

Her Vampire, Her Mate Chapter 31

Simone POV

When Casey and I got back up to the alpha quarters, Carli was no longer a sobbing mess. She was numb, and a little checked out as she sat on their sofa staring down at her phone, but no longer broken on the outside. She was internalizing all of that and I could see the worry written all over Parker's face.

Casey plopped down beside her on the sofa, plucking her phone from her hands and sticking his tongue out at her when she growled at him for it.

"Hey, turd. I flew 1,800 miles to see you. Look at me, not your phone. I know you missed my handsome face."

"Like a disease," Carli snarls at him.

"Eww. Parker giving you diseases now? That f*****g sucks."

Now it was Parker's turn to growl. "Watch yourself, punk," he then slid his arm around my shoulders, "I'm going to finish that shower now. I'll be fast."

I nodded and offered him a small smile. Poor guy still had half his hair matted down in minty-smelling shampoo.

Casey had Carli bickering with him in no time. By the time Vincent showed up a few minutes after us, Casey had challenged her to see who could do a handstand the longest, and the two of them were wobbling around on their hands, skirting around the living room with their legs up in the air. It looked ridiculous, but at least Casey figured out a way to take Carli out of her head for a little bit. She isn't one to back out of a challenge, even if it was one as silly as this.

"What are they doing, my love?" Vincent asks, wrapping his arms around my waist and planting a tender kiss on my neck.

"Being dorks," I giggle, "They're seeing who can do a handstand the longest."

"Sounds....challenging?" he chuckled in confusion. I'll have to tell him later about the state I found Carli in this morning.

“How was your meeting?” I asked him, trying to change the subject so Carli wasn’t triggered again by an off-hand comment on accident.

“Very good. I like your gamma very much. Very agreeable and his mate made all of us feel very welcome and comfortable. They worked really well together. I also saw Parker’s father-”

I cover Vincent’s mouth as fast as I can, not wanting him to reveal too much. Hearing Alpha Jared is here might set her off again. No such luck, though. Carli drops her legs and looks up at Vincent in confusion.

“Parker’s father? Alpha Jared is here?” Carli looks at us in confusion, her brows scrunched to the center of her face. Her eyes are still red-rimmed and slightly swollen from crying, and seeing the confused worry on her face almost causes me to have a panic attack myself. I’m about to mind link Parker again when Vincent speaks again, though my hand is still covering his mouth.

“He was. I saw him in passing. He may not be here any longer. I didn’t see him again after the one time for a brief 20 seconds and I have been hanging out downstairs all morning.”

The tension in Carli’s face fades a little and I’m grateful Vincent read the room enough to save Carli from having another episode.

“You totally lost,” Casey snickered, pulling Carli’s attention away from Vincent and the topic of her father-in-law.

“That doesn’t count,” Carli growls at him.

“Totally does. You have to grant my wish now,” Casey boasted proudly.

“What wish is that? I’m not massaging your hairy feet again,” Carli glares at him, thinking about all the times when we were kids when that’s what Casey wanted when he won a bet.

“Hmm,” Casey rubs his chin with a devious smile on his face, “Your bike. Let me use it while I’m here.”

“My bike? No way,” Carli scoffs.

“Have to. It’s in the rules. You have to grant any wish and I wish to borrow your bike. Come on, Carli. It’s so cold and wet most of the year in Blue Cliff

that I don't get to ride mine. Let me have some fun while I'm here. Please?" Casey gives Carli his best puppy dog look.

Carli caves and I have to resist the urge to jump for joy. I'm so proud of my brother right now. He figured out a way to get her to give him the bike without making a big fuss or making her suspicious of Parker.

"You scratch it, I tan your a*s. I'll f*****g murder you, Casey. I'm serious," she huffs at him as she hands him her key.

"I'll give it back in perfect condition. Unless I don't," he shrugs, "I'm sure I can take you."

"The hell you can," she sneers, stepping up to the challenge.

"Wanna spar today and find out? I haven't kicked your a*s in a long time," Casey wiggled his eyebrows at her.

"You're on," she smiled viciously. There's the Carli I know. I'm buying Casey something expensive before he leaves. Super expensive. Maybe I'll throw him a parade.

