

Professor Dearest Chapter 15

~CLARA~

"Come on," Jenna says as she pulls me onto the dance floor. "You should ease your tension and try to have some fun. Move those hips."

She was right.

I should dance a little to forget about Alaric and Nicole.

I tried my best to listen to the music and allow it to soothe me, but after a few minutes, I knew it was hopeless.

Why was I doing this to myself for a second time?

I should have more control but the truth was that I had none when it concerned Alaric.

It wouldn't be this easy to forget about what just happened.

What was he doing in that room with her? Was he making love to her? Were they getting back together?

There were so many questions, and I knew I didn't want an honest answer to each of them.

"She's been up there with him for a while now." I remind Jenna.

It's been over an hour since I last saw both of them; it bothered me.

"Are you sure she's still up there with him?" she asks me.

"I never saw her return," I tell her.

"Maybe she left early?" she asks me.

I knew she was only saying this to try and make me feel better. There was no way that Nicole would leave early if Alaric invited her. She was the kind of person who loved to rub everything in your face.

"I think I should check on Scarlett," I tell Jenna.

She'd left ten minutes ago because she wasn't feeling well.

She should have returned by now.

"Sure," she smiles as she looks around us nervously. "I'm sure I can find someone to speak to."

"You can talk to Violet," I tell her. "She's very sweet, and you'll get along with her well."

Alaric's younger sister was just as kind as she was beautiful.

I point Jenna in her direction, and she walks over to her. I smile when Violet's face brightens the second Jenna starts speaking to her.

It must be hard to be the only girl surrounded by so many brothers. I could tell they were also very overprotective of her. In fact, no guy here looked her way even though she was drop-dead gorgeous.

I knew that the day Violet fell for someone, her brothers would lose their minds.

I walk out of the ballroom and straight into the hallway; I look at the stairs, tempted to check on Alaric. However, I knew that would make me seem weird. I didn't want Alaric to get the wrong impression.

If he wanted to make things work with Nicole, it wasn't my place to say anything. It just meant that everything I've been doing recently to catch his attention would have to stop immediately.

However, I knew I would never stop wanting him, even if I were forced never to show it.

I made my way towards the kitchen. It was the last place that Scarlett told me she would be.

I pause when I see Alaric inside. There wasn't anyone else in here with him. I thought I would find Scarlett here since that's where she said she would be. The last person I expected to see was him.

Where was Nicole? Why wasn't she with him?

He had a beer bottle in his hand and a dozen more empty ones on the table before him.

Why was he drinking this much?

I move closer to him, and he lifts his head. The second his eyes fell on me, I felt weak to my stomach.

Only Alaric could make me feel like this, not even Carter could.

He exhales loudly as he lifts the tip of the bottle to his mouth and slurps with his eyes still on me.

His gaze kept me glued to my spot.

Why wasn't he saying anything?

It was only then that I realized something I should have noticed sooner. There was a bruise on his forehead.

It wasn't there earlier, meaning he'd just gotten it.

I gasped.

I couldn't help myself as I rushed forward to get a closer look at it.

Alaric stiffens as I approach him. His reaction to my nearness bothers me.

Still, I don't stop as I lift my hand to touch it.

However, before my finger could reach the bruise, he grabbed my wrist to stop me.

I swallow as I peer up at him.

His eyes search mine, and I'm unsure what he's looking for.

"What are you doing, Clara?" He asks me softly.

My lips parted slightly before I said, "There's a bruise on your forehead. How did you get that?"

He doesn't answer me; instead, he slowly lets go of my hand and returns to drinking.

"Please leave Clara." He whispers.

I pretended not to be hurt by his immediate dismissal.

"What happened, Alaric?" I ask him. "Who did this to you?" I was not leaving until he gave me an answer. I wanted to help him. He looked like a man whose entire world had just been destroyed.

He doesn't answer me. I didn't like drunk Alaric; he was much more distant.

I rush out of the kitchen and straight to the medicine cabinet.

After finding the emergency kit, I returned to Alaric's side.

I attempted to clean the wound, but he immediately stopped me. It was the second time tonight that he prevented me from helping him.

"What's wrong?" I ask him gently. "Why won't you let me help you?"

His gaze is sad as he stares into my eyes. I feel my heart skip a beat. His hand on my wrist was warm, and I could feel little shockwaves. It was a weird but exhilarating feeling.

"Just leave." He says in a defeated tone.

I hid my disappointment for the second time tonight.

It hurt.

I hate how much it hurts.

"Where is Nicole?" I try again.

He looks away at my question, and I frown. Another thought crosses my mind, one that makes me scream inside.

"Alaric," I whisper. "Did Nicole do this to you?"