

Lola rubbed her hands together and smiled.

"Lets go. I'm ready!" Lola says and I chuckle. Ben nodded to me.

"Slow down partner. I think its best if y'all recharge first, I'll come up with a plan and we can go over it before y'all leave." Madelyn says. Seriously who was she?! I nod in agreement and I see Lola deflate and sit down. I wanted to go and talk to Nerth but he kind of vanished.

"Hey, um, would you want to go on a walk with me?" Ben asks. My heart did two flutters.

"Sure." I say and he smiles. I told Lola goodbye and she gave me another one of those looks and I rolled my eyes and stuck my tongue out at her. She just laughed and then we started off. Elysium really was beautiful. Rolling green hills dotted with all different kinds of flowers. There was a small path. We walked in silence for a time, just enjoying the scenery and each others presence. But there was something weighing heavily on my heart and mind. I was trying to work up the courage to tell Ben about it. I opened my mouth finally to tell him when he stopped and bent down.

"Look Audrey, yellow roses." He says and points to a small bush dotted with beautiful yellow roses. I'd never seen yellow roses before. But they were really pretty.

"Wow their really pretty." I say and admire the tiny plant.

"Yeah, their super rare. But in my opinon the prettiest roses by far. Maybe thats why their rare." He says softly, almost to himself. He grabbed his sword and cut off one of the delicate flowers and careful took off the thorns. He did it with the gentleness I had seen only once before, when I was in the cage. When he finished, he inspected the rose. He looked at me with his sweet eyes and smiled.

"Here, this is for you." He says and carefully hands it to me. My heart threanted to beat out of my chest and I felt heat rush to my cheeks.

"Thanks Ben, its gorgeous." I tell him, fingering the tiny gift.

"Audrey, theres been something I've been meaning to tell you." He says and my heart starts beating in overdrive.

"Yes?" I ask him. He took a deep breath then looked at me again. This time he held my gaze.

"I-I like you. Like, like like you." He says softly. I think my heart actually stopped. What are the chances that your crush likes you back? WHAT ARE THE CHANCES?? For the first time in a long time, I didn't have any thoughts circling in my head. It was blishfully blank.

"B-Ben I-I don't know what t-to say." I start. He nods sadly.

"I-I get it if you don't feel the same way, I just couldn't go any further on this quest without telling you." He says.

"N-no no Ben. It's not that I don't feel that way, it's just that... I can't be with anyone right now." I tell him. He looks confused.

"What do you mean? If it's too early then I can hold off and wait but-" He says but I interrupt him.

"ITS BECAUSE I ALMOST DIED BEN! THE EVIL ONE ALMOST KILLED ME IN THAT CELL! And... I don't want to get you killed if he tries again." I blurt out. He just stood there as I collected myself.

"W-w-what do you mean he almost killed you? Erebus told us you were in rough shape but that wasn't his fault, it was Ha-"

"No Ben. He took over and he... he made a sword out of thin air and... and he..." I sobbed looking at my shaking hands. He stood there processing for a minute. Then he pulled me into a hug and we stayed in that postion for a long time.

"Audrey, I-I had no idea. But you shouldn't have to face this alone. You didn't leave me behind when my wolves attacked. You picked me of all people to go on this quest with you. You didn't let me walk away like a coward when my dad lied to me. Nobody's ever done that for. So, I'm not gonna let you go this alone. You pulled me out of my dark place, so I'm gonna do the same for you." He says and I couldn't help but smile. I hugged him tighter, like he was the only thing keeping me from slipping away.

"Thank you Ben." I tell him when i felt better.

"Always." He says, it was sweet even though it was a Professor Snape quote though he probably didn't know that. I forgave him for it though. I didn't want to leave the moment. I looked up at his face.

"What happened here?" I ask him and trace the line over his eyebrow. He sighed.

"Panic. I-I tried to fight the wolves off while you were gone. But, they won't kill me just hurt me. I'm thankful they won't come here. They almost tore off Lola's arm when we came out of that hole." He says and sadness crept into his eyes.

"I'm sorry Ben." I tell him and give him a hug. He rested his chin on my head.

"It's ok. I'll break it one day, even if it does kill me. They won't hurt you again." He says. I don't know what I did next but I reached up and kissed him. It wasn't very long but it was enough. I had never really kissed a guy before. I pulled away and he stood there, dazed. I blushed.

"W-Wow." He says. I chuckle. He smiled.

"I think it's time we head back, or Lola might come after us." I tell him, though I really didn't want to leave.

"Ok. You're probably right. You should've seen her when we got back to camp. She was a ticking time bomb." He says and I laugh. He slid his hand in mine and we walked back together.