

### Chapter 31: Butter ies

-Clara-

lanthe keeps ghting me to go to Josh... My mate. My second chance mate. My heart is still racing so fast, and his kiss with taste of chocolate lingers on my mouth, on lips.

Josh has always had this amazing scent of coffee and chocolate. He visited Blood Moon brier when I was a teenager living there. We talked a lot by then and had a connection that I was not ready to acknowledge. He was nice and different, but now everything about him is driving me crazy.

"Please, let's go back to mate!" This new emotion is so powerful that it almost defeats my will, granting lanthe the upper hand to manage my body.

I have experienced the mate pull before, but with Josh is even stronger and ... hotter.

"lanthe, I want to be with him too, but we came here for Angel." I tell lanthe, who wants to be with Alastair and Josh. She wants a proper introduction to them in wolf form.

I shiver thinking again about our ret kiss, and how his beard brushed my skin. How his heart was beating so hard at the same rhythm than mine. Everything about him is so...

All the things lanthe is thinking right now are making me blush. I guess second chance mates have this added intensity.

"Angel needs us, remember!" I tell her. lanthe calms down and helps me to manage this craziness for Josh. I need to focus; I am here for Angel... Why is Josh here? Never mind, I am grateful we found each other.

Angel needs my support while Blanche cooks the potion to endure the pain of rejection. "Later, we can..." lanthe, stop! First things rst.

Inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale...take control, close that door... for now... alright! I am ready.

I knocked on Angel's door. Sensing me, she opens it without asking and without waiting for me to come in. She just goes straight back to her bed. Angel is probably wearing the same pajama from yesterday.

My friend's face has dried tears, she is pale, and her hair is a mess. This is like looking at a mirror of my state a while ago. Her case is different tough, Shawn accepted her from the moment they saw each other.

I laid on the bed next to her waiting for her to talk. I caressed her cheek, and she broke in tears. I could only hold her, waiting for her to tell me what she feels and what she wants.

"How could he do this to me?" There are no words of comfort for a broken heart "Why he did not wait for me? I did. I waited..." I know, she did.

"I've always dreamed about my mate. I wanted what my parents had for myself. But I turned eighteen and nothing, so I waited... Then nineteen, and I still waited... I was growing impatient, but I waited... I am twenty now, but I decided to wait! For my mate, for him to come... to nd me."

"I know Angel, I know..." Coming here, I wanted Shawn Pert's head on a silver plate. That was before I saw her this hurt. Would it be really alright to facilitate the end of a bond that Moon Goddess created with a purpose? Or they might work things out?

A pup is still a pup, the same way as a fated mate is a fated mate. Would it be possible to compromise for all parties involved?

"It hurts so much Clara! He loved her... I heard them, he loved her. They were a couple. They had plans together." Oh crap.

"Moon Goddess made him for you. He loved her, as in the past... Before you, before he found you. You are his destiny. You, not her."

"She is pregnant! What is more absolute for an Alpha than his heir? I am so mad Clara. I hate him! I hate Renata! I hate them all!" More tears.

"Maybe you guys can talk, compromise on..."

"I've already told him I can take it... the rejection. That is why I called you to bring Blanche along." Angel should be in her right mind before deciding this big thing that will change her life. I do not want her to regret this later.

I understand the feeling of betrayal. I know the pain and the anger. Shawn is not even here, he is out there thinking and thinking, pondering his "predicament". I would like to kick his ass!

However, he accepted Angel disregarding ranks. He chose her just by meeting each other, that is good, at least from my point of view. A good start of what was meant to be. He is now is struggling to decide between his fated mate and his pup. That is what hurts her. His hesitation.

Angel sat on the bed and cleaned her own tears with her hands, her hair was red. She hated it. The other shewolf is a redhead. So, we decided to change to black. Besides, Angel needs a shower and food.

I nally persuaded her to eat after the change of hair color and her bath. She seems more serene now.

"You know I love you, right?"

"Yes, I love you too Clara. You are my sister."

"Angel, this might be a bad advice. It is your decision at the end, but... would you give Shawn a chance? I mean, why don't you tell him what you want? So far, it is all about him choosing, but what about you and what you want to do..." Mates are short for soulmates in our world. They might nd a way to save their bond, to stay together.

