

First, You Have to Understand

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Some things are unforgivable. (Thanks to Juno-Magic and dressagegrrrl for fabulous beta work.)

[oneshot]

Chapter 1 of 1

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He stared at her, the blood in his veins slowing to ice as she spoke.

"First," she said, "you have to understand. It wouldn't be fair to either of us if I didn't make this clear."

He continued to stare, afraid to move.

"It was unforgivable."

Slowly, breathe slowly.

"Notice," she said crisply, each consonant sounded to perfection, "I don't couch this in terms of, 'I don't believe,' or 'I feel,' but in the definitive, because to me, it is a fact as immutable as gravity. What you did was unforgivable."

Somewhere, water dripped into a sink. *Think about that, not what she is saying...*

"Not what you called her. What you *did*."

There was no softness, no gentleness here.

"You joined *evil*. There was no excuse for that—none. You embraced *evil*... evil out in the open that was determined to annihilate her and those she loved... people like me. She couldn't forgive you for that, nor could I..."

She lowered her eyes from his pain and rage, for he no longer believed he cloaked his feelings from her, as something inside him broke free of its moorings and threatened to erupt and flow, over her, over both of them—

"If you'd done such a thing to me, I would never have forgiven you. Never."

Her chin raised, and she met his eyes again in challenge.

"But you are more than a single moment." Her voice cracked, and a tear streaked down her pale cheek. "And I love you."

"It was unforgivable," he grated.

"Yes," she agreed. "No excuses."

The wild thing within him surged with a violence that shook him to his core.

And he—he was on his knees.

And she was kissing him—kissing his tears.

"Sometimes," she whispered, smoothing his hair away from his face and soothing him as if he were her child and not her lover, "we make mistakes. And then, we move on."

The alien wildness within him broke free; the flames consumed him.

And as he clung to her, he finally recognised it as hope.