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Claire glared at Sebastian and then Devin one last time before turning and storming off, the anger emanating from her palpable even after she was gone.

Sebastian let out a sigh before looking at Devin.

"Why did you just stay silent? Why didn't you tell her you were spending your days trying to find that bastard?"

Devin shook his head.

"Because I deserve it. I was so stupid that I stayed away from Eunice when she needed me the most. I was confused by my feelings regarding what happened to her and waited to sort them out. None of that should have mattered when she was in such a state." Devin sighed, his shoulders slumping in defeat. "I should just have been there for her when she needed me. I was such a fool and I deserve all the hatred from Eunice and Claire."

Devin said, regret coating his words, and Sebastian sighed. He had known this would happen. That's why he tried to coax Devin to go to Eunice that day. But he rejected his advice and now seeing his friend's regret, Sebastian wondered if he should have been more forceful that day. Well, what happened has happened and they can only try to amend it.

"Well, what are you going to do now?" Sebastian asked.

Devin straightened up, his eyes flaring with rage.

"I had failed Eunice by not being there for her in her darkest time. I can never make up for it, but I will do my best to make redemption.

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The only thing I can do is to get revenge for Eunice." Devin let out a growl. "My man had found the whereabouts of that monster and tomorrow, I am going to get him myself. He will regret the day he set his filthy eyes on my mate!"

"If that's what you want, then so be it. Scum like him should never dare to do something like this to any woman ever again. His death should be a lesson to all such monsters."

Devin just nodded absentmindedly, his eyes full of blood-thirst as he devised plans to torture the filthy bastard who touched his mate.

Sebastian sighed, remembering how Claire had looked at him with her eyes full of disbelief, anger, and pain. She had misunderstood that he believed a woman who had already been with another man was tainted. He never thought of such a thing in his life. In fact, he would have thought himself the luckiest man in the world if Claire would choose him now even after being marked by Liam. But she loved that rascal, and he had no intention of breaking his mate's heart. But how could he tell all this to Claire when he couldn't tell her she was his mate? And it was not like she was in the mood to listen to any explanations, even if he wanted to try. He could only hope that once she calms down, she will think more clearly. And maybe then she would realise he wasn't that much of a narcissistic to have such a shitty attitude regarding women. Maybe...

The next day, Claire stood near the training grounds while she stared at a bunch of recruits fighting each other. Her mind raced as she thought of Devin and Sebastian, both abandoning their mates just because they were 'tainted' by another man. She was especially pissed off at Devin, who broke Eunice's heart when she was already in such a fragile state. If only he had been more compassionate to poor Eunice...

Claire looked up to see a few warriors from Devin's pack walking away, duffel bags in their hands. With a puzzled frown, she walked towards the men.

"Where are you going?" Claire asked curiously.

"We had a training scheduled for now and we were left behind when our Alpha left. We are going to join him now," a lanky man from the group answered her.

"Your Alpha left?" Claire asked, trying to control her rage and disbelief from showing.

"Yes. It was a sudden decision. He left early in the morning"

Claire forced a smile on her face, which must have looked more like a grimace.

"Oh. You guys carry on then," she said, and the men nodded before walking away.

Claire stood there, her thoughts running rampant. Devin had known about Eunice's situation and he stayed away from her when she needed his support the most. And when Claire confronted him about that, rather than own up to his stupidity, he chose to run away from the pack. What a coward!

Claire let out a sigh, wondering how she was so wrong in judging someone again in this lifetime, too. She was so certain that Devin absolutely adored Eunice and he was a perfect gentleman. And he turned out to be a coward who runs away from problems!

Claire walked towards Eunice's room, trying to keep her disappointment and anger away from her face. How will she tell poor

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Eunice that the man she loved had run away when she was craving his presence the most?

Claire entered Eunice's room and, seeing the disappointment that flashed across her face, she realised Eunice hoped that it was Devin who came to visit her. Damn Devin for doing this to Eunice!

Claire smiled at Eunice, acting as if she hadn't noticed the sadness that flashed through her eyes.

"Hey, girl. Are you up to visit the garden again?" Claire asked cheerfully.

Eunice just stared at her without even blinking and then let out a sigh.

"He will never visit me, will he? I don't even know why I still dare to hope when I know I shouldn't. It is just not meant for me," Eunice said suddenly, making Claire drop her cheerful mask.

Claire sat next to Eunice and held her hand with a gentle smile on her face. How could she tell this broken girl she was right? That the man she wanted to see had no intention of visiting her? That he had fled rather than risk facing her again? She just couldn't.

"I forgot to tell you. Alpha Devin had to leave because of some urgent pack affairs. But don't worry. I am sure the first thing he will do once he is done will be to visit you."

Eunice just smiled sadly at Claire, her eyes telling Claire that she didn't believe a word. Just why did you do this, Devin? Why?

"He will come, Eunice. I am sure he will," Claire repeated, her voice firm, as if she was telling those words to herself more than to Eunice.

Eunice sat there silently, a faraway look on her face, and Claire

sighed. How was she supposed to fix this?

That noon, Claire stood facing Sebastian in their secret place at the usual time. But rather than the excited smile she always has, this time there was a cool indifference in her eyes. He stood there awkwardly, wondering if he should say something to smooth the situation. Maybe try to explain how he didn't care about his mate being with another man as long as she would accept him. That he didn't think of women as objects to be owned. Anything to clear her misunderstanding and stop her looking at him like he was a fucking stranger she didn't know! But the words wouldn't come and he could only stare helplessly.

"Shall we start?" Claire asked, her tone sounding almost bored. As Sebastian looked at her, hurt flashing through his eyes, a flash of pain passed through her eyes. But then a cool mask slid on, wiping all emotions from her expressive face, and Sebastian hated she was trying to hide from him.

Sebastian nodded at her silently, and without waiting for another signal, she lunged at him. He wasn't expecting her attack this soon, but being the trained alpha he was, he easily blocked her attack without even needing to think. Claire let out a snarl before leaping at him again. Her movements were all rushed and sloppy, making it clear she was acting on impulse rather than her usual agile planned motions. She was clearly still angry at him.

As Sebastian blocked her punch, she let out a yelp, holding her hand in an awkward position and worry clouded Sebastian's mind. Shit! She was hurt!

Without thinking, Sebastian rushed to her, pulling her to his arms and held her hand out worriedly, inspecting it for wounds. But Claire suddenly pushed him away, taking a step back. She put her hand

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down, a pained expression crossing her face for a moment before the now familiar calm mask slid on.

"I am fine. It's nothing to worry," she said in a formal tone, dismissing his worry, and Sebastian stiffened.

Normally it would have been him who tried to keep the distance between them while she always seemed to welcome his attentive gestures. She would have been smiling that gentle smile of hers, her eyes crinkling with affection as she stared at him fussing over her 'wounds'. It would have been his stepping back that would have caused her pretty face to droop in disappointment before she shakes it away. But for the first time, she was the one to keep a distance between them, and he certainly didn't like that feeling.

Claire stood just a few steps away from him, but suddenly it felt as if there was an ocean standing between them, as if she was going far away from him with each breath he took. And he couldn't do anything about it. He thought it was agony to be near her when she was marked by another man. But seeing her distancing herself from him, he knew the real agony was this. He was losing his mate for good... 1



lovelyfan



Author

*"Hello dear readers!
I know I have been absent for a while now and I
am really sorry for it. My whole family had been
suffering from Covid and my father in law died be* 2



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