

OH FOR MATES SAKE

Chapter 76 Gift of Life

I felt Sion's grip tighten around me, crushing me against his hard chest. The realm we were in seemed to pause, as if time itself was waiting for us to take action.

"Sion, it's time to go and finish this."

"I'm sorry that I couldn't save you from this agony," he whispered in my ear. "I understand the ache and desolation that you feel all too well."

"It isn't your fault. It's just... it is just too raw right now." I didn't want to think about it. I just wanted to pretend it didn't happen. This was when Sion tilted my chin up to look at him. "I just want to get the fighting over with."

"I'm ready to fight and end all of this madness, but I

am not going to leave you in this darkness alone. I'm not going to let it swallow you up. It almost did me. I won't allow it to happen to you. I can't bear to see your sorrow. I wish I could take it away... I can't. However, I will be here with you. You aren't alone—"

"Sion." I sighed and gave him a small smile. "I'm hurting but it isn't going to consume me. It just doesn't feel real, and I honestly don't want to think about that reality. Not when there is a battle to face." I pursed my lips together and stared into Sion's eyes. "Denny and Jude knew what they were getting into... we all did. It was naïve to think we wouldn't suffer casualties." My voice cracked and I paused for a moment. "I hope their next life is good to them."

"They deserve real happiness and maybe this time a proper fated mate," Sion said, and with my eyes downcast, I sadly nodded in agreement. Though I wanted them to stay here with me, in my heart I knew

that a new life would be the best thing for Denny. He had been through so much horror with his father, and I only wanted him to find peace and love in the next life. As much as it pained me, I had to accept that they deserved the chance at happiness—even if it meant being apart from me in this life.

Though it did make me think a little bit. “Sion...” I lifted my gaze to him as he brushed his thumb over my cheek.

“Hmm?” He hummed gently.

“Do you think they will remember any of this?” I looked at him as his brows knitted together.

“I don’t think everyone is given the choice. Sometimes it is chosen for them, and some are never granted rebirth. Most who are reborn have no knowledge of the previous life. Sometimes they have dreams of

their past life, but it would only seem like a realistic dream to them. Are you worried about them remembering what happened... or remembering you?" Sion asked and I shook my head. It was neither. I didn't want them to have any previous memories because this would only cause them pain. I was just curious, and it made me wonder about my parents.

"I wonder what my parents chose," I whispered, and I watched as Sion slowly nodded his head in understanding.

"I have wondered this about my own parents too."

"It is silly," I said as I glanced around the dark realm.

"I used to wonder if my parents were out there watching me grow up. I wondered if they were proud of me or if they ever thought of me at all. Sometimes I wondered if they were still alive and just waiting for

me to find them.” I felt Sion’s hand caress my side and I smiled up at him.

“I can ask Reapus what they chose to do.”

I shook my head. “No. Honestly, it doesn’t matter. Whatever choice they made, that was theirs. Even if they were reborn... those people aren’t my parents. They are new people with lives of their own. I think it would be better not to know. I wouldn’t want to risk finding them and somehow jolting a memory of their past.”

Sion stared at me, drilling me with his hazel eyes before he slowly nodded his head in agreement. “Maybe... but you don’t have to decide anything for certain. Perhaps, one day, you will ask and maybe you never will. Maybe when our mortal existence is over it will be something you want to know? Or we could always walk in the in-between realm and see

them undetected. I just want you to be happy,” he said, and I realized he was telling me not to make any absolute decisions. He wanted to give me room to change my mind in the future. “You don’t have to decide now.” Sion kissed my forehead. “We have time, and we have other priorities.”

“You are right. We need to take care of the rest who are responsible—”

“Well yeah... I wasn’t exactly talking about that. I was talking about carving out a life for us and building a home for our children. Clover...” Sion paused and let out a quiet sigh. “I just want to say one thing and I want you to tuck it inside of you. Understand that Denny made the ultimate sacrifice so that you could live your life to its fullest potential. Not live with a hidden weight inside of you. I know this is all too soon, but remember this. Denny and Jude’s death should not be felt as a crushing burden, but rather a

reminder to celebrate life and make it count. Live your life fully and freely. Do not allow their deaths to be in vain. Remember their sacrifice and live your life to its fullest potential, in honor of them both.”

He was right... it was too soon to say all of that.

Thinking of Denny sacrificing himself as a gift of life to me made me feel ill. I couldn't look at it like that right now. I know Sion was trying to help because he hated seeing me sad. Sometimes... you just need to grieve. There were no bandages or quick fixes. I just needed time. Time to come to terms with the loss and to mourn them properly. No amount of time would ever heal this wound. I would carry their loss with me forever. However, in time, I know I will be able to smile when I think of them.

