

## Chapter 9: Hurt

-Clara -

Daylight already.

I know I must get up. What time is it? Noon? I am not sure. It is warm. My body hurts, even my eyelids. Everything hurts.

I am in Angel's bed at the Simmons's house. I remember now...

Ilanthe moves inside of my head. She is also in pain as I recall what happened with Mason and what he said to me. He does not accept me as his fated mate.

Angel is sitting on a chair next to the bed. She was checking on me.

I fainted after my encounter with Mason. Mrs. Simmons carried me in her arms to Angel's father's car, and he drove us all together to their home. I woke up there and started to cry hidden under the covers. I have slept almost the whole day. That was yesterday.

I was just exhausted from all the crying that I did not even have the strength to eat something. Angel came to make me eat.

She is missing the first day of high school today.

I am feeling so guilty. Angel should have gone to classes. Her parents seemed as worried as she was, but I just could not face them.

Fortunately, they did not ask.

I was happy and felt so blessed on my birthday; everything is so messed up right now. I am not sure what to do...

My Luna called yesterday, but I could not talk to her. Angel told her that I was still sleeping after my first shift. She probably thinks that my wolf is weak. It does not matter anymore. I do not want to go to the Pack's house where he is.

Ilanthe does want to go and talk to Mason. She is still hopeful that Jax will convince him to accept our bond. That is a matter of time before he comes for us.

"His human will accept us; the mate bond is something irresistible for wolves, and Mason will come around it." Ianthe's sweet voice with hope breaks my heart.

"Do not worry. We were paired by the Moon Goddess. Jax will make him understand." I wanted her to be right about this too. However, I have known Mason my whole life. He said he wanted an Alpha's daughter as a mate for years, and he has her now. He will not let go of her now; I am sure of it.

Ilanthe is building up anger against my pessimistic thoughts. She thinks I have very low self-esteem, that I should trust our mate. It is so hard to do that when you know what I know.

"Mason is already engaged to someone else; she can help him to achieve his dreams."

Angel is listening while preparing our lunch. My statement is for Ianthe more than for Angel. We cannot steal his dream away from him. Who are we to hurt him like that?

Mason's words play inside of my head repeatedly, torturing my mind and heart.

Ilanthe does not want to believe he is rejecting us. She thinks it is just a matter of time before Mason agrees with Jax that we are soulmates.

I told the whole story to Angel. I started with the kiss we had two years ago, the potion Sky gave him to become Luna. Then, I told her what I heard at the entertainment room, how I found him at the end of the forest close to the territory's border, and what he said to me, rejecting me. I told her everything last night.

I gave Angel my permission to tell her parents what I told her. They are like family to me, but I did not have the strength to do it by myself. For some reason, I felt ashamed talking or explaining anything to them.

Explanation... Yes, I do need some explaining, too.

The pain of rejection can kill an omega... I wonder why am I not dead? My mate of a higher rank of werewolves has rejected me, so I should be dead... or at least at the verge of death, right?

"Perhaps Mason is right, and we are not mates. What if the potion kicked into effect now that my wolf is awake? After all, I am not dead after his rejection." I am trying to understand this situation.

Angel frowns while Ianthe growls angrily at me.

"I doubt it, Clara... Sky's trick was two years ago. Why did it not work by then? The potion does not work alone... it should have a spell. And that spell was for her, not you. Even if you kissed him, I think it does not count."

I have no idea how spells really work. Angel works in the area to heal werewolves from magic attacks in the hospital. She knows.

"I know who my mate is, Clara! Mason is my mate!" Ianthe is screaming again.

My wolf is even giving me headaches. I feel disconnected from her. She wants to hold her mate, while I want to let go and run away.

"There is no potion or spell strong enough to last for two years without contact or another dose... I mean, I am not an expert, but I think your kiss broke the spell of the potion he drunk because you are his true mate."

Angel's arguments make sense to me. Would they make sense to Mason? I wish I can tell him. He can be a well-educated young Alpha, but this knowledge is not average.

"You are missing the fact that I am not dead." I need an argument against this doubt.

"I have a theory about that... but once again, I am not sure, and my parents left. I should have asked them... well, Mason did not acknowledge you as a mate. Therefore, he did not fully reject you. Those things are quite different to me because he still can change his mind." My heart skipped a beat. I wish she is right.

