

Chapter 23

Jasper

I stood by the stairs, or what use to be the stairs, feeling like a complete jackass. Why had I said that to Violet? Could I possibly have said anything stupider? I didn't give a damn if she a hybrid. Hell, I didn't give a damn if she turned out to be part witch, part wolf, part troll! As long as she was safe...

Glaring down at the mess below me, I had no idea if Vie was safe. I could feel her through our bond, strangely, but she was already far away, far from the packhouse. Briefly, I stopped to wonder why I could feel her so strongly; Our bond was still brand new, it shouldn't be this strong yet.

"Mom says we should be able to get down in a minute or so."

I was pulled out of my thoughts by Garrett behind me. He was visibly unhappy.

"Good. I need to find-"

"Haven't you done enough already?" He cut me off. I glared at him.

"Don't start Garrett." I growled.

"Or what?" He scoffed. "You're the reason Vie got so upset."

"Enough Garrett." Alpha Dimitri came up behind us, giving his son a stern look. "Violet was upset about a lot of things today; She just happened to focus her feelings on the wrong person. Jasper didn't do anything wrong."

"Seriously?" Garrett argued.

"Perhaps it wasn't the best choice of words, but she was already on the verge on being overwhelmed by everything. She's been dealing with a lot of stress since the shift." Alpha Dimitri eyed him meaningfully, and Garrett hung his head a bit.

"Are you guys ready?" Luna Lily called up to us.

I never really thought about how high the Alphas floor was; I'd never been here after all. I knew the packhouse itself was very large, but looking down at the Luna now, who looked like a child from this height, was rather unnerving.

"We're ready when you are." Alpha Dimitri called back.

"How exactly does she plan to get us down?" I asked curiously.

"And why can't Aunt Clara do this?" Garrett added.

"Because, -" Clara spoke up behind us, "-I have no idea how to judge the fall. In case you didn't notice Garrett, I'm not Harry Potter, and levitation spells aren't my specialty. I'd probably end up dropping you before you were halfway down."

"Good to know." He muttered.

They stopped bickering as a soft bark reached our ears. Suddenly, Alpha Dimitri stepped forward, walking off the edge of the hall that the stairs were once connected to.

"Alpha!"

"Dad!"

"Oh, my Goddess!"

Sophia, Garrett and I all rushed forward, positive we would see our Alpha splatted on the wreck below. We caught the last of his fall... right into Luna Lily's wolf's mouth. Sophia went pale, her mate not looking much better.

I watched, but it didn't seem like the Alpha was hurt. The Lunas wolf disappeared for a second, then appeared again looking up at us.

"Next." Beta Ben stepped up, stepping up.

I backed up as he walked off the edge as casually as the Alpha before him had. Next was his mate, telling us not to be such babies before she fell. The three of us remaining looked at each other, unwilling. After a few minutes, and a couple barks from below, Garrett groaned.

"She better freaking catch me, or I swear..."

He closed his eyes tightly. His step wasn't as casual though; In fact, it seemed like he tried to step back at the last second, but he was already falling. Sophia and I looked over, making sure he made it. She let out a sigh of relief beside me when his mom caught him with ease. That relief didn't last long though.

"Oh Goddess.... I can't do this. I can't. I'm terrified of heights! Oh Goddess, just leave me here!" Sophia rambled. Her face was going from white to green.

"Unless you sprout wings, this is the only way down." I pointed out.

"Why did it have to be the stairs? Why couldn't she have destroyed a tree or something?" She kept rambling.

"Sophia!" Garretts voice drifted up to us.

"Just focus on Garrett." I told her. I knew if I went first, she'd never jump. I had to get her down first.

"No, no, no, no!" She squealed as I led her to the drop.

"Close your eyes. Don't think about it, think about him."

She was a sickly color by now, but she took a deep breath, squeezing her eyes shut. The girl was shaking like a leaf and when she put her foot into open air, a terrified shriek left her lips. Regardless, she let her drop. I

watched her fall, my ears ringing at the scream she let out the whole way down. It cut off when the Luna caught her. When the wolf's eyes were back on me, I also took a few deep breaths. I wasn't a particular fan of heights either, but I could do this. Gathering myself, I stepped off.

The fall was actually rather short. The scary part was seeing the Lunas oversized teeth coming closer and closer until, with a grunt, she caught me as gently as possible. Stepping down from the rubble, she set me on my feet with the others. Well, most of the others; Sophia and Garrett were just outside the door, Sophia getting sick into the bushes that lined the front steps. The Luna joined us, now back in human form and clothed.

"I'm going to find Vie." I announced, turning for the door.

"Hang on." Luna Lily put a hand on my shoulder, stopping me. "We need to talk about this."

"This?"

"Her being a...." She trailed off, eyeing the maids around us who were attempting to clean the huge mess. "You know."

I shook my head. "I'm not talking behind her back. No offense, Luna."

"He's right Lily." Alpha Dimitri said. "Let him bring her back first, then we can discuss the situation."

Still, she didn't let me go. Instead, she looked into my eyes, and a shiver ran down my spine at the fierceness I saw. She looked every bit a Luna and a mother right now.

"Are you going to reject my daughter?" She half whispered.

"No." I deadpanned. "I'm sorry that I gave that impression. I don't care what Violet is. She's my mate and I will accept her no matter what. I'm only worried about right now."

She held on to me a while longer, before nodding, believing I was serious.

"Go find her."

