

## Chapter 48

Violet

Determined, I made my way over to Jane and placed down my tray, sliding into the chair on the opposite side of her. I greeted her with a polite smile which she returned.

Her gaze was soft, and her green eyes warm and kind. Her brown hair was tied back in a sleek bun, showing off her beauty even more. Just by looking at her face, I could only imagine how popular she must've been back in her days.

"No classes today?"

"No, not today," I shook my head shyly. "Do you teach here too?"

Before that night at the Elite Team dinner, I had never seen her before—but no regular soul would sit here this early if they didn't have any business at this school.

Jane gave me a nod. "Yes, I'm an allround shifter specialist."

She really was admirable. That wasn't something easy, yet the calm way she had said it made it sound like it was.

Her smile widened a bit as she tilted her head. "So, how are you finding school?" she asked. "Already tired?"

I shook my head. "Not really. It's okay."

Truthfully, most of my classes had been manageable—and the only thing that made me worry was the Elite training, but that was a whole different story.

Jane took a sip from her coffee, yet her eyes were still watching me as if she was still trying to figure me out. "And you're a healer, right?" she questioned, putting down her cup.

I nodded, taking a small sip of my own coffee. The conversation died down, probably because I was being awkward—but I couldn't help it. There were so many questions I wanted to ask, but I couldn't just come out with, 'Hey, what's the deal with Adelaide,' not when everyone seemed determined to hide the truth for some reason.

I had to take a careful approach, so I decided to start by asking about Mom first.

Gathering some courage, I shifted a bit in my chair. "I think you were on the Elite team with my mom and dad...Claire and Greg?"

"Claire and Greg?" Jane let out a small gasp, her eyes lighting up with an expression I couldn't quite place. She looked shocked, happy, maybe even a little sad. "I knew you were a Bloodrose, but I wasn't aware you were theirs..."

"Yes," I whispered, going through my thoughts. All of them were supposedly close, yet none of them knew I was their daughter.

Well, Rochwall knew—but he hadn't said anything about it until I brought it up.

Did they all have a falling out after their senior year?

"I think about those two every single day," Jane spoke after a moment of silence. "How strange that James didn't tell me."

I took a breath, searching for a way to dodge the topic of James. The last thing I wanted was for her to connect the dots and realize that mentioning Mom and Dad had somehow turned into this strange, unspoken taboo.

"What were they like...my parents?"

Jane's expression softened instantly. "Your mom...she was something else," she said. "She was strong, stubborn, determined—one of the most driven people I've ever met, but she also had the kindest heart."

A warm feeling spread through my heart as I heard Jane talk about her with so much pride. The way she described her was exactly how I remembered her.

"What about Dad?"

"Greg," Jane continued, looking up for a second. "He was always the first to step in if someone was struggling, made sure no one fell behind, always looking out for others, always willing to do anything for the ones he cared about..."

"Sounds like him," I concluded. Dad truly had been one of a kind. He was abandoned at a young age, grew up in an orphanage, and worked hard to get into Starlight. Mom had even gushed about him going back to the Bloodroses without her having to beg him.

She chuckled a little, her eyes glowing. "Your Mom was an amazing healer, your Dad was an amazing warrior—and both of them were amazing people, I hope you know that."

"I do," I responded, trying my hardest not to break down on the spot. The words she had shared with me were more than anyone had ever told me about my parents. She didn't brush them off or get weird about it—she told me exactly what I needed to hear. The truth.

"Were all of you close back then," I asked softly, trying to find an opening.

"Yes, we were all best friends," Jane nodded eagerly. "The teams were smaller back then, and we spent so much time together it was impossible not to get close."

I had caught Rochwall in yet another lie. I clearly remembered him telling me that he'd barely spoken to Mom, making it seem like the group wasn't close—when they definitely had been.

If she meant everyone, that included even Kylan's dad—the king, who seemed incapable of keeping a friend. I hesitated, but still had to ask out of curiosity.

"Even the king of Lyperia?"

Jane chuckled softly, looking down as if she was still deciding how much to say. "Let's just say... we didn't have much choice but to accept him. We had to make it work."