When Parker finishes getting ready, I'm sitting on Vincent's lap in the recliner and we are watching Carli and Casey play some online game on their phones. Both are hanging upside down on the couch, feet propped up on the wall. Casey keeps covering Carli's screen so she can't see, and right when Parker steps out, Carli takes his phone from his hands and tosses it across the room.

"Cheater," Casey taunts her, making her growl. She wins whatever they're playing and throws her hand up in the air victoriously. I looked up at Parker and he was looking at the two of them in relief. Appreciation for Casey is written all over his face.

He hands Casey his phone and bends down to kiss Carli on her lips briefly. "I have to run downstairs for a bit. You can entertain them on your own for a little while?" Parker asks her, but Casey and I both know he is really asking us.

Carli nods, "I'll be fine," she says sheepishly, "I'm sorry for this morning."

"Don't be sorry, baby. You did nothing wrong. I love you," he tells her softly.

"I love you too," she smiled shyly back at him. He kisses her one more time, soft and lingering, then pulls away to leave.

Carli and Casey go back to playing the game, and I take the opportunity to sneak out and speak with Parker as he leaves.

"I'll be right back," I whispered to Vincent. He lulls his head back and nods with a small smile on his face.

"Parker, hey," I quietly chased him down the hall to the stairs.

"Hey, Sim. Sorry about this morning."

"No, I'm sorry. I panicked and didn't know what to do. That was...different from how she used to be when she was upset. I didn't know how to react."

"I know," he sighs, running his hands through his hair, "She will be okay. I'll be staying close to her as much as I can for now."

I nodded, "That's probably best. You're pretty amazing with her."

"Thanks," he laughs softly, "She's been training me most of our lives."

I laugh at that, "Uh, yeah, she has. You're perfect for her, Parker. I'm so glad she has you."

He smiles crookedly, "Thanks, Sims."

"And the bike thing is taken care of. Casey is pretty awesome with her too. He challenged her to see who could hold a headstand the longest and when he won, asked her to borrow it while he was here. He got the key and everything."

A broad smile stretched across his face, "That's amazing."

I laughed, "It was pretty amazing. He handled her for 4 years in your absence. Guess he's still got it."

"I guess so," he chuckles, "Well, I got to get down to check on things with my dad. Let me know if you guys need me to come back up."

Parker is back upstairs with Carli after lunch, and the three of us retreat to take naps after a morning filled with meaningless challenges and even an intense game of Monopoly. I swear, Carli or Casey one were going to toss the board any second before Parker showed back up. Vincent and I were really just spectators in the games. Carli and Casey are both too intense for either of us.

Vincent and Casey were civil with one another. Casey even talked him into selling him a few of his properties in the game. There was no more hostility between them, which made things so much easier.

"I'm so ready for a nap," I murmured, crawling into our bed in our room and sprawling out among the pillows. Vincent stands watching me for a few seconds before striding over and running his hands down my back in a sensual gesture, making me moan softly as tingles and sparks spread across my back.

"Mmh, I was going to go get some work done, but I don't think I'll be able to focus knowing there is something so delectable for me in here," Vincent purrs, kneading my butt roughly.

"You should take a nap too," I looked over my shoulder and fluttered my eyelashes at him.

"I don't think nap has the same definition as what I have in mind, fiance," he murmurs huskily, bending over me and placing a feather-soft kiss on my neck. I moan in need.

"I like the sound of that," I smirk at him as he trails kisses over my shoulder.

"Well, fiance, let's get you out of these clothes, fiance, and we can get right to taking that nap, my fiance."

Her Vampire, Her Mate Chapter 32

Vincent skims his hands up my thighs, softly and sensually, making tingles erupt all over my exposed skin. His fingers grip the edge of my shirt and gently push it up, massaging my back with his knuckles. After he pulls my shirt over my head, he starts peppering kisses on my naked shoulders, straddling me from behind. I can feel his erection pushing into my butt, making me lift my hips and push it back into him.

A throaty moan escapes him, pushing himself harder against me, his hands roaming under me, gliding across my skin and sending delicious tremors through me until his hand cups my s*x, his middle finger pushing between my folds over my clothes.

He teases me a little, pushing in from behind and rubbing the front of me. His other hand is massaging my breast, my n****e popping out of my bra and caught between his fingers as he tenses and loosens his hand. His hands are magical, making sparks erupt everywhere they touch.

He hooks his thumbs into my waistband, ridding me of the bottom half of my clothing, so I'm left in nothing but my bra.

