Mistake - 37

Ryder

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Hours seemed to pass. Sweat drenched Brook's clothing and blanket. I kept continuing to whine and whimper, sending her my encouragement as best as I could.

Mom watched the machines like any predator, not willing to miss even the smallest movement. She was silent most of the time, which drove me insane with worry. I had no idea what was going on. Was Brook doing okay or did things look bleak? Suddenly, the machines started making a bunch of noise. All the nurses and my mother jumped into action, pressing buttons here and pushing them there.

Brook convulsed on the bed, and I jumped to my feet, unsure what to do. I didn't know if I should lie on her to keep her from falling or stay back. A whine of indecision escaped me and I looked at my mother for some direction, but she was staring at Brook in surprise. "I don't believe it," she breathed.

I looked back down at my mate and made a startled yelp. She was shifting, like actually taking a wolf's form! I figured with the coma, the muscle relaxants, and everything, she wouldn't shift. "Hold her down," my mother ordered the nurses. "But not too tight. Let her bones morph as they should."

The nurses all fell around me, holding Brook's arms and legs. She convulsed and twisted. Her muscles contracted and relaxed in grotesque waves. I'd seen nothing like this before. At a snail's pace, her form twisted and change. Despite the coma and painkillers, her face twisted in

agony. It made my stomach turn, and I was afraid I was about to get sick. My first shift, while it hurt like hell, Brook's shift seemed worse.

Minutes seemed like hours as Brook changed. I wanted to comfort her, but I was so caught up in my fear of what was happening. I was helpless, completely helpless. My mate was suffering, and there was nothing I could do to help her. Again. I hated this more than anything. I should protect her and help her, yet here I was, useless, completely useless.

"Ryder," Mom said sharply, giving him a hard look. "Relax, everything is going as it should. Your fear is filling the room and Brook can now detect that fear. Calm down and just keep supporting her as before."

I swallowed, forgetting she could do that now. This wasn't about me. This was about Brook. I dipped my head in a nod and took a slow breath. Laying down next to her, I made a soft whimper of support. You can do this, Brook. You're the strongest person I know. I keep repeating my silent encouragement, refusing to let the helplessness and worry in. She would make it. Brook would make it.

Finally, after what felt like half the night, she completly shifted. She was a small wolf. Her fur was brown with bright auburn and gray highlights. Brook looked like a red wolf, and she was beautiful. I got to my feet and waited for her to wake up, but Brook remained unconscious. This time, the worry slipped in before I could stop it.

I watched Mom as she leaned over us and examined Brook. She checked the machines, then offered me a smile. "It's done. Ryder. She's going to be okay." I gave her another wolfish grin and Mom laughed, ruffling my fur like she used to do when I was little. "She still needs lots of rest so don't expect her to open her eyes any time tonight." I whined a little, earning another laugh from Mom. "You should get some rest yourself, Ryder. It's been a night."

With another nod, I curled up next to Brook, sharing my warmth with her. I placed my paw on her, assuring her I was still there, and sighed. Mom ruffled my fur again. "I am going to go get some rest as well. Some nurses will come in and check on her from time to time."

I closed my eyes and thanked the powers that be that it was over. It was finally over. I would do everything in my power to prevent her from ever having to do anything like this again. With a deep sniff, I took in her scent and made note of the changes becoming a werewolf had made. Good Job, Brook. I'm so happy you're okay. For the first time in two weeks, I relaxed and drifted off to sleep. It had been the best sleep I had gotten in a while and I slept so deeply that not even shifting back to human woke me up.

Apparently, it had taken my friends a while to make me up, too. " Finally," Kara said, as I sat up with a large yawn. Someone put a sheet on me at some point. "You sleep like the dead. How did it go?"

I looked over at Brook. She, too, was back in her human form and covered with a sheet as well. "Went great. She's going to be okay."

"Yes!" Dean said, pumping his fist into the air.

"When do you think she'll wake?" Andy asked.

"Hopefully soon," I said, still needing to see her open her eyes.

"Well, I doubt it's going to be right now. How about you get dressed and we go get some breakfast," Kara offered.

Part of me wasn't ready to leave Brook. As if I wasn't here, she'd get hurt again. I knew it was stupid. I nodded, wrapping the sheet around me. " Sounds like a good idea. I need to find Mom also and see when Brook

might wake up."

"Well, come on, lover boy," my brother teased, grinning at me.

"Shut up," I shot back, but returned the grin.

We left and as we headed to the cafeteria, Beth joined us. Unlike me, she looked like she had gotten a terrible night's sleep. She probably did. After all, Beth did lose all of her family when Brook took her dad off that cliff. It didn't help that Mike refused to see or talk to her. I wondered what Dad was going to do with him. He was as bad as my uncle.

"Is she okay?" Beth asked, hesitantly joining us as we walked.

"Yeah, she's okay," I told her. Beth nodded and started to leave. "Hey, join us." Mike may not forgive her for whatever he thought she did, but I had forgiven her. In the end, she did what was right, and I wanted her to know we were cool.

With a smile, Beth said, "Yeah? Great"

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