

## **His Beta 364**

### Chapter 364

Lanie

The hallways outside the school bustled with people picking up their little ones. I kept my head down, not really wanting to talk to anyone. I didn't want to have to force a smile or explain why I looked like I'd been crying.

The moment I saw my three precious little ones, my heart instantly lifted. No matter what else might be going on in my life, their sweet faces always made me smile. Becoming a mommy was hard work, but I was never going to regret the choices that had given me these children.

I shouldn't have been surprised that Alaina and Isaac were both bigger than when I'd dropped them off this morning. The doubling all wolf pups went through was never completely predictable, and because they were twins, even less so. They'd started off smaller than Stella when she was born, and of course she'd grown faster because of being a Celestial. Now, though, both twins were an inch or so taller than their sister.

“Mama, look what I made!” Alaina ran to me waving a paper colored all over with pictures of rainbows, suns, and moons.

“Very nice,” I said admiringly. For a second I had a pang of melancholy that I had no fridge of my own to hang this picture on. I’d just have to save it carefully for when we were able to get back home.

If we ever could.

Stella had followed the twins a few steps behind and now gave me a curious look. “Mother, are you sad about something?”

She sounded as sophisticated as a teenager. I bent to stroke her hair and kiss her forehead.

“No, my love. I’m fine. Oh, hey, there.” I let out a laugh as Isaac muscled his way into our embrace.

“What

have you got for me?”

“I made a picture, too,” he said, holding it up. His was of dragons breathing fire.

I admired it, too, then folded both pictures and tucked them into the pocket of my jeans. I looked at Stella.

“Didn’t you draw any pictures today?”

She shook her head. “No. Miss Janice said I should be in reading group, so I didn’t get to color today.”

“She did?” I I

I looked for Miss Janice, a tall Fae woman with silver curls framing her face. She waved at me. “You

three stay here. I’m going to talk to Miss Janice for a second.”

When I asked her if what Stella had said was true, Miss Janice nodded.

“Oh, yes. Stella was so interested in learning to read that we put her in the group with some of the older

children. She was already sounding out words and insisted that she be allowed to focus on that. It

seemed

silly to keep her with the children who aren’t quite as advanced.”

That wasn’t how Stella had put it. She’d made it sound more like she’d been put in the group, not that

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she’d relayed the information.

“We so enjoy all three of your children, Lanie, if I might say so.” Miss Janice beamed. “What a

wonderful addition to our school. Alaina and Isaac are so friendly and well-behaved.”

For a moment, her smile faltered as she looked beyond me. I turned to see what she was looking at but saw only the groups of children being released to their parents. My three were busy giggling with a small boy with dark hair whose name I didn’t know. Stella raised her hand to wave at me when I caught her eye.

Miss Janice cleared her throat. “And Stella...well, her name means star, and I suppose that’s just what she is. A bright and shining star, yes?”

There was no better way to make a mother happy than to hear praise about her children. The teacher’s words made me smile and chased away some of my sadness from the fight between my mates.

“We certainly think so,” I said to the teacher.

Miss Janice nodded. “If you’ll excuse me...?”

“Of course.” With a small frown, I watched her bustle away. Something in her tone had seemed a little off, but then I saw her smiling and greeting another parent there for pickup and told myself that Miss

Janice was

just busy.

I gathered my three. "C'mon, you rascals. It's time to go home."

"You mean back to our quarters," Stella said as I took her and Alaina by the hand, with Isaac holding

his

twin's.

I looked down at my daughter. "Yes. Home."

"It's not home. Not really." Stella said this cheerfully and matter-of-factly. "Alaina and Isaac don't

remember our other house like I do. So they don't care."

"Do you care?" I asked her, pausing in the hallway outside the school.

Stella shook her head. "Not really, Mother. But I know that you do. Hey, Allie, let's run!"

Before I could stop them, both took off and made it around the corner with Isaac close behind. By the

time I got there, ready to tell them to slow down...

All three pups were gone.