

CHAPTER 3: THE PARTY

Claire stared at her father, feeling confusion and fear rising inside her.

“Hawthorn pack?”

“Yes. Alpha Devin will arrive with a few of his elite warriors. We are planning to create an alliance.”

“What about Alpha Sebastian?” Claire blurted out and Gavin blinked, looking puzzled.

“Sebastian?”

“I mean, why don’t you invite him too? The Silver fall pack is the strongest pack and an alliance with the pack will be best for us, right?”

“You are right, darling. It will be good to have Alpha Sebastian here,” Gavin said, and Claire felt hope. Had she succeeded in persuading her father to invite Sebastian? “But he is not in his pack right now and he can’t attend the party this week. Maybe we can invite him later at another time?”

Claire felt her heart beat rising at an alarming rate. This was not right! He was supposed to come to the party! If he doesn’t come, she won’t get the chance to meet him like she did last time! Why was this happening differently than she remembered? What does that mean for her?

“Princess?”

Claire looked up to see her father watching her with worry, and she forced herself to smile.

“Okay, Dad. I hope the party will be a success.”

“You look tired, princess. Have some rest.”

Claire noticed her father’s gaze falling on her mark again, but neither of them said anything about it.

Once her father was gone, Claire sighed. She couldn’t meet Sebastian at the party like she had expected. But it was not like she could do anything about it either. She could only wait for another opportunity. One day soon, she would meet him again. She just knew it.

Days passed by and all Claire could think about was Sebastian and meeting him. In her excitement to see him, she even ranted about him to Liam, much to his annoyance. Finally, it was the day of the party and Claire absentmindedly started talking about how wonderful it would have been if Sebastian could have come.

“Why are you always talking about Alpha Sebastian? You haven’t even seen him till day and you talk as if you are best friends with him,” Liam complained, looking like the typical jealous boyfriend when she knew for a fact that he didn’t give a damn about her.

Claire held back from rolling her eyes and looked at Liam. It was not as if she could tell him how Sebastian was not a stranger to her. That he was the man who had always been there for her, even when she didn’t deserve it...

“But darling, Alpha Sebastian is the Alpha of the strongest pack on the continent. What if we invite him and he finds his mate in our pack? He will cooperate with our pack and we will become stronger than ever. After you become the Alpha, we will have him as our ally and imagine how great it would be for us then!” Claire practically sang while watching the twinkle in Liam’s eyes when she mentioned him becoming the alpha. After all, it was all he ever wanted. So obsessed with the alpha position that he had no qualms in marking her when he already found his mate. Manipulative bastard!

“You are right, babe. We definitely need him on our side! We would have to invite him to another party soon.” Liam grinned at Claire, his eyes turning darker with greed. “But we won’t need it for long. When I become the Alpha, I will make this pack the strongest one and then there will be no need to depend on anyone else!”

When you become the alpha... Dream on, asshole!

Claire watched him walk away, lost in his daydreams of becoming the Alpha and probably planning her funeral along with it. With a shrug, she turned away, only to freeze when she saw the person sashaying towards her. The one woman she hated more than anything in this world...

“Hey babel!” Diana greeted her with a wide smile, and it took everything in Claire’s willpower to stop from punching her in her stupid mouth. She hadn’t seen the viper since the day she had come back in time, and she certainly hadn’t missed her charming presence!

There were still hours left for the party and she, the hostess, was still in her T-shirt and jeans. But Diana was already ready to party. She wore a red sequined dress that stopped above her knees. With winged eyeliner lining her hazel eyes and daring red lipstick on her sultry lips, her face was begging for attention. And her red high heels completed her siren look, making her look taller than her five foot delicate frame. Somehow, she still wore a deceptively innocent aura that made all the men always want to protect her. Go figure!

“Hello Diana,” Claire gritted back with a smile, all the while the memories of Diana’s taunting grin and curses flashed through her mind. She could still feel a phantom pain in her belly where the fucking witch had stabbed her.

“I will help you with the arrangements. You must be tired of doing everything all by yourself. Where is your charming boyfriend?” Diana asked with a grin, and Claire smirked.

“Not my boyfriend. He’s my mate,” she said, pointing to the mark on her neck and watched with satisfaction as she saw Diana gritting her teeth. It hurts, doesn’t it? Seeing your man with another woman? Still, you wanted power more than your life and you should suffer the consequences!

“Ah, right! Congratulations on your mating,” Diana all but growled out.

Claire grinned at her, thinking how she couldn’t be hostile to the bitch and cause her to be suspicious. Then they started talking about nonsense like they did and Claire laughed and nodded at all the right place while trying to murder her so called best friend with her gaze. Now that she was aware of it, she realized that all her honey laced words were filled with jibes and taunts. How had she never noticed it before? Was she that stupid, or were they that good at their act?

