



## CHAPTER 39: HEALING

Claire looked up at the blue sky as a gentle breeze played with her hair. She closed her eyes enjoying the breeze and slowly looked up to see the butterflies flying around her in all colors. They flew from flower to flower, their colorful wings opening and closing in a practiced motion. Birds chirped from the trees which swayed lightly with the wind and Claire felt her tensions ease a bit. Nature really had the power to soothe one's mind even when it's full of chaos.

Slowly, Claire turned to the girl sitting beside her. She had coaxed Eunice to spend some time with her in the garden and even though she was hesitant in the beginning, Eunice had agreed finally. Claire was glad she did because Eunice had a light smile on her face now as her eyes followed the butterflies. Seeing Eunice smiling, even if it was a gentle one and not the merry one she had always seen on her friend's face, Claire's heart felt a little lighter. It may not be much, but it was still a start...

It had been a few days since the incident and during these days, Claire had been trying all she could to bring Eunice out of her shell, to make her feel she still had the chance to live her life to the full. Claire just wanted Eunice to feel better, and she was ready to go to any lengths to do that. Claire had tried bringing her favorite chocolates and ice cream to Eunice, that usually made Eunice squeal in glee. But now she simply didn't care, just gobbling them up mindlessly as if she couldn't even feel what she was eating. When that failed, Claire tried dressing her up, doing her hair and nails, but throughout it, she just sat there lifelessly as if she wasn't even seeing any of it. After that effort too failed, Claire tried bringing the sequel to the book series that Eunice had been waiting for months. Claire read it out loud for Eunice, but it seemed as if she didn't even hear a word.

Thinking a walk would help Eunice relax, Claire asked her out for a walk. To her shock, just hearing the word 'walk' made Eunice let out a blood-curdling scream that sent chills down Claire's spine. She realized Eunice was traumatized by the word walking after what happened during her walk. Claire hadn't even intended to go to the forest but a stroll through the pack grounds, but Eunice couldn't even do that. Eunice and Claire always loved to have a walk through the forest, sharing the events of their day, and the realization that they may never get to do it again was a reality check to Claire. What if she never gets her bubbly Eunice back?

Even looking in the forest's direction made Eunice's eyes widen with fear and Claire just wanted to run off to find the monster who caused this. But Eunice was the priority, and she just wanted to see her friend getting back to normal life first. And then she will go hunting.

After all her attempts to cheer Eunice failed, Claire gently brought up the idea of visiting the garden. She was sure Eunice was going to reject it, so when she agreed, it was a pleasant surprise that brought hope to Claire. And she was right because it was just what Eunice needed. The peaceful look in her face which was always full of anxiety and grief these last days was such a relief to Claire.

Even if she would have loved to sit there all day with Eunice if it brought peace to her, the sun was getting hotter by the moment. It wouldn't be good to stay any longer when Eunice was already in such a fragile state. So Claire turned to her reluctantly.

"Shall we go back?" Claire asked tentatively, making sure not to startle Eunice. In response, Eunice let out a long sigh before nodding.

As they walked back to her room, Claire spotted Eunice looking in the direction of the guest wing with a longing look, as if hoping to catch

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a glimpse of Devin. When she didn't see anyone there, disappointment and pain flashed through her tired eyes, making Claire grit her teeth angrily.

At first, Eunice didn't want to see Devin, unable to face him after what happened to her. But as days passed by with no word from Devin, she started to look anxious. Claire knew Eunice had gotten over her initial reluctance to meet him and now actually craved his presence to soothe her wounded soul. She mentioned nothing about him, but as each day passed without Devin showing up, Claire could see the pain flaring in her friend's eyes. 1

Eunice was already broken after the traumatic incident that happened to her and the man she loved didn't even show up to look for her. His absence was adding to the pain in her soul and making her even more miserable. If he had visited her and offered her a word of comfort, it would have meant the world to her. If he had stayed by her side, she would have healed from the trauma a lot sooner. If only...

Once Claire brought Eunice to her room, she could see the tears brimming in her eyes before she wiped them away. Claire knew that this time the tears were not because of what happened, but because of Devin. The disappointment and ache that Eunice felt over his absence was so palpable, making even Claire's heart twist with pain. That asshole.