"Even my mom?"

"Especially your mom," Jane smiled, surprising me with her answer. "She had a soft spot for him, felt sorry for him and the way his father treated them. They cared for each other in a friendly way."

I was so certain she must've hated him, but mom and Kylan's dad were friends...

I swallowed before continuing with my questions.

"Were you and Rochwall already together back then?"

Jane let out a laugh, her face softening. "No, no...not back then. But I did like him," she admitted with a shy smile. "We did know we were mates though, but he rejected me, and he was already in a relationship."

"But you're so pretty!" The words slipped right out of my mouth before I could think about it. "Why would he have ever rejected you?"

If she got rejected despite looking like that, that meant there really was no hope for me.

"I'm flattered," Jane's face flushed. "But I certainly wasn't the prettiest on the team. There was this other girl he was with."

I paused, suddenly wondering if that 'other girl' had been my mom, but then it hit me that she and dad had accepted their mate bond from the start. If it wasn't mom, it meant it had to be...her.

Adelaide...

Rochwall and Adelaide were a thing?

"Was it...the witch," I took a bite from my cookie, trying to sound casual. The word 'witch' seemed to be another taboo within these school walls, so I wasn't sure about how she would react yet.

As expected, Jane's eyes widened slightly in surprise, but only for a second before it was quickly replaced with a chuckle.

"You sure know your stuff," she squinted her eyes. "But yes, it was the witch."

It finally felt like I was getting somewhere. No wonder Rochwall spoke with such dismay about Adelaide when I asked him about her. She was his ex.

"Why did they break up?"

I mean, a witch and a Lycan—it wasn't hard to guess, but every bit of information counted.

"I..." Jane's eyes softened, but no words left her mouth. This time she stayed quiet, her lips pressed together as if she wasn't allowed to speak. She looked more nervous.

"I'm sorry, it's none of my business, but—"

She cut me off with a soft sigh. "She broke up with him because she fell in love with someone else on the team," she spoke as she bobbed her head. "With him, she just had this...instant connection, something she didn't have with James."

Someone else on the team?

My mind raced, trying to think about who this person could've been. There was James, Greg, the king...

"Was it the king?" I asked, mortified.

Jane nearly burst out laughing. "No, not him."

But if not him, then who was it?

Then it hit me—the name the king had mentioned at dinner...Alaric.

He had said he would never forget what that witch did to Alaric.

So, what did she do?

"It wasn't my Dad, was it?" I scrunched my nose, trying to act oblivious. "Because I think he's the only one left?"

It worked. Jane's mouth opened as she looked at me, probably torn between wanting to spill everything and knowing she shouldn't. "I really want to tell you," she said. "But I've already said too much."

Without thinking, I reached out across the table and wrapped my hand around her wrist. "Please," I begged, my tone desperate.

I was so close to finding out the truth.

Jane's eyes fell to where my hand touched her, and I quickly pulled back. "I'm sorry, it's just that my love life is such a disaster right now that I'm desperate for a good romance story."

Jane gave me a warm, apologetic smile. "This story didn't exactly have a happy ending."

A deep breath escaped from her lips, and I could tell she was about to talk.

"I'm not even supposed to be telling you this—"

"Oh, you can tell me. I don't even have friends to share it with," I joked, feeling bittersweet. It wasn't just a way to get her to talk, but it was the unfortunate truth.

I bet no one would be interested in hearing what happened at this school before they were even born.

Jane smirked, leaned in closer. "Are you familiar with how, years ago, there used to be an Alpha King—the ruler of all werewolves?"

"Yes," I nodded.

We learned about the royal family in school. They were replaced, forced to step down—and no one heard about them again. It was suspected that the royals took all of their people down with them in a self-destruction mission. The situation was so severe that we weren't even allowed to learn their names which had been erased from existence.

To us, it was a constant reminder of why there should never be an Alpha King.

Jane continued. "After the team was established, a new student transferred to Starlight and was recruited to the team," she explained.

"He was a handsome werewolf prince, the future Alpha King...Alaric."