

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 171

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 171

Chapter 171 – Reunion Part 2

Selene

If Bastien wants to hold me up against this wall and growl at me for the rest of our lives, I'll gladly let him. It's honestly a miracle I'm not crying like a baby just being reunited with him. The crushing weight that left my shoulders when I saw him was absolutely unfathomable. I truly did not realize how much stress I was carrying until I felt the sweet release of knowing my mate is unharmed – even if he has lost his marbles a bit.

I don't have the first idea what Arabella has done to him, but it's clear he has no idea what has been happening while he's away – or even what happened before. If she were a Volana I might think he'd been hypnotized, but since she's not, I have to think some sort of magic is responsible.

When he looks at me with that bewildered expression and opens my coat to reveal my small baby bump, I feel a tiny flutter behind my belly button. It's as if the pup knows it's father is finally near, and it's the first time I've felt the baby quicken. I'm about to gasp when his silver eyes bore into me, "You're breeding?"

"Arabella didn't tell you?" I guess, not surprised Arabella would have kept this knowledge secret when she's clearly been hiding more recent news from him as well.

"How would she know?" Bastien snarls defensively.

"Bastien, it's been all over the news. I've been in the hospital, Frederic was keeping me there, making me sick." I explain in the simplest terms I can.

"You're lying." He accuses immediately, "I've been following the news very closely – I haven't seen anything about this."

"I don't know what coverage you get here, but I promise if you search you'll find plenty of results." I share, hoping he'll do as I suggest. I can't be sure how much of what I'm saying is actually getting through to him, but I have to try to plant as many seeds as I can."

Bastien stares at my belly for a moment, his jaw ticking. "I suppose this is another of his bastards?"

"Bastien, if I'd been with Frederic, you'd smell him on me, but you don't do you? There's only you." I pull my neckline back to expose his mark. "I've never been with anyone else, and you planted this pup the night you gave me this."

He stares at the crinkled white scar as if he's waiting for it to jump out and speak to him. I have no idea what he sees or smells, but I know the way male wolves respond to marks, I know they can sense things completely below women's radar.

"This pup is yours, just like Lila is." I remind him passionately.

"Lila?" He repeats, sounding as if the name might be ringing a bell, but one which he simply cannot place. – "Lila, our daughter." I'm unbelievably glad my pup isn't here at the moment, it would devastate her to think her father had forgotten her. "Do you

truly remember nothing of the last five years?" I press, becoming increasingly worried. "Do... do you remember meeting me?"

Bastien finally sets my feet on the ground, removing some of the pressure forcing me against the cold bricks, "your assassins took my memory in the attack."

"They weren't my assassins!" I exclaim. "They were Frederic's and they didn't take your memory. We spoke after it happened. You called Aiden and Donovan to get Lila and I to a safe house because you were afraid someone was coming for us too!"

"She's lying!" Suddenly Arabella is standing next to Helen just inside the alleyway. I'm beginning to think the magic has dulled my other senses. I didn't smell Bastien until he was in front of me, and I didn't hear her coming. "Don't let her fool you Bastien. You remember waking up after the attack – you were in my apartment."

"And just how did he get from being knocked out by assassins to being in your apartment?" Helene demands, voicing my thoughts. "How did he escape them if they knocked him out. I suppose they had a sudden crisis of conscience, decided to give up their mercenary ways and carried him to your doorstep?"

Keeping one eye on Bastien, a spark of hope lights in my heart when he apparently considers this question for the first time. What in the Goddess's name has she done to him? I ask Luna. It's like it's not just his memory but

his logic too.

Better yet, who's been helping her? My wolf adds, we both know she didn't manage this alone.

“Put a sock in it, witch.” Arabella spits, sending a flare of outrage through my blood.

As usual however, my mentor needs no help defending herself. “Now, now. Don’t say that like it’s a bad word, deary. You might offend me.” She states ominously.

Cringing away from the woman, Arabella reached for Bastien, “Remember honey, you’d already found me when they caught up to you, after we fought them off I had a friend help me get you inside.”

Bastien looks completely overwhelmed now, as if he’s racking his brain trying to remember but keeps coming up empty. “You’ve seen the newspapers Bastien.” Arabella reminds him. “You’ve seen the lies she’s been spreading about you.”

“Then he will also have seen the news about my pregnancy, Frederics exposure, all of it.” I argue fiercely, looking at my husband helplessly. “If you can get the Novan News Network here it would have been impossible to miss this last week.”

“I’ve been sick this week.” Bastien murmurs hazily, “I slept for seven days straight.”

“How convenient.” I snap, approaching him cautiously. “You don’t get sick, Bastien.” I remind him. “During our first marriage I could be bedridden with the flu for days on end and you could take care of me without ever coming down with so much as a sniffle.” He’s staring straight at me now, and I’m almost tempted to channel some of my power into my words, but I won’t risk being accused of manipulation.

“Since when do you lose fights? Since when do you succumb to injury or illness?” I press, “This isn’t you. If you would only come home with me you’ll see. Aiden, Donovan, your mother, they can verify all this. We’ve all been calling you for weeks.”

“You’ve tricked them.” He says dully, not sounding like himself at all. Disappointment slams into me, for a moment there I thought we’d had him, but now it seems like he’s fallen further away. “You’ve tricked them just like you tricked me.”

Pain and frustration swell up inside me, but then a new thought strikes me. “How did you know I’d changed my eyes, Bastien. How do you know what color my eyes are supposed to be?”

“I had a dream.” Bastien confesses, rubbing the back of his neck and pacing. “I don’t even know if it was real. You were... afraid of me, we talked about someone called Garrick. I killed him for hurting you.”

“That was real, Bastien.” I assure him, “back then I didn’t have my wolf, I didn’t know we were mates.”

“Stop this!” Arabella practically shrieks, “don’t you see what she’s doing? Who are you going to believe Bastien? You’ve known me my entire life, you remember every day we spent together – all you know of her are a couple of imagined flashes amid a fever.”

“If it’s that cut and dry then what’s the danger of hearing my version of events?” I counter.

Footsteps sound on the main road then, and Helene peeks her head around the wall. “Bad news, we’ve got company.”

“I warned you about the curfew!” Arabella half whispers, half-shouts. She grasps Bastien’s hand, dragging him towards the opposite end of the dark corridor. “This is probably one of her traps. She brought you out knowing you’d be caught.”

“It’s far more dangerous for me to be caught by them than him.” I growl, even as Helene begins pulling me away too. “Ask yourself Bastien, ask yourself what makes more sense: Is the person trying to deceive you the one asking you to face reality head on, or is it the one who wants you to stay here with your head in the sand.”

“You b***h!” Arabella scowls, “You have no idea the bond we have – we’re going to be married, and then we’re going to come home and deal with you once and for all.”

“You cannot marry him when he hasn’t yet rejected me!” I remind her sharply, regretting the words the moment they’re out of my mouth.

“That can be easily arranged.” Arabella answers gleefully. “Go ahead, Bastien. Do it! Reject her!”

“We have to go, now!” Helene urges us, even as I stare at my mate in horror as he begins opening his mouth.

“Reject her!” Arabella urges him, “do it now before it’s too late!”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 172

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 172

Chapter 172 – Selene Finds... #Chapter 172 – Salene Finds Her Confidence

Selene

“Selene they’re almost on us!” Helene whispers urgently.

Staring at my mate, it's easier to summon the shadows than ever. While he watches, still looking deeply confused as Arabella begs him to reject me, I wrap the darkness around the mouth of the alley. I can hear the sentries on the other side of the dark veil, but they cannot see us through the impenetrable fog.

"Who goes there?" One shouts, hesitantly reaching into the darkness. I extend the shadows toward him in reply, inky tendrils reaching out for his body like a predator. Both men leap back with little yelps. "What the hell is this?"

"It's got to be some kind of magic." The other replies, "call it in."

"We need to get out of here." Helene urges me, tugging at my arm as I continue to wait for Bastien to decide whether or not to reject me. Luna won't let me move until we know our fate, even if the outcome is too painful to contemplate.

Arabella, staring at the shimmering void I've conjured in abject horror, seems to feel the opposite. Losing her patience, she grabs Bastien and pulls him towards the opposite end of the alley, disappearing around the corner a moment later.

Their sudden departure jolts me out of my reverie, and I run after them, however by the time I reach the end of the narrow corridor and exit onto the street, Bastien and Arabella are long gone. Helene appears at my elbow a moment later, glancing over her shoulder to make sure the guards are still held captive by the shadows.

"How will we find him again?" I murmur, scanning the deserted block for the dozenth time, just in case I somehow missed

them.

"The same way you did tonight." She replies, guiding me away

When we get back to our hotel, the staff hurried us inside with hushed voices, "What are you doing? Don't you know the law? You can't be out after nine o'clock. If the night guards catch you, you'll be arrested!"

"I'm so sorry." I say, wide eyed. "We didn't know." "I don't understand." Helene frowns, "why is there a curfew?" "Because the alpha decrees it." The concierge answers simply.