Vincent grabs my hips, lifting them so my butt is up in the air, my p***y and a*s fully exposed to him. He hums in appreciation, pulling my cheeks apart, opening me, and then blowing gently over my folds.

His tongue dives in, making me cry out at his assault. I can't even think anymore because of the mind-blowing sensation. It's like his tongue is shooting electric currents through to my depths, feeding this aching hunger inside. My walls start to pulse around his tongue as he invades, only pulling out to flick across my nub in a tortuous motion. My mind fogs and my toes curl, and I know I'm close to the edge. I want something more, though. I want him. I want him to pound into me from behind, hitting that spot deep inside me that sends me to heaven and back.

My walls flutter as I begin to reach my end, Vincent pulls his tongue from me and before I can miss his touch, he slams his rock-hard c**k into me in a violent motion, causing me to yell out in satisfaction. This was what I really wanted. I explode around him as he pumps vigorously in and out of me.

My o****m is pushed as far as it can go, making me shake and cry out in pleasure. This man is a f*****g god in bed. He is rocking and twisting his hips while ramming in and out of me, and I'm soon cumming again. He knows every inch of my body, inside and out, and knows exactly how to fulfill every one of my desires.

I cry out into my pillow, gripping the sheets as a third o****m shakes me, only this time Vincent is cumming too, his pulsing spurts filling and spilling out and down my thighs.

We are both out of breath, and I'm panting hard when Vincent leans over, kissing my back to my neck, then nuzzles my hair as he catches his breath.

"I love taking naps with you, my fiance."

I smirked, too tired to open my eyes, "You can take a nap with me anytime."

Vincent pulls out of me, causing me to hiss at the sweet soreness from the pounding my p***y had just taken. My hips fell on the bed and I was too tired to move. My eyes feel heavy, and my body feels weighed down in satisfaction. s*x was just what I needed before taking my actual nap.

I feel the bed shift as Vincent climbs off, heading into the bathroom. A few minutes later, a warm washcloth is cleaning me and I smile, though I'm too sleepy to open my eyes or thank Vincent for taking such good care of me. I love him so much.

"Goodnight my fiance," Vincent whispers in my ear, kissing the corner of my mouth as I finally give in to my nap.

I wake a few hours later, slightly delirious and almost freaking out, thinking it's late at night, but then I notice that the heavy curtains are drawn, giving the room the feel of nighttime. A small sliver of sunlight can be seen in the tiniest of cracks between the folds. Vincent must have closed the curtains to help me sleep better.

I stretch out, lifting my arms high in the air, and realize I'm now in one of Vincent's shirts. It smells heavily of him, making me smile as I bring the fabric to my nose. I put on a pair of shorts and walked out of our room into the apartment.

Laura and Simon are cuddled on the couch watching some comedy and laughing together. The tattoo of Simon's lips is uncovered on Laura's neck, a sheen layer of ointment over it to help it heal. It's a sweet idea, but I'm glad I didn't go get it done with her. I've never gotten a tattoo and it looks painful. I like my ring much better.

I tip-toe into the office so as not to disturb the happy couple. Vincent is at the desk on the phone with someone but offers me a brilliant smile when his eyes

land on me. He scoots his chair back and motions for me to come to him. He doesn't have to tell me twice.

I crawled into his lap, wrapping my arms around his neck.

"I'm going to let you go, my lady. Yes. I understand. I will tell her next time I see her. You as well. Goodbye."

"Who was that?" I asked as he hung up the phone.

"Lady Delilah. She was calling to check on the progress of the investigation. She wants me to tell Elena to call her so they can schedule lunch again soon."

"She and Elena are good friends," I smiled at him. Elena is hard not to be good friends with. She's very down-to-earth and wise. She's great to go to when you need advice or just an open and trustworthy ear to listen to your problems. She couldn't have kids of her own, but she has been a mother figure to many of our warriors over the years.

"They are," Vincent agreed with me, "She tried to call her earlier but Elena had a crying Rosie and couldn't speak much."

I forgot that Rosie was with her grandparents this weekend. I should call Tommy or Elena and let them know I'm helping Carli with Rosie this week. I'm sure Parker will tell them about Carli. I can't fill Carli's role at the warrior center, but Elena can. Between Elena and Laura, Carli should be set to stay home and focus on herself for a bit.

