CHAPTER 44: TRUE FEELINGS

"What?" Sebastian blurted out in shock while Claire glared at him.

"I said not him!" She snarled before letting out a tired sigh. "Please don't call him," she repeated in a defeated voice and Sebastian stared at her with surprise, a strange warmth filling his chest. He felt blank for a moment as he tried to process the information, and then felt his lips stretch into a smile as realization dawned. She said she didn't want Liam, the guy she was supposedly in love with! In fact, she looked absolutely revolted at the idea of seeing him, let alone letting him touch her. A strange thrill coursed through his veins at the thought that maybe Liam wasn't as important to Claire as he had originally thought. Maybe the relationship between Claire and Liam wasn't as strong as he believed. Did that mean he still stood a chance?

Feeling elated, Sebastian smiled down at Claire, but his smile faded when he saw the obvious agony on her face. This was not the time to be petty and think of his chances with her or to be smug at her reluctance to call Liam. This was the time to help his mate, who was suffering. But how?

Sebastian took a deep breath, trying to gather his thoughts, and stiffened when her scent hit him. God dammit! She was heavily aroused and the pheromones emanating from his mate's body weren't helping him anyway, even if he wanted to stay rational and help her. He took a breath through his mouth, trying to calm himself and force his excitement down, but it was only getting harder by the moment, pun not intended. As he sat there wondering how to get out of this tough situation without doing something that will bring more problems with Claire later on, she let out another moan, making him groan. This woman was going to be the death of him!

Stifling his desire to push her towards him and claim her plump lips with

his, Sebastian slowly rose from his seated position. He started walking back and forth while trying to devise plans to ease her discomfort without making it awkward. What if he helped her into the pond? Will it help? What if he could make her sleep? What if...

However, all thoughts left his mind when he saw Claire arching her back in a tempting pose, her nipples straining against the thin camisole she was wearing while she bit her lips seductively. Sebastian gulped before letting out a few curses that would make a sailor blush. All his alternative plans flew out the window as he stared at Claire, who was grinding her hips suggestively, her eyes hooded with lust. Alright. He was deluding himself if he thinks he could just sooth this woman by any other means than sex. She was drugged by an aphrodisiac and even a fool knows that sex was the only way to contradict its effects. Without it, he will have to watch his mate go through agony and, in the worst-case scenario, even death and he certainly wasn't willing to let his mate suffer just because it would be awkward! He had to ease her ache, even if it meant she will hate him later.

Sebastian took a deep breath, mustering his courage and stalked towards Claire. He was an alpha, and he was her mate. He was no coward who runs away at the first sign of trouble. He could do this!

"Shall I..." To his mortification, his voice broke in the end and Sebastian took another deep breath before continuing.

"Shall I help you?" He asked meekly. Great. Alpha, huh? And where was that stupid dog when he needed his help?

Claire, who had sat there dazedly until then, suddenly snapped her head up, her eyes lighting up with sudden clarity while she glared at him.

While she was still under the effects of the drug, she still remembered how she was pissed at him for thinking she was not good enough because

she was with another man. How could she forget it when his attitude had just about shattered her already broken heart?

"No!" Claire snapped at Sebastian. "I don't need your help!"

Sebastian stiffened, his eyes flashing with pain as he stared at Claire.

Even when she was in pain, she refused to take his help. Did she hate him that much? Was he that bad in her eyes? What did he do to deserve this hatred when all he ever wanted was to see her happy?

Sebastian was snapped out of his thoughts when Claire let out a pained groan, her hands flying to her head. A drop of tear rolled down her cheeks, making it clear that she was in agony and Sebastian stood there helplessly, feeling utterly useless. He couldn't help his mate when she was in pain. What kind of mate was he?

Claire writhed on the ground while she let out a pained cry and Sebastian knew that the effects of the drug had reached the next state. Rather than cause her to be aroused and end up having sex, the drugs were causing her pain now. If this continued, soon the pain will become insufferable and she may even die if the dose was high enough. Everything in his being was demanding him to save her from the pain but how could he help her when she had clearly said no? Even if he was ready to accept her hate for saving her, his principles wouldn't allow him to touch a girl who had already said no. So did that mean he could only stand there like a moron and watch her suffer? Hell no!

Sebastian sighed before sitting next to Claire and taking her hand in his, ignoring the way she stiffened with his touch. She refused to accept his help because of a misunderstanding and if clearing that was the only way for her to accept his help, then that is what he will do. Claire thought he was the kind of man who treated their mate as a possession who will be tainted with the touch of another man and, lord knew, he will never have

such a thought in all his lives.

"You asked me if I thought a woman will be tainted if she was touched by another man," he began and noticed how Claire had stopped groaning, her attention now solely on him. Good.

"You don't know how bad I felt after learning what had happened to Eunice." He let out a sigh. "If something like that had happened to my mate," Sebastian paused, rage coursing through his veins at the very thought before he gritted his teeth and forced himself to continue. "I will never think of her as tainted just because some lecherous bastard violated her. I will only be pissed at myself for failing to protect her. The bastard will never get to live another day after what he did to my mate." He shook his head, determination flaring in his eyes. "I will never abandon my mate for something that was no fault of hers. I will always be there for her and I will help her forget that day by creating new precious memories together."

He looked down at Claire who was gazing up at him silently, her eyes as clear as the sky above. Gods, he loved this woman!

He let out a sigh before tightening the hold on her hand and, to his relief, she didn't try to pull her hand from his hold.

"Even if she ended up getting pregnant with another man's baby, I will accept that child. I will never make her think she is not good enough. The only one I will ever blame is myself for not reaching earlier to protect her."

Sebastian stared at Claire earnestly, meaning every word he spoke. Even now, he will get Liam for her if she asks for him and if she ends up pregnant with his baby, he will still love her as well as her baby. Claire stared at Sebastian with a blank face before a slow smile spread across her face. She could feel the honesty ring in his words and knew that he was speaking the truth. These were his true feelings. In her sadness and anger at Devin's actions, she had misunderstood Sebastian too. She should just have listened to her soul, which always knew how pure her mate was. This was her Sebastian who was always there for her and she knew that it will never change even if she was reborn a hundred times....

Claire tightened the hold on the hand Sebastian was holding and he stared at her with wide eyes full of hope. Those green green eyes that she loved...

"I trust you," she said, her voice hoarse.

Sebastian beamed at her and Claire felt her breath hitch as she stared at him. It felt like seeing the sun come out after a long, cloudy day. So beautiful...

But then another wave of pain hit her, and she let out a groan.

Sebastian looked at her anxiously before speaking.

"Does that mean you will let me help you? We don't even need to have sex. I will just use my hands to help you reach climax. It won't even have to mean anything. You can just see it as getting help to relieve your pain and nothing more," Sebastian blabbered nervously and Claire let out a laugh before it turned to a groan of pain.

"Yes," she said.

"I mean, it is just ... Wait, what? Yes?"

"Yes, I will take your help," Claire repeated, rolling her eyes and

