session. Whether or not you want to just stick with talk therapy or try hypnosis again is completely up to you. Okay?”

“Okay.” I stood, then walked over to the door with Dr. Rhodes. But before I opened it, I suddenly turned to face him with a burning question on my mind. “Dr. Rhodes,” I said, “can I go back to work, do you think? I really hate being cooped up.”

The therapist looked at me for a little bit. “Would it make you feel better?” he asked.

I nodded vehemently. “Yes. I love working with my students... Without that, I feel like I’ll go crazy.”

Dr. Rhodes nodded. “Well, that’s up to you, then,” he said. “I think that if it would help you, then you could go back to work. But I think that you should make sure you have an aide in the classroom in case you have another episode. In fact, if you do go back to work, I must insist that you have an aide, actually.”

After that, Dr. Rhodes and I said our goodbyes and I saw him out. As I watched him disappear into the elevator, I thought about what he said about an aide, and it reminded me of my conversation with Edrick about having a bodyguard in the classroom.

At the time, I hated the thought of having a bodyguard with me. But now, after everything, I was beginning to realize that the help was really important. And I couldn’t stay cooped up in this penthouse all day; with Ella still going to school and Edrick going to work, it was just me, Selina,

and the maids all day, and they were busy during the day as well. I feared that if I stayed cooped up in the penthouse for much longer, my mental health wouldn't get any better.

So, I waited for Edrick to return home from work that day so that I could talk to him about bringing a bodyguard to my classroom.

Chapter 220 Kat the Bodyguard

Edrick

When I arrived back at the penthouse after work, I half expected Moana to be still laid up in bed and exhausted after her first therapy session. That would have been perfectly fine and reasonable, but I was completely not expecting her to be standing in the foyer when I first stepped out of the elevator.

“I want to talk to you,” she said without so much as a greeting. She grabbed my hand and began to tug almost aggressively on my arm, like I was being an inconvenience just for trying to set down my briefcase and hang my suit jacket on the hook.

“Woah, woah, woah,” I blurted out with a chuckle as she tried to pull me away. “What’s the big deal? I haven’t even walked in the door yet. Is everything alright?”

Moana nodded. There was a bit of a twinkle in her eyes, which made me smile a bit. That twinkle also made me involuntarily let my guard down, which allowed her to succeed in yanking me away to my office. She pushed me inside and closed the door behind us, which made me think that either one of two things were going to happen: either she was going to start an argument with me, or she was going to leap on me in a passionate frenzy after being cooped up all day. Neither of those things happened, though.

“I want to talk to you about something,” she said, putting her hands on her hips. “It’s important.”

I furrowed my brow, but nodded anyway as I took off my suit jacket and loosened my tie. “Go ahead,” I said. “Lay it on me.”

Moana took a deep breath, then spoke very quickly and all in one breath as though she expected me to shut her up right in the middle of her sentence. “I want to go back to work and the therapist said that he thinks it could be good for me as long as I have an aide and I was thinking that maybe we could talk about the bodyguard situation again and—”

“Geez,” I said, putting my hands up in surrender as I sank down into my chair behind my desk. “Talk slowly. One thing at a time...”

Moana sighed. “The therapist said that he thinks it might be good for me to return to work, so long as I have an aide with me in case anything goes wrong,” she said. “I know that the doctor told me that I should take a week of bed rest, but I feel like I’m going crazy in here with you and Ella being gone all day. I really miss my job, so I was thinking that we could talk about the bodyguard situation again.”

I raised my eyebrows. There were only a few days left of Moana’s week of bed rest, but she seemed so passionate about it that I had a hard time saying no. Even though it terrified me, I knew how happy teaching made her. And if the therapist said that it could be good for her, then maybe it wouldn’t be so bad so long as she promised to keep the bodyguard by her side.

Besides... I did have the perfect candidate lined up.

“I’m Katherine. But you can just call me Kat.”

The female bodyguard sent to me by my chief of security stood in front of Moana and me in my office the next morning. After some thought the

night before, I finally agreed to at least let the two of them meet to see how it would go.

Katherine — Kat — was tall and slim, with short black hair cut into a boyish style and stood in a powerful stance. However, unlike many of the other bodyguards who I had interviewed when I was first setting up our security team, Kat also seemed sweet and friendly. I could tell instantly just from the way that she interacted with Ella when she first came in earlier that day that she would be really good with kids, which was a relief. I could also tell that Moana liked her right off the bat, and so I sat back and allowed them to talk while I only asked a few obligatory questions in regards to Kat's abilities.

I could sense that Kat's wolf was strong, too. She seemed like the perfect fit, honestly, and by the end of our interview I had a good feeling about it. Now all that was left was for Moana to approve of having Kat in her classroom; the night before, when I told her that I would let her go back to work early, it was only under one condition: she had to have her bodyguard with her at all times. Moana, unlike before, was just so desperate to go back to work that she was finally open to the idea, and I was feeling a lot better about it myself.

Therefore, that evening, I already knew Moana's official answer before she gave it to me.

"I think I'd be okay with having Kat in my classroom," she said, holding her chin up high as she spoke to me. "I'll have to make sure that she's good with the kids, though."

"I'm sure she will be." I cut my steak on my plate and popped a piece in my mouth, chewing slowly as I watched a whole host of emotions run across Moana's pretty face. I could tell how badly she needed to return to her normal life. Although I still hadn't gotten to the bottom of whatever that knife represented, I had hope. And, unbeknownst to Moana, I had begun some research on what to do if she suddenly shifted. As it turned

out, the Mother Witch had some apprentices who were very helpful the past few days, and when Moana thought I was at work I was actually spending part of my day talking to them. Although I didn't tell them that Moana was the Golden Wolf out of fear of them turning on us, they did have some ideas for keeping her safe if she shifted; one of those ideas was a perfume that could mask her scent if she shifted, which they were still working on. I just hoped that it would work on the Golden Wolf's scent.

"I guess it's settled, then," Moana said matter-of-factly. "I'll notify the headmistress that I can return to work tomorrow."

Even though I still felt as though it was a bit too early, the happy look on my mate's face made it all worth it. Besides, I thought, maybe Moana and Kat could eventually become friends while Kat was working as Moana's bodyguard.

After all, Moana had just told me how the prejudiced people at the school weren't talking to her much since she was a late bloomer. I knew how badly she needed a good friend. Sometimes, in my opinion, having a good friend to lean on during bad times was more helpful than any kind of medicine.

And, I figured that having a good friend to talk to, along with the right therapy, might help Moana relieve some of her stress. The doctor did tell me, after all, that any more stress could be detrimental for both Moana and the baby... And that terrified me.