

Chapter 5

Violet

I could not get Dylan's face out of my head. His expression when he realized I wasn't his mate? Heartbreaking. All those times I'd secretly wished I wasn't... Last night had to be the first time I wished I had been. Yet, I was still relieved. Dylan and I were meant to be friends, best friends. But nothing more. And I was okay with that.

It just really sucked that he obviously wasn't.

I'd gotten up early, earlier than even Garrett, so as to avoid him. I'm sure I was the last person he needed to see right now. The last thing I wanted was to hurt him more. And it was clear as day that he was hurt. I'd stayed awake, lying in bed and nervously twisting the blankets, anxiously watching the clock on my bedside table. When the clock struck midnight, I half expected Dylan to come bursting through the door, and that would be it. But he didn't. As the minutes clicked by, and I realized that nothing in me had changed, I felt both relieved and sad.

And then he had come to my door, and what was I supposed to say? Better luck next time? Even if I didn't return his feelings, Dylan deserved happiness, and that's all I wanted for him.

"What do you think, Vie?"

"Hmm?"

I looked up at Brianne; I hadn't heard a word she said. We were skipping first period, because neither of us wanted to do math today. Brianne and I had been friends since the start of high school. Remember that girl I'd stuck up for from Sarah? Yup, that's Brianne. She'd been so grateful, and we'd been buddies ever since. She was a cutie, with her medium-length

golden blonde hair and freckles. She had a slender build, but with just the right number of curves. Brianne was actually the niece of my Aunt Hazel, though I hadn't known that when I'd punched Sarah. Interestingly, she'd gotten the hazel eyes as well, complimenting her appearance.

"What's with you today?" She cracked open a bag of Doritos, offering them to me. I took a handful and popped one into my mouth.

"It's nothing. What were you saying?"

"I asked if you wanted to come to the party this weekend?"

"The party?"

"Yeah, Jasper's birthday party. He's turning eighteen."

My face clouded with anger at his name. Okay, so maybe the rumor wasn't his fault, not entirely, but did he really need to bring me into his spat with my brother? No, he didn't. So, yes, I partially blamed him. People at this school like to gossip, he should have left me out of it completely.

"Yeah, I'm good. I think I'd rather have a movie weekend." I said.

"Aww. That means I have to go alone!" Brianne pouted.

"Sorry chick."

"Didn't you just get freedom? What better way to spend it than going to a party with your friend? One you don't have to sneak out for?" She argued.

Damn. She had a point.

"Plus, you know Isa is going to get wasted again. And that's always fun." She giggled.

"Fun, until it's your bathroom she's puking in the next day." I replied.

"Hmm, true. So, are you-"

Our conversation was interrupted by a figure rounding the corner. I jumped to my feet, which was the dumbest thing I could have done. The

teachers knew our hiding spots though; If we were caught, we were caught. No sense in hiding. My insides clenched a little when I realized it wasn't a teacher though, it was Dylan. Oh, Goddess. Why was he here? I really didn't want to put him down again...

"Mate."

That one word coming from his mouth stopped my heart. It only started breathing again when I realized he wasn't looking at me. But that meant... I looked between him and Brianne. Her eyes were glued to Dylans, both of them unmoving. Just starrng at each other in awe. Gently, I gave her a little nudge forward; That's all it took. The next second, they were in each other's arms, trapped in a passionate kiss. I smiled hugely, beyond happy for my two friends.

"You smell like pineapples, but you taste like Doritos." Dylan told her. I laughed out loud as she blushed.

He looked at me, all traces of sadness gone. We grinned at each other and I gave him a thumbs up.

"Looks like you have a partner for that party after all." I said.

"Looks like I do."

Of course, that happened to be the moment Mrs. Harris came around the corner, placing her hands on her hips. I smirked in her direction.

"Really girls? Again? And now you're dragging boys into your skipping!" She shook her head.

"Mrs. Harris, these two just found out their mates. Maybe give them the moment to bask in it a little?" I said.

