

Chapter-12*In His Arms*

Zelene Sallow:

Ray led me to the waiting room, where he had been strolling around carefree, emitting little chuckles before finally turning to face me.

"So, everyone was right about you," he remarked, causing a twitch in my body. I couldn't forget the night he abandoned me in the hotel to be with his best friend.

With all my memories flooding back, I couldn't help but recall how he used to dismiss my concerns whenever I questioned his closeness to Vera.

He held the ring on his finger, staring at it intently. "I designed it for you, so I'm its owner. Even after Oscar gave you so much, you decided to be greedy and come here to sell this," he said, his voice deep, as if attempting to mask his true emotions in that moment.

However, I remained silent, not uttering a word.

"And you're shamelessly standing here with no excuse?" I was right. He wanted me to beg for his forgiveness or provide a pile of explanations, but I did neither.

Initially, I felt guilty, but when Vera told me that he had also cheated on me, I lost all respect for him. I began to wonder if he had changed his mind after being with her. Perhaps

that's why he was so quick to believe that I had orchestrated the whole affair with his brothers. He cast me out of his life so he could be with Vera.

"Fine, then I'll take this with me," he said, growing angrier when he realized I wasn't saying anything.

Stuffing the ring into his pocket, he walked away while the manager instructed the guards to throw me out.

I made my way back home, feeling strangely embarrassed.

Exhausted and weakened from giving birth, I trudged back to the mansion, my stomach growling incessantly, adding to my discomfort.

The aroma from the taco truck was overpowering, causing me to momentarily pause and observe a couple enjoying their food. It took me a moment to realize that I was making them uncomfortable.

Once I arrived home, I hadn't anticipated encountering the bullies again.

They had gathered in the living room, waiting for me to pass by.

"If you're so desperate for money, come beg me for it. I'm sure I can offer you some services in exchange," Shane yelled, causing me to slow my steps, but I refused to raise my head to look at them. All I could sense was that they were huddled together like a pack of hyenas, ready to pounce.

"Hey, remember that councilor's son, Barret? He's coming over to finalize a major deal with us. He asked if he could have a female companion during his stay. I think Zelene should consider it; she loves money anyway, and he'll pay her handsomely," hearing such words from Ray was even more shocking than enduring the mockery from the others. 1

I kept my head down and hurried past them, entering my room, tears streaming down my face.

With one glance at my face, my mother instantly recognized that I had been crying. Rising from the bed, she embraced me tightly, no need for words or questions. She understood that my attempt to buy food had failed.

I truly believed that the money I had would sustain both my mother and me for several weeks. The night was arduous to endure; we were forbidden from leaving the room for anything. Now, with the added responsibility of feeding my daughter, I felt utterly drained.

"Are you alright?" my mom noticed my discomfort as I squirmed with Yuna in my lap.

"My stomach hurts so much," I whispered, resting my head against the wall and closing my eyes.

"You don't look well, Zelene. I'm going to call the brothers for help," Mom said, rising from the mattress on the ground. When I shook my head, signaling her not to, she hurriedly left the room.

It was midnight, and I had no idea who would be awake to lend a hand. I gently set Yuna down and embraced my aching stomach, crying with vulnerability.

The pain was intensifying, and I began to feel feverish. Just as I thought I couldn't bear it any longer, the bedroom door opened once again, and my mom reappeared with Axel in tow.

He had one eye half-closed as if he had just been awakened from a deep sleep. His black boxers were crumpled, and his hair was disheveled around his forehead.

"What's going on?" he asked, his voice carrying a sensual rasp, still laced with sleep. He approached and placed his cold hand on my forehead to check for a fever.

My mom anxiously rubbed her palms together, her worry evident. I wondered how many doors she had knocked on before Axel finally responded.

"I'll take her to the hospital," he mumbled under his breath, one eye still closed and the other barely open. There was no hint of taunting or a frown, making me question if his usual asshole demeanor was something he forced upon himself.

Without saying much, he adjusted his knee on the bed in front of me and wrapped his arm around me, lifting me into his arms. The pain was so unbearable that I didn't even think to resist.

As he carried me, I realized how strong and solid his body

felt. In his arms, a tantalizing scent lingered—the captivating blend of musky cologne, warm skin, and a subtle hint of desire, awakening my wolf's dormant desires.