"I have no idea what to do. Ianthe is getting stronger than me... You have no idea how painful it is. And you know the worst part of this...?" My heart twisted painfully in my chest. "Stay away from him is! While at the same time I fear him." It is a dilemma, indeed. These are complex emotions my poor heart has never experienced before.

"Probably, Mason has it worse than you. He is an Alpha. Jax must be driving him crazy. He is the one who was trying to be with you, right?" Angel does not know how strong Mason is. Perhaps, only a more senior Alpha would beat him at self-control.

It is already night. Ianthe wants to get out and talk to Mason. I am tired of ghting my wolf to stay inside.

"Clara, my parents will help you. Everything will be alright. We just need to stay at home until they return. We must be patient." Angel says as if reading my mind. Possibly, my face gives away my thoughts.

Around midnight in the morning, I heard Mason's voice. I am not sure if he is using mind-link or our bond to communicate with me. His voice sounds as if he is just right next to me. It woke me up.

"Meet me at the pond in the middle of the forest in one hour." His voice is tainted with anxiety.

I can almost see Ianthe waging her tale when she hears his voice. My heart runs faster. His voice calms me and excites me at the same time.

As I leave the safety of Angel's house and walk towards our meeting point, I leave a note for her and her parents. She is sleeping, and her parents went out to find a solution for me.

They would not understand my actions, even I am not sure to understand myself either.

I was told to stay away from Mason until we can figure things out to survive his rejection, but... what if he chooses me?

Dear Moon Goddess, what am I thinking?

It must be the mating bond because I am an omega, and I will always be an omega.

He despised me for so long, ignored me for years, brought another female to the packhouse even though she is not his fated mate. She even smells like him... Why would he change from one day to another?

Ilanthe loathes my self-pity and growled at the memory of Marissa's scent mixed with Mason's. My wolf is crazy; she still chooses to trust her mate better than my knowledge of him. Her faith relies on the mate bond.

"We are soulmates. Jax would never take someone else over me, well us. Please, Clara! We need to ght for our mate. Tell Mason to choose us, our bond! Jax accepts me, so it is only Mason. He will come to accept the destiny that Moon Goddess has for us." Ianthe, sweet innocent Ianthe, you have just a couple of days in this world. "You have picked in my memories but not lived them by yourself." I tried to convince her.

Ilanthe is innocent. She has the condence of those who have not suffered before.

I want to believe in her words. I want to do as Ianthe said, but I am scared. I fear the pain he will cause me if he says cruel things to me.

However, I do not want to drag Angel and her parents or anybody else into this. Mason will either reject me or not. I will die, or I will not.

I hate feeling so miserable and powerless. As I walked towards my destiny, I began to think about my life.

Maybe my mother had to go over the same situation as me since my father was a delta. Did she fear his rejection? Or did they accept each other as Mr. and Mrs. Simmons did?

Nobody can tell me what happened between my parents. He died before I was even born, and then mom died when I was six. There are no more relatives, no stories about our family.

My heart hurts every time I remember my mother. I wish I had more time with her.

I remember hugging her by the waist. Her scent was lavender, and I felt the warmth of her embrace... How she tended my scraped knees. I used to be too clumsy, even until now.

I should have visited my parents' graves more often. Although, I felt it was useless because she is not there. Her grave is empty. The vampires did not leave her body for us to mourn; they tore her apart among a pile of bodies. No one was there to recognize her remains.

My father's grave is next to hers. I was supposed to visit them yesterday, but this happened, and now I am walking to find Mason. My possible death.

Mason was already there, waiting for me.

When Mason's eyes fell into me, Jax tried to take over. I know because his eyes icker black again. His wolf wants me; I can feel it now. There is a mix of lust and love in Jax. It is a feeling that we share throughout the mate bond.

I am so new to controlling Ianthe's emotions that I can barely manage to approach Mason without launching myself at him.

Neither of us spoke. We both are in a battle with our wolves looking into each other's eyes. I wish I can read his thoughts, his face is blank. No expression.

He knows his rejection will kill my wolf and me.

My body will not be able to take the pain of rejection from an Alpha. I can see this clearly now... The emotions are so strong, I have never known I would be able to feel like this. I wonder if he feels it too.

I am standing in front of him, still far from his reach, and I closed my eyes while trying to focus, trying to gain courage from Ianthe.

My wolf is standing strong and resolved about getting her mate.

