

FOURTEEN

Blossom's first day back at senior school had been very packed and busy as she had three days' worth of lessons to make up. The worst part was learning that all were banned from setting paw in the forest until further notice, though she understood it was for everyone's safety after what had happened to Brave. It didn't help that she was still slightly lightheaded from the blood donation. Saniel caught up with her at lunch, which helped a bit. Her thoughts kept going back to Brave.

She nibbled on a butternut across the table from Saniel. Between mouthfuls, she briefed Saniel on Brave. "...And so, the doctors figure he'll be in the hospital for about a month." She sighed.

"That's not too bad considered what kind of shape he was in."

"Saniel, Autumn is nearly half-over. There will be snow on the ground by then. Not only will there not be enough food gathered for him, but he's also going to have those casts on until at least mid-winter."

Saniel drooped his tail. "Oh, so he can't go back to his territory when he's released, provided its safe by then for him to do so."

"Which means he'll need to finish his recover at The Refuge, among a bunch of strangers he doesn't know as I doubt the Schoolmaster will allow us to bring him here."

"It'll be hard on him at first at The Refuge, but I'm sure he'll get used to it. That would be a lot easier than to expect him to remain calm surrounded here by Biggens."

Blossom looked towards one of the windows facing the forest. "Yes, I hope so."

The afternoon seemed to fly by quickly for Blossom. She felt nearly overwhelmed by how much she had missed in the past three days between the normal coursework and the remedial coursework. She seemed a bit elsewhere to Saniel and the others at dinner.

He asked her a question and she didn't respond. He looked at the others at the table, got off his cushion, moved over next to her and gently nudged her. "Hey, Blossom, are you alright?"

She blinked a moment and turned to him. "I'm sorry, Saniel. My mind was elsewhere. Yes, I'm fine. Just very tired." She paused a moment. "And I feel a bit overwhelmed by what I need to make-up after being in the hospital the past three days."

"Recovering from saving another's life, you mean," he replied.

“That was very selfless of you,” Moselyn added having not had much time to speak to her roommate about what happened.

Saniel glanced over at Moselyn as he replied. “If Moselyn doesn’t mind, I can spend some time with you this evening and help you study.” Moselyn nodded as he finished the sentence.

“Don’t you have your own coursework to study, Saniel?”

“I do, but I haven’t missed three days of classes either. I can take a little time and help you catch-up.”

True to his word, Saniel spent a couple clicks in the evening helping Blossom with her studies until she started to nod off.

“I guess it’s time to call it a night, huh?” he asked as he closed the textbook on his flatpanel and attached it to his hip.

“Please stay,” she pleaded. “I need company tonight.”

Saniel glanced over at Moselyn. “Will you allow me to spend the night?”

Moselyn was caught off guard, but barely hesitated before answering, “Of course.”

Saniel reached for her forepaw in his, bowed and gently kissed it. “Thank you.” He turned to Blossom. “I need to use the bathroom and will return shortly.”

While he was out of the room, Blossom thanked Moselyn. Before she could reply back, Saniel had returned, tapping a quick message on his flatpanel.

“I’m just alerting Drexle that I’ll be here tonight.” He set the flatpanel on a side table near the nest and crawled in with Blossom quickly joining him. The two of them snuggled down together and Blossom was quickly asleep.

Moselyn felt a bit envious as she glanced over at the other two. She was caught off guard when she realized Saniel was still awake and watching her. He tapped a space in the nest next to him and Blossom with his tail.

“You could join us if you wish,” Saniel whispered. “I think Blossom needs extra snuggling tonight. It’s been several rough days for her.”

Moselyn hesitated for a moment and then came over. “Are you sure?”

Saniel flicked his tail up and down once and nodded. She crawled into the space Saniel had indicated and found the nest was more comfortable than she had expected. She curled up on the other side of Blossom from Saniel and found herself facing him muzzle-to-muzzle. She was slightly startled when he gently licked her cheek fur.

“See, it’s not that bad. Good night, Moselyn and thank you for letting me stay.”

Saniel quickly drifted to sleep as she watched. She soon was asleep herself.