

## Alpha's Rejected 16

### Chapter 16 - The Alpha's Rejected and Broken Mate

Amber POV

I need to get the hell out of this house for a while, I think to myself triumphantly, flinging some clothes and food into a backpack. I was going hunting in the forest, needing some time to think and to just be alone, without my parents or my sister bothering me. Especially after that nightmare of a date and the house cleaning I'd been forced to do, with Sophie making sure she made a right mess just to annoy me. Luckily my parents were away on business and the house was empty, Sophie was at a friend's house. Maria would make no move to stop me, knowing just how much I needed to just be outdoors and one with nature.

I hoist the backpack onto my shoulders, almost skipping down the stairs. I lock the front door behind me and then take a giant inhale of fresh air. It's almost sundown and I begin to head straight for the forest, wanting to get to my sanctuary as soon as possible. I'm careful though, digging a flashlight out of my bag with one hand, to ensure I don't make a misstep or trip over something in the dark.

I find myself fascinated by the beauty of the forest as the sun goes down and the moon comes up, the night sky twinkling with stars overhead. An Owl hoots nearby and I smile, my feet trudging through the broken debris and fallen leaves on the ground. I find my sanctuary, a large clearing with a small stream nearby, and begin to make camp, getting out my small one-person tent. I put it up with ease, I've been camping since I was sixteen and couldn't shift, and make a fire, sitting by it and warming my hands, feeling happy for the first time in what seems like forever.

I nibble on my granola bar and banana, leaning back to stare up at the stars, a heavy jacket on to prevent the cold air from making me chilly. The sound of footsteps approaching has me panicked. I scramble to my feet and search for a large branch, wondering if it's a rogue. But if it was a rogue I would smell it before it came too close, for they smell of rotten meat and eggs which is quite pungent and repulsive. Was it a wild creature? The footsteps seemed to be almost stomping haphazardly through the forest and crashing through the branches of trees. I tense preparing myself and then the last person in the world that I want to see comes blustering through the trees, looking out of breath.

"Darius" I exclaim, irritated beyond belief "what on earth are you doing out here?"

He gives me a grin. Once upon a time, I would have been charmed by that handsome smile of his, but not anymore. I want to know what he's doing out here and why this place specifically. It couldn't just be a coincidence. I knew it deep in my gut. Had he followed me here?

"Geez you're quite sneaky when you go hunting, it was bloody hard to keep up with you as a human" he complains loudly, startling several birds nearby who take flight.

"You followed me" I accuse him, folding my arms across my chest "why?"

He gives an exasperated sigh. "I wanted to come and apologize to you again Amber. About everything that's happened. It's really not fair to you. It's not fair to us" he complains "your sister tricked me and you know it."

I just shake my head at him. "She might have seduced you intentionally, but you should have had the willpower to walk away Darius. So don't blame this all on her."

"Don't you miss me Amber?" he asks gently, looking downcast "we dated for over a year and I thought we loved each other. Don't you miss us? The good times we had. That first time we kissed? Don't those memories mean anything to you anymore?"

I glare at him. "We had good times and I remember everything," I say pointedly "but I want someone who is willing to be faithful to me. Someone who means it when they tell me they love me."

"I meant it" he almost shouts "I meant every word when I said I love you and I still do. It's killing me on the inside, not being near you. Not being able to touch you, or feel your soft lips. I miss the way you make me feel."

I stare at the ground. "None of that matters anymore. You're marrying my sister remember? You have no choice and neither do I."

He moves closer, encouraged by my words and the dismal tone of my voice. His hand reaches out to touch mine. For a moment I wait for the sparks to arrive, but this time I feel nothing but his cold clammy hand on my skin.

"Amber, we could fight, tell them no. I can refuse to marry Sophie, we have options" he urges, his eyes gazing straight into mine. "We don't have to give up."

Was I giving up on us? I suppose I was in a way. Because no matter how much he tried to convince me, he had still slept with my sister and that was something that was unforgivable to me.

"What are you saying, Darius? Are you out of your mind? If you refuse to marry Sophie, your parents will refuse to make you Alpha. Is that what you want?" I ask him wisely, my chest hurting now, my heart giving a silent pang.

He bites his lip, looking away for a moment, his hand dropping back to his side. The wind picks up around us, making his hair disheveled. Mine goes every which way, a blazing beacon in the darkness, my hair was that bright.

