

FIFTEEN

[PG-13—for brief adult situation]

Aophril and Orlan rushed into the waiting room. Tears were trickling down her muzzle.

“We just came out,” Dr. Kaynobble stated, “so you two can go in. Don’t be startled when you go in. They’ve got him mostly submerged in an ice water bath to try and keep his fever down. He’s unconscious, but your presence may help him.”

The two squirrels left the waiting room, neither seemed to register Butternut’s presence. Dr. Territin entered. “Dr. Gowandle, may I speak with you a moment?”

“Anything you need to say to me, Dr. Territin, can be spoken in front of my husband. We have pledged ourselves to one another, but haven’t had a moment yet to gather three witnesses to make it legal as we came straight here on the news of the Ambassador’s condition.”

“Very well,” the hedgehog replied, turning to Dr. Kaynobble. “First, if your mate hasn’t had a moment to tell you yet, Dr. Kaynobble, the two of you need to be careful when you choose to couple due to your size difference. Otherwise, you could seriously injure her internally.” The raccoon blushed under his fur at the chiding.

“But that’s a separate issue. I came in here to discuss the Ambassador’s condition as Dr. Hanter won’t leave his side at the moment. As he told you, the Ambassador has contracted a virus which is common among our youth. It usually causes sniffles, possible an ear infection, and maybe a brief fever.” He paused. “You know, a typical cold, but he hasn’t any immunity to it.” He turned back to Dr. Gowandle. “Your blood tests are in, Dr. Gowandle. You’re perfectly fine. Also, you and the Ambassador are the exact same blood type as hard as that may be to believe, considering he’s not from our world.”

“Which means?” Dr. Kaynobble asked.

“If Dr. Gowandle were to agree to it,” Dr. Territin replied, “we could give the Ambassador a transfusion of her blood and hope the antibodies in it would assist his immune system in fighting the virus as she, like just about everyone else, had this particular virus as a child.” The hedgehog shrugged. “It’s all we’ve got at this point.”

She wigwagged her tail and looked to her mate with hesitation clearly written across her muzzle.

“Why do you hesitate, love?” Dr. Kaynobble asked, scooting down and grasping her forepaws in his.

She drooped her tail, looked to her doctor, who got the hint. He left to give them some privacy.

“Raoul, after all these years, you don’t know? Even after how we pledged ourselves to one another yesterday evening, you don’t understand? By my people’s traditions, if I offer him my blood, we would be mates.” Tears welled up in her eyes as she fought down the mixed emotions within. Her love for him and her fear of the Ambassador coming between their love for one another.

Dr. Kaynobble scooped her up and hugged her close. “It’s alright. Hush...sssshhhh.” He continued to embrace her as she let the tears flow freely and sobbed into his shoulder, wrapping her tail partially around him just like the previous day.

“But...”

Again, he shushed her as he continued to hug her close. “If I must share you with him, I will. However, I don’t think I will need to. I think you’ll find his traditions are different.”

“Really?”

(affirmativeflick) “Come. Let’s go see if you can save the Ambassador,” he said and winked. “The legal stuff can wait whether it is a joint or triple filing.”