When his eyes meet mine, we both remained silent under the moon's light, and then I decided.

Moon Goddess planned this for us, for me. I embrace my destiny. I want him; he is my soulmate. I forgive him for everything he did in the past, all my resentment until my birthday, all that he said and did or did not. I need him, the mate bond is something powerful and astounding.

He does not move even a muscle still ghting Jax. I get bolder and approached him.

Mason is tall, I jumped a little and threw my arms around his neck to hug him tightly. I startled Mason giving the upper hand to Jax because I was hugged back.

"Just hold me." I whispered in his ear.

Mason is my mate. His scent is driving me crazy. His arms around my waist while mine around his neck. I want this to be our starting point, him choosing me.

"Clara..." he whispers back still holding me. His voice thrills me, butterflies exploding inside of my stomach. Sparks there, where our skin gets in contact. Nobody can ght this, I know I cannot.

He pulls away from me only to kiss me eagerly. This kiss is better than our first one. This is love... for me, it is. It might have always been without knowing he was my mate.

Quickly his kiss deepens and turns into one desperate; his tongue enters my mouth... exploring, taking, and sucking me. Mason is demanding submission, which I gladly give him.

I am melting in his arms. My knees are wobbling, and I need to rely my weight on him. I broke the kiss to breathe, and I can feel his desperation to keep touching me. His hands run through my body while he begins to plant wet kisses on my neck reaching the place where he should mark me as his... because he is mine. I moaned without intention, unable to avoid it.

I looked at the moon as he buries his nose on my neck taking deep breaths of my scent grabbing my hair in one hand to get access. I am in ecstasy.

Mason loves me and my heart races inside of my chest with so much hope. His other hand released my waist to move around my body and reach one of my breasts. The pleasure he gives me is hard to explain, and we still have our clothes on.

Suddenly, Mason pushed me away and closed his eyes while clenching his fists tightly. He intakes deep breaths of air from the opposite direction of where I am standing.

I am in front of him with my clothes wrinkled and feeling so vulnerable, not knowing what to do...

"This cannot happen again." There is anger in his voice now. It is Mason. There are no traces of Jax.

Ilanthe is howling inside of me; he is hurting us both.

"What are you talking about? We are mates." Mason looks at me, but he is so angry right now as if I have committed a big sin.

Tears are forming in my eyes.

"That is not true." I cannot believe his words.

Ilanthe wants to get out, but I do not trust her. She is going to throw herself at him... I cannot do that again.

"I graduated with honors as the youngest Alpha with a perfect score in almost everything. I have worked so hard every day in my life to get me where I am... I already know how hard he has worked until now. I know his achievements. I know very well his ambitions..."

My heart begins to sink as I think I know what he is going to say.

"I am about to merge two packs into the biggest pack in existence and overthrow Silver Rain Pack once and for all..."

I opened my mouth, but then I closed it again. What can I offer him? What do I have for him to choose me?

"We are his destiny!" Ianthe screams at me, pushing me to say this to him.

"I am your mate, Moon Goddess paired us. You know this..."

"I only know that Marissa is my chosen mate. Marissa is my dream of a mate and no other..."

The pain inside of my chest is growing and expanding fast. He willfully rejects me now.

I wish I can say something else, but I cannot. I just cannot move from where I am standing and clenching my fists.

"You better know this and forget your stupid dream to become Luna. You are not my mate. I will not let the \*\*\*\*\* witch who did this, I will kill her with my own hands... and if you say something to anyone. If you open your damn mouth to claim yourself as my mate, I will kill you too... I am going to x this shit."

I stopped breathing altogether, waiting for his rejection, but he just does not want to acknowledge me as his mate.

It is painful every time he says those things, the pain increases in my chest. The words that will kill our bond are closer. I wanted to say something. Angel's reasoning comes to me, but I just could not let the words out... Instead, I stayed there.

He walked away from me, leaving me there. I got down to my knees and began to cry out loud.

Ilanthe is broken-hearted now.

It is cold. It is so freaking cold. The sun rises in the sky while I am still cold. Blinking several times, I realize I should do something.

"Go to Luna Michelle..." Ianthe suggests, but I am not sure about that. He asked me to keep my mouth shut. Should I disobey him?

"Clara, please... it is our last attempt. I will not accept any more bullshit from him. I promise." I can trust Ianthe; this is the last time we ght to get our mate to accept us.