

OH FOR MATES SAKE

Chapter 4 Rely on Myself

I stood in the upstairs bathroom, running my hand under the cold water. Sheena was ghosting me. She was angry with me for rejecting our mate. I could feel the extra room in my mind showing she had closed herself off from me. I wouldn't push her though; I knew she was hurting too. She lost her fated mate also, but because she was closing herself off from me, it would take me longer to heal.

I tried to grab the slippery glass with my hand to pull it out. I winced as I felt it move slightly, only to have my fingers slip off of it. Damn, that hurt; I hadn't asked for help before leaving, not that anyone even offered. It wasn't in my character to walk back out there and ask for help either. I didn't like asking for help. It would have been different if they offered on their own... but I never wanted to be seen as a bother.

Now I had a real problem as I watched the blood drip into the sink. I needed to figure out how to pull this slippery shard out of my skin as it was wedged in deeper than I thought. I grabbed a washcloth and was beginning to attempt to remove it when the door opened behind me.

I looked up and was met with green eyes. Denny's eyes immediately landed on my hand, and he swore.

"Clover, why didn't you ask for help?" He came over, taking my arm into his hands. He held my arm gently as he sucked in air from his mouth.

I gave him a weak smile. "You know me... Are you okay? After your father's announcement?"

"Andrea is pretty upset, but there isn't anything I can do about it. She will calm down. It is only a temporary delay. Soon she will be my luna and-" Denny winced,

and his eyes met with mine. “I’m sorry. This is insensitive of me.”

“Denny, it’s fine. Now, my arm dripping blood isn’t.” I gave him a crooked smile and moved my arm slightly in his hands.

“This is going to hurt...” He grabbed onto the glass shard and, with a burning tear removed it from my arm. I immediately wrapped it up with a towel to try and aid the clotting process.

“Why aren’t you healing quickly?” Denny frowned taking my arm back into his hands.

I gave him a dry chuckle and shrugged my shoulders slightly, “Sheena is giving me the cold shoulder after earlier.”

Denny looked at me, his eyes glued to mine filled with

regret. “Did we make a mistake?” he finally asked, making my mouth gape open in shock.

I shook my head slightly and gave him a brave smile. “You’ve been in love with Andrea forever. Being with her has always been your plan. And even if you didn’t have her... we know your pack wouldn’t accept me. Come on Den, the looks they give me... it is like they think I am some sort of contaminant in the pack.”

“They are wrong. There is nothing wrong with you. I think, after the dark war, they all just became more cautious. And-”

I smiled at him and patted his hand, holding my arm. “Hey, you don’t need to explain it. It is just how it is. Regardless of their reason this is the reality. We didn’t make a mistake. You will be a great alpha, but to do that, you need a luna the pack trusts. You have that, the pack trusts Andrea.”

He shook his head slowly then pursed his lips together. "What about you?"

So, he wasn't completely blind to the fact that I had just sacrificed my dream. I gave him a weak smile and shrugged, "I am going to start shopping for cats now."

"Come on Clover, be serious."

"Don't worry about me. Don't feel like you have to watch out for me now. Remember, nothing has changed." I knew what I needed to say. I knew what was going on deep inside of him. "You don't have to feel guilty being with Andrea. Be with her and be happy."

"Thank you." He moved the towel away from my hand and examined the wound. It was healing just at a much slower pace.

“Clover...” Joey walked into the bathroom and stopped looking over the situation. Then his eyes landed on my still open wound, “Why aren’t you healing?” He walked closer and reached out to look at my arm. I could see Denny’s eyes beginning to darken possessively once again as Joey said, “Den, Andrea is waiting for you in your spot.”

We all knew what that meant. I saw the guilt in Denny’s eyes again, and I knew Joey saw it too. I needed to try to cover for him since he didn’t have a poker face. “Joey will eat the pancakes, so they won’t go to waste. But I am not making you another batch, so you missed out. Go on and go.” I then turned to look at Joey and gave him a crooked grin. “Sheena and I are having a tiff so I am not connected to her enough for fast healing.”

