

His Beta 297

Chapter 297

Lanie

“My daughter was, of course, a hybrid, although I knew what I was before she was born. She seemed normal at birth.”

“Stella is not abnormal,” I cut in fiercely.

Charlotte smiled. “No. You’re right. Hazel was not abnormal, either. She was, in fact, extraordinary. As I suspect your Stella is. Rare and extraordinary. But definitely not normal.”

“Fine,” I conceded.

“Let me describe her, and you tell me if I’m right,” Charlotte began. “Grew at an expected rate until close to her first doubling, when it became clear she outpaced her siblings by quite a bit.”

I nodded.

“You were lucky to have the comparison. I didn’t realize that Hazel was bigger than other pups at her stage of development. Oh, sure, I knew she was particularly bright and beautiful, but, after all...”

Charlotte’s eyes shone as she ducked her head. “What mother doesn’t think her own child is the best,

the brightest, the loveliest of them all?"

"We were all shocked when Stella started talking. All three of the pups had been babbling, but Isaac and Alaina were still only making those baby words when Stella was using full sentences." A tickle caressed the back of my neck at the memory. "Was Hazel the same?"

"Again, I wasn't fully aware that she was progressing so much faster than expected. I simply thought she was advanced for her age. But yes. She began speaking in full sentences. She could walk, talk, dress herself. She was able to use the toilet by herself within a few hours of me teaching her."

Charlotte's gaze for a few seconds, and she fell silent.

Was. Were. She spoke of her daughter in the past tense, which sent a chill of worry twisting through me. Was she simply relating a story that had taken place in the past, or had something happened to Hazel? I was stant

The thought of losing Stella had my heart seizing. I covered my sudden distress by taking a drink of beer, but the sour flavor made me cough even harder. Charlotte turned her attention back to me and waited without speaking for me to clear my throat.

"You need to understand how rare this is. In all the years I've been trying to understand my own life and

that of my daughter, I've only heard rumors and stories. And, Lanie, keep in mind that Hazel's bloodline was much shorter than your daughter's. My father to me, to my child. Stella's bloodline goes back another entire generation, which ought to have diluted it even further."

"And, no other hybrids are showing the same traits," added. I was desperate to put all the pieces into place, but some of them simply would not fit. "But why?"

"That's something the High Council is trying to figure out with what they're doing in that facility." Her lip

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in it buried to the aratind

"I'm with you on that one." A shudder rippled over me at the memories of the horrid building. The smell.

The harsh lights.

"You were very brave, you know. Going after those babies. The children of your rival. I doubt many

others

would've done the same." Charlotte sounded admiring.

I frowned and shook my head, uncomfortable with the praise. "The children could not be blamed for the circumstances of their conception."

"That's true, but that still doesn't mean that what you did isn't commendable. I doubt their birth mother would've done the same, if the situation were reversed."

"We'll never know, because she died," I said, a little too harshly. "There's no point in wondering what she

might have done. I am their mother."

Charlotte chuckled. "Thank Goddess. You're not perfect."

"Huh?" My brows knit.

"You're not perfect," she repeated, but in a kind voice, "Your jealousy over the woman your mates all loved

is still there, even if you try to pretend it's not. It's very real, very relatable, and very understandable."

"I didn't come here to talk about Alice," I snapped, hating that Charlotte's insight felt spot on. "And I've never claimed to be perfect."

“Good thing. That’s likely to be the swiftest way to have the Goddess show you how wrong you are.”

She

grinned.

After a few seconds, I returned it. I wasn’t sure I liked Charlotte. I wasn’t sure I one hundred percent trusted her. But I was starting to understand her.

“I want to meet your daughter,” she said next. “I have some theories, and I do have more information to share, but here is not the place. We’ve just about worn out our welcome.”

I glanced around and for the first time, started to notice some curious glances. “Did you...do

To shield us?”

Her smile told me the answer was “yes.”

My Luna intuition told me that having her meet Stella was the right choice, but I also knew it was g
be a hard sell for my mates.

When I told her this, Charlotte laughed. “Understandable, and if they weren’t concerned, I would wonder why they weren’t. So... Let’s start with Xander. Come on. You’ll have to help me convince him.”