Vincent still isn't fully aware of what Carli is going through, though he suspected something was off while we were hanging out with them earlier. I took this opportunity to tell him all the events of this morning up until he joined us in the alpha quarters.

"Your alpha is good for her," Parker says after I'm done. "Parker is a good man. I feel bad for hating him for so many years."

I smirked at him, "Hated him for taking Carli from you?" I quirked my eyebrow.

He shrugs, "Not so much that. When I first met Carli she seemed very broken and withdrawn. When she told me what she was doing at my parent's club, my heart went out to her since I was struggling so much with my family at the time. I saw Parker as part of the problem with her brokenness for a long time.

It wasn't until recently that I saw how good he really was for her. They seem made for each other."

I laughed softly, "She groomed him from a young age, which helped, but they were made for each other. All mates are. That's what we believe anyway. That the moon goddess destined us to be with the one made just for us.

"Does that mean you were made just for me?" he asks.

"It does," I leaned forward and kissed his lips, "And you were made just for me."

"Mmh, I like the sound of that. I will have to thank your moon goddess extensively for this great gift."

Her Vampire, Her Mate Chapter 33

It's been a week since the episode with Carli. She has gone mostly back to normal, at least around us, but I can still sense the underlining turmoil in her. Parker, the poor guy, has been working overtime to handle pack business and continuing the search for Aiden, all while closely monitoring Carli and trying to always keep her in his sights.

There has been no sign of Aiden anywhere. He seems to have just disappeared and I selfishly keep hoping that he ran away and we won't have to worry about him any longer. Cathal said that that is just not possible in his current situation. He has no money since the fairy knights put a freeze on his accounts, and he also doesn't know many people outside of the fairies. If he was in the kingdom of fairy, any of the kingdoms, Queen Aisling's decree to turn him in would force anyone conspiring with him to hand him over to the knights. He would be compelled to hand himself over, since her magic influences everything in their world.

That means he is out here somewhere, broke and desperate with a flying horse. An old and ailing flying horse that needs magic to survive. If the horse dies because of his selfishness, Aiden will surely face the death penalty by his own kind if our kind doesn't find him first.

Casey has been leading the investigation and searches for him, freeing up much of Parker's time. Parker's father has been helping in the packhouse too, helping run the business side of things, and the previous gammas, Tommy and Elena, are assisting at the warrior center to cover for Carli and Matt, while

Matt works with Casey. It takes a village, but everything is still running smoothly, even without Carli at 100%.

Her scent has been changing over the last week, and I suspect that she is pregnant, which is probably why her emotions are so out of whack. She doesn't seem to know herself yet, so I haven't brought it up, but Parker's worry and the way his hand sometimes lingers on her abdomen lead me to believe that I'm right.

He talked her into stopping breastfeeding since Rosie was almost a year old. That was a fight I didn't want to witness, but Carli eventually tearfully agreed after Vincent helped. Vincent, being a stronger vampire, can compel people to believe what he wants them to believe. It doesn't work as well on werewolves, but he can alter emotions slightly. He was able to reign in her anger and replace it with acceptance.

Vincent is also great with Rosie, which surprised everyone, even him. Rosie had been choosing him over everyone else, flirting with him in her little baby way, cooing and smiling brightly at him whenever he was in the room. He is currently sitting with her on the recliner, rocking back and forth, trying to get her to sleep. Now I know why Carli always jumped Parker's bones whenever he was affectionate towards their daughter. It's such a turn-on watching a man in that dad role.

Vincent and I are babysitting tonight so Parker can take Carli out for fresh air. She is getting stir crazy, we can all tell.

"I'm hungry," Carli whines, looking into the fridge for the fifth time in the last few minutes.

"You're about to go out to eat, girl. Get out of the kitchen and go get ready," I shook my head at her.

"I am ready," she tells me, still scanning the contents of the fridge.

"You are not wearing that," I scolded her choice of jean shorts and a plain, baggy t-shirt.

She looks down at herself and then back at me, "Why? What's wrong with it?"

I look up towards the heavens, silently thanking the goddess that I don't have her fashion sense. I pushed off the couch and made my way over to her, "Come on. That isn't date night attire."

She scoffs, "We're married with a kid. I don't need to impress him anymore."

"Hey, you always need to try and impress him. Don't let the magic die."

"Magic my a*s. The dude farts in his sleep," she mutters.

