

## Chapter 419

Violet

My chest felt like exploding as I waited for their answer. The answer that could change everything and erase every good moment we had today. Every real moment we had shared.

And every second stretched as I waited.

Fergus's eyes were fixed on me. "You are not a demon child," he stated. "And I do not know what possessed me to ever call you that."

His voice cracked slightly. "You are the precious daughter Claire left behind. No matter who your birth parents were, my sister was your mother, and you are a Bloodrose. One of us."

I felt a strange sensation inside.

My sister was your mother.

You are a Bloodrose.

Those words landed straight in my chest. Sonya squeezed my hand.

"We kept in touch with your grandfather Aelius after your parents passed," she said quietly. "We needed answers."

They kept in contact with Aelius?

He had never told me.

"It was only a few times," she clarified quickly. "He knew the pack wouldn't stop looking until we got some answers, so he came to see us instead."

Her fingers tightened around mine, and then she pulled back. "He told us darker forces were in play, and that Claire and Greg gave themselves to protect you, Dylan, and many more lives than we understood."

My heart started pounding, and it wasn't necessarily a good thing.

"We knew you didn't do it," she whispered. "We all knew you didn't do it."

Then why?

I had already convinced myself that was the reason they hated me. I needed it to be true because it could somehow justify their hatred. But if they knew...then there had to be something else behind the way they treated me.

Fergus shook his head once. "We don't know all the details. Aelius told us we had to let it go, that the less we knew, the safer it was for you. He advised us to settle on a story of a rogue attack, and after my father, your Grandpa, had passed peacefully not long after, we decided to leave it that way."

He looked at me with something close to regret. "I'm not going to sit here and lie. When I found them, I thought it could've been those eyes they were always guarding, but that thought only lasted a second because if there's one thing no one could doubt, it's your love for them. You loved them too much to ever hurt them."

My throat burned, and I stared down at the table for a moment. The truth was comforting, but it also hurt, and I couldn't stop myself from wanting more.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Anything," Fergus answered immediately.

I lifted my head. "Did you go to Aelius only for answers...or to throw me away like garbage? Since you were against Mom keeping me in the first place."

Even saying it out loud hurt, but once again, I had to know.

Fergus didn't look away. "I can look you in the eye and tell you that that has never been an option for me," he said instantly. "Ever."

Sonya inhaled sharply. "It was for me," she admitted, her voice soft.

I felt Dylan stiffen beside me. He had just been listening until now.

"We argued," Sonya continued. "Your dad and I fought about it. I didn't know how to raise you, didn't know what exactly you were, and I was scared."

I didn't know how to feel.

Relief?

Pain?

Understanding?

All of it at once. "Why didn't you want me?"

"It wasn't like that," she said gently. "I never hated you, and I never thought you were evil. Not even when you..."

She stopped talking.

Not even when I shifted for the first time and lost control, nearly

destroying our land.

"I admit, I believed you should have stayed with your grandfather from the day you lost your parents," she said. "Not because I didn't want you... but because I had always thought he could protect you better than we could."

Her voice trembled slightly. "The way he spoke about you...I could feel the love he had for you, and I didn't want to take that away. I was afraid we would fail you, that we wouldn't be able to protect you the way Claire and Greg did. They were so deeply connected to you because of the promise they made to your mother."

Her thumb brushed over my knuckles. "But I was wrong."

Something inside me softened. Of course I wasn't completely and magically healed. That would've been too unrealistic. But it did feel like there was a weight lifted off my shoulders.

Sonya drew in a breath. "I know I hurt you, and I know you must have felt the difference between how I loved you and how I loved Dylan," she said, her voice shaking. "However, I want you to know that you are both my children, and I regret not trying harder. I regret letting fear guide me instead of love."

Tears welled in my eyes, but I fought against them.

"I know a sorry won't undo those horrible years or fix the way I have treated you," Sonya said. "I know I will never be able to replace your mom, but what I can do is try to do better...if you'll allow me to do better."

I gazed into her eyes, and there it was again. The sound of two strong and steady heartbeats. It felt like I could see straight through her. Past the

words, the guilt, and into the truth.

She meant it.

Lumia yawned lazily inside me. 'You feel it too, don't you?' she murmured. 'That woman might actually be serious this time.'

A small smile tugged at my lips.

Dylan took a breath. "I always thought you picked sides because of me."

I used to think that too...

That I was the demon child, the shadow, while he was the sun in their lives.

"That knife..." Dylan continued. "I told Violet about it. After I held it to her throat, you..."

Both Sonya's and Fergus's faces tightened with regret.

"Our behavior toward Violet had nothing to do with you, Dylan," Fergus said. "The only thing I thought back then was that I had failed to protect you. Both of you."

He looked between us. "I had one of my children hurting the other, and I didn't know how to fix it."

A chuckle escaped Dylan. "After that," he said, "things didn't get better. I was still cruel toward Violet, and I know that's on me," he continued. "But I can't remember any of the adults stopping me or anyone else, and I can't help but wonder...is everyone in the pack aware of what she is?"

Fergus nodded slowly. "After she lost control that night...when she

shifted..."

I heard Lumia growl inside me.

What was her problem?

"There was chaos in the pack," Fergus went on. "The children didn't see much, but some adults did, and when they recognized those glowing white eyes that could only belong to a Child of Blood..."

Lumia growled again, sharper now, and I felt something awaken inside me. I knew why she was growing restless. She didn't want him reminding me.

But now I knew.

I had blamed Lumia for so long, and she hadn't done much to correct me. She had made me believe her behavior was just because she was a reckless wolf. She had made me resent her, and she must've done it to protect me.

I was the one who lost control that day, just like I had during the battle, not her.

"Anyway, we had no choice but to come clean," Fergus said. "Not about everything, of course, but enough for them to understand what we were dealing with."

His eyes pierced mine. "They know you're special. They don't know who you truly are, but they know."

He took a breath. "And they will always stand behind you, and you will always have their loyalty because you are one of us."


A sigh escaped him. "We have failed you, and I have failed you the most. I didn't educate them properly as their Alpha, and I let fear spread through the pack when I should've protected you."

I sat still, taking everything in.

"If things were different," he added, "if you could simply be who you were meant to be, the princess of the Common Lands," he chuckled, "we wouldn't even be having this conversation because the Alpha Prince would have thrown me in the dungeons."

A small laugh escaped me. He didn't know Alaric, but I did. There was no way he would've thrown him into the dungeons, knowing he'd done all he could to keep me safe. Sure, he could've done more, but there had been at least some effort.

I truly wished I could tell them.

About Adelaide, Alaric, that I had met them, heard their voices, and seen what they were still fighting for. 

Unfortunately, that would open too many doors for now.

So I swallowed it down instead. "I'm glad we had this conversation," I smiled. "I hold no grudges and would like to move forward. I think that's what we all need right now."

Fergus and Sonya shared a smile that warmed my heart. I didn't want them to stress themselves out, especially not now.

"I think there's something you wanted to tell us as well," I said, looking at them. "Right?"