

CHAPTER 34: THE TRAINING BEGINS

Time seemed to move slowly as Claire waited for the afternoon to approach, her mind full of excitement at the thought of training with Sebastian. With a smile, she envisioned scenarios of her fighting Sebastian, impressing him with her fighting prowess.

Finally, the agreed time arrived, and Claire rushed towards their secret place, brimming with energy. But the minute she spotted Sebastian standing there with a devilish grin, she had a feeling that she was not going to like whatever he had in store for her. And it turned out, her instincts were absolutely right!

"Shall we start?" Claire asked timidly, all the energy she had while arriving was a thing of the past by now.

"You can," he said, and her spidey senses tingled. You can? Not we?

Seeing her puzzled look, Sebastian grinned.

"Give me a hundred laps around the trail," he said, and Claire blinked.

"You are kidding, right?" She asked when he just stood there as if expecting her to do what he asked.

"Of course not."

"You mean you want me to run hundred rounds around this forest trail full of debris and what not? Hundred?" She asked incredulously and Sebastian grinned.

"You don't want to improve your stamina and endurance?" He asked

CHAPTER 34: THE TRAINING BEGINS

in return and she stood there dazedly, the words 'hundred laps' repeating inside her head like a broken record.

"Are we standing here the whole day or are you starting yet?" Sebastian called out, making her snap off from her thoughts, and Claire looked up. Dear God, he really wasn't kidding. Was he planning to kill her?

Seeing the serious look in Sebastian's eyes, Claire knew that there was no escaping it. She had made her bed, and now she had to lie in it. Running it is then.

Reluctantly Claire started running, but once she went through a few laps, energy coursed through her veins, even when her entire body was coated in sweat. She felt determination flare up in her as she ran over logs of wood, bushes, and even the little animals she encountered in the path. It felt liberating, and even when she felt tired; she knew she had to do it.

She could feel her limbs, which were unused to such torture, protesting every movement by the time she reached forty laps, but she still pushed on, her determination to complete the challenge winning over her exhaustion. By the time she reached the seventieth lap, she was panting so hard that she felt like her heart will just burst at any moment.

Claire looked back to see Sebastian standing there with a torn look, as if he was arguing with himself. Probably Caleb was giving him hell for torturing her like this while he says it was for her best. Still, he himself looked as if he was questioning his decision to be this tough on her and if his hesitant look was any indication, he may ask her to

CHAPTER 34: THE TRAINING BEGINS

stop any moment now.

The thought of her mate's concern freshened her up, and she started running with renewed vigor, her exhaustion forgotten as if it was never there. Before she knew it, she completed the hundredth lap before falling into a puddle on the ground, a victorious grin on her face.

"I did it!" She crowed triumphantly.

"You did it," Sebastian agreed, plopping next to her, a proud glint in his eyes.

"Now let's move on to push-ups," Sebastian said indifferently and Claire stiffened, the smile on her face vanishing. Is he for real?!

Seeing her incredulous look, Sebastian let out a laugh, his eyes shining with mirth, and Claire gaped at him. How can someone be this mesmerizing?

"I meant tomorrow," Sebastian said once he stopped laughing, but he was still smiling as he spoke.

And their first day of training was officially over.

The next several days passed by in a similar way, Sebastian and Claire meeting at their secret place for her training every afternoon. Even though she was skeptical in the beginning, the running, pushups and the other exercises Sebastián ordered her to do helped build Claire's stamina. And when she finally started fighting him again after a few days, she realised she was a lot better than she was before. Even Sebastian was impressed with her progress, praising

CHAPTER 34: THE TRAINING BEGINS

her whenever she managed to land a blow on him.

She was not yet at the level that she could defeat him but still she could hold her own though. Like now, when she was facing him, both of them in fighting stances, anticipating the other's move.

As Claire leaped at Sebastian, he leaped back in a fluid motion resembling a cat, even though he was technically a canine. But before he could straighten up, Claire was over him, pushing him to the ground. He could have easily regained his balance, but he still let himself fall to the ground as he saw the victorious grin on her face.

"Finally! I won, and it wasn't because of cheating!"

Sebastian just smirked at her. But then he stiffened, becoming aware of their position. Slowly, he pushed Claire off his body and got up, dusting his pants as if that was the most important task in the world. Claire stood there next to him awkwardly, a pang of hurt flashing through her chest at his obvious attempt to distance her from him.

Every day when they met each other and spent time together, Claire would feel like they were a normal loving couple who just enjoyed their time together. But then instances like this would give her the reality check. Whenever they had intimate physical touches like this accidentally, he would always distance himself from her. Whatever his reasons may be for doing that, it always left her feeling bereaved.

