

CHAPTER 19: WELCOME BACK

Claire smiled gently as she walked towards her father's office, her thoughts full of Sebastian. Devin must have already informed him about her injury. Knowing how protective Sebastian was of her in her last life, it shouldn't be any different now. How would he react to the news? If he cared for her, she will know now.

She knocked on the door, even though her father had already given her permission to enter his office whenever she wanted. But it didn't feel right to invade his sanctuary like that and a little politeness hurt no one, right?

Ever since she noticed her father's health issues, she was worried history was going to repeat. Though she was careful this time, the anxiety of losing him never went away and hence she frequently checked on him. Her father seemed amused with her fussiness and to her relief, he was doing good these days. She could only hope it meant he would be safe from whatever ailment he suffered from last time. She couldn't lose him again.

"Come in," Alpha Gavin called from inside and with a

smile, Claire opened the door.

“Hey, Dad!” She greeted him as she entered, only to freeze when she noticed the guest sitting on the chair in front of her Dad’s desk.

“Hello princess. What brings you here?” Gavin asked, a pleasant smile on his face and Claire dragged her gaze from the man who was sitting stiffly, refusing to look at her.

“Ah. I just wanted to see how you were doing,” Claire said, tearing her gaze away from the broad back of a certain Alpha.

“I am alright princess. Just like I promised.” Then he leaned forward, his eyes filling with worry as he glanced at her hand. He had already seen the wound and knew it was not a cause of concern but still he couldn’t help but worry for his daughter. “Now you tell me, how is your hand?”

“I already told you it’s nothing but a flesh wound. You know I am tougher than I look. I won’t cry for a little boo boo. Stop worrying, dad.”

Claire smiled at her father as she looked him over. While he didn’t look as if he was perfectly alright like he claimed to be, he didn’t look bad either. She will just have to find his issue in time and he will be fine...

Claire turned to the man who sat like a statue, his hands tightened into a fist beside him as if he was stopping himself from turning around. You came for me!

“Welcome back, Alpha Sebastian. Good to see you again this soon,” Claire greeted him in a pleasant voice, calling him out. Now how will you pretend not to notice me?

Slowly, Sebastian turned around, his face set in his usual blank mask, but she could see the worry in his eyes. He quickly looked her over, his brows furrowing as his gaze paused on the bandaged wound in her arm. Even though she had just said that she was fine, his entire body was taut with tension as he stared at her.

A look of relief flashed through his eyes after he assessed the wound, seeing with his own eyes that it was nothing to worry about. Though he still had that indifferent mask on his face, she could see his shoulders relaxing from their stiff position. Still, he refused to look at her eyes directly. Ahaa. We are playing that game, huh? 1

Claire looked away from him reluctantly when her father started speaking.

“Alpha Sebastian is here to talk about an alliance. He

had been planning to do it the last time itself. But he had urgent business in his pack and had to leave before he could get to it," Gavin said, his blue eyes that looked so similar to that of Claire's twinkling excitedly. "When he got free, he didn't want to delay it anymore and visited us right away. Isn't that wonderful?"

"It's absolutely wonderful, Dad. I am so happy he could come," Claire said, her eyes on Sebastian. Then she blinked. "For our pack, I mean!"

"Alpha Sebastian, you don't mind having Claire here, right? She will be the future Luna after all, and including her in our discussion will make things easier for us later." Gavin said, and Claire watched as Sebastian nodded in response.

"Sure," he replied, his tone sounding distant.

Claire walked over to her father. She took a seat next to him, facing Sebastian, who pointedly looked at Alpha Gavin as if he was suddenly the most interesting being he had ever seen.

"So as we were speaking, we should increase the trading between our packs. Our Ashwood pack has an abundant supply of iron and we are ready to supply it to the Silver fall pack. In return, are you willing to

send a team of your best warriors to train our men?" Gavin asked.

"That sounds good. I will send a team of ten elite warriors for a period of three months. In addition, I will personally visit and help with the training," Sebastian replied, and Gavin nodded merrily. As he bent down to make notes in the paper in front of him, Sebastian threw a glance at Claire, only to turn back, seeing her gazing right at him.

"Great. So that's settled. And we will be allies from now. If our packs face any issues, we will aid each other," Gavin continued.

Sebastian nodded at him but even before he knew it, his eyes were looking towards his mate. Seeing Claire staring at him with raised brows, he snapped his head towards Gavin, his indifferent mask slipping back into his face.

Even though he was acting unaffected, it was obvious that he was extremely aware of Claire's presence. Even when he was chatting with her father, his eyes were always following her. Warmth filled Claire's heart at the thought of her mate, who obviously cared for her even if he wanted to show otherwise. He had rushed into her pack as soon as he heard about her injury and made sure that she was alright. Euphoria

rose in her at the thought that he cared for her. It was a foreign feeling to her because in her previous life, all she had ever received from Liam was neglect and taunting. It felt strange, but in a good way.

Claire looked at Sebastian, her heart skipping a beat as she stared at his handsome face. Oh God, she loved him.

“Well, it’s settled. We will just have to get these on paper now,” Gavin said, looking up at Sebastian, keeping the papers away.

Claire looked at Sebastian as he sat there stiffly, his eyes on the penholder in her father’s desk as if he was fascinated by it. Her father chatted animatedly while Claire responded to him, and Sebastian just nodded and humphed whenever he was required to respond. It should have been awkward with the grumpy alpha refusing to look at her, but somehow, Claire only felt amusement.

Claire turned to look at her father and seeing the blank look in his eyes, she realised he was mind linking someone.

Suddenly, he straightened up and pushed his plate away.

“I am sorry, Alpha Sebastian. I would have to leave

now. There is some urgent business I have to attend to," Gavin said, standing up from his seat, an apologetic expression on his face. "Sorry for cutting it short, Alpha Sebastian. But Claire will keep you company."

"It's not a problem Alpha Gavin. Please tend to your business."

"Thanks for your understanding," Gavin paused before straightening up, his eyes lighting up as if he just thought of something. "It will be wonderful if you could join us for dinner tonight."


Sebastian looked doubtful but seeing Gavin's expectant look, he nodded in response.

"Alright."

"I will see you at dinner then."

Gavin nodded at him in farewell, looking relieved Sebastian wasn't annoyed with him. Then giving a smile to Claire, he turned and left the room. Now it was just Claire and Sebastian alone in the room. They stared at each other, neither telling a word.

Finally, after what seemed like hours but was probably just a few minutes, Claire stood up from her seat abruptly. As she walked around the table and

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stood in front of him, Sebastian tensed up, his hands fisting nervously. He tried to look away from her and focus on a particularly interesting spot on the wall, but his traitorous eyes just returned to the woman in front of him.

As Sebastian's eyes locked with Claire's, she smiled at him, making him freeze.

"So dear Sebastian," she began, and Sebastian felt a strange thrill course through his veins hearing her address him like that. However, he turned stiff the next moment when Claire continued speaking.

"So care to tell me why you came back?"

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