Helene gives me a little nudge, and I reflexively jolt, looking down at her in bafflement. She tilts her head towards the man and darts her eyes in his direction, clearly encouraging me to press harder. Realizing she must want me to use my power to try and get more information out of him, I adopt the zen headspace I've been practicing my hypnosis with. Staring deep into his eyes, I ask, "I don't understand, does that mean the people here can never shift beneath the moon?"

The man seems unaffected by my attempt, and I realize Helene's drops must have stolen this particular ability when they changed the color of my eyes – after all Odette's book described it as hypnotizing people with my eyes, not some innate power. That's right." He says shortly.

Coming to the same conclusion I did, Helene nods and thanks the man, before leading the way to our room. Once inside, she grumbles, "there's something seriously wrong with this place. Can you imagine never going on another night run?"

"Yes, but then I never shifter until I was twenty four." I remind her. Still, I know what she means. We can shift at any time of course, but it's different when you can feel the Goddess's light shining over you. The magic we all possess feels stronger, and the darkness frees us to let our animal side truly take over. "I wonder..." I mutter dragging my hand through the long tresses of my hair, "do you think it makes wolves weaker? If they're away from the moonlight for a very long time?"

"That's entirely possible." Helene agrees, "But it could just as easily be about control for the sake of control. Blaise might not have a real reason for doing it other than to restrict people's lives further."

"I swear the more I learn about that man, the more I want to kill him." I growl, surprising myself. I don't think of myself as a violent person and I can't ever remember wanting to physically harm anyone – other than in self defense. But tonight my desire to

attack Arabella was so strong it nearly won over, and I could happily attack the Calypso Alpha now.

"That's your wolf talking sweetheart." Helene smiles, "When she came back she didn't just wake your powers, but your predatory instincts too."

"I don't feel like much of a predator." I confess with a sigh, sitting on the edge of my bed. "I can't imagine actually harming someone."

"We're all capable of harm, Selene. My mentor declares, "it just takes more of a push for some people than others."

Clearly it doesn't take anything for Arabella." I grouse. "I can't believe what she's done to him." I reflect, replaving the night events in my mind. "I mean, I knew she'd stolen his memory, but part of me thought he'd come out of it when he saw me, but I might as well have been a stranger to him, he didn't remember me at all"

I can't bring myself to voice how deeply this cut me. I know it isn't his fault and that Arabella has done this to him, but it hurts to think he could forget me, no matter her schemes. Logically I understand it's silly to expect such a thing, after all, Bastien is just a man – albeit a very formidable one. He's not a superhero and he's not immune to

magic, but my heart doesn't understand logic. The idea that my mate could ever turn against me makes it want to split in two.

'She's clearly got a powerful hold on him.' Helene concurs, "some sort of spell or potion."

"How am I ever going to get through to him?" I inquire hopelessly. "She was right, he has at least twenty years of memories bonding him to her, and the only thing he knows of me is what she's told him."

"And what his wolf senses." Helene adds, "That is what you have to focus on. I'll try to break whatever enchantment she's put him under, but you have something neither of us do – and that's a mating bond. There is no more powerful magic. You have to target his wolf."

"I don't want to manipulate him." I caution, that's exactly what she's doing."

"Sometimes *you*'ve got to fight fire with fire, darling." Helene reasons. "Don't think of it as manipulation, this of it as using your wiles to remind him of the truth."

"So what, I should seduce him?" I clarify.

"That's one way to do it." She chuckles, but not the only one. My point is really that you should rely less on words and more on feelings: when you're together position yourself so he can smell you strongly, wear clothing that exposes his mark and keep your hair up, tailor your movements to his, make sure he can sense your own response to him."

"That makes sense." I agree, but the hard part is going to be getting him away from Arabella. From the looks of it she's not letting him out of her sight."

"You're right. We have to find a way to separate them." She muses. "Or at the very least, we need to locate them so we can figure out when they aren't together."

"There's something else." I realize, still going over our quick but tense encounter in my head. "She's clearly been hiding the news from him – if we can find a way to get the true coverage in front of him, he might start to question her more."

"And we have to do all of this without letting her know what we're up to." Helene contributes, "If she gets spooked there's no telling what she might do."

"That could work in our favor – the more desperate she is, the more mistakes she's bound to make." I suggest.

"Or the more drastic lengths she might go to in order to succeed." Helene says, shaking her head, "A cornered animal is a very dangerous thing, Selene – and Arabella's already more dangerous than most."

“Okay, that’s fair.” I exhale, pursing my lips. But I refuse to stand by and watch them get married. So help me, if he still hasn’t come out of this – this trance, by their wedding day, I don’t care how dangerous she is, I will drag her away from that altar kicking and screaming.” Seething, I rise from the bed and stride to the mirror. Staring at my reflection, I try to remember how I must have looked the last time Arabella saw me – the terrified, crying girl she locked in a closet.

“Arabella has no idea who she’s dealing with.” remark coldly. “I’m not the weak little halfling she used to bully.” Gripping the edge of the dresser, I consider Helene’s words about my wolf bringing out the predator in me. “She’s not the only one who’s dangerous now – and we don’t even know everything I’m capable of yet.”

When I glance at Helene, she’s smiling widely. “There you are. She purrs, full of praise. “I’ve been waiting for you.” “What?” I wonder aloud.

“This is the she-wolf I saw waiting in your destiny the first time we met – the one you could be if you found your confidence.” Helene explains, coming forward to cup my cheek in her hand. “She’s finally here. You’re ready now to truly begin training

Furrowing my brow, I begin to worry the old woman’s mind is slipping. “What do you mean? We’ve been training “No darling up until this point we’ve been working with kid gloves on.” She grins, “Now the real fun begins

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 173

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 173

173 – Let the fun begin

Bastien “Arabella what was all that?” I demand as soon as the apartment door is closed behind us. The blonde stares at me in innocent confusion. “What do you mean?”

“All those things Selene said, about Frederic being exiled and her being hospitalized – about me still having my memory after the assassination attempt?” I’ve been replaying the conversation over and over in *my* head, every confusing detail sticking in my mind, and new baffling details reappearing every minute.

Why didn’t Selene hide the fact that she had powers? Why did she have a teacher with her and talk about them like she was just beginning to learn? Why was she asking me to come home when my absence could only help her scheme? More striking than anything else, was how sincere she’d seemed, from the way she clung to me when we

first saw each other, to the moment we parted. If it truly was an act, she was the best actress in the world.

“Bastien, this is what she does!” Arabella groans, “I can already see you doubting yourself. She’s the most talented gaslighter I’ve ever met. She twists facts and bends the truth and is so convincing that she can convince people they’re wrong about what they know in their hearts. You can’t be fooled by her sweet, innocent act.” She insists, frowning. “I don’t know what news she was talking about, but if Frederic has been exiled, I guarantee you it was Selene’s doing – so that she wouldn’t have to share her power with him. Now that she’s gotten a taste she probably wants to run the pack on her own.”

“A female Alpha?” | question. It’s not unheard of, but if she accomplished such a thing she’d been the first in generations.

“She’s certainly powerful enough.” Arabella shrugs.

My head aches trying to unravel this logic. Selene couldn’t both pretend to be innocent and harmless, and claim to be powerful enough to lead a pack like the Novas.

Selene’s last question rang in my head like a relentless warning bell, is the person trying to deceive you the one asking you to face reality head on, or is it the one who wants you to stay here with your head in the sand? “Why are you so determined that we don’t return to Elysium yet?” I ask

“Because of her!” Arabella bursts out, her voice thick with emotion. “I was afraid this would happen, I was afraid that if we went back everything would go back to the way it was before. That you’d fall for her tricks and go back to hating me. That’s why I wanted to get married first, so that at least then I’d have a little bit of security.” She sniffles, her eyes shining with tears, “I can’t lost you again, Bastien!”

She throws herself into my arms, and I catch her reflexively, rubbing her back and trying to calm her down. Yet even as I comfort Arabella, doubt writhes in my chest. She is behaving so differently from how I’ve ever seen her act in the past, and Selene seemed exactly like the woman from my dreams – older, stronger and much healthier, but every bit as sweet. She felt so right in my arms and everything she said made so much sense. I’ve never lost a fight in my life, I haven’t gotten sick since I was a child, and I can’t imagine leaving my pack at such a stressful time.

After a moment, she pulls back and wipes her tears away. “I’m sorry,” She whimpers, “I’m being such a baby. Why don’t make us some tea? It’s been such a terrible evening.”

“Okay.” I mutter, not really processing her words.

pace as Arabella clatters around the kitchen, trying to sort out the tangled information in my brain. A moment later she reappears and offers me a cup, still steaming and blissfully aromatic. I take a few sips and feel the tension seep out of me almost instantly.

As I relax, I seem to even forget why I was so worried in the first place. In fact, now that I think about it, what was I thinking about a moment ago? Why was I so agitated when everything seems fine? Arabella and I are at home in her apartment, safe and sound.

Axel, do you remember? I ask my wolf. It takes a moment, but then his familiar voice sounds in my ear. Selene. He rumbles simply.

Of course. Why else would I be so anxious but for the woman who is currently destroying my reputation and my pack? Shaking off my unease, I remind myself that Arabella and I will be home soon enough. I'll deal with Solene once and for all – and then Arabella and I can finally begin our life together.