"And you don't? I've shared a bed with you before," I challenged.

"At least I don't talk in my sleep like you. You're a shopaholic even in your f*****g sleep. Throw this in the cart. Don't buy that, it's coral, not pink," she says, mocking my voice, "Lucky you got a loaded mate who can maintain your addiction."

"I can maintain my own addiction, thank you very much," I turned my nose up to her, "I got a credit card and a job."

"I don't mind, my love," Vincent whispered loudly from the living room, trying not to wake a now sleeping Rosie, "What's mine is yours."

I blow a kiss to him, and he catches it, placing it over his heart.

"Y'all are so f*****g cringy," Carli looks at us with disgust.

"Your outfit is cringy," I threw back at her, "Come on. I'm not letting you leave looking like that."

I take Carli to her bathroom, strip her down to nothing since the chick still refuses to wear underwear, and dress her like a lifesize Barbie. I can't talk her into underwear, but I do talk her into a more date-worthy sundress and strappy sandals. I sat her in front of her mirror and ignored her protests as I styled her hair and applied a thin layer of make-up.

By the time I'm done, she looks hot and ready for a night out in Miami with her mate. Parker is home and talking with Vincent in the living room when we come out, and he does a double-take when he sees my handiwork.

"Wow," he manages to sputter out after gawking for a minute, "You look...wow."

“You’re drooling a little there, bud,” I laughed at him, pointing to the corner of my lips.

He ignores me and stands to approach a now shy Carli.

“You look gorgeous, babe. Did you get ready for me?”

She bites her lip and nods at him. I wanted to roll my eyes, but I resisted. I had to literally make her get dressed up, but I’ll let her have this moment with her mate.

I looked over at mine, and he was looking at me the same way Parker was looking at Carli. I felt a blush spread across my face. His heated eyes told me that if we weren’t babysitting tonight we would be making a baby of our own.

“Ready to go?” Parker asks Carli.

She nods, still not finding her voice. Parker is the only one who can make her feel shy or embarrassed like this. Probably because she cares what he thinks of her more than anyone else. Carli and Parker walk over to Vincent and Rosie, and each place a kiss on Rosie’s cheek before heading out.

When they’re gone, I walk over to sit on the arm of Vincent’s chair, “Want me to move her to her bed so you’re not stuck here while she naps?”

“I’m okay. I like the way you look at me while I’m holding her,” he smirks at me.

“Maybe if you lay her down, you might get more than a look from me,” I told him suggestively.

“What a bad babysitter you are, trying to seduce me while on the job,” Vincent tuts his tongue and shakes his head.

I laugh softly, covering my mouth with my hand so I don’t wake the baby. “I’m an excellent babysitter,” I tell him after collecting myself, “I just want to show you what else I’m excellent at.” I stand up, make an obscene gesture with my hand and mouth, then lick my lips sensually, causing him to groan with want, “But you’re right. We have a job to do right now. I just hope I’m still in the mood to taste you later.”

“I will make sure you are,” he whispered darkly.

Rosie wakes up from her nap about 30 minutes later. It's almost dinner time, so we decide to take her down early with us so we can get her seated and situated before the rush comes.

Simon and Laura join us, while Carlos and Stephan are at warrior training with some of the friends they have made among the warriors here. It's encouraging to see everyone getting along so well.

Right when we get our dinner, and after the kitchen fixes us a kid's plate of pureed veggies and baby meat sticks for Rosie, Casey, and Matt, along with Lilly, join us too. Trevor is sitting with the warriors who just came in. It was most surprising to see him becoming good friends with Carlos and Stephan. The former Betas were not as close-minded as the former alphas, but Jessica Reynolds, Trevor's mother, was a little snobbish and over-opinionated about certain things. Trevor showed no hostility towards the vampires, welcoming them as much as everyone else.

Rosie doesn't allow anyone but Vincent to feed her, turning her head away stubbornly when someone else tries. Laura and Lilly are swooning with me over the adorable way Vincent is handling her, and I can see by the looks on their faces, that Matt and Simon are not pleased with this. Soon, both of them are fighting for Rosie's attention too.

"Losers," Casey shakes his head while watching them, taking a big bite out of his steak sandwich, "Knock your women up and have your own babies if it bothers you that much. f*****g pansies," he says with his mouth full.