She took a deep breath and look to the window, far away, to the thick forest covered by snow. This cold place where she found her mate. Angel looked back at me; she was no longer crying.

"I want him... I want the life Moon Goddess wanted for me, with him."

"Then, tell him! It is not fair for him or you to break your bond without knowing each other's feelings. Fight for what is yours! The rest will just fall in place. I promise."

"If he does not choose me, Clara... I will die."

"Angel... I was pushed away and rejected long before my bond was even formed with Mason. He did not choose me, so I can speak from experience.

"If that happens at least, you will cut your bond knowing you were honest, so you can start over without regrets. You will let go and never look back. Angel, we are here for you. You will not die."

"Clara!" Angel hugged me as more tears fell from her eyes.

She was so tired from crying that fell sleep. I left her to rest, closing the door behind me.

"Mate! Mate! Mate!" lanthe screamed in my head making me stop. I know lanthe! I want him too, but we need to nd Blanche rst.

"Who are you?" Asked this shewolf standing in front of me. She was blond. So, this one was not Renata. Still, she was quite impolite. Her aura told me this is a high rank wolf. An Alpha daughter, perhaps?

"I can ask the same," I replied.

"I am a guest here, obviously." Also, a brat?

"Obviously, me too." If she is not polite, do I have to be? I would normally would... but my best friend is hurt by someone who did this on purpose. I am sure.

"Do not do it, Paige. Please!" Said a redhead shewolf taking a last step from the stairs towards us. This one looks like Renata, the shewolf that is ruining my best friend's life.

Renata does not look like what I thought, her aura is not evil. She does not look like the greedy shewolf I pictured in my head. She is beautiful, pale with big eyes and a sad expression. The one called Paige approached her and took her hand.

"You should be resting; this stress is not good for you or your pup." Renata shook her head and let go of her friend to greet me properly.

"I am Renata, and this is Paige... she is not like this, normally... She is just worried and stressed because of me. Paige... is the best." She smiled to Paige kindly, and the last one blushed.

"I am sorry, I was impolite too. I am Claire Bond and I am witch apprentice." They looked at each other.

"I apologize then. I assume you were with Angel to help her with the rejection, right?" Said Paige with hope. I was going to respond in a bad manner, but Renata spoke before I did.

"Stay quiet Paige! I am already causing enough problems for Angel and everyone here. Let's go." Renata said and pulled her friend, who just allowed her without any other remark.

Renata looked at me one last time. And I held her gaze, I knew that expression. The same kind of expression I have seen before when meeting Lorraine.

Downstairs Luna Aerin took me to the cabin where Blanche was preparing to cook the potion. Leon joined Alpha Dean and a patrol to check the parameters and secure the pack was safe.

"What do you think Young one?"

"Shawn and Angel need to talk honestly, before making a decision. It is a very big and hurtful step to cut the mate bond. It will change their destinies."

"I do not know Clara... I mean sometimes it is for better. Look at your case, a handsome second chance mate. That Joshua guy, he is ready to be eaten..." I could not hold a growl from lanthe scaping my lips!

Blanche laughed out loud. Leon appeared by the door of the cabin and asked what was so funny for the witch. I hid my face with my hands, I should look like a tomat.

"Clara got jealous! She growled... she never growls!" Another round of laughs from Blanche. This is so embarrassing! lanthe!

"Jealous of what? The boy is crazy about her, even before the bond."

"What?" I am confused, by the way...

"How is that you know each other, can you explain? Now!" Said Blanche, who was holding her favorite witch like in one hand. That is a powerful weapon at the hand of a powerful witch like her. He better come out with the truth.

"Due to work..." If he thought it was a good idea to reply that, he is not ready for Blanche.

"Do I know enough about your work, Mr. Sailor? What is your real work? Import, export? What? Because you do not even bring me nice things anymore, like your trips are to where that you do not even bring me a freaking souvenir! Do you have a family in Silver Rain pack? You know him from there? Do you have another woman? Ah! Tell me! Ha..." She was losing it. He better does something, or she will summon a snowstorm and we do not want that for Sunlight pack.

