

Mated to the Werewolf King

Welcome Home

The sun rose over the horizon, illuminating the sky with a fresh pink-orange tinge as I climbed the front steps to my home.

I knocked on the door, hoping someone would be awake this early, and when it opened, I was not disappointed to find my father standing on the other side of it.

"Belle!" he cried. His face lit up with so much joy I could see the faint tears he had never liked us to see in his eyes.

He pulled me in for a strong embrace.

"Thank the Moon Goddess you're safe."

The amount of love I felt in that moment was stronger than any fears or doubts that had been hanging over my head.

For the first time in a while, I felt at ease.

My father always believed that words held power, but the absence of words held truth.

He didn't speak much, and for this, I thought he was some all-knowing entity with ridiculous foresight.

I guessed others believed this, too, since he was the alpha.

To my surprise, he acted like a schoolkid craving the latest gossip.

"Where did you sleep? What did you eat? Did anyone hurt you?!" he blurted, without realizing I couldn't answer because I was bursting with laughter.

It was all so much to take in, for both of us, and I was the one with all this hard-hitting information.

As he started to cook a breakfast for the entire village, I contemplated what to tell him in on first.

How could I explain I had been fated to mate with the Vampire King whose kingdom I had destroyed?

Would he care to learn the Werewolf King's memory had been erased by dark magic?

I didn't know how to begin, and some of the information seemed too daunting to recollect.

Part of me wanted to hold out the darker elements, such as the Demon Lord, whose obsession for me was matched only by his brother's obsession to torture me.

Then, there was the most important information I could have learned about myself: I was a witch-demon-hybrid with the ability to levitate, teleport, and summon energy.

Just as he dropped a fresh pancake onto my plate beside loads of bacon and a muffin, I heard footsteps descending the stairs.

It was Sean!

At first, he almost didn't notice me, as he was still rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"Why are you up so early, Dad?" he asked.

I couldn't hold back my chuckles when I noticed his hair was a complete mess.

Then, he saw me, and his jaw dropped.

"Belle! Oh, Moon Goddess!"

I quickly got up and ran over to him, practically jumping on him, with my arms as wide as they could be.

"Wow, I'm so happy you're alive," Sean said, as we slowly broke our embrace.

He rubbed at his eyes again, and this time, I saw it was tears, not sleep, he wanted so badly to get rid of.

"You can't get rid of me that easily," I smiled at him.

He gave me one last hug and a noogie before sprinting up the stairs.

"I have to wake up Mom, this is unbelievable!" he said, disappearing out of sight.

But the volume of his voice alone was loud enough to wake our mother along with the entire neighborhood.

I dug into the food, unaware of my hunger, until the second forkful of pancakes entered my mouth.

I salivated over the sausages and eggs that were on their way to the table when Sean returned downstairs with our mother.

"Oh, my goodness!" she cried. Literal tears of joy poured out of her along with a high-pitched squeal I didn't know she could make.

When we hugged, it felt as though she could squeeze every ounce of breath from my lungs. I could feel her heart beating fast, matching pace with my own.

I didn't realize just how badly I needed to be back home with the very people I believed to be my true family.

We sat down and enjoyed our breakfast together, just like we used to.

For a brief moment, it felt like nothing had changed.

But I could tell in my father's eyes, Sean's hunched posture, and my mother's constant happy tears, this endeavor had been hard on us all.

It was no use trying to avoid their questions any longer.

Once I finally put down my fork and washed away my breakfast with a cup of coffee, I turned my full attention to them.

It took me a long time to figure out how to explain everything.

My story began with an air of uncertainty, but as I recalled the events and saw the reactions on their faces, my voice grew strong.

When I first explained I had three kings to mate with, both my parents were horror-stricken.

Sean made a wise-crack about knowing I would attract such strange choices, but I reminded him of some of the women he had brought home.

All the memories were so vivid, yet when spoken aloud, they sounded straight out of a dream.

They seemed to overlap with one another, so I almost couldn't separate them from becoming a complete blur.

By the time I had talked about my time spent with Samuel, my father couldn't hold it in any longer.

"You blew up the Vampire Kingdom?" he huffed.

"Well... I kind of had no choice," I said.

"They're going to come after you and anyone associated with you!" he snapped.

My mother cleared her throat and kicked him under the table, her eyes like daggers.

"You had every right to. Believe me... if I had known what they were trying to do to you, it would have been much worse," my mother said reassuringly.

I noticed Sean was more silent than he had been since I arrived, and my heart grew heavy with recognition.

I reached across the table and grabbed his arm.

"Gregory gave everything to help me survive," I said. "He only knew as much as I did. And that was only so the Demon Lord could try to keep me there."

He looked at me, and tears began to well in his eyes.

"I didn't even get to say goodbye," he admitted.

The hurt in his voice made my heart break for the millionth time. I had seen so much death and destruction I had almost forgotten how it could feel so fresh and new.

Like something from another world that would never visit this peaceful respite.

"You mentioned Lasarus told you about your real parents," my father pried.

His voice tried to fool me into thinking he had only asked to change the topic, but the wonder and uncertainty in his eyes revealed something more...

I couldn't help but frown.

"My biological father is dead and was a powerful demon. I still don't know who my mother is, but I do know she was a witch," I said, with a hint of uncertainty.

My family shifted awkwardly as they sat there, soaking up the last of my information.

It was a lot to absorb, but no one had exploded yet, so that was a plus...

My mother reached across the table to grab my hand as she smiled at me.

"We might not be witches, or demons..."

"And thank the Moon Goddess we're not vampires," my father chimed in.

My mother cleared her throat. "But we love you as our own. That will never change. And I promise, we will do our best to help you in any way we can."

I squeezed her hand and smiled at her softly.

Looking around the table at the loving support my family had given me was an unexpected blessing. I felt like I really did have all I needed right here, right now.

"Where's the Keith? He practically led us to an aneurysm just to take you to his kingdom," my father asked.

"His memory is still wiped... I don't know, I couldn't watch him make new memories with someone else," I said.

"There's always room for new memories, sis," Sean mentioned, as he picked up our plates and walked over to the sink.

But I didn't want new memories.

I wanted Keith and everything that came with him—the good, bad, and ugly.

I wanted my beast, and there was no way I could find him in someone else.

In that instant, three aggressive knocks sounded at the door.

My father and Sean instantly stood up.

"Stay there," my father ordered.

I waited in the kitchen with my mom as the two of them moved to the front door and peered through the peephole.

After another moment, he opened it, but I couldn't see who it was on the other side.

"You have a lot of nerve showing up here," was all my father said.

Fear filled my heart as I ran toward the hallway. I heard a deep voice respond, and even though I couldn't hear his words, I knew who the voice belonged to.

I could barely see over both my father and Sean's shoulders, but there he was, standing outside with a remorseful look on his face.

Those eyes. Those mesmerizing, heart-wrenching eyes.

My mate—my *true* mate—had made his way back to me.