I watched Joey’s eyes flicker angrily as they turned to

Denny. “What are you going to do about Taylor. You know this wasn’t an accident, right? I know she is your girl’s friend, but this is going over the line.”

“Taylor is also Jude’s girlfriend. And he is convinced it was an accident.” Denny turned and looked at me.

“Well? What do you think?”

“I think it isn’t worth causing trouble over. I’m honestly tired of it. Yes, she tripped me on purpose, but this isn’t her first offense. She does these things to me all the time.” I shrugged thinking what I said was common knowledge. But the shocked look on Denny’s face suggested he never realized it.

“Wait, all the time?” Denny looked up at Joey who laughed bitterly and shook his head.

“You never noticed? Taylor is always pulling little stunts like these and saying something mean but

passing it off as a joke to Clover. I guess you are usually preoccupied but I've noticed. I am surprised you tolerate it so well." Joey says as he looked at me and I shrugged again.

"You act like this sort of treatment is new to me. It is actually mild in comparison. Before I became an officer it was much worse. So I guess I usually just ignore it." Denny's hand roughly landed on my shoulder jerking me in his direction slightly as his face came closer to mine. I felt my heartbeat racing as I stared into his dark eyes.

"Is this the first time she has injured you?"

I bit my bottom lip, tucking it inside as I tried to avert my gaze from him. This was too much. He was being too intense, and I was feeling uncomfortable.

"Den... it doesn't matter, does it?" I was shocked at

how meek my voice sounded. His alpha aura was pushing me down, and it was a struggle to even speak.

He stared at me blankly for a moment. I watched as his eyes returned back to his normal green. He straightened up and took a small step away from me. His eyes looked pained and sad as he shook his head. "I'm so sorry Clover. I didn't realize. It was still happening right under my nose..."

It was those sympathetic eyes again, both from him and Joey. They were looking at me as if I was a poor helpless child. I was that once. It was hell. I wasn't that person anymore. I could fight. I was just trying to pick and choose my battles. I didn't want to cause problems. What was happening to me now was weak in comparison to the past. And now I was receiving sympathy? I didn't need it now. I needed it when I was younger. I needed someone to take me in and treat

me well then. I'm an adult, not a child who needed their compassion. Seeing their pity for me now made me angry. After all the emotions I had to go through today... I exploded.

"You don't get it at all. No one does. I don't need you to look out for me now. I don't need anyone to feel bad for me now. I'm an adult and can take care of myself, but I had no one growing up. No one to take care of me. I was stuck in an orphanage where they treated me like I had the plague. I was stuck in isolation and treated like a slave. I was beaten, kicked, starved, neglected, and insulted. Those were the moments when I could have used someone. But I learned something important. I learned to rely on myself and only myself. And I-"

Denny had wrapped his arms around me pulling me into his chest shocking the hell out of me. I froze, not knowing how to respond.

“I never knew... I never knew...” Denny whispered in my hair. And even with the severed connection, his hug was relaxing. It was bringing me comfort. Though I didn’t get hugged often. So, I imagined this was why others hugged. It felt nice. Of course, this comforting moment that I never got would get interrupted and by the worst person possible...

“What the hell?!” Andrea’s voice hissed out making Denny jump away from me in shock.

“Wait, Andrea, it isn’t what you think.” Denny tried to explain but she turned on her heels and took off running. He glanced at me once and then took off after her.

If Andrea didn’t like me before she would hate me now. I already could see it in her eyes. Being the delta was looking more and more like an impossible

challenge. Joey placed his hand on my shoulder and nodded towards the door.

“Join me while I devour those pancakes you made? I won’t talk about the past. I won’t feel sorry for you. I’m sorry about what happened and that is all I will say. I can’t change the past. But... about you only having yourself... that isn’t true. It might have been true, but it isn’t anymore.”

A small smile was all I could manage. I heard his words, but I didn’t believe him. Not entirely. I realized I may have been a fool thinking they were like family to me... they weren’t. Jude would pick Taylor and defend her over me. And Denny would do that same with Andrea. And once Joey found someone, he would also do the same thing. Without a mate... I was alone.

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