Selene “Helene, this is not fun!” I shout, struggling to maintain my focus.

It's our second night in Tartarus, and we've returned to the park to practice my moonlight magic once more, but tonight feels very different from yesterday. Instead of the gradual harnessing I achieved to lead me towards Bastien – and apparently call him to me – today the power floods over me like a tidal wave. At first I merely noticed a soft glow at my fingertips, but before long my entire body was lit up like some strange new species of bioluminescent wolf, and my feet left the ground. Now I hang in the air, white light pouring out of me as I struggle to regain control.

“Just focus.” Helene calls from below me. “If you don't get yourself down from there you're going to call every guard for a mile around, and then where will we be?”

“Is that your way of encouraging me?” I demand hotly, waving my arms uselessly around me. “No more kid gloves little mother.” She grins, “nothing motivates like a healthy dose of fear.” “I'd like to give you a healthy dose of your own damned medicine.” I mutter under my breath.

“I heard that!” Helene chuckles, not sounding the least bit bothered.

Okay, I think, shaking off my nerves. Just focus. Use the power to get your feet back on the ground. If your feet are on the ground, you can find Bastien. You can't find him if you're floating here like a canine balloon.

Slowly, I feel the air shift around me, and the harder I concentrate, the softer the breeze becomes. Before long I feel my feet reconnecting with the ground, and triumph rushes through my veins.

“Good Selene,” Helene praises. “Very good, now turn off the glowing, firefly.”

I imagine pulling all the light emanating from my body within, again reminding myself that the sooner all this is sorted out, the sooner I can find my mate. Every muscle in my body goes taut with the effort, but when I peek my eyes open nothing has changed. I'm still lit up like a marquee and the radiance doesn't even seem to be softer than it was a moment ago.

"It isn't working." I tell Helene.

She shakes her head with a wry smile, "Such a pup. No patience whatsoever."

"Hey!" I object, glaring at her. In the pearly light she looks years younger, and I realize what a beautiful woman she must have been in her prime. Still, her words grate at my temper. "I'm a grown woman and a mother – forgive me if my family and my pack being on the line makes me a bit anxious."

"And a moody pup too." She teases, patting my pregnant belly. "Just keep trying, don't let failure bog you down."

At the word "failure" I feel something burst inside my chest, and all at once the light is sucked inside my body. I almost imagine that I hear a pop, and when I look down, I see only a gentle white luminance on my skin. Despite my pleasure at succeeding, I level my mentor with a glower. "You know I really don't like you sometimes."

"Tut tut." She brushed off my words as I knew she would, 'no one likes being pushed, but look where it gets you.' She lectures, gesturing at me. "Truly – if you could bottle that you'd make a million on the beauty market. As if you weren't pretty enough already."

"But what can I do with it?" I ask, studying the moon-kissed skin of my arms.

"Find your mate.' Helene instructs. "But this time don't draw yourself a map or pull him to you, just locate him. Reach out with your mind and let the moon guide you."

Closing my eyes and thinking hard, I try to envision the strange city where we've landed and fill my senses with all that is Bastien: his scent, his handsome features, the feeling of his body against mine. Little by little my mind closes in on my target, and before long I'm lighting up – not with the moon, but a smile

"I know where he is."

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 174

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 174

Sophie

Lila is sprawled on the sofa in our apartment in Asphodel, flipping through Drake's photo album. There used to be a time when that album filled me with jealousy. Half of it was occupied with photos of Selene – when she was pregnant with Lila, the early days after the pup had been born. Now it fills me with longing. I want a pup of my own so badly, a dream I never even realized I had until Drake claimed me as his own.

I haven't confessed this dream to my mate yet, but I know he wants the same thing. He's been endlessly patient with me, taking every new stage of our relationship one step at a time. One day soon I hope to share this secret with him, but I'm still finding my feet in the new order of things.

As nervous as I was to be given the responsibility of caring for Selene and Bastien's daughter while they're away, I've come to adore Lila, and even catch myself practicing my own maternal skills on her. I'm not sure if Drake knows this is the reason I've been so eager to spend time with her, but he's more than willing to indulge me either way.

"What do you want to do today, Lila Bean?" | ask, coming to sit beside her.

"I wanna go shopping!" She informs me happily, kicking her pint-sized feet back and forth as she lies on her belly.

"Shopping?!" | exclaim, not the least bit opposed to this idea, "What kind of shopping?"

"For gwocries." Lila answers promptly. "I wanna cook like ! do with Mommy."

Of course, I think with resignation. She wants to do the one thing I'm truly terrible at. No matter what Drake says, I know I'm a horrible cook. Thankfully he hired a real chef for Selene's cafe and re-appointed me as the business manager, otherwise the restaurant would have gone under months ago.

"Alright!" | agree, "But you don't get to be mad at me when the food doesn't taste like how your Mommy makes it." I caution the toddler.

"Don't worry." Lila giggles, "I show you how."

For most pups this would probably seem like an over-abundance of confidence, but Lila knows exactly how well I can cook, and she's right to think she can do a better job. Poking my head into Drake's office, I tell him where we're headed. "Lila and I are off to the store."

| planned on ducking in and out, but to my surprise, Drake rises from his desk and comes to take my hands in his, “Oh? | was thinking about getting a sitter and taking you out tonight.”

“Really?” | flirt, fluttering my lashes, “because that would probably save us all from food poisoning.”

LV.1

“Stop.” He scolds light-heartedly, “I believe in you even if you don’t, you can be a good cook with a little confidence.”

“I love that you believe in me.” | concede, “but I don’t care enough about cooking to put in the effort.” I confess, “if we ever have kids, we’re going to have to hire a chef.”

“Kids?” He repeats with a wide smile, “Is that something you want?”

“You know,” I begin in a teasing tone, “most couples discuss this sort of thing before tying themselves to each other permanently.”

“I know.” He laughs, “but I love you more than I love some imaginary future. I want whatever life you’re willing to build with *me*.”

Leaning into his warmth, I wrap my arms around his neck. “You can’t say things like that to me when there’s a pup in the next room, Drake.” I scold, feeling my heart pulse with affection.

“Oh?” He utters with a grin, “why’s that?”

“Because it makes me want to do a lot of very naughty things that would be very difficult to explain to her should she walk in.” | exclaim, turning my cheek when he tries to kiss me. Drake emits a low growl and catches my chin, turning my face back to his and claiming my lips despite my protests. When we part a few breathless moments later, I add. “We’re going grocery shopping. You and I can finish this... discussion, later.”

“Okay.” Drake agrees, dropping his head to his mark and swiping his tongue over the pink scar, “But do me a favor, and get some whipped cream and chocolate syrup.”

Cocking my head to the side, I agree with mild confusion, “Okay, would you like something to go with that? Ice cream perhaps?”

“Oh I already have everything I need.” He grins wolfishly, kissing my nose and giving my waist a squeeze. “Right here.”

Flames burst over my cheeks, “Oh.” | murmur softly, suddenly liking the idea of staying put much more than I did a moment ago. “You know, we don’t have to go.” I offer.

“Oh yes you do.” Drake informs me with a sultry stare. “I have very specific plans for you now, little lamb.”

Shivering happily, I do as he says, packing Lila into the car and whisking her off to the grocery store. In addition to the items my mate requested, we picked out chicken, strawberries and carrots for Lila’s dinner. It was an odd combination, but it was what she wanted and it wasn’t unhealthy, so I agreed.

After arriving home and unpacking out bags, Lila helped me prepare every step of her dinner. Together we sliced the straw berries (her with a very dull plastic knife), roasted the chicken and laid out the carrot sticks. When the chicken was finally done cooking and – to my amazement – actually smelling appetizing, we let it cool before Lila cut it into bite sized pieces too. When her plate was finally ready, brimming with all the foods she’d specially requested, she looked up at me with her beautiful two toned eyes. “Uh-uh.”

Blinking, I transferred a few of the dirty dishes to the sink, “What was that?”

“I don’ want dis.” Lila announced.

“What do you mean lovey?” | ask patiently, “We made this just for you, it’s exactly what you asked for.”

“I don’ want it.” She repeated, crossing her plump arms over her chest.

My head spun slightly, but I reminded myself I was dealing with a toddler – logic wasn’t on the table. “Honey, we went shopping for these specific things, you helped make it and cut it all up, why don’t you want it?” | ask.

“I don’ like it.” Lila explains, baffling me completely.

“Then why did you ask for it?” | murmur, feeling completely baffled.

“I didn’!” Lila insists, pouting deeply.

Pursing my lips. I try to conjure a reasonable reply. I want to

throw my hands up in defeat, I want to order her to eat the food we prepared or go to bed hungry. Instead I try to imagine how difficult it must be for her to be away from both of her parents right now, and feel myself soften slightly. “Okay Lila, what do you want instead of this?”

A few hours later I’m burying my head in my hands and complaining to Drake, “She’s a monster. We did exactly what she wanted and it still wasn’t right! I cooked successfully for maybe the first time in my entire life, and she didn’t even care.”

“Baby, she’s three years old.” Drake soothes, pulling me into his lap. “She’s meant to be unreasonable. It’s in her DNA.”