She looked between the two, her eyes growing.

"Oh. Congratulations." She sauntered off awkwardly back the way she came. I walked up to my friends, throwing my arms around them in a group hug.

"I'm happy for you guys." I looked at Dylan. "I told you so."

"Yeah, yeah." He brushed Brianne's hair back with his free hand.

"I'll leave you two alone. Have fun." I gave them one more squeeze and let go. "Just not too much fun. You're still at school."

"Vie!" Brianne hissed. Her cheeks were redder than a tomato.

"See ya!" I walked away as Dylan pulled her in for another kiss. Walking around the corner, I almost ran into Garrett.

"Did he find her?" He asked.

"Yup."

"Brianne?"

"Yup."

He grinned. "Didn't see that one coming."

"Me either."

We walked side by side back to the parking lot.

"Hey." Garrett turned to me. "I'm sorry about yesterday. About... you know. I get why you were pissed."

I shrugged. "Thanks."

"So..."

"So?"

"Our birthday is coming up."

"No shit?"

She gave me a look. "Are you excited?"

"I guess. You?"

"Yeah. I can't wait to find my mate." He looked back in the direction we left Dylan and Brienne. "I hope I get as lucky."

"You will." He looked at me, our eyes meeting. "Okay, so maybe I don't say this a lot. But you're a great guy, and I'm sure the girl who is my future sister-in-law is going to be just as great."

Garrett gave me his special smile, the one reserved for the people he loved best. I hadn't seen it in a long time; Not directed towards me anyway.

"Thanks, Vie." He punched my arm lightly. "Just don't you bring home an asshole." He laughed.

"No promises." I grinned.

We went our separate ways then, him to the little time of class he had left, and me to my locker. Skipping more than one class was sure to get me an earful from my parents, if I wasn't in trouble already. I spun the lock and it popped open. English, science, history; I grabbed everything I would need for the rest of the day. Suddenly, a shadow loomed over me. I glanced up to see Jasper smiling down at me. Ugh.

"Hey short stuff." He leaned against the metal next to me.

"Really? What happened to princess?" I asked casually.

He shrugged. "You said you didn't like it."

"So, you went with short stuff instead?" I rolled my eyes.

"Just trying out nicknames. You don't like that one either?"

I shook my head.

"I'll keep trying." His voice held a hint of a promise.

"Don't bother Jasper."

"Why not?"

"Why would you, I think is the better question." I shut my locker and looked up at him. Goddess, his eyes really were amazing.

"You coming to my birthday party this weekend?" He changed the subject. I narrowed my eyes at him.

"No."

His face clouded in disappointment. Though he could have been faking. "Why?"

"We're not friends Jasper. Truth be told, you kind of disgust me."

His hand flew to his heart in mock hurt. "Ouch! That's cold."

I shrugged. I wasn't going to take it back.

"You don't have to be someone's friend to come to their party." He continued.

"Actually, I think it's sort of a requirement." I started walking down the hall, and he fell into step beside me. Around us, other students stopped and stared.

"Why do you want me there anyway?" I asked quietly. I waited, but he didn't answer. "Well?"

I peeked up at him through my lashes, my stomach flipping a little at the look he was giving me. I'd seen him give that look to many girls before. Did he think his charm was going to work on me? Not likely. Yes, he was gorgeous, but I wasn't like the other girls here. I had respect for myself.

As if he could read my mind, he repeated my thoughts aloud. "You're not other girls. You respect yourself, and you're the only one not throwing herself at me any chance she gets."

I glanced at a group of seniors nearby. At Jasper's words, they looked away, but not before giving me icy glares.

"Thanks. But I have other plans." I said to him.

"Alright. Well, if those plans change, here's my address." He slid a piece of paper into my hand; His skin was hot on mine, and my throat went dry at the touch. He gave me a dazzling smile, turned around and walked away. I stared after him for a second, trying to process.

Just what did Jasper Cole want with me?