"Darius, we can't change what happened. You need to accept reality. You're stuck marrying Sophie and it's your own fault." I was a little bitter this time.

He gives a giant exhale. "Well then what if we continue to see each other in secret?" he asks me rather desperately "nobody has to know Amber. We could still have each other. What do you say?"

I stare at him in disbelief. Had he really just said that to me? What was he trying to pull? I take deep breaths in an effort to stifle my increasing rage. "You want us to see each other behind your paren't and Sophie's back" I confirm.

He nods.

I laugh out loud, the sound echoing throughout the forest. "You must be joking. You want me to be your mistress" I snarl "and there is no way in hell that's happening. I might be an undesirable, but I'm not stupid Darius."

"That's not what I meant" he begins to protest.

"That's exactly what you meant" I cut in, waving my arm at him, wanting nothing more than to throttle him right here and now. "I won't stand for it. You've made your bed, now you have to lie in it."

"I could tell your parents you slept with me" he snaps and I just laugh at the absurdness of the situation.

"Go ahead," I say drily "do you really think they'll care? If anything it just makes you look like the idiot, not me. Besides, they caught you red-handed with Sophie, not me. That's all that will matter to them."

He kicks a small branch across the floor in anger.

Now he resembles a petulant child who wasn't getting their way. I raise an eyebrow at him.

"Why won't you just think about it" he growls "It's the only way that we can be together. You know that. Why would you throw away what we have? It doesn't make sense."

"I'm not giving up on us," he says coldly "Amber, I love you. I always have. You'll be with me, I'll find a way" he threatens.

"I don't want to be with you Darius," I say icily "I don't want a cheater for a mate, Now leave. I can't stand to look at you" I add and he glowers at me.

"You'll regret saying no" he threatens.

"I doubt it," I say softly "I want true love Darius, and one day I'll find it, but it's not with you."

His mouth opens and then closes. His jaw tightens and then he storms off, the sound of broken twigs and crunching leaves in the distance as he gets further away from my camp.

So much for my sanctuary, I think to myself miserably. I listen until I can't hear Darius anymore and then begin to pack up the tent and everything else. I didn't trust Darius not to come back, and I wasn't going to be able to sleep knowing he knew where I was. So I was going to have to move. Damn him, I thought fiercely to myself, I was happy and then he had to come along and ruin it. Was it too much to ask for a break from all the craziness of my life?

I move on autopilot, eventually finding another clearing that would work just as well, a long distance away from my previous camp. I try not to leave a trail, in case Darius is clever enough to track me down again. This time I don't make a fire, not wanting to draw any attention to myself or where I am. Patrol as it is, knows I'm in the forest, but doesn't care. After all, an undesirable could be killed by a rogue and they wouldn't even blink. It would be my fault for entering the forest in the first place. I was fairly certain my father had instructed them not to come to my rescue if that happened. It stung because I knew that he had ordered that Sophie be kept safe from harm. But I couldn't let that stop me from living my life.

Part of my mind wanders back to the gorgeous man in the bookstore. The tingles and sparks I had felt when he touched me accidentally and the naughty dream I had of him. I still couldn't get him out of my mind and sadly, he hadn't visited the bookstore again. Not that I had the nerve to ask him out on a date. He was a shifter, I'd sensed that, and a strong one, so probably an Alpha. There was no way a man like that, would want to be seen with a girl like me. I hate the fact that the moon goddess didn't grant me a wolf.

Had I done something to offend her? Did she hate me for some reason? I figure she must do, because why else would she not have granted me the one thing that would have ensured an easier life? If I had a wolf, Darius's parents might not have hated me so much and it would be us getting married instead of him and Sophie. But I had seen Darius's true colors now and I find myself exceedingly grateful not to be in that position. Once a cheater, always a cheater as far as I'm concerned, and hadn't he just proved that by asking me to be his mistress while still marrying Sophie?

I climb into the tent and lie down, my body trembling slightly. The air was chilly and I zipped the tent up, getting into the sleeping bag with a sigh of relief. I close my eyes and immediately, a vision of him, appears in my mind. This strange man who drew me towards him, who caused me to become instantly aroused. I wish I knew his name, I should have asked it. I can feel my body relaxing as it gets sleepy and instantly I begin to dream again, but this time I'm clad in a wedding dress, walking down the aisle, the stranger in a tuxedo, waiting patiently for me, a wide smile on his scarred face.