“I don’t know how they do it.” | admit, thinking of Selene and Bastien, “I mean I worked my ass off and all I got in return was a tiny tyrant making me feel like a crazy person.”

“It helps when it’s your tiny tyrant.” Drake acknowledges, rubbing my back, “But if it makes you feel better, she wouldn’t act out if she didn’t feel safe with you.”

“How do you figure that?” | grumble, cuddling into his arms and pouting.

“Because it’s in a toddler’s nature to test their boundaries.” He explains, pressing a kiss to my temple, “and they do it the most with the people they know they can trust. That’s why kids are always the worst behaved with their parents.”

“Really?” | question, looking up at him anxiously.

“Really.” He promises. “Lila loves you, and she feels comfortable with you, so she’s a tiny bit of a brat. Take it as a compliment.”

“I do.” | admit, “I assumed it was because she didn’t like me.”

“Nonsense.” Drake scoffs, “How could anyone dislike you?”

“I have a life’s worth of evidence of people not liking me at all.” I remind him, “It’s not that unthinkable.”

“Sophie, when are you going to learn?” Drake asks, kissing me deeply, “Your family didn’t see you for the gem you are. They were idiots. The rest of us aren’t so foolish.”

“Easy for you to say.” | joke, “You’re my mate, you don’t have a choice either.”

“How dare you?” He growls. “I have a choice. I have every choice in the world.” He announces sternly. “That’s precisely why you should recognize how special you are. I could have any woman in the pack, but I want you.”

“You’re a cocky bastard, you know that?” | chuckle, stroking his scruffy cheek.

“I do.” He confirms, nuzzling my neck and breathing in my scent, “Which is precisely why you should feel so confident in yourself.”

“Whatever you say, Alpha.” I preen.

“That’s my girl.” Drake grins, kissing me deeply. “Now – about this starting a family...”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 175

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 175

Selene

Helene and I wait patiently until Arabella left her opulent apartment at the city center. It felt almost like being a part of one of the mystery shows I love watching at home. We staked out the apartment for hours, munching on unhealthy junk food and staring at the building's front doors until our vision seemed blurry.

Finally Arabella emerged, departing with the air of a socialite off on some sultry affair – dressed to the nines and slinking off towards the pack house.

“There she goes!” Helene whispers excitedly, “Go on now, I’ll stand watch.”

“Now, already?” This was all happening much too fast for me to process. I thought I might reconnect with Bastien in a few days, after an extended mission watching their apartment. I’m not ready to face him now. Still, my mentor seems only too eager for me to take this step.

“Yes now!” Helene scoffs, “This is what we’ve been preparing for you silly thing.”

“Okay,” I mutter, drawing in a deep breath. “Okay, you’re right.”

Dashing across the street, I follow Bastien’s scent up stairs, climbing flight after flight rather than attempting to use the elevator – on which I would have had to press every button in order to catch my mate’s scent. Striding to the apartment door, I heave in a few deep breaths, attempting to calm myself before facing my mate.

In the end I don’t even have to knock. The door swings open in front of me, and Bastien appears – fuming, handsome beyond reason and with eyes full of hatred, “What are you doing here?” He demands.

“I wanted to talk to you.” I confess. “I have a message from Lila.”

“Lila.” He says her name in that same dazed manner he had when we met in the alley.

“Do you remember Lila?” I ask hesitantly. “Do you remember me?”

“Of course I remember you.” He growls, dragging me inside and pushing me up against the closed door. “You destroyed our lives. You tricked me into thinking Frederic’s bastard was my own.”

“No Bastien, I mean: do you remember meeting me in Tartarus the other day?” I clarify. “Do you remember talking to me and meeting Helene?”

“What are you talking about?” He demands, “the last time I saw you we were in Elysium.”

“You saw me two days ago.” I inform him softly, shaking my head with worry. “We were in an alley a few blocks from here. You told me about the dream you had while you were sick last week.”

His powerful hands soften on my body as his brow furrows in confusion. “How do you know about that?”

“Because you told me.” I say again, resisting the urge to reach out to him. “We talked about the news and Frederic, Arabella tried to make you reject me but the night watch men came around before you could.”

“Arabella was there?” Bastien rumbles, looking completely beside himself.

“Yes.” I confirm gently, “She followed you when you left the house.”

“This doesn’t make any sense.” He groans, releasing me and scrubbing his hand over his face.

“Bastien, I think she’s doing something to your memory.” I tell him, moving forward when he retreats deeper into the apartment. “The things she’s been telling you aren’t true. A lot has changed in the last six years, she’s not the girl you remember.”

He slumps down on the sofa, “she has been behaving oddly – unlike herself, but that’s your doing.” He accuses, eyeing me fiercely. “Yours and Blaise.”

The name of the Calypso Alpha sends a flicker of unease through my veins, “what does Blaise have to do with any of this?”

“She came here for his help, but he’s turned out to be a monster. He wants to make her his mistress and she’s terrified he’ll force himself on her.” He explains.

I relax slightly, relieved that she hasn’t told him about me or Lila and praying she never finds out about his bounty. “Then why are you still here?” I question, “If she’s that afraid of him, why haven’t you taken her back to Elysium yet?”

“We can’t go back yet.” Bastien announces, sounding as if he’s reciting lines from a play; things he doesn’t feel of believe, but somehow knows he’s supposed to say. “You and Frederic have made it impossible.”

“Bastien, Frederic and I aren’t working together. He’s not even in Elysium anymore.” I recount, pulling out my phone. Pulling up the video of our confrontation on the street, I offer him the device. “Here.”

Lv. 1

I watch with baited breath as Bastien plays the recording, praying it will knock some sense into him. His eyes narrow further and further, until they’re little more than slits as he watches. “What is this?” He demands.

“This is what was playing on every news station the week you got mysteriously ill, Bastien.” I share, kneeling in front of him and resting my hands on his knees. “Arabella didn’t want you to see it, so she must have made you sick so you’d miss the coverage.”

: m

“How do I know this isn’t just some trick?” Bastien interrogates, emitting a vicious growl when he sees Frederic raise his hand against me. “Maybe you set Frederic up so you could take control of the pack.”

“That wouldn’t explain why he confessed to all those things. They can’t be true if we were working together the way Arabella insists.” I reason.

“But all the things he’s saying she did – those are the things you did to her.” Bastien insists, making my heart ache in my chest.

“No, they aren’t.” I state, desperately trying to hold onto my sense of calm. “Go to the next video.”

He flips over to the next recording downloaded on my device, one that Drake sent me just this morning. In it Lila is beaming into the camera, her sweet face smeared with chocolate even as Sophie stands behind her with a damp rag, trying to convince her to get cleaned up before making the video.

“Hi Daddy!” Lila chirps, waving an equally dirty paw. “I miss you so much! I’m in ‘sphodel with Uncle Rake and Aunt Sophie, an’ we’re having lots a fun, but I wanna come home! You’ve been gone too long and I wanna go for wolf rides and bake with Mommy an’ hear your silly songs.” She rambles off her wishlist in one breath, bouncing up and down on the balls of her feet. To finish, she spreads her little arms out wide, “I love you this much, Daddy! Please come home.”

Bastien is smiling at the screen, that same besotted expression he got the first time he saw her. “She has your…” He looks up at me in confusion, trailing off, “eyes.”

“My eyes.” | confirm, “when they’re not disguised. And your smile.” I point out, nodding towards the phone. “She’s yours, Bastien – *you* can see it plain as day.” Pressing my hand to my belly, I add. “And so is this one.”

Bastien looks back at the small rectangular screen, flip ping to the next video without being told. It’s the sonogram I had Dr Lee take just before I left the city. “You didn’t come here for Arabella, Bastien. You came here because we’re having another baby, and Blaise is a threat to all three of us. I don’t know how it happened that you ran into Arabella, but you cannot trust her.”

Swiping over, I pull up the last video I requested, one Odette sent not a half hour ago. “If you won’t believe me, maybe *you’ll* believe them.” I suggest, pressing play.

In the recording, Odette is standing with Aiden and Donovan, looking very somber indeed. “Bastien, do not trust Arabella.” His mother begins. “I was there the night she tried to kill Selene, Aiden and Donovan were there when you saved Lila from starlight poisoning.”

“We witnessed these things with our own eyes.” Aiden adds, “You called us after the assassination attempt because you were afraid for Selene. You were in contact for days afterwards and your memory was fine.”

“Everything Arabella is telling you is a lie.” Donovan proclaims, “She fled Elysium because she’s committed countless crimes, trying to enact her Vendetta against you. She hates you because of Flynn. She blames you for his death.”

Bastien lowers the phone with a grim expression. Pinching the bridge of his nose as if he’s got a headache, he growls, “this doesn’t make sense. I don’t understand.”

“Just come home.” I beg. “Forget Blaise, forget Arabella and come away with me, at least until you can get your memory back.”

“Blaise.” He repeats thoughtfully, “why did you say he was a threat to you?”

“He’s the reason you came here – he has a bounty on Volanas. It’s why my eyes are disguised. He’s hunting us and he’ll kill us if he finds us.” I share, both afraid of Bastien waking up and realizing that I defied his express orders never to come here, and wishing for nothing more.