After a while, Diana excused herself and pranced out of the room. Claire smirked at her receding figure, a knowing smirk on her lips. She hummed while counting and as soon as she reached ten, she grinned, seeing Liam make a beeline towards the exit while muttering some nonsense excuse of going to find table cloths. As if he will ever bother with such trivial chores...

Claire sighed, remembering how it was always like this. Whenever Diana left a room, Liam was sure to follow within moments of her leaving. Diana was older than Claire by almost a year and they must have found out they were mates then. Maybe they were already with each other even before then and all this while they were together right in front of her eyes. She really was stupid...

“You have to pay a little attention to your mate and best friend.”

Claire stiffened hearing the words and slowly turned to the speaker. A dark-haired woman stood in front of her, her grey eyes narrowed in anger. Eunice Miller, her maid and the one real friend who had been with her in the darkest of times when the rest of the world treated her as an outcast... She had always warned her about Liam and Diana, just like she did now. But Claire had been blind with her love for Liam and ignored her warnings. If only she listened to her friend then...

“Don’t worry, Eunice. No one is fooling me. Not anymore.” Claire smiled at Eunice and she blinked, clearly not expecting the answer. But before she could reply, Claire looked her up and down with a frown.

“You came to advise me on relationships. Don’t you think you should worry about your own matter first?”

“Huh?” Eunice looked even more puzzled now.

“You do know that we are having a party tonight, right? What if you find your mate tonight, my darling friend? Is this how you are planning to welcome him? Don’t you think you need to doll up a bit in case you end up meeting your special one?” Claire teased Eunice, who blushed beet red.

“Y-you!” she cried out in protest.

“Relax, girl! Just go and get ready.”

“Alright Ma’am! But are you planning to welcome the Hawthorn pack in your worn out T-shirt and jeans? Not that you don’t look good, but...” It was Eunice’s turn to tease Claire now.

Claire rolled her eyes and shooed off her friend before returning to her room. By the time she got ready, everything was ready for the party. Only the guests needed to arrive for it to get started.

Claire walked down the stairs, making everyone turn to her, taking her in with their adoring gazes. Right. She was adored at one point in her life, even if she had forgotten what it felt like...

In her last life, Claire had been angry at her father at the time of the party and didn’t care to impress anyone. She remembered how when Diana was dressed to the nines, she almost appeared like a hobo. She was being a rebel, but maybe it was the beginning of her becoming the pack outcast. Not anymore. This time, she will do everything the right way...

Claire was wearing a silver floor-length gown that hugged her curves in all the right places, emphasizing her hourglass figure but not in a vulgar way. Her golden hair was left open, swaying gently with the breeze, making her almost look like an angel. Her magnetic blue eyes lined with kohl were filled with a mysterious allure as she gazed at the people watching her. With her cherry red lips raised in a gentle smile, she looked innocent and seductive at the same time. Claire Black looked absolutely beautiful, and she knew it as she held the attention of the adoring crowd.

Claire spotted her father, who was watching her with a doting gaze, and went towards him with a genuine smile on her face. And right when she reached him, the door to the hall opened, making the crowd hush in anticipation. She watched as a group of men walked inside, all holding an air of authority. The Hawthorn pack has arrived.

Claire spotted the distinguished-looking gentleman with reddish brown hair and black eyes. With the way he was leading the group, he must be Alpha Devin. Claire smiled, ready to welcome him, when she froze seeing the man who was walking right next to him.

His blazing green eyes looked just as she remembered, full of passion and fire. He was taller than Alpha Devin and his body radiated power and dominance even when he was at the other end of the room. His messy black hair looked as if he had been running his fingers through them one too many times and her hands itched to do just the same. Alpha Sebastian, the man she hadn’t been expecting to see at the party, was walking towards her, looking like he owned the very place.

Flashes of their memories from the first day she saw him in her last life at this very party went through her mind. She could never forget the utter devastation in his blazing green eyes as he saw her dying in front of him. ‘Oh Sebastian, I missed you...’

From the way the two alphas were deep in conversation, Claire realised that they must have been friends and Alpha Devin must have brought Sebastian along to the party.

Suddenly, Sebastian stopped, his head snapping up to meet Claire. They both stared at each other, lost in each other’s eyes as if it was just the two of them in the world and time itself had stopped.

Claire automatically took a step forward, her hands raised to hug Sebastian while he did the same. But then reality hit her and she realized that she couldn’t act on her instincts. She had to act as if he was a stranger...

The smile on Sebastian’s face froze, and he looked at Claire, a strange look crossing his face as he saw Claire’s hands falling down. Why wasn’t she running towards him? Why was she staring at him with that gloomy look? What was wrong?

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