

“I can help who’s next .” Liam looked at the line and then at the clock on the register. *Only half an hour left.* He looked up when someone approached. “Name?”

“Here’s my ID, I’d rather not say it.” She held the card out awkwardly. Liam nodded with a smile as he grabbed the card.

“Technically not supposed to allow that, but I’ll make an exception for you hun.” He looked at the card as he placed it on the register and began typing. *Thought that’s what it might be.* He reviewed the information before handing the card back. “Here you go ma’am, I’ll have that right out.”

“Thanks.” She shifted on her feet as Liam walked into the back and retrieved her prescription.

“Alright, looks like we had both filled this morning, I just need you to verify and sign on the pad and then I’d like to talk to you at the next window.”

“I’ve been on these for a while.” Her face pleaded, asking to skip that step.

“Sorry, can’t ignore that policy unfortunately.” They completed the checkout process and walked to the next window. Liam leaned against the counter, turning one of the bottles in his hands until he saw she was in front of him. She made intermittent eye contact. *Sorry hun, but we gotta talk.* “We don’t get many of your kind here.”

“I’m sorry?” Her demeanor shifted in an instant, a spark of defensive annoyance showing in her blue eyes.

“At the pharmacy.” He stood up straight, looking up to meet her gaze.

“Trans folks? Where else are we going to get our hormones?” A new harshness underlined her words, replacing the awkward shyness she’d shown not moments before.

Liam was taken aback but steadied himself as he shoved his hands into the pockets of his lab coat. “No. Werewolves.” He could see her mind racing as her mouth fell agape.

“I.. I don’t know what you’re talking about. Can I just have my prescription?”

“Good answer. I’m off in half an hour, can I buy you a coffee?”

“Um. I’m gay.”

“So am I hon, I’d like to have a chat with you though.”

She swallowed hard before her mouth fell open again. “Yeah, sure. Okay. Where?”

“You pick, I can tell you’re on edge.” His face softened into a warm, disarming smile as he handed her the prescription.

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Liam walked into the cafe and looked around, finding the woman sitting in a booth in the back. She looked at him briefly, then back into her drink.

“Miss.” He offered a hand in greeting, she stood and took it before sitting back down. “Allow me to introduce myself, I’m Liam.”

“I know.” She looked at the nametag on his chest. “Please call me Ashley.”

“Pleasure to meet you, Ashley.” He smiled as he took off his nametag and shoved it into a pocket. *Are you going to ask or am I going to have to tell you?*

“H-how?” She looked up from her drink and stared straight into his eyes with a puzzled and upset look on her face.

“I’m sorry?”

“How did you know? I know you’re not a werewolf, I would’ve smelled you.” She sniffed the air to drive her point home.

“Ah, yes. Well, you see, werewolves aren’t the only supernaturals in this world.”

“Meaning you’re?” She raised an eyebrow.”

“A witch.” He smiled softly and cocked his head to the side.

“A witch?” She looked him up and down. “So you what? Cast spells and curse people?”

“Spells yes. I’m not big on curses, nasty business, don’t you agree?”

Ashley grunted in agreement, clearly thinking about the once again expanded world she’d had forced upon her.

“You think on that, I’ll get us some coffee. Cream or sugar?” He stood when he saw her shake her head and returned a minute later with two cups.

“What else is there? Supernatural I mean?” She took a cup and sipped from it, flinching at the heat.

“Too hot? Here.” He grabbed the cup and muttered a few words quietly. Ashley watched as the steam stopped rising from the cup and he handed it back. “Let me know if that’s too cool.”

“You’re not kidding.”

“Why would I kid?” He nodded at the cup and she drank from it. “As for your other question, I only know of the wild spirits and the Fae.”

“Witches, werewolves, spirits, and fairies. Wild.” She shook her head, clearly wanting to disbelieve.

“Not fairies, not like in the stories. It’s...complicated. And there aren’t many of them around here anymore.”

“What about other witches? Werewolves?”

“Yeah, plenty. Have you not met any? At all?”

“I mean, I had a few classes with the one who bit me. But that was before she did. I only saw her once after.”

“So you don’t have any control of your shifts?”

“I do, when I saw her she gave me a necklace, moonstone. I don’t go nuts or anything.”

“But you can’t shift at will?”

“That’s a thing?!” She shouted but covered her mouth as she finished her question.

“I have some folks I’d like you to meet. Could I introduce you to the pack?”

“Pack? Like alphas and shit?” She scoffed and shook her head.

“No, no. Alphas aren’t a thing. Think of it like a loose association of families, a few individual werewolves.” He paused. “A couple witches. Some humans too. More mutual aid than hierarchical organization.”

“Uh, sure.” Her face showed she was searching for something more to say.

“Don’t worry, they don’t bite. There’s a barbecue next weekend. My husband and I were going to bring a few pies. You’re welcome to come with us.”

“Okay, yeah. That sounds nice.”

“Great, here.” He handed his phone out to her. “Put your number in my phone and I’ll text you the details.”