"Blanche... Blanche... Blanche!" He thinks that saying her name will get her attention or calm her down... silly males.

Now, what do I do? Ah! I should better get away from here... where is my bag? I better just drag myself over the oor away from the re. I saw my bag close the door.

"Mate did not take it with him?" I am disappointed too lanthe. It is not like I am ready for something more physical, but at least to spend the night together, right? Cuddling? She purred. "You are not helping lanthe!"

However, I guess Josh is right, we still need to reconnect and get to know each other again before moving forward. He probably has some doubts, and we need to talk... like a lot. He might not want to do anything with me since I am a target of FDI.. a Luna or leader of a very small pack without territory, and right now it is not the ideal time... Shawn and Angel crisis at the moment...

lanthe begins to feel anxious. I guess I scared her too. Unlike in the past, when she defended Mason, she remained silent and cautious. My same thoughts lanthe! He is also cousin of my former mate, who might be looking for me at Saint Isabella now. Things are complicated in that department. If Josh accepts me then I will be related to my ex-mate! He will be my cousin in-law?

"Clara! Where are you going?" I was about to grab my bag when Blanche called me. Probably Angel will kick me on her sleep because she tosses a lot. But I will have a place where to sleep tonight, with her.

"This lycan here is the one who will nd a place out to sleep! You stay!" Well, at least I have a place to sleep.

"Oh no! Woman, you are not kicking out of our bed!" There it goes my chance.

"Our bed? Why do you call it our bed? What..." He kissed her. And I was glad. Blanche is the best but when she is mad, get yourself some shelter for the storm of questions, words, phrases and even grunts that you will hardly understand, and even worst... you would hardly nd how to reply to.

"There is no other family. You are my woman. You know that and, you would be my mate if you would accept me already." Interesting. Turns out I was wrong; Leon does know how to be with her. I think she feels better now.

"Trust me! I was about to explain my work when you interrupted me!" That is my queue to leave this cabin.

"Speak! It was about time!"

"I guess I should leave guys..."

"No, you can stay. It involves you too." Mr. Leonardo Walls said what?

"How is that...?" He looked at both of us like challenging us to keep interrupting. I did not dare; Blanche folded her arms over her chest and frowned. I am not intimidated, but very curious about how they meet each other. I prefer to listen than to keep arguing about it.

"I work for the King of Lycans. I travel a lot because I receive assignments, secret ones Blanche! I cannot tell you everything about my work. I can only tell you that. Can you manage your curiosity from now on?" I wonder if Blanche would do it, well... she might activate a tracking spell, and others more to be sure he is alright. Yeah, that would make his work difficult.

"I am offended! Of course, this old hag knows perfectly how to..." Another kiss.

"You are not an old hag, stop. You are my beautiful witch... please accept me. I was already. Accept the bond with me." Lycans are different than werewolves in that aspect. "There are no more secrets. I swear!"

Moon Goddess hardly grant a lycan a fated mate. Most of the time, they choose, but they do not call them chosen mate, they are called "intended mates" until the bond is formed with their acceptance of each other.

Lycans do not have just a ceremony. They have two ceremonies. One of acceptance of each other, which is the main one. And another one of mating and marking. That one is like our werewolf tradition of a mating ceremony.

According to the legend of their creation, lycans were originally Moon warrior's. Gigantic wolves. One of them, seriously wounded in battle survived and thought it was his time to die. So, he begged Moon Goddess for her mercy since he wanted more time in this earth.

A woman passed by and found him. She thought it was just a wolf that was injured. She was kind and cried for him. Those tears fell on his snout and gave him energy to open his eyes. His yellow eyes did not scare the woman, she found a way to take him with her to her home to heal him.

The wolf could not help it and fell in love with the human, of her soul, not her body. The woman released him back in the nature when his wounds healed, and it broke his heart to see her tears when he left her. So, he licked them from her face before his departure.

He begged again Moon Goddess, but this time to be human and have a life with the human that held his heart. And Moon Goddess granted his wish, but with a condition. The woman should love him for his soul not his body, if not he would get back to be a wolf forever.

