Chapter 7

 As soon as we arrived home, we were cascaded with an avalanche of questions. They wanted to know where we had been, what had happened, how we escaped, and much more. I felt overwhelmed and exhausted, wanting nothing more than to take a nice long nap. As Eya ignored her surroundings and I retold the tale, I noticed that Griffen was hanging back. Everyone was too busy to be aware of anything other than their fascination.

 "The mad man was firing in all directions, nearly hitting us the whole way! Luckily, the truck ran out of gas just as we broke free of the village." I said dramatically. "Did you die?" Sage asked urgently his little black and tan tail wagging. "That depends on your definition of 'dead'." Savoy mused, laughing good naturedly. Eya scowled and lay down to take a well deserved nap, her ears twitching irritably. I turned around just in time to see Griffen leave. "Hey!" I called after him, "Where are you going?" He sighed and sat down. "This is all my fault. I put you in danger, I should have known. I was so stupid." He pleaded, casting his eyes down in shame. It pained me to see his deep blue eyes so sad. "I still think we made the right decision." I whispered, he smiled feebly. "But I just need a little more time." "I know." he sighed. "I just want you to be happy."

 Eya evidently had perceived that we were having a little chat and had decided to join. "Aren't you two tired?" she asked suspiciously. No doubt she suspected us to be planning another getaway. "Eya, don't think us so stupid that we would try something. Seriously, we have brains too you know." I snapped, hoping that I was speaking for both us. "I want to apologize--" Griffen started, but Eya interupted, "What you two did was completely irrational and totally insane. You could have been killed." She snapped angrily. I opened my mouth to argue, but she wasn't done, "But you weren't, and that is all that matters. If you want to be reckless then so be it, it seems I cannot force you to be logical." she sniffed, "apology accepted." she added. "Eya, you're the best." I chuckled. She had always had a unique way of expressing herself. "Well, you know me. I'm always taking a risk." Griffen laughed. Eya glanced at the darkening sky and shook herself, looking perturbed. "Now that we've cleared that all up, I would like to speak to Mayda alone if you don't mind." She requested, pawing at the ground as if she couldn't wait to tell me something. He nodded and gave me a reassuring look as he trotted back into the forest.

 "Yes?" I inquired apprehensively. We didn't have private chat on a daily basis, and I was anxious to know what she wanted. "It's a beautiful night." she whispered absently. "Have you turned into some kind of Moon wannabe?" I joked, trying to cut to the chase. Apparently she wasn't listening. Turning to me with a strange kind of excited expression, she asked me the most unexpected question, "How do you feel when you're with Griffen?". I was flabbergasted. "I don't know, kind of giddy and.....special. It's hard to explain. It's like walking on a cloud but you have to be careful not to fall. You have to act normal, but it's impossible not to be frivolous when your with the one who wants to be with you." "So the butterflies in my stomach are normal?" she pressed eagerly. "And the feeling like you want to be with them forever so they can make you laugh and when your with them you're the happiest wolf on earth and nothing else matters but him? Mayda, I don't know what's happening to me!" This had caught me so off guard that I broke into a fit of laughter. "I was positive you were going to chew me out and you want to talk about love!" I sputtered. She looked down, embarrassed. "But who? How long?" I asked, still snickering. I had always thought that Eya would always be a cranky old widow. It was a miracle such feeling could actually get past her thick skull.

 "Every time he looks at me and talks to me I know that someone other than the one I was born with actually wants to be with me. And his blue eyes shine even when he is sad or angry, but of course he can never stay angry for too long. The way his fur is always unkempt and he still speaks to me even when I'm so mean to him. He sees past all my faults and I'm so lucky to know a guy that is so loyal and loving." She went on, totally and completely love struck. At first I had no idea who she was rambling about, and then it struck me, "Savoy! But I thought you hated his guts!" I shouted in disbelief. "Shhh." She warned, glancing at the pack, "They'll hear you. And I don't hate his guts, I think he is funny and sweet." "Then why do you make those faces whenever he tells a joke and why do you pretend that you hate him?" "I make those faces because I'm trying not to laugh, I have a reputation you know. If I laugh then I'll give myself away and I won't know what to do. I've been holding it in so long because I didn't want to like him, but when I saw you with Griffen I realized how happy you two were, and I envied you. I just don't know how to show him how I feel." She admited, looking ashamed. "Reputation?!? I'll tell you what you're going to do. You are going to laugh, you are going to let him in, and you are going to love it!" I ordered. "All right, but you have to help me." she smiled. I smiled back and told her, "When you are in love, you don't need help."

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 I watched Eya carefully as she sat there seeming as though nothing had happened. Everyone was getting ready to go to sleep as we silently communicated. I had told her not to come on to strongly, but to be nonchalant and calm. Savoy was sitting quietly gazing up at the stars, unaware that we were both watching him. It was the perfect scene to put operation Savoy into action. The night was clear and quiet, nothing less than romantic.

 I caught Eya's eye and nodded subtly. She cast one last fleeting glimpse of me and moved in for the kill. She sat deftly next to him and stared up into the shining sky. "Beautiful night, isn't it." she whispered in awe. Savoy must have jumped a foot into the air with surprise. He had been so absorbed in his star gazing he hadn't noticed her arrival. I had to squeeze my eyes shut to keep myself from laughing out loud because I was supposed to be pretending to sleep and if a 'sleeping' wolf laughs it kind of ruins the moment. Opening my eyes again I saw Eya smile and felt relieved that she hadn't chickened out. "Yeah." was all he managed to stutter, still trying to compose himself as he sat back down. "Listen, I know I've been kind of a jerk to you, and I just wanted to apologize." She said as she stared into his eyes. "Uh, thanks." He gawked, "I didn't mind, really." She smiled and looked up again.

 They sat there silently and admired the night sky, soaking in the moment. Finally, Savoy looked at her adoringly, his ears flopping to one side like they always do, and he asked, "Did you mean all those things you said in the forest?" Eya blushed under her fur. I had no idea what they were talking about, but I had a pretty good idea. "Yes, I guess I did." she said honestly. Savoy's seemed to shine even more, his tail wagging slightly. He reminded me of a puppy that had just received a bone. "I have to know, what do you see in me that made you like me?" She wondered nervously. "You're smart and pretty and you always know what to do. I'm sorry if I bother you, but I can't stand to see you so unhappy, and I want to cheer you up. I can't help myself." He confessed, looking down. "You do make me happy, even if I am too ungrateful to show it." She said timidly. "I've never met someone so determined to love someone who doesn't deserve it." "But you do!" He protested, "Even if you aren't the nicest wolf, you have never done a wrong thing in your entire life, and I want you to know that even if you don't want me around, I'll always be here to tell you that." "But I do want you around, that's the problem." She half laughed, "Let's go to bed." They fell asleep side by side, happy to finally be together.