Hearing that I’m in danger seems to rile Bastien enough for his wolf to rise to the surface, because suddenly his silver eyes are glowing and his claws extended. “He wants to kill you?”

“Yes, and so does Arabella. She’d kill me and Lila in a heartbeat Bastien. She thinks we’re standing in her way.” | tell him anxiously.

"If that's true, I can't just leave." Bastien decides, sounding like himself for the first time in a long time.

"Then... do you mean... do you believe me?" I squeak.

"How can I not?" He murmurs, gesturing with the phone.

"Then come away, please, before she can take your memory again." I plead.

Just then I hear the sound of heels clicking in the hall, and smell Arabella's vile perfume. "It's too late." Bastien announces gravely. "She's back."

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 176

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 176

Bastien

My head is swimming with too much information. I don't remember any of the events Selene is describing, and so much of it defies everything I believe to be true. Still the evidence in front of me is overwhelming. The videos Selene showed me prove that Arabella has been lying to me, and as strange as it seems, it's actually a relief. Things have felt off ever since I arrived here, as if I've been trapped in some strange fog. I thought it was simply a side effect of losing my memory, but now I suspect it's Arabella's doing.

As I look down at my beautiful mate, Axel rages in my head, urging me to claim her, protect her and punish her for risking her safety all at once. However there's not time for any of that now. "You need to get out of here." I command, rising from the couch and pulling her up with me. "You can go down the fire escape."

"Come with me." Selene begs, "she's going to know! I was here either way."

"I'm not running away like a coward." I announce.

"Oh but it's alright if I'm a coward?" She demands, full of sass.

"You are far more precious than I am." I inform her, eyeing the slight swell of her belly. "I'll find you after I've dealt with Arabella."

“Just, do me a favor and keep this.” She requests, pushing the cell phone into my hand. “You can reach me through Helene. You can also track me that way – we’re set up to share our locations.”

“Alright.” I agree, opening the window and lifting her out onto the fire escape. “Now hurry, and be careful.”

“Bastien wait!” She exclaims, before I can close the window.

“What’s wrong?” I pause, scanning her lovely face, which looks deeply conflicted.

“Kiss me?” She requests in a small voice, as if she’s afraid I’ll refuse.

She doesn’t need to ask twice. Leaning out the window, I drag her mouth to mine, perhaps more roughly than I intended. I’ve been trying to resist doing precisely this from the moment she walked in the door, at first feeling terribly twisted for being so attracted to someone so evil, and now relieved beyond belief that it isn’t true. I slant my mouth over hers, drinking her in with an urgency that pulses deep in my bones. Coaxing her tongue out to play with mine, I run my hands over her body, trying to memorize the way

12 13

she feels in my arms. I only release her when I hear Arabella’s keys jingling on the other side of the front door, and there are tears in Selene’s eyes when I pull away.

“Go, baby.” I encourage her, finally closing the window, “I’ll come for you. I promise.”

As Selene races away down the fire escape, I shove the cell phone under my mattress and return to the living room. When the door pushes open and Arabella appears, she looks furious. “Why do I smell Selene?” She asks me abruptly

1. ly.

“Because my mate is a lot cleverer than you gave her credit for.” I announce.

“Is that so?” Arabella questions, eyeing me warily.

“In fact just about everything you told me about her was *w*rong.” I continue, stalking my way around her. “The only thing you had right is how beautiful she is.”

“So, she managed to trick you again already?” Arabella sighs, attempting to look sad.

“No, she managed to outsmart you again.” I correct, “How long did you think you could keep this up, Bella? Did you really believe you could turn me against my entire family, my betas?”

Chapter 176 – Bastien Confronts Arabella

“She’s a witch.” Arabella insists, “she admitted it herself the other night – you saw her magic. Everyone in Elysium is under her spell.”

“Right, of course.” I agree, “And remind me why I can’t remember meeting her the other night?” | demand. “Re mind me why I was mysteriously so ill that I slept through a week of news coverage that exposed you as a liar?”

“She’s playing with your mind, Bastien.” Arabella argues, backing away from me into the kitchen, “Please don’t let her divide us this way.”

“The only person playing with my mind is you!” | thunder, “How have you been doing it? A potion? A spell?”

“I’m not! I haven’t!” Arabella whines, adopting a put upon expression, “How could you think I would do such a thing?”

“Oh give it up Bella!” | order sharply, “it’s over, you’ve lost.”

“Fine.” She snaps, dropping her act at last. For the first time since I woke up in this strange city, she actually looks like herself again. The weak, frightened little girl image never did sit right with the woman I remembered. The furious blonde on the verge of a tantrum however, that is exactly the way I recall Flynn’s baby sister. “I knew that bitch was aning to ruin my nians – like she always does!” She rages.

LU

“Did you really think you could go on doing this forever? For the rest of my life?” I hiss.

“Yes.” She snarls with a cruel smile, “But in my defense, I didn’t plan on the rest of your life being all that long.”

Disbelief slices through me. Arabella spent so long pretending to be in love with me, that I never imagined she could feel so violently towards me. “I’m sorry about Flynn, Bella.” I tell her honestly, “You have no idea how much guilt | carry because of his death, but killing me won’t bring him back. And he wouldn’t want you to tarnish your own soul for his sake. How many innocent people have you hurt trying to avenge him? Did Selene, did my pup, deserve to be tormented by you and Frederic?”

“Oh please!” Arabella explodes, going completely red in the face. “I’m so sick of everybody falling all over them selves to fawn over fucking Selene. She’s a pretty face and a sweet temper, and nothing else! I mean even Frederic lost his damned head over her. And for what? She’s not strong or brave or even smart – it was so easy to fool her into thinking we were having an affair it was laughable. She didn’t even fight for you, she just ran away like a scared pup.”

“She’s fighting for me now.” I remind her, almost slipping up and telling Arabella that Selene was brave enough to risk her life just by coming here. “She was strong enough to stand up to Frederic, to travel halfway across the continent while pregnant and face me even after I threatened her life.” Arabella is getting more worked up with every word I speak, edging away from me with her hands braced against the cabinets, “She has strengths you never will, Bella.”

“You’re a fool.” She replies, “compared to me that little mutt is garbage.”

“So what, you were going to kill her simply because she got in your way?” I question, still prowling after her, the scent of her fear sparking my wolf’s prey drive. “You were going to make my daughter an orphan just like you were, make her suffer the same pain you did?”

“And leave a loose end?” Bella scoffs. “I was planning on being the Nova pack’s first female Alpha. That means that even your brat could challenge me when she grows up.”

The smiling face of the pup in the video flashes through my mind: that perfect, sweet little girl who just wanted wolf rides – whatever those are – and silly songs. “You were going to kill her?”

“Eventually.” She shrugs. “You actually made this all a lot easier for me. I was going to try to convince Blaise to help me take over the pack, but getting rid of him was going to be a lot harder than simply wiping your filthy little family off the face of the earth.”

“You’re deranged.” I say the words even as I realize them. “How can you think any of this is justice for what happened to Flynn.”

“Oh it stopped being about justice a long time ago.” She tells me, showing more self-awareness than I imagined her capable of. “I spent my entire life powerless. My parents were taken, then my brother was taken and I was powerless to stop any of it. I had to stand by and watch while you and your family got to rule the world while my family died serving you. And after my first few failed attempts to get a slice of the power you all took for granted, I realized the only way I would ever attain the life I deserved wasn’t to share your power, but to take it.” She muses. “You should actually take it as a compliment – I wouldn’t have to be so drastic about it if you weren’t so formidable. Because when it comes to wolves like you, you’ll always be a threat so long as you live.”

Shaking my head, I declare, “Your brother would be so disappointed in you. It’s actually a blessing he didn’t live to see how horribly you turned out.”

Closing the distance between us, I try to decide how I want to proceed. I’m horribly tempted to kill her where she stands, but I know that she should probably have a fair trial before being sentenced to death – for the sake of honoring Flynn’s memory if nothing else.

A sudden knock on the door pulls my attention for a mere half-second, but it was all the time Arabella needed. A faint prick stings my arm, and when I whip my head back to the despicable she-wolf, she's grinning widely, her thumb still resting on the plunger of the syringe in her hand.

The only thing I have time to think before the world goes black is: not again.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 177

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 177

Arabella

That was way too close. I think, breathing a much needed sigh of relief. It's only because of dumb luck – that my potion maker was stopping by to drop off my most recent order – that I even managed to inject Bastien with the sleeping solution.

I suppose there was some cunning involved – I had prepared the syringe and kept it in my purse for emergencies just like this, but I'd hoped I wouldn't ever need to use it. After helping me drag Bastien to bed and charging me extra for the labor, my sketchy contact left as swiftly as he came, leaving me to try to sort out what to do about Selene on my own.

Injecting enough memory potion into Bastien that I'm afraid I might actually have to start my plan over all the way from scratch, I take a page out of the Alpha's book and begin to pace. Somehow Selene had convinced Bastien that everything I've worked so hard to convince him of these past few weeks was all a lie. I was only gone for half an hour, so I cannot fathom how she managed to do it.