The wolf now looking like a handsome man courted the woman and she fell for him; unfortunately, the woman's father gave her hand to a rich man of their village. Someone who did not accept her rejection and tried to force himself on her. The wolf in rage killed the man in his wolf form, scaring the woman who run away from him.

Moon Goddess was mad at the wolf because he did not tell the woman who he really was, and even killed a mortal. He was punished to stay in wolf form forever. But the woman found in her heart a way to forgive him, and together they asked Moon Goddess' forgiveness.

However, Moon Goddess was mad at the wolf until the woman began to pray to her for him, since this woman loved him beyond the form of his body. To test her, Moon Goddess asked part of her blood to grant him part of her humanity to him. That is why Lycans shift are like they are in a middle of shifting, where they look like a very large human, with fur covering their bodies, with claws and paws, walking in their foot, an enormous snouts, with yellow eyes... very scary.

Consent and acceptance are very important for them, as start for the mate bond.

"Is that the only thing you are hiding from me Leon?" Asked Blanche.

"I know Claire is not human, but werewolf. Josh has been looking for her for over a year now. I received her photo a while ago to inform if she was spotted in my territory... Since she is important to you, I have covered any trace they would have had. Saint Isabella is safe for her." Blanche launched herself to his arms.

"You did it for me?"

"Of course, if it is important to you. It is important to me." She kissed his both cheeks.

"Josh was looking for me?" I grabbed the locket of my necklace.

lanthe placed an image of Josh when we met more than two years ago, she found it in my memories. I smiled remembering Josh, the nice Alpha.

He was thinner by then, now... well... he has work out and still looks slender. Now is even taller, that beard was grazing his skin when we were kissing, and he cut his hair to the right size to grab it while... lanthe! Don't do that!

"It was not me! I just show you his before and after image." I had to grab my cheeks with both hands; my face is burning! lanthe is right. It is me!

"I asked him why once, a while ago when we found each other for a meeting... By the way... ask him about his job."

"You are giving advice on that?"

"Yes... and Blanche wanted to keep your bag. He was going to gift for it. Hahahahaha... poor boy, give him something." He winked at me.

"No, do not do it! Save your cookie for later! My cookie?" I did not bake anything for this trip. It was so sudden.

"Your precious." My what?

"Do not give in so fast, okay?" Oh! That... I do not know. I do not have a plan. "I do!" lanthe!

My heart utters and I felt like butterflies, so many apping their wings furiously inside of my stomach. I might even vomit them.

He was looking for me. My lips are trembling, I want to cry again... he kissed my tears. That was so sweet... "And sexy?" My wolf again. She is horny... "Only me?" Oh, dear Moon Goddess! This pull is so real, so strong.

"Do what you feel like doing!" Said Leon.

"No! For a long-lasting relationship it is better to wait for it... so he will treasure her more..."

"Blanche, we are children of the Moon. If Clara is Joshua's mate, he is crazy about her already. She is a gift from the Goddess herself. You do not reject a gift."

Mason was supposed to be like that, yet... he... "Not the same. Do not think that way." lanthe is right. I have already decided to give myself the chance. Even if I end up with a broken heart, I will live this. I want to talk with Josh.

These new butterflies are so mad at me. I am holding my bag standing at the door of Josh's cabin. I do not know, if I knock or just try to get in... would he sense me? I sense him at the other side of the door. Would he want me after hearing my story?

"Let's go!" lanthe promised me, nothing will happen since I was not ready for it, and because both of us agreed that we wanted to talk with him and his wolf. If he is ready to accept and understand me, as I am now. Not the teen, he met a while ago.

I knocked the door, and he allowed me to get in. He did not come to open the door himself. I did not just to think more about the meaning of that. I opened the door and found him standing just one step away from me.

He did not move from there, did not even offer his hand. I smiled at him. He looked relieved when he saw the bag on my hand and smiled back at me.

None of us said anything. I understood he wanted me to take that last step to him, inside his cabin. He was nervously cleaning the sweat from his palms on his pants.

Josh was and still is adorable when he is nervous...

I let go of my bag on the oor and jumped into his arms, he gladly caught me allowing me to wrap my arms around his neck while he hugged me around to whirled me around the place. This emotion goes beyond the mate bond. I just know.