

## Chapter 12: Liam

Seven years? No wonder I've never found her. My mate has been a blood bag since I came of age. If she hadn't escaped when she did, I still wouldn't know she exists. And because of how much time had passed, I was willing to take a chosen mate. My hatred for the vampires is overwhelming. They have kept my mate from me and they will pay for it.

When Dustin returns, he flirty interactions with Angel piss me off. I know he's doing it intentionally, and I know a Beta should care for and respect his Luna, but he's pushing my buttons.

It bothers me that Angel thinks I would give her back to the leech. I can tell she doesn't recognize the mate bond, but she has a very skewed idea of that an Alpha's role is in a pack. She may not be one of my pack members yet, but I would never send her back to the hell she must have come from. No self-respecting Alpha would. Which makes me wonder what exactly her ideas are of Alphas. Knowing that her parents left their pack, it had to be because of the Alpha. Either he was the problem, or he wasn't willing to fix the problem. Either way, he's given my mate a very bad impression of what an Alpha should be.

I've been running this pack since I was 10 years old. Even though my father was technically Alpha until his death, his ability to manage the pack died with my mother. His Beta, Dustin's father, helped me to run the pack. He made sure that other packs did not take advantage of our weakness and taught me everything I needed to know.

When I turned 16, it was almost as if my father was glad that he could finally let go and be with my mother. So, taking over as Alpha was seamless. I kept Dustin's father on as Beta until Dustin turned 18 then made his position official.



I take the role of Alpha and my responsibilities as a pack leader very seriously. I always have. So to know that there are Alphas out there that mistreat their pack members, and I do know they exist, it pisses me off. I refuse to be in an alliance with any Alpha that has a bad reputation with their pack members. And given that my pack is the strongest in the country, at least for now, most packs want some sort of an alliance with me. 4

I do think at the next Alpha competition that happens every four years, like the human Olympics, that Rik's pack will emerge as the strongest. I am slightly stronger than Rik, but he has two Guardians in his pack, one now being his Luna. Clint being in a wheelchair may keep him from competing, but that doesn't mean he wouldn't win if he did. And Cara is a force to be reckoned with. I may be stronger than Rik, but I'm not stronger than Rik and Cara. So I expect next year when the competition is held that my standing as the strongest pack will fall, and I'm okay with that. While I haven't spoken to Cara since her birthday, I have contacted Rik periodically to let him know what is happening with Eli. I will also be filling him in on the risk of a vampire attack. Our alliance remains strong and that won't change if the Canyon Ridge Pack takes over as the strongest pack. 1

When I tell Angel about the bounty on her head, I knew it would upset her, but I didn't realize how much. I need her to understand that she can't leave. Not only will Cyran and I not allow her to leave, but now it's a matter of safety. There will be too many people hunting her and I need her to stay where I can keep watch over her.

I realize when I can't get Angel to focus and breathe that I need to do something to shock her system. 'Kiss her.' Cyran says and it's as good an idea as any.



The minute my lips touch hers, I can taste it. Raspberries and cream. Her taste is even sweeter than her smell.

I'm quickly beginning to understand Rik's ferocity about me touching Cara after he identified her as his mate. If the roles were reversed, I would have been hard pressed not to take his head off. No one will touch my mate. No one! She's MINE.

She's finally settled when Dr. Phillips walks in. "Oh look, our patient is awake."

If I hadn't been watching her so closely, I would have missed it. And I'm not even sure I saw what I think I saw. It's not possible. It can't be. But it was there, a moment, where Angel's eyes flashed golden. The golden eyes of the Guardian.

"I'm Dr. Phillips." She introduces herself to Angel.

"Angel."

"Angel, it's nice to meet you. I've been looking after you since you arrived here in Shadow Falls Pack. Do you mind if I take a look at..." She stops, looking at the IV that is no longer attached to Angel's arm.

"She ripped it out." I say, watching the exchange.

Dr. Phillips looks at me then back to Angel. "The IV only has saline and some vitamins and liquid nutrition in it. Nothing that would hurt you. As your doctor, I'm not sure that it's a good idea to remove it yet. Would you be willing to have me reinsert it in your other arm?"

I watch as Angel's eyes track back and forth between the doctor and me. It's obvious what she's thinking. She doesn't trust me and doesn't want to be restrained in any way. But, she also isn't willing to say so. Fear



flashes in her eyes momentarily before she gets it under control again. I want her healthy, but I also want her to start trusting me.

"Is there another option doctor?" I ask and I see Angel's shoulders relax slightly.

Dr. Phillips turns to me, looking pensive. "Well, if Angel can agree to drink 8 ounces of water every hour, and I mean every hour, then I could be okay with it. And she will need to eat small meals every three to four hours. Can you agree to that Angel?" 1

Her response is immediate. "Yes."

"Okay, I'm going to put a form together so you can track your fluid and food intake. Alpha, who will be assisting her?"

"I will." I can see her shock at my statement, but she covers it quickly.

"Yes Alpha."

She finishes her evaluation, then prepares the form for Angel to track her water and food. "Angel, if you do not follow my orders, I will reinforce the need for the IV tomorrow, so if you don't want the IV, you need to be diligent in your fluid and food intake overnight."

"Thank you doctor." I say to her and walk her to the door. She looks at me like she's about to say something but changes her mind. "See you in the morning Alpha."

After I close the door, I turn to my little mate. "So, I'm guessing you would like a real bath, am I right?"