“Right now...” I stopped and closed my eyes, I slowly filled my lungs with the thick air and looked back at him. “Everyone deals with pain differently. The best

thing for me is to fight. I need to take this helpless frustration out on the enemy. I don't care if it is healthy... it is what I need."

I felt the corner of my mouth lift slightly. "It will be therapeutic. You know, the best way to find peace in the middle of war is to fight. To concentrate on the physical pain and not the emotional... But to be honest, I am not even sure if I want peace. I want these bastards to suffer." I clenched my fists and let out a savage snarl. "I want them to feel the same pain Denny and Jude did. I want them to feel each bone break and feel the life drain out of them." I closed my eyes for a moment and took in a shaky breath. "I want to hear their screams so I can replay them as my lullaby before I sleep."

The curves of Sion's lips twitched up as he leaned forward and kissed my forehead. "I understand. I need this too. I need to kill the one who slaughtered

my parents and pack members. I think I also need this so that I can find peace. But Clover... let's be clear... we do want peace. We want to destroy those responsible, but after that we don't want to be consumed by the dark. We will want to live a quiet life with our children." His hands cupped my cheeks as I stared back at him. I nodded my head. Of course, I wanted this... but could he just let me hold on to this anger for now? I just wanted to kill and think about that. I didn't want to think any further ahead than that. "But for now," he murmured, brushing his thumb over my cheek, "we can do both. We can fight for the sake of revenge...and peace."

I let out a small sigh and then slowly gave him a small smile. "So... I get to shred 'Call me Bree'." I said her name in a mocking tone and watched as amusement flashed in Sion's eyes. I never used my mental nickname for her out loud before.

“Call me Bree?” He chuckled and smiled at me.

“Yeah... remember that is what she said to just call her Bree. It sort of stuck.” I shrugged and he laughed.

“I’ll be with you if you need me—”

“I won’t.” I said, smirking up at him. He pulled me hard against his chest and rested his head on top of mine.

“What would I do without you, Clover?”

“You’d be alright. You’re strong.” I said in a teasing tone, and I felt his chest vibrating against me. I pulled back and took a step away from him, but before I could take another, I felt his hand grip my waist. He gently pulled me back against him and stared at me with a serious expression.

“I’m nothing without you.” His eyes pierced into mine

and brushed his nose over mine. "No matter what happens, I want you to know that I love you." He said softly as his hot breath pelted against my skin.

"I love you too." I said as he leaned forward, pressing his hot lips gently into mine. No matter the pain... no matter the devastation... I know I can continue to move forward as long as I have him. We have one more big fight to finish, our last hurdle and then life could hopefully slow down for us. Together... we would help heal our emotional wounds.

The world around us began to shift and the air was suddenly lighter. The colors faded back in, and we were back in the land of the living. The fighting was over. I looked around, seeing everyone tending to the wounded. I heard sobbing behind me and turned to see Andrea sprawled over Denny's lifeless body. A bitter reminder of the devastation this battle had caused. Her painful wails made me clench my fists in

anger. Sion's hand rested on my arm as we both stood there looking at Andrea, who was beside herself with grief.

My eyes teared up as I glanced towards the night sky. The moon shined above us, striking the dark. The darkness of our current journey was almost blinding, but I know that the light of our future was waiting for us. Just like the moon was always there to greet the dark. We just had to keep moving forward and never forget to look for the light.

"Clover." I turned my head to see Joey's red-swollen eyes. Stacey was at his side, holding his hand. I gave him a small smile, trying to hide behind a brave face.

"He sacrificed himself... for me," I murmured.

"Andrea doesn't want the responsibility of the pack. She has relinquished being the Luna." Joey said

quietly.

“Denny must have already known this would be the case. He told me to tell you to take over as the Alpha of the Sulfur pack. He said you will be a great leader for the pack. I...” My voice cracked as I cleared my throat. “I was able to talk to them... after...” my throat seemed to close off and I couldn’t say anything else.

“We will help you get established and you can lean on us for support in the future,” Sion said, taking the lead. “Right now, you need to gather your pack members together and establish yourself as their leader. They just had a traumatic experience, and you need to calm them. Take care of the pack first... you can take care of yourself after.” I watched as Joey nodded his head in understanding. In that moment, he still needed some direction, but I was confident he would be a good leader. With Stacey by his side, they walked away to gather the pack together.

What Denny told me to tell Andrea I would... in time. But right now, wasn't the moment for it. She wouldn't want to hear it. I would allow her the rawness of her grief. Sion rubbed my arm as I blinked away the tears that threatened to fall.

"Sion..." I snapped my head in the direction of Conner, who had a grave look on his face. "It's Kai..."

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