A little while later pause my panicked plotting when I hear my phone ring, so I go digging into my handbag to retrieve it. However, when I have the device in my hand a moment later the screen is completely blank. Still an unmistak

able ringtone is playing from somewhere in the house. Following the sound of the noise, I stride into Bastien's bed room, seeing a faint glimmer of light between the mattress and boxspring.

Pulling out a sleek black phone from the bed, I see Drake Cavanaugh's photo behind the red and green call buttons, with his name beside the incoming call notice. Apparently Bastien was right – Selene is cleverer than I gave her credit for, at least in part. She was clearly smart enough to leave her phone with Bastien so they could get in

touch, but she must not have trusted he'd keep his memory because she removed the passcode from the device.

It makes it only too easy for me to access all her information, including the videos she must have showed him to

convince him of her honesty. Well played, Selene. I think begrudgingly. Too bad you didn't think to silence it.

Wracking my brain, I try to remember the name of the witch who had been traveling with Selene, recalling that it had been something similar to her own name. Pulling up the recent calls, the name Helene Gray appears in multiple rows, and when I check the profile image it depicts the same ancient woman from the alley. To my delight I see that the two women are sharing their locations, and while I can't be certain, I'd be willing to bet Selene is already back with her mentor.

Laughing aloud at the irony, I feel my spirits lift. This

day might have started out badly, but it's sure as hell improving fast.

—
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
—

Selene

I'm staring at Helene's phone like a woman obsessed, willing the device to ring. I haven't heard from Bastien and it's been more than an hour, which makes me extremely nervous. "I shouldn't have left him." I murmur, "I should have stayed so we could face her together. Why did I let him send me away like that?" I groan.

"There's no use beating yourself up about it now." Helene advises. "You can't change what happened. All that matters is that you made progress. We know a lot more about

his state of mind now, and he has your phone so even if she manages to overpower him somehow, there's a lifeline to reach him or remind him of what happened."

"You're right." | concede, trying to shake off my cynicism, "Though I should probably contact everyone to make sure they know they can't reach me using it anymore."

Just then the screen lights up on Helene's phone, and a text message from me appears. "Arabella is gone. I'm on my way to you now."

LLLLLLLLLLLL LLLLLL

"Arabella is gone?" | repeat, my heart leaping into my throat with both excitement and confusion. "Does that mean dead? Or like he's sneaking out behind her back?"

"I suppose we'll find out soon enough." Helene smiles, "See, all that worry for nothing."

"I know, I need to get out of my head." I confess, "even now I can't help thinking that it was all too easy."

"You're too young to be so jaded." My mentor tells me dryly.

Luna is bounding around like an excited puppy in my head, positively overwhelmed with joy that we'll soon be reunited with Bastien – not for a few stolen moments, but permanently. "I still don't know what we're going to do about Blaise." I confide, "I have a bad feeling that Bastien isn't going to just get in the car and let me take him home once his memory returns."

"You may be right about that." Helene agrees, "but this has also gone on much longer than he ever intended, he may see the benefit of returning now – even if he doesn't give up on the idea completely."

"Is it horrible of me to hope he will give it up?" I whisper, "I know Lila is in danger, but Blaise is getting on in years already, and we've made it this long without him finding us."

"It's not horrible." Helene promises, "It's understandable. You're afraid of losing your mate. But we already know you're fated to face Blaise one way or another, so I'm afraid it isn't a hope that will pan out."

"How can you be so sure?" | ask her, "surely your premonitions have been wrong before... at least once or twice?" I suggest hopefully.

"Sorry sugar." Helene laughs, "I've yet to be proven wrong. But there's a first time for everything."

Checking her phone again, I see the dot depicting Bastien moving closer and closer, and my pulse increases with every tiny flicker of the tracking dot. "He's almost here." | announce happily.

I run to the bathroom to empty my bladder before he arrives, talking quietly to my baby as I wash up. "Please be good while Mommy and Daddy talk. I would really love not to throw up on him in the middle of our reunion."

A knock sounds on the door as I'm drying my hands, and checking my reflection like a nervous teenager before a date, I exhale and emerge into the hotel room. I reach the bedroom doorway just as Helene opens the front door of the suite, and I watch in horror as she drops like a fly, leaving only Arabella in sight.

"Oh my Goddess, what have you done to her!" | exclaim.

rushing forward and then stopping myself before I come within reach of the she-wolf. As my shock wears off, disappointment and fear rise up to replace it. Arabella clearly found my phone and was clearly alive and well, which means one way or another, she did manage to overpower

Bastien.

"Oh don't worry about her, it's just a little bonk on the head." Arabella smiles, slipping inside and nudging Helene's fallen body with her foot, pushing her aside so she can close the door.

"She's ancient!" | remind her, "You could have killed her."

"Nonsense, she's breathing... I think." Arabella hazards, glancing down at my mentor.

"Where is Bastien?" | question her sharply, letting Luna rise to the surface of my skin.

"Sleeping it off." Arabella smiles. "Did you really think you could undo all my hard work that fast?" She demands, stalking towards me, "play a few videos and have him back in the blink of an eye?"

"Why are you doing this?" | ask, shaking my head, "know you don't really love Bastien."

Lv

"Sorry but I've already given my evil monologue for the day." She quips, "Not that anyone will remember it, but c'est la vie."

"Fine, then tell me why you're here." | counter, trying to buy time to figure out what to do. I'm worried about getting too close to the woman. I may have powers now but she's

still a lot bigger than me and she's clearly capable of bringing down a wolf as strong as Bastien – somehow.

"I came to return your phone of course." She smiles fakely, "you accidentally left it behind." She tosses it onto the couch. "Oh, and one other thing..." before she can finish I hear something behind me, and when I turn I find a grisly looking man entering through the door connecting the hotel room to the one next door.

"How did you-" I begin, but too late I realize it was a massive mistake to look away from Arabella. I don't even have time to defend myself when I feel something jab my arm. I look back to see a syringe sticking out of my bicep, but the darkness is already closing in.

When I wake, I'm in a dark room, chained up and completely alone. I don't have any idea where I am, but it smells damp and the air is very cold. Letting my head drop back, I stare up at the only source of light I can find – a flickering lightbulb hanging from the very grimey ceiling. "Well Luna." I sigh, "I guess that was too easy after all."

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 178

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 178

Helene

When I wake up, still sprawled on the hotel room floor with a terrible ache in my head, I don't pause to search for Selene or Arabella. I know they aren't there any longer, and I know Arabella will be coming back for me once she's done with Selene.

I sense all of this in the same way I sense that my young pupil is not in any immediate danger. There is no explanation for how the knowledge arrives in my head, and I've long since given up trying to understand the magic. Wasting even one moment wondering how I can tell that Selene is captive but unharmed, is one more moment I could be looking for her.

I have my suspicions about the she-wolf's plans for my student, and one thing is clear: though Selene might be alright now, she won't be for long. Gathering my few belongings, I leave the hotel as fast as I can, instead driving to the apartment where Selene and I traced her mate.

I don't have a shifter's heightened senses, but I was watching when Selene ran down the fire escape earlier today, and I easily remember she came from the top floor of the

building. I can feel the presence of a single sleeping wolf inside, but I don't want to enter and risk letting Arabella come home and catch my scent. Reaching out the ten

drills of my power, I close my eyes and concentrate, sending out a magical summons powerful enough to rouse even the deepest of sleeps

As soon as the spell is complete, I enter the cafe across the street from the apartment building, and wait. It's only a few minutes before Selene's mate appears, looking deeply confused. I draw him to my table without a word, then stand to greet him. "Hello Bastien." I say warmly.

"I'm sorry," He frowns, shaking my hand, "but do I know you?"

"We've met once." I inform him gently, "but I'm guessing you wouldn't be able to remember even if I reminded you of the occasion."

The huge man rubs the back of his head, "Yes." He slowly agrees, "I've been having trouble with my memory lately."

"That can happen, when you're being fed memory portions every day." I remark, having come to this conclusion only after hearing Selene recount their interaction earlier today.

"What are you talking about?" Bastien inquires, sounding suspicious but open to my explanation. That fool Arabella has clearly been overdoing it. He knows something is

troubling her but she's keeping him in too much of a toad

for him to figure out the truth.

"You cannot trust the woman you are living with." I announce simply. "She is making you forget all the details of your life so she can trick you into marrying her."

"What?" Bastien objects, furrowing his brow, "I've known Arabella since she was a pup – she wouldn't"

"If you've known her since she was a pup then you know she's a spoiled, selfish brat with a mean streak a mile wide." I interrupt. "And you know she's not acting like her self right now, and she's been working very hard to keep you in Tartarus when you know you need to return home."

He stares at me in shock, "Who are you?"

"I'm a friend." I explain, "And I want to help you." Folding my arms on the table in front of me, I continue, "Let me ask you this, young man. Does Arabella prepare your drinks for you? Does she make you coffee in the morning or cock tails in the afternoon? Do you watch her do it?"

“Yes.” He confirms, the gears whirring rapidly in his mind, “and no.”

“Alright.” | nod, “you need to start. I’m going to give you something that should serve as an antidote to any potion she’s using to keep you forgetful, but there’s a chance she’s using something rarer than I’m prepared to counter.” | place a small vial on the table between us, filled with a draught I had the lucky foresight to concoct while Selene and I waited for her mate to arrive. “Take a few drops of this every day, but also try to avoid drinking or eating anything you don’t prepare for yourself.”

