

## Her Vampire, Her Mate Chapter 8

My parents, primarily my dad, were my last hope of getting out of staying with my mate. The pull of the mate bond, combined with the rejection I felt knowing he was in love with Carli was hard enough to cope with, then when you add everything else on top of it; Aiden, my pressing school assignments, not being able to attend school until Aiden was found, and then my negative feelings towards my best friend, I just wanted to go home and curl up into a ball and cry on my own, breaking down in the comfort of my own bed.

Parker, the traitor, had to go and tell my parents that Vincent was my mate. They were all for his and Carli's little plan after that. Why wouldn't I want to go with my mate? Well, he was a vampire and didn't know I was his mate was reason number one. Secondly, he f\*\*\*\*d my best friend. It's a suspicion at this point, but in my gut I know it's true. Lastly, he's imprinted on that same best friend he slept with, and it tears me up being near him knowing that.

I asked Matt to be the one to take me to Vincent's house. Carli, I could tell, was minorly offended, but then Elena called to tell her Rosie had eaten a penny and she had to go home. Her daughter was getting to be as much of a pain in the butt as she was. Rosie was always getting in trouble and she was barely a year old. It didn't help that the kid was spoiled rotten. I'm not above her charms, though, and may be a contributing factor to her spoiledness.

Matt pulled into the parking garage connected to Vincent's condo building. He gave me instructions and keys to get in. Matt pulled into the designated spot for Vincent's cars between his BMW and Lamborghini. He had 6 reserved spaces, and this was the only spot empty. How much money does this guy have?

To my surprise, Vincent is waiting for us at the elevator, looking nervous and maybe even excited. I try to bury down my longing as I walk toward him, but it's hard. He looks so....mouth-watering. That would be the best way to describe the smooth planes of his sexy face and strong jawline. I wanted so desperately to run my tongue along the smile lines etched on his face as the corners of his plump lips pulled up in the corners. His eyes, strikingly red like my desire for him, are calling to me, and for once I feel like he is looking at and only seeing me. Not Carli's best friend but me.

"Hola!" He greeted us, taking me back for a minute.

"You speak Spanish?" I asked.

He laughs nervously, rubbing his jaw, “Ah, not well. My mother was Puerto Rican. She only spoke it when she was angry.”

I smiled at that, “Was she angry a lot?”

“Haha, no. Not at me anyway.” He turns to Matt, “I can take those from you,” he tells him, nodding down to my bags.

“I’d like to take them up and make sure the apartment is secure if that’s OK. Her brother would kick my a\*s if I didn’t. My mate too.”

Vincent’s eyes brightened at hearing that, “You have a mate?”

Matt smiles and nods, “Yeah, my Lilly pad. She, Simmy, and Carli are all close.”

“I look forward to meeting her one day,” Vincent smiled politely.

“Nah, I’m good. She would swoon over your accent and then I’d hate your guts,” Matt laughs.

Vincent and Matt continued to chat on the way up. I was surprised to see we were going to the top floor to the penthouse.

When the elevator doors slide open, Matt whistles in appreciation. The apartment is all white marble, white furniture, white walls, and decor. The only pops of color are the tropical plants throughout the entire open space. The wall of windows looks out over the ocean and the view is breathtaking. I love it. Everything about it. It’s definitely not what I expected a vampire’s apartment to be like. There isn’t anything black or gothic in the entire place.

Vincent leads us around a posh sectional, down a bright hallway, decorated with expensive-looking paintings of exotic birds. He shows us the bathroom for guests and points out the linen closet and his office, which looks much like the rest of the apartment. He opens the door to a bedroom at the end of the hall, indicating it’s his bedroom.

His scent is explosive in the space, and I almost embarrass myself by taking deep, exaggerated breaths full of the spicy deliciousness. Goddess, it is going to be so hard to act normal when the pull gets stronger being in such close proximity to him and being constantly immersed in his smell.

His bedroom is very simple. Just his bed, floating nightstands, and a couple of chairs facing out towards the view.

He opened the door next to his, indicating for me to enter with a wave of his hand.

“This will be your room. I assumed having the room closest to mine would be the safest.”

“It’s so pretty,” I said excitedly, a huge smile spread on my face. The bed has a plush duvet, with pink accent pillows. The view is the same as his, and instead of basic chairs, there’s a hanging chair suspended from the ceiling, a woven blanket sitting on its seat with a couple of books stacked on a small table beside it.

The artwork on the walls are all abstract pieces that resemble roses when you squint just right. The vanity outside of the ensuite has a vase full of at least 3 dozen pink roses, a few red littered among them. He bought me roses?! Did he think Carli would be the one to drop me off? No. He was there when Carli got the call from Elena about Rosie. He knew it was just going to be me and Matt.

Matt walks in and sets my bags on the bed.

“How many points of entry are there?” Matt asked Vincent.

“Let me show you,” Vincent responded, turning to show him.

Matt comes up and gives me a big hug, “After I check, I need to get back. I’ll come to check on you tomorrow. Call me if you need me,” he kisses my cheek then whispers in my ear, “I heard what he is to you. I also know why you’re acting like that towards Carli. Call me or mind link me if you need to.” He gives me a pointed look, kisses my forehead, then goes to follow Vincent. When I turned to watch them go, the expression on Vincent’s face startled me. His brows are pulled together like he’s confused about something, but he quickly recovers and walks away, ahead of Matt.

What was that? Did he hear what Matt said? No way. I could barely hear Matt.

I start unpacking my clothes, hanging them on the hangers provided in the large closet. I don’t know why I packed so much. I probably brought half my

wardrobe. I set a pair of glittering high heels on the built-in shelves, wondering why I brought them in the first place when Vincent walked back in.

“So, um, do you need help unpacking?”

I lick my lips nervously, trying hard not to react to being alone in this room with my mate.

“No, I’m okay. Thank you, though.”

“Sure,” he nodded, walking to the window and looking out over the breathtaking view. “There are bodyguards posted around my building. I have one at every entrance and in the parking garage. You will be safe here, Simone. I promise. I, um....well, it looked like you didn’t want your friend to leave. I just want you to know I will do everything in my power to keep you safe.”

“Wouldn’t want to disappoint Carli?” I challenged him. He laughs at my sarcasm.

“That woman would obliterate me if I let harm find you,” he rubs his chin while observing me, “Not because of Carli, though. I truly just have this....this deep desire to keep you safe. Strange, huh? I barely know you but the thought of that.....fiend hurting you makes me....violent,” Vincent scrunches his face in confusion.

He’s not doing this because of Carli? I try not to get my hopes up. Just a few hours ago he was flirting with her right in front of me. In front of her mate too.

We stand there in awkward silence for a moment before Vincent coughs, clearing his throat.

“I’ll have dinner delivered soon. Does Italian sound alright?”

I nodded, “I like Italian food,” I smiled at him.

His smile is brilliant, “I know. Parker informed me. I’ll come to get you when it arrives. I’ll leave you to settle in.”

When he passes by, his shoulder brushes against mine, sending core tightening shivers all over my exposed skin. He must feel it too because he gasped in shock, rubbing his shoulder lightly.

A slow smile spread on his face, "You have quite an electric personality, Simone," he chuckled, "I will come to get you soon for dinner."