"I wouldn't mind you putting a pup in me," Lilly teases Matt, who shuffles back to his chair with a big smile on his face.

"A baby with your eyes would be adorable," Laura flutters her eyelashes up at Simon.

While everyone is laughing at them, Vincent leans over to me, "Does this mean we get to talk about having babies too?"

Before I could answer and tell him how much I'm okay with having his babies, a couple approached our table, stopping right behind Rosie's high chair as they looked down on her with adoration.

“Alpha Jared, Luna Mary,” Matt, Lilly, and Laura all nod in polite greeting. Vincent, Casey, and I glare at the couple while Simon looks at them with apprehension.

“Can we help you with anything?” I asked them, though from the apologetic look on Alpha Jared’s face, and the wanting look on Mary’s, I can guess why they’re here.

Her Vampire, Her Mate Chapter 34

“Can we help you with anything?” I asked them. Mary was smiling warmly down at Rosie, not listening to me. Jared is the one who responds.

“My son? Do you know where we can find him?” His tone is surprisingly friendly and almost hesitant like he is worried about our reaction to them being here.

Casey sighs, pushes his chair out from the table loudly, and grabs Rosie from her high chair, earning him a scowl from Luna Mary.

“I’m going to go change her diaper,” he tells me, though I know her diaper is clean. We know what happened between Mary and her daughter and don’t want to give Carli another reason to feel upset. He carries her from the room, making her giggle by pretending to eat the smashed food in her hands. Mary’s eyes followed him longingly the whole way out the door, but to my surprise, she didn’t protest him taking her.

“Alpha Jared, your son and Carli are out on a date. Maybe try calling him or texting him later?” I answered him, since no one has yet.

He nods and grips his mate’s shoulder firmly. The look she throws him is almost hostile, like she’s turning her anger out towards him for once instead of her daughter. I can tell by the look in their eyes that they are mind linking to one another. We all sit awkwardly, watching them in their stare-off.

“You guys have a good rest of your night. Thanks for your help,” Alpha Jared tells us, walking off with his mate in tow.

“That was weird,” Laura says, breaking the awkward tension.

“I’m going to go find your brother and the little angel and tell him that they’re gone,” Vincent whispered in my ear, kissing my cheek.

That was weird. I almost expected them to abduct Rosie or something, and I'm sure Casey did too, that's why he took her out of the room like he did. I wonder what that was all about?

Jared POV

"You are unbelievable," Mary huffs at me, stomping out to her car parked in the designated alpha spot like she still has the right. Parker never says anything, but I know it's bad manners to continue letting her abuse her alpha rights now that I'm no longer officially alpha.

She saw Elena parking there a few times and ever since she has been adamant that she should have the same rights as Elena for being Carli's real mother. No matter what I say, I can't convince her otherwise. Elena only parks there when she borrows the kid's car to drive our granddaughter around, but that just angers Mary more, knowing Elena has the right to take Rosie as she pleases, but she can't.

"I told you, you can't keep coming here making demands, Mary. You're going to push them too far and lose her for good. Just you coming here like this is going to put me in a bad situation with them. You probably just jeopardized me being able to come here."

"I just want to see my granddaughter, Jared. Is that too much to ask?"

I stared at her, not knowing what to say without starting this fight all over again. I know we don't have the right to demand anything more from Parker and Carli. All things considered, I think they're being fairly generous. Mary, though, is still holding onto her stubborn pride. It hurts that, because of our past mistakes, we lost the privilege to be real grandparents to our only grandchild, but it's our own fault. I didn't even know the real name of Rosie's mother until she was practically an adult.

"We've been over this. We also went over how you needed to apologize to Carli before trying to show back up here. I promised Parker, Mary. I promised him Carli wouldn't have to see you around here if I came to help him. I'm trying to get back in their good graces but you might have just ruined that. If she has another episode from hearing you stopped by, Parker will banish both of us from coming back here all at. Do you want that?"

"Another episode?" Mary turns around, staring up at me questionably, "What episode?"

I sigh, forgetting I didn't tell her about what happened to Carli after we left that night a week ago. "Carli has been fighting depression. Us showing up and....well, what you said to her set her off."

Mary's face dropped, worry crossing her features. "Depression? She's depressed? How?..."

I ran my hand down my face. This is why I didn't want to tell her. "She didn't really have a happy upbringing. She wants to be the best mom she can be for her daughter since she didn't...." I cleared my throat, uncomfortable with telling Mary this.