“Anything, like this concoction?” He remarks, lifting the vial hesitantly.

“Here.” | take the solution back from the Alpha, and pour a couple of drops into my own mouth to show it won’t harm him.” There’s no risk to you if I’m wrong – either you’ll regain your memory or things will continue as they are.” || promise.

“I still don’t understand.” Bastien admits, looking very conflicted.

“You will.” | assure him, “once you’re back to your old self, it will all make sense again.”

“How can you be so sure?” He asks.

Shrugging, I offer him a wide smile, “I have a way of knowing things.”

Bastien

It’s been three days since the strange visit I received from the witch, and as odd as the situation seemed, I did as she said. I started watching Arabella like a hawk, and when I caught her tipping something into my coffee from a vial around her neck, I began taking the antidote the woman provided.

It’s taken some time, but as she predicted I’ve been able to remember more and more with every hour that passes. First it’s only small things, flashes from what I suspect is the recent past – of Selene sitting in Arabella’s apartment, of a little girl with two-toned eyes and chocolate on her face. Next it seems like someone is taking an eraser to the fog in my mind, and is ridding me of my confusion starting from

the first day I forgot – six years ago.

I can remember meeting Selene now, my father sharing the secret of her bloodline and the early months of our marriage. By the second day I remember my mate’s death, and am only comforted by the knowledge that she isn’t truly gone.

As confusing as it all is, so far nothing explains why Arabella is trying to tamper with my memory. Everything! remember happens the way she said it did – even if my memories

make me feel it's impossible Selene could be the monster Arabella names her. The woman in my memories is so sweet, so genuine and lovable. The mere thought of her dying cuts me to the core.

It's not until the third day that reality diverges from the tale Arabella told, when I finally recall finding Selene and Lila in Asphodel, and see how hard she fought me when I tried to bring her home. She didn't come back to me, she ran from me until I literally hunted her down. And she didn't try to pass off Lila as mine at all, she denied it until she was blue in the face.

I feel as if I'm in the middle of reading a book whose next pages are blank. I can't wait to remember more, to regain more of my proper senses and figure out why this is all happening. In the meantime Arabella is planning our wedding, suddenly saying we should have it before the week is out so we can finally start our lives together.

She's currently showing me swatch after swatch of flower arrangements, asking for my opinion even though I couldn't care any less about something so frivolous. When I don't respond to some question or another, she emits a beleaguered sigh. "Honestly Bastien, if I didn't know any better I'd think you didn't care about our wedding."

She has no idea how right she is. Now that I remember how amazing Selene is, Arabella seems obnoxious and vapid in comparison. I'm spending every last moment fantasizing about my mate, and wondering how I was ever convinced to leave her and come here in the first place. Part of me wants to interrogate Bella until she gives me the an

Lv.1

swers I crave, but a voice in the back of my head – one that sounds oddly similar to the witch's – urges me to use caution. Wait it out. It encourages, just let the truth come to you, then you can act.

Watching me with an odd look on her face, Arabella pales. "You're starting to remember, aren't you?" She asks.

"What?" | feign ignorance, returning to the present so abruptly I almost wince. "Of course not, I would have told you." | insist, conjuring a small smile.

She shakes her head. "He warned me this might happen."

"Who warned you?" | clarify, "that what might happen?"

"I've been increasing the dose frequently, but my potion maker said you might grow immune to the effects after such significant exposure." She frowns, seeming to admit her scheme so suddenly I can only blink. "That's why I got a bit of insurance." She

continues, pulling out her phone, “after the last slip up, I knew you might need some extra encouragement to get down the aisle.”

“Bella, what are you talking about?” | ask, truly worried now.

“Say hello to Selene, sweetheart.” Arabella instructs me

with a sly smile, turning her phone to face me. “I’ve been keeping her on ice for you.”

The small rectangular screen is lit up with a video of Selene, who is sitting chained in a dark room, glaring up at the camera mounted on the wall above her head. Suddenly I understand the lengths Flynn’s little sister is willing to go to in order to get what she wants. It wasn’t enough to steal my memory – now she’s kidnapped my mate.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 179

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 179

Bastien

“You bitch.” | growl, glaring at Arabella. Without my full memory, I can’t begin to fathom why she is doing this, but it’s clear now Arabella is not my friend. The only reason she’s still standing is because she has my mate, and I don’t have the first idea how to find her in this strange city.

“Ouch, Bastien!” She pretends to pout, “You’ll hurt my feelings with talk like that.”

“Where is she?” | demand, “why are you doing this?” Axel is seething in my chest, begging me to let him out so he can put an end to this woman. It all feels impossibly strange. A few days ago I still saw Bella as Flynn’s understandably flawed little sister, now years worth of memories have reappeared in my mind all at once, and I’m seeing her more and more as an unforgivable villain.

“You know I don’t remember much about my mother,” she tells me, “but I’ve always remembered her telling me that some men needed a little bit of extra encouragement to get down the aisle. I guess what they say is right – Mom my does know best.”

“Why go through all this, just to marry me?” I demand, She tilts her head back and laughs, a light, tinkling sound. “You know this never gets old. I thought having the same conversation over and over would get really tiring, but I never cease to enjoy the way your poor memory always leads you to the same ridiculous conclusion.” Arabella

sneers, “I suppose after a lifetime of being told you were sooo superior I’ll take any opportunity to disprove it.”

“What are you talking about?” I hiss.

“I don’t want to marry you, for you Bastien.” She announces sharply, “I want to marry you for your power: Nothing more.”

“And you think this will make me agree?” I demand, brandishing the phone. “Why should I play into your hands when I could just kill you now?”

“Because if you kill me, you’ll never find her.” Arabella grins, “I’m the only one who knows where she is. If I don’t go by to feed her and give her water, she and your unborn pup will die.”

“... she’s breeding?” I gape, feeling both horrified and thrilled.

“You know she’s been a lot more forgiving than I would be in her shoes.” Arabella ponders aloud. “I mean, if my mate forgot me and my pups so easily, I’d never want to go near him again.”

“That isn’t fair.” I snarl, “It’s not as if it was my choice.” Even as we stand here talking, more of my memories return, including Selene sharing what really happened the night she left Elysium. Unbridled fury washes over me, and it takes all my strength to keep my temper in check as Arabella carries out her game.

“Well this is certainly going to be your choice, pretty boy.” She taunts. “You can walk down that aisle with me, or you can say goodbye to your foul little family.”

“And after?” I hiss. “What then? You think we’ll just go back to Elysium like nothing has changed, like you aren’t a fucking monster?”

“If I’ve learned anything on this little journey of mine,” Arabella begins, taking her phone back and stuffing it into her pocket, “It’s to be flexible and adapt your plans as the situation develops. I’m not sure what we’ll do when we go back – but whatever it is, we’ll do it as husband and wife.”

“Where is Selene?” I ask fiercely, “I have other ways of getting the information out of you – don’t forget.” I threaten.

“You do.” Arabella agrees, “but how do you know when the last time it is I paid your little mate a visit? What if she’s dehydrating to death right now? Can you really afford to tie me up and torture me when her life hangs in the balance?” She scoffs. “I’ve heard that breeding mathare noad aum

more sustenance than normal women – and poor Selene with her severe nausea.” She pouts and shakes her head.

“You’re lying!” I accuse, feeling completely beyond my depth for what might be the first time in my life.

“Am I?” Arabella challenges, “How can you be sure?”

I’ve never wanted to wring someone’s neck more than I do in this moment, but I also know the alternative to giving in to Arabella is losing my mate. I want to believe that I could track Selene even if I killed Arabella now, but I’m in a strange city without half of my memory, and there’s no telling whether or not I could actually succeed.

“And how do I know you won’t just kill her once you get what you want?” I press, struggling to contain my wolf.

“You don’t,” Arabella shrugs, “but there’s no doubt she’ll die if you don’t agree.”

“Fine.” I agree, deciding to play it safe for the time being. “I’ll marry you – but don’t expect anything more from me.”

“I wouldn’t want it even if you were offering.” Arabella informs me coolly. “But I’m so pleased you’re finally seeing reason.” Arching her brow and adopting a mocking tone, she adds, “Get ready honey, the big day is already here!”

“What?” I mutter in confusion.

“You heard me.” Arabella says simply, tossing a black tuxedo jacket into my arms. “The wedding is today, so get ready!”

—
—
—
—
—

Selene

If I can go the rest of my life without getting kidnapped again, I’ll die a happy woman.

Honestly, it’s actually ceasing to be frightening and is just getting old. It’s also getting embarrassing – I mean really, what kind of grown woman gets kidnapped more than

once and still doesn't learn her lesson? My only hope is that Helene was unharmed by Arabella's blow, and was able to recover quickly enough to escape. My own magic isn't doing much to help me. Arabella seems to have had the foresight to chain me with silver, which apparently dampens my power enough to keep me captive.

I'm also feeling worse with every hour that passes. Without Dr Lee's medicine and Helene's potions, my morning sickness is quickly spinning out of control. Arabella had the decency to leave me a bucket for my bodily functions, but even on an empty stomach, I'm only filling it with vomit.