"Alright. Let's meet tomorrow. Same place, tomorrow noon," Sebastian said with a smile, repeating the phrase they told each other the first day they trained together. It had started off as fun, but it was now like a mantra for them.

"Same place, tomorrow noon," Claire said back with a smile, shaking off her melancholy. It didn't matter. As long as he still cared about her, she had no business feeling bad about him shying away from her touches.

With that, they started walking back, both lost in their own thoughts. After reaching the packhouse, Sebastian looked at Claire.

"See you later," Claire said, and Sebastian nodded in response. Then she turned and walked inside while he stood there, deep in thoughts. He knew Claire was hurt by his attempt to distance himself, but he didn't have a choice. She was in love with another man and bore his mark. How can he let himself get close to her when all it will end up doing will be to cause them both agony? What will Claire think if she knew how excited his body gets whenever she touched him? Nothing good, he was sure!

"Ah. If it isn't our neighboring alpha in heat!" A voice teased from behind and Sebastian let out a sigh.

Training with Claire was a sweet torture for Sebastian. While he loved the opportunity to be close to his mate, it was agony to see and touch her, knowing he couldn't have her. As if getting aroused in the middle of the training and having to hide it by almost throwing her away from him was not enough, the thoughts of her tortured him the whole day too. It had been days since he had a peaceful sleep, since each night he would dream of her. He would wake up in the middle of the night, aroused as hell seeking the comfort only his mate could provide. The comfort that he will never get in this life.

Only after taking a cold shower could he calm his overheated body,

CHAPTER 34: THE TRAINING BEGINS

and only then could he fall back asleep again. At first he thought it was just an odd occurrence, but then it started happening every night, much to his frustration. The lack of sleep and gratification made him annoyed as hell. When Devin teased him about his grumpiness, he ended up blurting about his dreams and having to take cold showers. Big mistake since his asshole of a best friend started teasing him, saying he was in his heat period. Just what he needed. Not!

Sebastian just huffed indignantly at his friend before walking away in frustration and he could hear the jerk's laughter behind him even when he reached his room. Asshole!

The next day, Eunice knocked on Claire's door with a pleasant smile. After the incident with Diana, Devin had been extra protective about her and under his care, she got over her injuries faster than she ever imagined. They spent a lot of time together now and had grown closer to each other over the days. Her face, which had no traces of her injuries, now glowed with affection as she remembered Devin and the flowers he brought her that morning.

Claire opened the door to see a smiling Eunice standing there, and she raised her brows.

"Someone is happy!" She sang in a teasing tone.

Eunice just rolled her eyes while still smiling.

"Are you coming with me for a walk, you smart ass?" Eunice asked.

Claire was about to reply when her phone beeped and she looked down to see a text from Sebastian. It was time for their training.

CHAPTER 34: THE TRAINING BEGINS

Claire looked up at Eunice, hesitation evident in her face. She didn't want to turn down her friend, but she didn't know how Sebastian would react with her missing her training session with him. What a dilemma!

But then she grinned. Why was this a problem when she could tell Eunice to ask Devin instead of her? It would be an opportunity for them to spend time together.

"I am sorry, Eunice. But I can't come with you since I have some business to do. How about you ask Devin instead?"

Eunice just smiled at Claire in response. She had met Devin earlier that day and he had told her he had to meet Alpha Gavin to discuss their alliance. But seeing Claire's flushed face, Eunice had a feeling that she must have already made plans with Sebastian. Even though Claire hadn't told her, Eunice knew Claire was hanging out a lot with Sebastian. If she knew Devin was unavailable to accompany her, Claire would certainly cancel her plans and join her instead. But Claire was so much happier these days after meeting Sebastian, and Eunice felt that her spending time with him was a good thing. She didn't want to interrupt them and decided to keep the matter of Devin being busy to herself.

"Ah. Business, huh? Business with a certain alpha, I guess," Eunice teased Claire, who turned red. How predictable!

"As if you are any better," Claire grumbled.

"Chill woman. I will leave you to your business," Eunice said, emphasizing the word business, and Claire grinned.



CHAPTER 34: THE TRAINING BEGINS

"Have a safe walk. And tell Devin I said hi!" Claire said, making Eunice smile.

"Alright. You have fun doing your business," she teased Claire once more, and she rolled her eyes in response.

With a smile, Eunice turned and walked away from Claire's room. It wasn't a big deal if Claire or Devin couldn't accompany her. She was a big girl and she could just have a walk by herself. What was going to happen?



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