CHAPTER 22: INVESTIGATION

The moment Claire stumbled into his arms, Sebastian knew it was no accident like she acted. But he couldn't understand why she would do such a thing. However, when he held her in his arms, and the feeling of rightness hit him, he didn't care what her reason was. The only thing that mattered was that his mate was in his arms, where she belonged. It felt... perfect.

Claire looked up at Sebastian, feeling victorious as she imagined Sasha's reaction after hearing his voice. She must have realised that it meant Sebastian was near her. And he didn't contradict her words of him caring for her. She had just declared that Sebastian was hers and being a woman, Sasha must have realised it. Now it's time to see what she will do about it. If she leaves them alone, Claire will never look her way again. But if Sasha tries to snatch Sebastian away from her, it will be war!

However, all her victorious feelings and plans left her head the moment her eyes met Sebastian's molten gaze. The heat in his gaze was unmistakable, and he was looking at her as if she was the most prized possession he had ever held in his arms. She forgot Sasha and her jealousy and nothing mattered but

Sebastian.

As she stared at him, it was as if everything else faded away and it was just him and her left in the world. Even though she should have straightened up and left his hold, she just wanted to stay in his arms.

As if realising her thoughts, Sebastian tightened his hold on her, pulling her closer to him. As he hugged her tighter, Claire closed her eyes contently. She could feel him dipping his head, nuzzling into her hair, and she breathed his addictive minty scent in. They both stood lost in each other's presence, the only sound in the room that of their breathing and the wind.

Phantom tingles ran down Claire's frame wherever their bodies touched, even though she couldn't feel their mate bond. It was perfect. This moment... She wished she could live in it forever...

Suddenly, the door to the dining room opened and startled Claire out of her dream world. She opened her eyes to see a frowning Liam standing at the entrance of the room. For a moment, she wanted to ignore him and snuggle into the warm body of her mate. But then reality hit her. Liam was there! She couldn't let him know her actual feelings! With the realisation, Claire gasped, leaping away from Sebastian.

Claire tried to control her erratic breath as she faced Sebastian, who still stood with his arms extended, looking utterly lost.

Sebastian looked away from her and as he spotted Liam, understanding flashed through his eyes. Liam was the one Claire loved and hence his touch must have been unwelcome to her. Even though she was his mate and all his instincts told him she was his, he shouldn't try to bother her when she loves another man.

Even when everything in his being warred against it, he took a step back from her, keeping a distance between them. Even though she was just a few steps away from him, it suddenly felt as if there was an ocean between them.

"Thank you for catching me," Claire said awkwardly, breaking the silence. Seeing the pain in his eyes, she wished she could take it away. This was wrong. So wrong. She belonged in his arms. Why should she act like he was just a stranger who helped her?

She forced herself to turn away from him and looked at Liam.

"Hey. Dad told me you were busy with a task he gave you. Are you done?"

Liam was staring between Sebastian and Claire with suspicion till then, but then he shook the thought off. There was no trace of his guilt in her demeanor. That meant Claire was still foolishly devoted to him. There was no way she would hug Sebastian just like that. She must have fallen, and he must have caught her. She thanked him, right?

Confident Claire was still besotted with him, he grinned cockily.

"Ah yes. I rushed back as soon as possible so I could see you, babe."

Then he looked at Sebastian and gave him a nod in greeting.

"Hello again, Alpha Sebastian. Good to see you."

Sebastian gave a barely perceptible nod in acknowledgment, a blank look on his face.

Claire looked at Liam, wondering how she could get rid of him. She was having such a nice moment with her man, and the damned asshole had to spoil it by springing up uninvited. She had to get rid of that thing before getting back to her mate. Claire couldn't just let him think he didn't matter to her. He deserved better than that.

"I feel like getting some fresh air. Would you join me for a walk?" Claire asked, walking towards Liam. She will have to take him out of the room and then find some excuse to send him away.

"Okay, babe," Liam agreed with a smug smirk as he looked at Sebastian. 'See, the girl forgot you the moment she saw me. She wants to come with me!'

Claire turned to look at Sebastian.

"I will see you later," she said while her eyes told him, 'I will be back now. Please wait!'

As Sebastian stood with an impassive look, Liam led Claire out of the room. The minute they were out of sight, the blank look slid off his face, and he punched the wall in frustration. One minute it feels as if everything is perfect in the world with his mate in his arms and the next moment he is standing alone, looking at her, walking away with another man. Just what exactly had he done to be tortured like this?

Suddenly his phone started ringing and Sebastian gathered himself before checking who was calling. Seeing it was Bryant, the guy whom he had assigned the task of investigating Claire, he straightened up.

"Hello Bryant. Any updates?"

"Alpha, I had investigated the girl like you asked," Bryant replied.

"Good. Did anything unusual come up about Claire in the investigation?"

"No, Alpha. Everything checked up perfectly. There were no particular incidents in her life other than the death of her mother when she was a baby. She is a friendly person and has no rivals in either her school or the pack." Bryant paused before continuing. "She started dating the Beta's son Liam a few years ago and after her eighteenth birthday, she chose him as her mate. Also, there has been no information regarding Alpha Gavin being ill. Nothing strange has happened in her life so far."

"Alright. Keep investigating and inform me if you ever notice anything strange about Claire."

"Okay, Alpha," Bryant replied before cutting the call.

Sebastian stood lost in his thoughts, wondering what was amiss. It just didn't seem right. How would she know about Doctor Jordan? And her father seemed fine, but she was so worried about him. What was he missing?

Sebastian frowned, feeling more suspicious than ever.

His senses were telling him that there was more to this than what they were seeing. He needed to get to the bottom of this.

Meanwhile, Claire, who left with Liam, had mind linked her father and mentioned Liam was with her. Gavin, who was busy with the paperwork for an alliance with a neighboring pack, decided he would call Liam for help. Receiving the Alpha's call, Liam had to leave. Successfully ditching him, Claire rushed back to Sebastian, only to halt when she heard him mention her name to someone. As she listened to their conversation, she realised he was investigating her.

Claire froze, her heart twisting with pain at the realization that Sebastian didn't trust her. She had tried to cover up her slip of the tongue with lies, never imagining he will doubt her. She had taken his feelings for her for granted but forgot how he wasn't the same Sebastian she knew. In this life, they had just met. Naturally, he had no reasons to trust her, unlike the man who had seen her at her worst and stood beside her. She had to earn his trust and so far; she did nothing to deserve it.

Claire who had been excited to come back to Sebastian now stood feeling lost. A drop of tear slipped down

her eye as she recalled his words, asking to investigate her. The Sebastian of her past had never doubted her. He had always been there for her even when she was a stupid brat who pined for another man...

Claire wiped off the tears before straightening up. Everything will be back to how it was with time. She will win his trust and love one day. Gathering herself, she decided to go into the room.

Just as she turned to step forward, Sebastian stepped out of the room and both of them froze, looking at each other with wide eyes. ①

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