I've got to get out of here – sooner rather than later. Her flunky, that grisdled looking potion maker, is coming by every few hours and pushing food and water through a compartment in the door, but so far he's seemed completely immune to my charms. I've tried talking to him and convincing him to free me, but it isn't any use.

I've tried everything my exhausted mind can imagine – conjuring shadows, summoning moonlight, even hypnotizing the man holding me captive – yet nothing is working. The silver is too strong, and I feel more helpless than I have in a very long time.

It's almost dark when I hear movement outside, and I try to rally enough to make another attempt to charm my guard. However it's no easy feat to be lovely when you're spending all your time being violently ill.

"Hello?" I call, trying to soften my raspy voice when a door clanks in the distance. I've been trying my best to learn all the sights, smells and sounds of my prison, but I haven't yet discovered all its secrets. I'm not sure if the sounds I'm hearing should frighten me or give me hope.

To my surprise, it's not the gruff tones of the guard which reply, but a very familiar alto. "Hello little mother, got yourself in a bind, have you?"

"Helene!" I exclaim, "Is that you?"

"Yes my darling, and not a moment too soon." She answers, "You're about to lose your mate to that snake."

"Be careful," I caution, not able to concentrate on her words quite yet. "The guard is due soon."

"Oh trust me, angel." I can hear the smile in Helene's voice, "Your guard isn't going to be doing his job tonight."

A moment later a bright shaft of light filters through the darkness surrounding me, and my diminutive mentor appears, brandishing a ring full of heavy iron keys.

"How did you find me?" I ask with a rush of love and relief.

“I have my ways, Selene.” Helene replies, kneeling down beside me and pulling a silver key from the overstuffed ring. She inserts it into the hole in my manacles, tutting when she sees the burns the silver made on my skin. “Poor little wolf. Always getting, taken prisoner.”

“I know,” I grumble, at last able to see the humor in my situation now that the danger has passed. “I might need to re-evaluate my decision making skills from here on out.”

“We could all do with a bit of that every now and then.” Helene reasons.

“You have no idea how much I’ve missed you.” I inform her with a wide smile.

“I have some idea.” She replies sweetly. “But that’s not a matter for the present.” She advises. “You have a wedding to crash.”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 180

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 180

Chapter 180 – Wedding Bello

Bastien

I never thought much about my wedding when I was a boy. I imagined it once or twice, trying to picture my fated mate in my mind and hoping my love would be as strong as my parents’, but in all my boyhood fantasies, I never dreamed I would be standing at an altar with so much dread. Even after I reconciled myself to the idea of marrying Arabella, I didn’t imagine such a bleak future. Loveless maybe, lacking any true heart – undoubtedly, but not a

tragedy, not the disaster it has clearly become.

Every moment that passes, my wolf urges me to kill the girl-I once vowed to protect with my own life, so furious am I about her betrayal. Still, I cannot lay a hand on her without also losing my true mate. The more time that passes, the more I remember. I can now recall learning about Arabella’s schemes, discovering that Lila is my child after all, and even remarrying Selene. I remember all of our fights, all of our struggles, though I still cannot recall how I was ever convinced to leave them and come to this horrible place.

The only thing I can fathom is that I came here after finding out Selene is breeding again, though I can’t imagine ever agreeing to allow her to come with me. The worst

part of all is knowing that she's been suffering while I've been buying into Arabella's schemes. I'll never forgive myself if anything happens to her.

Arabella has planned every last detail of this day, from her dress to the flower arrangements and our vows. I didn't contribute a single word, but I know this is all a waiting game. I will never claim Arabella as a true wife, and the moment I can dissolve this false union – I gladly will.

However for the time being I'm stuck standing at the end of a long aisle watching her march towards me to the tired old tune they use in the movies. The affair couldn't be more different from my weddings to Selene. They had taken place outdoors in the forest we both love, under the glow of the moon and stars, with a few close members of our family looking on. They had been small but full of love and light.

On the other hand, this ceremony is absent of any guests or well wishers, yet so completely overdone it's laughable. It's a perfect reflection of Arabella: gaudy, lonely, and lacking any and all heart.

When Arabella finally reaches the end of the aisle, she offers me a lethal grin. "Smile Bastien, this is a happy event."

"The moment we're done here, I want Selene released." | order, not bothering to fake a smile for the officiant.

"Oh I don't know about that." Arabella hedges, "If she's released then I won't have any more insurance to keep you in line."

"Our deal was –

*Our deal was that if you were a good boy and walked down the aisle without complaint, I wouldn't let her die." She interrupts. "I never said I'd let her go."

"So what, you're just going to keep her prisoner for the rest of your life?" I hiss

"If I have to." Arabella shrugs, it really depends on you. The way she's treated will be decided by how well you do your job. Now stop arguing with me, we only have the officiant for another half hour."

The man in question is looking back and forth between us with confusion and mild horror, but he makes no comment. I suppose things in Tartarus are so bleak that even this strange affair cannot phase him. He begins walking Arabella through her vows with all the passion of a funeral director, and my horrible bride smiles and parrots back his words as looking as thrilled as the cat that ate the canary

The officiant is turning towards me when I hear a crash from the back of the church.

“Stop!” I’d know that voice anywhere. No matter what Arabella has done to my memory – no matter what has happened between us.

“Selene!” Whirling around, I see my beautiful mate standing framed in the open doors of the church, a ring of blinding gold light surrounding her body.

Arabella screeches with rage, “What! How!”

I don’t give her a second look, I’m already running to wards my mate, overflowing with relief. “Are you alright?” || question when I reach her, looking her over worriedly. Her skin is pale and she has great dark circles beneath her two toned eyes, but she looks alright otherwise.

“I’m fine.” She promises, looking suddenly very nervous. “Do... do you remember me?”

“I remember you.” | confirm, framing her lovely face between my hands. “I don’t know how I could have ever forgotten – I’m so sorry little wolf.”

I move to kiss her, but she puts one small hand on my chest, “You don’t want to do that – I’ve been puking in a dark cell without a toothbrush for three days.”

Rage pours out of me in waves as I look down at her belly, taking in the soft curve beneath her dress. Seeing her this way seems to snap the remaining pieces of my missing memory in place, as all the details of the past few months come flooding back into my mind. Suddenly I remember exactly why I came here: the assassination attempt, finding Arabella in Tartarus, and falling under her control. I remem

Chapter 180 Wedding Redis

ber attacking Selene in that alley, almost rejecting her and everything she revealed to me when she came to visit.

“I don’t care.” | growl, claiming her lips roughly. “I’m so glad you’re safe.” | profess as we part, staring into her in credible eyes. Realizing she must not have been able to continue using whatever she’d been to conceal her eyes while in captivity, a rush of urgency slams into me. “But we’ve got to get you out of here.”

She lowers her lashes, leaning into my embrace even as an anxious shiver works its way down her spine. “Are you angry that I came after you?”

Feeling a strong pang in my chest, I realize I don’t know how I feel. I’m still very confused and trying to wrap my head around our surreal situation. She did break her promise to me, and she is risking her precious life just standing here in this nightmare city, but when I think about what might have happened if she hadn’t come here... I’d probably be married to Arabella by now and getting ready to exile Selene from Elysium.

“No baby, I’m not mad.” I tell her, hugging her tightly to my chest, “I’m so sorry I left you for so long, and I’m so proud of everything you’ve accomplished while I was away.” I declare, feeling my throat thicken with emotion. “But I still have to finish the job I came here to do – especially now.” Realizing that Arabella has some sort of relationship with Blaise is more frightening than anything else

ILY. 1

– my guess is that she doesn’t know about his bounty, or Selene and Lila would already be dead.

“And what did you come here to do, Bastien?” We’d gotten so caught up in each other, I’d almost forgotten about Arabella. However, it wasn’t Arabella who spoke, nor was it Helene. I don’t recognize the person speaking behind us, but he clearly knows me.

Turning around, I keep one arm around my back to hold Selene in place – out of sight from the stranger. I instantly recognize the man Arabella had taken me to meet in the city underground hovering behind a huge, seething wolf with a scar through his eyebrow. His dark hair is streaked with gray and slight wrinkles gather at the corner of his eyes, but he exudes strength and power. My heart sinks as I realize this could only be the Calypso Alpha, and my mind races as I try to decide what to do. If I attack him now and lose, Selene will be prime for the taking – then again, I don’t know what other choice I have.

Looking down the aisle at Arabella, he glares at the suddenly terror-stricken she-wolf. “Well well, Bella.” His steely voice sounds again, “You’ve been holding out on me.”

“Blaise-” She tries to explain, wringing her hands but having enough sense not to move forward.

“Don’t bother.” He snarls, “I don’t want to hear it.”

He’s scanning the room, clearly looking for something. Horror filters through my chaotic thoughts as I realize he already knows about Selene. Arabella might not have known about the bounty, but I bet her underworld contact did. He must have been the one guarding Selene while she was locked up, and the moment her disguise wore off, he went running to collect the reward.

When Blaise’s eyes finally land on Selene. The gray pools instantly begin to glow, and a terrifying grin stretched across his face. “My Goddess.” He breathes, “I’ve found you at last.”