I had never felt this way toward them before. I always saw them as my mate's brothers, even after experiencing the mate bond. But now, at this moment, something shifted.

As he carried me with ease, a sense of security washed over me, erasing any doubts or worries. His strong embrace provided a sanctuary of strength and protection. 2

Carefully, he settled me into the passenger seat of his arctic blue Bentley. Leaning my head back, I closed my eyes.

"I'll be right back. Just need to grab my wallet real quick," he whispered, closing the door and hurrying back inside.

As I squirmed and cried, overwhelmed by my misery and the inner conflict of accepting help from them, I realized how unfair life was to those who were weak and impoverished. We seemed incapable of growing a spine.

He soon returned, settling into the driver's seat and starting the car, ready to embark on the journey to the hospital. During the ride, he absentmindedly ran his fingers through his hair, quickly fixing his hair without trying to make it obvious.

Suddenly, another wave of pain struck me, causing me to flinch and tightly hug my tummy, contorting my muscles in agony. He became momentarily distracted from the road,

turning to give me a quick glance.

"Why are you crying? Is the pain that unbearable?" he asked softly.

I remained silent, biting onto my bottom lip, while he continuously glanced in my direction to check on me.

"We're almost there," he added, parking the car and rushing out to carry me once again.

Once in the emergency room, everything became a blur. The doctors attended to me, perhaps due to the presence of the future Alpha King. After two hours of treatment and receiving injections, I began to feel much better.

With tear stains still visible on my cheeks, I waited for the doctor to enter the room, accompanied by Axel. She appeared to be a young intern on night duty, her blond hair tied up in a bun. Her beautiful blue eyes shimmered as she glanced at Axel while he held the door for her.

The atmosphere seemed reminiscent of someone having a crush on a popular kid.

"So, how are you feeling now?" she smiled at me, sneaking glances at Axel.

"Much better," I replied, my voice unable to match her level of perfection. Her words and pronunciation flowed effortlessly, while I struggled to mumble my own.

However, what troubled me was the fact that I found myself

comparing to her.

But there was a more pressing question: Was she interested in Axel?

Axel finally shifted his attention from the IV bag and asked the doctor, "What happened to her?"

"She gave birth just two days ago and, according to what she's told me, she hasn't eaten anything. She's extremely weak and stressed. I suggest she stays overnight so we can conduct further tests before discharging her," suggested Doctor Vania. However, I vigorously shook my head to dismiss the idea.

"I have a daughter at home," I tried to get up, but she gently placed her hand on my shoulder, urging me to remain in bed.

"Is there someone to take care of her?" She directed the question to Axel.

"Yeah, her mother is with the baby. It should be fine. Let's keep her here for the night, and I'll take her home in the morning," Axel made it clear that he would be staying overnight as well.

I wasn't entirely satisfied, but as soon as I tried to move, dizziness overwhelmed me, forcing me to lay back in bed.

"May I ask who she is to you?" Vania asked Axel discreetly, her head bowed as she reviewed my files.

I anticipated him to say that I was a maid, just like Shane

had claimed, but Axel's response surprised me.

"She is my brother's mate."

"Ah, I see," she seemed satisfied with the answer.

"Last time I saw her, she was with her friend and badly injured. If only I had known she was your brother's mate, I would have treated her for free," she mentioned an incident that had never occurred, piquing my curiosity. I had never met her before and didn't have any friends, so her statement was a lie.

I suspected that she had noticed the expression on my face, yet she deliberately chose to ignore it. It was astonishing how effortlessly she conjured up a lie, or perhaps she genuinely found herself perplexed.

As soon as she left the room, I let out a frustrated grunt, capturing Axel's attention. "Your doctor must have mistaken me for someone else because, thanks to you guys, I ended up in prison and certainly didn't make any friends," I muttered, leaning my head against the pillow.

"Sure, get some rest," his calm demeanor, devoid of any taunting, only added to my growing unease.

"You don't have to stay here, I'll be fine," I added, observing how he kept his head down, engrossed in playing a game on his phone.

"I'm staying here just to make sure you don't run away," he commented without lifting his head from the phone. It was

an obvious lie. He knew perfectly well that I would never flee while leaving my daughter behind.

With nothing else to occupy my time, I closed my eyes for a moment and found myself dozing off.

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