I know she has a lot of guilt for how she treated Carli from the time she was born, but growing up in human foster care as a wolf left her with a stubborn personality and an iron will. It's ironic that her daughter ended up with those same qualities, just channeled towards different things.

"When you accused her of being a bad mom, it sent her spiraling. Parker chewed me out for it, Mary. Just like I would do anything to keep you safe and healthy, he's doing that for his mate."

"I didn't know," she whispered in a weak voice. This is the Mary only I get to see. The broken, fragile girl who still thinks she has to fight for a place to belong in the world. This is why I spent over 2 decades doing everything in my power to try and make her happy. I realized all I was doing was enabling her, causing her more harm than good.

Rosie put a lot of things in perspective for us, for me especially. I know Mary cares for her daughter, but she sees the walls Carli has built around herself as something she has to tear down herself as her mother. She doesn't realize she is just contributing to those walls being reinforced, built even higher than before.

"I know you think she's super strong and the only way to get to her is through force, but Carli is a lot more delicate than you think," I told her gently.

Mary just nodded, sighing in defeat.

I engulfed her in a tight hug, comforting her as best I could. I know it hurts her to know she is the reason her daughter is having such a hard time right now, but babying her does no good. I learned that the hard way.

“Go home. I’ll stay and talk to Parker when he gets back. I’ll let him know you want a chance to apologize to Carli. I’ll send you pictures of Rosie too if I can.”

“I love that baby girl, Jared. I don’t want to lose her like I lost my daughter. I just don’t know what to do.”

“For now you need to go home. Maybe sit down and write out everything you want to say when you see Carli so what happened last time doesn’t happen again. I know you get defensive and say whatever comes to mind at the moment, but you need to work on getting your thoughts sorted before you see her again. Don’t insult her back if you feel insulted. Think about exactly what you want to convey to your daughter, write it down, and we can work on the rest one step at a time.”

“Okay,” she wraps her arms around my waist and looks up at me expectantly. I leaned down and gently placed a kiss on her soft lips.

“I love you,” I told her.

“I love you too.”

Her Vampire, Her Mate Chapter 35

Vincent POV

Simone and Laura are bathing Rosie and getting her ready for bed. I have been sent to the alpha quarters to retrieve a playpen to put her to sleep in since she will be staying with us for the night.

Rosie is a darling little child. I’ve never put much thought to having children, but after helping my love take care of the little darling all day, I wouldn’t mind having one of my own.

My men have been fully integrated into pack life. Stephan and Carlos are currently out with the pack’s Beta, Trevor Reynolds, and Simon is completely devoted to his mate. I have a feeling Simon will be staying behind after this fairy issue is resolved to live here with his mate at the packhouse. As long as he doesn’t quit, he has my blessing. I’m happy he has found in Laura what I found in Simone.

As I rounded the corner from the stairs, pulling Simone's spare key from my pocket, a figure sitting on the bench outside the alpha quarters caught my attention.

"Parker's father?" I asked, perplexed as to why he was sitting out there. I thought he left with his mate early after the fiasco at dinner.

The man's head snaps up, and he takes in my appearance, but doesn't seem hostile or adverse to seeing me. Just curious as to what I'm doing there.

"You are the vampire that Carli's friend is mated to?"

"I am," I nodded to him, "Are you waiting for your son? It may be quite some time until they get back."

He sighed, running a hand down his face, "I can't get Parker to answer my call or respond to my texts. I wasn't sure how long they would be."

"They are on a date. Knowing Parker, he is screening his calls so he can pay full attention to Carli. We are keeping the baby for the night so they can stay out as late as they wish."

"You have Rosie?" The man asks in skepticism. I tightened my eyes at his tone, as if he is implying I would be unable or unfit to watch the darling little girl.

"Me and my Simone are, yes. Why? Does that bother you?"

He rubs his eyes as if he is tired, and I noticed the faint darkness under his eyes, like he wasn't getting enough sleep.

"Only because I have never gotten the privilege to keep my own granddaughter overnight. It's my own fault, I know, but it still bothers me that a vampire has rights to my granddaughter that I don't have."

"Would it have been better if I was a wolf with those rights? It seems that my race shouldn't be a factor in their decision on who is fit to watch the baby. They are allowing Simone and me that right because they trust us. Can they not trust you?"

