

## Her Vampire, Her Mate Chapter 9

“Simone, dinner arrived,” Vincent called from the hallway.

Ugh. I groan softly. My body is still vibrating from earlier. I’m going to end up embarrassing myself. I just know it. The swinging chair hits the back of my legs softly as I climb out of it. Setting down the book I was trying to read to distract myself. I don’t even know what it was I was reading. My eyes scanned the first page over and over again but the words never registered in my brain. My thoughts were completely consumed by Vincent.

Even the way he says my name is intoxicating. He makes it sound exotic and sexy. I always hated my name. It sounds like a warrior name; something strong and dominant. Nothing like me at all.

The way ‘Simone’ rolls off his tongue, though, makes me grateful for the name my parents gave me.

I slipped on my furry house shoes and went on my way to the sleek dining room. Vincent not only set the table and served up the plates of breaded veal cutlets and pasta, and salad, but he also lit some candles and poured red wine into crystal wine glasses. The setting sun over the ocean in the background makes the scene look very romantic, making my heart twinge.

Vincent’s smile stuns me as he pulls out my chair. “Agnolotti di vitello okay? I wasn’t sure which pasta you would prefer. I ordered additional bolognese with gnocchi if you prefer that one?”

I’m swooning as the Italian words rolled off his tongue. The way his tongue flicked against his teeth sent my mind into my gutter. Stupid mate bond. I just hope I can get through this candlelit meal without soaking through my panties. It’s frustrating not being able to control my body.

I take my seat, letting Vincent push my chair in for me. He lifted the chair slightly, and I’m suddenly self-conscious about my thick thighs and denser body mass. I’ve easily got 15 pounds on Carli due to my curvier body and lack of real exercise. It’s something I’ve been growing more conscious about the older I get. I recently started doing yoga and spin classes to help, but I haven’t seen results yet. If he thinks I’m heavy, he doesn’t show it. He easily moves my chair in, smiling down at me.

“Are you settling in alright? Did you get unpacked?” He asked me as he took his seat across from me.

“I did. I used the shower too. Love the waterfall feature and the jets.”

“Glad to hear it,” he smiled, taking a sip of his wine, “If there is anything you need, please let me know. I want you to feel at home.”

I smiled politely. Taking a bite of my pasta, I moaned in appreciation, making him chuckle.

“Good?”

“So good. Where is this from?”

“One of my restaurants,” he grinned, taking a bite of his own.

“You have restaurants too? How many businesses do you own?”

“A few. My mother’s family was quite influential back in their time. They left my mom well off. What my father didn’t squander flourished once the tourist industry took off.”

I shifted awkwardly in my seat, not knowing how to respond. I know Carli killed his parents. He told her to. He speaks so fondly of his mother, though, I don’t want to say the wrong thing and upset him.

“I see your mind working. I’m sure you know what happened with my parents. You can ask me anything if you’re curious.”

I licked my lips, sucking my bottom lip into my mouth. His eyes flickered down to the movement but quickly shot back up to my eyes again.

“Do you miss your parents?” I asked hesitantly.

He takes a sip from his wine, thinking for a few seconds. “Yes, and no. I miss my mother. She was a loving mother, but she still put my abusive father before me. He was always a little dark. Tried to talk my mother into moving up north to join his sister’s coven for years, but mom wouldn’t cross that line.”

“What line is that?”

He rubbed his chin, sitting back in his chair, "We knew what Satrina joined into. It's not normal for vampires to feed off each other. It's....wrong. Our blood isn't living in the same sense as yours or any other beings. It is infected, and when we mix our infection with another vampire's we turn septic and go rogue. To join that coven, that was what was required. Mama would have likely gone along with my father, but she said she didn't want that for me. They were going to wait until I graduated and took over the family assets, then go, but Satrina ended up coming down right after I finished high school. The rest I'm sure you know."

I nodded. I did know. It started with my 18th birthday party after all. His aunt and uncle attacked the fairies at my party, killing one of them, then his parents and aunt hunted Carli after she defended us. I knew his dad was turning rogue, but I thought it was from his sister's influence. I didn't expect to hear that he was seeking out that life for himself and his mate even before Satrina and her lover came to Miami. Carli was merciless when she killed them. I heard his mother's face was smashed in so severely and she was walking around with her brain matter stuck to the bottom of her shoes and legs. I shudder remembering Casey telling my parents about the gory details. I'm surprised he still likes her after she killed his mother that brutally.

"What was that? What were you thinking of?" Vincent's amusement is evident as he watches me shudder from my thoughts. Do I tell him?

"Um, I was just thinking about what Casey told me happened that day. I'm sorry. It must make you sad to know your, uh, friend killed your mother."

He shrugged, "I loved my mama. I think death was a way to save her from my father's ideals. He was already becoming rogue. He would feed on my mother every night. She would become more and more corrupt the longer they were together, and once vampires are fully, what's your word....mated, they are mated for life. Carli couldn't have just killed my father and aunt. My mother would have stopped at nothing until she took revenge for my father."

Fully mated? Is that the same as being imprinted? Is he fully imprinted or mated to Carli? Is that why he can't let her go, though she will clearly never be his?

"What does it take for vampires to be fully mated?" I ask quietly, setting my flatware down on the table. I need to know. I need to know if having him as a mate is already a lost cause.

Vincent looks up at me, his crimson eyes boring into mine. “I have yet to know. It’s a powerful pull. That’s how it starts I have heard. I have also heard that once fully formed, you connected much like your mind link. You share a consciousness. The particulars I have yet to experience, but once that bond is formed, it is unbreakable.”

I feel like he is trying to communicate something to me with more than just his words. The way he is staring at me, it’s like he is imploring me to understand something he doesn’t quite understand himself. More than that, I’m flooded with relief. And hope. If he doesn’t know; if he has yet to experience that bond then he doesn’t have it with Carli. I can’t help the slow, shy smile spreading on my face.

“You’re mine,” rang through my head, and I couldn’t tell if it was my own thought, or coming from somewhere deep within me. He is mine, though. I will do as Carli and Parker said, and use this opportunity to get closer and hopefully, both of us can find our desired bond in each other.

Vincent POV

Something I’m becoming more and more sure of, the more time I spend with Simone, there is something about her calling to me. I feel this itch within me; this constant irritant that can only be soothed in her presence.

The delightful spread of her rose-colored blush spreading across her cheeks and heating her button nose was my inspiration as I rushed to decorate the room she is currently using. I thought the roses might be a bit forward, but seeing the delight in her eyes when she saw them chased that worry away.

She looks up at me shyly through her thick eyelashes, the amber of her irises stunning framed in the black fluttering fanning them. I wonder how soft they would feel brushing against my skin.

She picks back up her fork, poking it into the salad and bringing a piece of mozzarella to her delectable lips, her lips pillowing around the small mound as her teeth bite into it. Those lips....

As much as I’m set on murdering this Aiden, I must thank him before he dies. Because of him, I have this opportunity to grow closer to this mystifying woman. I will not take it in vain.

There is something between us, and I plan on discovering just what that is.

