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know. "You now Ashlyn Verasch."

Tears, happy ones this time, formed at the young girl's eyes, and she felt something in her change in that instant. A feeling of contented belonging, unlike anything she could remember even in the idyllic days of her youth. It would not be until much later in her life that she'd recognize it for what it was, but in that moment she didn't need complex words.

This was her name. This was her father. They were family now and forever, and she would give anything to protect that. She reached out, the tears falling freely, and flung her arms around her father.

Hrvoje said nothing, for nothing need be said. He simply wrapped his paws around his new daughter, his Ashlyn, and smiled.

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