Nodding, I gave her and the Alpha a respectful nod before leaving. I ignored Garrett and his mate, going straight for the woods at the back of the packhouse. The only thing that caught my eye was the damage; Even on the outside, it was impressive. My heart clenched. Vie must have been really upset to cause this. I starting stripping before I even hit the trees. Giving control over to my wolf, I shifted, and started running.

Her scent was easy enough to follow, even more so in this form. Her trail led mostly in a straight line. Obviously, she hadn't cared about where she went, as long as she could get away. Ehno whined, eager to find our mates.

"Don't worry, we'll find them." I assured him.

"I know. I hate that they are upset though."

"Me too."

"You need to think before you speak." He growled.

"I'll definitely work on it." I promised.

We ran for over an hour. Did Violet cross the border? I really hoped not; Who knew where that psycho Jennine was? Not to mention rogues. However, her trail turned left about twenty minutes from the border, to my relief. Ehno pushed himself faster, jumping and twisting around trees. When he started to slow down, I took back control, much to his annoyance. Making my way at a fast jog, I looked around for any sign of her, until, finally, I caught sight of her.

She wasn't in wolf form anymore, but sitting on the bank of one of the packs waterfalls. She was wearing a green dress; I guessed she found it in one of the many stashes of clothes hidden in the woods. Even from here, I could tell she was still upset, her knees drawn up with her chin resting on them. Her arms hugged her legs as she stared unblinking at the scenery. Quickly, I sniffed out the clothing stash, shifting back. All I could find was a pair of jeans in my size, but every shirt was too small. Whatever.

Tracing my steps, I stepped out of the shadows, hesitantly approaching her. She didn't even seem to notice I was here.

"Vie?" I called her name softly.

"What do you want Jasper?" She asked. Her voice sounded a bit rough from the crying. So, she did know I was here.

"I came to find you."

The waterfall crashed into the water below, almost drowning out my reply. I'd never been to this spot before, Blood Moon had various waterfalls like this one. Usually, kids and teenagers flocked to the bigger ones for bonfires or parties. The biggest one was used for pack parties sometimes; I remembered the twins had their sixteenth birthday party there. Comparatively, this waterfall was significantly smaller, but somehow, I liked it better. It was more secluded, with no traces of past get togethers. As if it had been untouched, always. There was something pure about it, and it was still beautiful.

"I'll admit, it's a nice place to be rejected."

Violet's words pulled my attention back to her. Silent tears ran down her cheeks. I sat beside her on the ground, taking her face in my hands and wiping them. I couldn't stand to see her in so much pain.

"I'm not rejecting you." I told her firmly.

Our eyes met. Neither of us spoke for a while, our breathing overshadowed by the noise of the water behind us. Eventually, she whispered one word, so low I had to read her lips to catch it.

"Why?"

I half smiled. "I'm sorry I upset you earlier; That wasn't what I wanted. Yes, I was shocked to discover what you were. But Vie, it doesn't matter to me what you are. To me, you will always be the girl who punched a kid over one of my shitty drawings. The girl who stuck up for her best friend

when she was getting bullied. The girl who snuck out, the troublemaker who also has a kind heart and a good soul. A good person. You're the girl I've watched for years, the girl I grew more attracted to every day. The girl with the attitude, and a temper, but who will also help anyone she can, simply just because she can. You're my girl, Violet, always. You could have a third arm and six eyes and I would still want you."

Her bottom lip was quivering; I couldn't remember ever seeing Violet cry this much. Actually, I couldn't remember seeing her ever cry at all. It hurt worse that this was because of me, that I'd been the one to upset her. Gently, I pulled her onto my lap, wrapping my arms around her in a tight hug. She cried into my chest, the tears dropping onto my skin and sliding down. I kissed the top of her head.

"To me, you will always be just Violet. Not Violet the hybrid, that's just another part of who you are. But that doesn't mean that's all you are." I told her.

The dam broke, a fresh torrent of tears and sobs erupting from her. I held her gently, but firmly, occasionally whispering reassurances in her ear, not even sure she was listening to me. Her cries echoed around us, mixing with the roar of the waterfall. Eho was whining, pacing in my head, but I tried to just focus on her. After a long while, Vie's tears ran dry, her sobs turning into little hiccups. Resting her cheek against my chest, I waited until her breathing evened out.

"Better?" I asked her.

"Yes. She sniffed. "Thank you. Thank you for coming to find me."

"Always."

I could feel her fidgeting with her fingers. When she looked up, she was biting her lip.

"Did you mean it? What you said?" She whispered.

I cupped her cheek, leaving one arm around her. "Every word."

"What if... what if I'm... dangerous? What if I can't control it?"

"Then we will deal with that. Together."

Something in her eyes changed; The worry dissipated almost completely. Taking my face in her small hands, Violet leaned in and kissed me. I answered her kiss eagerly, feeling an intense amount of relief. This time felt different than before. The sparks were definitely there, but there was more under that. A new level of mutual trust, of understanding. And a passion that wasn't there before too. Violet kissed me like I was the air she needed to breath, and I was quickly getting lost in her. Her hands went to the back of my neck, playing with the hair there. I shivered under her touch, the first time I'd ever been so affected by a woman's touch.

I tugged her closer, our chests pressing against each other. My hand was splayed back into her hair, securing her to me. My other arm was holding her against me, unwilling to ever let go of her, of this moment. Too soon though, we both ran out of breath, forcing us to part. I rested my forehead against hers, our noses brushing.

"Home?" I whispered.

"Yeah. I need to talk to my parents."

Standing up, I set her on her feet, reaching down to take her hand.

"Let's go."