Claire knew that Devin had heard their conversation and knew about what happened to Eunice. So why didn't he even make an attempt to see how she was doing all these days? Why did he stay silent and avoided seeing Eunice when he should have been beside her, offering her comfort? The only reason Claire could think of was that, unlike what she hoped for, Devin cared about what happened to Eunice. That he thought of her as tainted and unworthy when it was



not her fault that it happened to her.

Claire stalked off towards Devin's room angrily, her rage growing with every step she took. It was so unfair! Why was Eunice punished for something that was not her fault? Why would she be shunned like this when she did nothing wrong?

Suddenly, she spotted Devin coming out of his room and let out a growl.

"Alpha Devin!"

Devin paused, a frown on his face as he stared at Claire, wondering why she sounded so hostile. And they were already calling each other by their names, so why the sudden Alpha title?

"Yes? What happened Claire?"

Did he seriously ask her what happened?

"What happened? You really don't know?!"

Devin frowned before his eyes widened in realisation and he looked at her as if waiting for her to confirm.

"Yes. I saw the flowers you dropped on the ground that day. I know you heard everything."

Devin sighed in response.

"Yes, I heard everything," he said, his voice barely above a whisper.

"Then why didn't you ever visit Eunice, knowing how devastated she must be after what happened to her?"

Devin just stared at her, his face growing pale.



Claire narrowed her eyes, her anger rising with each moment that passed.

"You think just because some monster assaulted her, she is tainted? That she isn't worthy enough for you?" Claire growled and Devin gasped, his eyes widening as he shook his head.

"I-"

Claire interrupted him by snarling.

"She needed you the most now and you abandoned her! She was a victim, the one who needed to be told that she didn't do anything wrong and she had the right to live her life to the fullest. If you were a decent human being, you would have loved her regardless of what happened and supported her. She would have healed sooner with your presence," Claire said, her voice choking with grief by the end.

Devin just stood there silently, his eyes full of pain.

"She was waiting for you, you know?" Claire asked suddenly, and Devin's eyes widened in shock.

"She kept hoping that you would come for her. But you broke her already shattered heart again by choosing your status and ego over that pure soul."

Claire said and Devin stood there as if he couldn't process her words.

"I thought you were a good guy, the perfect match for my Eunice. But you proved me wrong."

Claire took a deep breath before looking him in his eyes.

"You are such a disappointment, Alpha Devin."



Devin took a step back as if he was slapped, his face twitching with pain.

Claire took a step forward in response, her stance intimidating even if she was way lesser than him in height.

"With this toxic attitude, you don't deserve to have Eunice. Just stay away from her!"

With that, Claire turned to storm off when she spotted Sebastian standing there watching the interaction with his signature blank mask. Seeing him there near Devin when she was already frustrated, Claire remembered how he had been avoiding her touch during their training. As if he couldn't bear to touch the woman who was already marked by someone else. As if she wasn't worthy of his touch. Maybe he even thought that she was a lesser being who was tainted by sharing a bed with another man, even if she never did.

These men were like two peas in a pod. Finding a woman not worthy of them the moment they were touched by another man whether she wanted it or not. Why couldn't they think beyond the physical level of shallowness? Why did it matter if the body was 'pure' or not if their soul was? 1

In her grief and anger, Claire narrowed her eyes at Sebastian. If he hadn't cared about such things, he would have already revealed to her she was his mate. If it had been him who was already marked by another woman, she wouldn't have cared, as long as he was still ready to accept her. So why couldn't he think the same? Just why was he so prejudiced?

"You are also like him, aren't you?" She asked while Sebastian stared at her calmly.

"You know what happened to Eunice, don't you? Even then, you didn't convince him to go to her or console her. That means you also think like him. That she is tainted because of what happened to her," Claire accused, her breaths coming in shallow pants as anger, disbelief and pain warred inside her. "If this had happened to your mate, you would have abandoned her too, wouldn't you? You too would have thought her unworthy of you because she was touched by another man! Just why can't you men think of women's feelings? Why is it that only their bodies matter to you?" Claire asked, tears streaming down her face. She wiped them off before staring at Sebastian, a strange look crossing her eyes. She couldn't tell him she knew she was his mate. But she could tell him how his mate would feel.

Claire took a deep breath before looking at Sebastian, straight in his eyes.

"I feel sorry for your mate, whoever she is."

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