He looks at me incredulously for a moment, "It seems not," he finally says.

Done with this conversation, I move to the door to unlock it so I can head inside and grab the playpen and be on my way. If this man thinks he's better than me just because of his race, then he is not worth my time or breath.

"I'm sorry if I offended you," he says in a softer voice, "that was not my intention. It's been...a trying day. Projecting my irritation on you will not solve anything, and I apologize."

I turned, standing in the open door to study the man once again, "Who are you irritated with, if you don't mind me asking."

"Myself, mostly," he sighs, "I made many mistakes in the past and am paying for them now. It's easier to project and find fault in others instead of looking inward sometimes."

"My mother always said to remove the log from your own eye before pointing out the sliver in another's."

"I have one heck of a log. It makes it hard to look past sometimes," he offers me a small smile.

"You could always seek help," I told him.

"Help from whom, though? I'm walking on eggshells around here as it is."

"Maybe having an unbiased outsider is the answer. I could recommend a person that helped me when I was battling my mixed emotions from my parent's deaths."

"Like a shrink?" his face turned doubtful, "No thanks. I don't need someone else to know the details of my failures. It's no one else's business."

I shrugged, "It seems to me that your pride is what will do you in more than your failures. I don't mean to be rude, but I know some of those failures you speak of. I met Carli at a very hard time in her life. The failures you speak of are more than anyone can fix on their own. The more you stubbornly try to gain control of a situation, the more you will realize control is nothing but an illusion, something you will never fully have. I would put your pride away and seek help, but that is entirely your choice. If you don't think your granddaughter and her parents are worth giving it a try, that is your choice."

The man seemed dumbfounded for a minute, and instead of waiting for him to argue with me again, I slipped inside and grabbed the playpen that I originally came up here for. When I leave the apartment, he is still where I left him, still staring off deep in thought.

I resolve to leave him be, and just let him do as he wishes. It's not my problem to solve, and I'm still not a fan of the man, but he stops me as I pass by.

"Can I get the number of that person you were talking about? The shrink who helped you?" He asked, surprising me.

"Sure." I smiled as I sent it to him by text. Maybe he will start making steps in the right direction. If not for Parker and Carli's sake, then his granddaughter's. The granddaughter who I can't wait to help fall asleep again. She is just so darling. I can understand why the man would want to set his pride aside if it was for her.

Parker POV

This is exactly what Carli needed. She looks more alive than she has all week. Casey does a good job pulling the fighter out of her, but tonight she's vibrant and full of life. She is starting to resemble the Carli I know and miss once again.

After taking her for a romantic dinner at a beachside Cuban restaurant, we walked along the beach for a long time, eating ice cream and joking around like we always do on dates, and now we are at a salsa club, Carli dancing her sexy a*s off, sensually pushing up against me.

Her leg is hooked around my hip as I dip her to the ground and rub my nose down her exposed, tan neck. My hand, gripping her butt so she doesn't expose her naked lower half under her dress, flexes, drawing out a moan from her sweet lips.

I miss my mate like this. The sexy vixen that treats me like her personal pleasure maker, using me to make herself feel good. She has been so reluctant to have s*x with me all week, and I didn't want to push her, but I'm ready to explode now. Every time I feel her heat on my leg, or get a whiff of her arousal, I have to think of other things to cool down before I embarrass myself.

We are swaying slowly, bodies flushed against each other, when Carli leans up and whispers in my ear, "Let's go to the car."

I know what she wants. I can feel it in the bond. Knowing she wants me after a whole week of going without, she doesn't have to tell me twice. I dip down and lift her into my arms, carrying her out of the club in a bridal hold. I skip the valet, grabbing my keys from the box while his back is turned, cradling Carli in one arm momentarily as she kisses and sucks on my neck, and then race around the building into the alleyway leading into the back parking lot where they park the cars.

We don't even make it halfway down the alley before Carli bites down on my mark, making my knees buckle as she slides out of my arms. She pushes me against the wall in my dazed state, lips fiercely attacking mine. Her hands go to my belt buckle, unhooking it and undoing my fly. She is hungry for me, just as I am for her. When she drops to her knees in front of me, I know I'm about to be dominated by my mate right here in the alleyway, but I'm totally okay with it. She can do whatever she wants to me. I am hers.