

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 46

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Chapter 46

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Selene's POV

We should have heard something by now. Luna huffs as I scrub dishes in the kitchen sink. After a simple dinner and a quick bath, Lila curled up on the sofa to watch her favorite show while I clean up. It's amazing how unfazed she is by the sudden change in scenery and my undoubtedly tense energy.

No news is good news. I tell my wolf, focusing on the glass in my hand. Especially when it comes to Bastien.

He's going to be furious, you know. She cautions, not sounding the least bit concerned, That only matters if he finds us. I remind her coolly.

Oh he will. Luna remarks smugly, he always will.

You know you're supposed to be on my side, I complain.

I am. I want what's best for you. She adds. Bastien is what's best

I throw my hands up in exasperation, sending water and suds flying. You're impossible.

And you're in denial.

A giggle sounds from behind me. "You made a mess, Mommy"

Turning to find my young daughter standing behind me watching my temper tantrum, rather than safely ensconced in the couch cushions, I paste on a smile. "You're right." I agree. "Mommy did make a mess."

"Have to clean up your messes." She advises sagely. "That's the rule."

I adopt a pitiful pout. "You don't want to clean it for me?"

The little tyrant puts her foot down. "Uh-uh, your sponsibility."

Throwing my head back with a dramatic groan, I surrender. “Fiiiiinnnee.”

Lila’s giggling again. The sweet sound is music to my ears, the perfect balm for the stress of reuniting with Bastien.

I’m still reeling, and beginning to think I’ll never stand on solid ground again. What am I supposed to do now? My entire life is in Asphodel: my business, my friends, Lila’s playmates and babysitters.

I can’t pretend life in the Eros pack has been perfect – far from it. The wolves here were distrustful of me from the beginning. They saw only a halfling; a single mother who seemingly had the future Alpha wrapped around her finger. The she-wolves hated me, and the men wouldn’t go near me for fear of angering Drake.

Things got a little better after I opened the cafe. Good food and regular interactions convinced people I was not an incurable outcast, and once I made it clear I had no designs on becoming the Alpha’s consort, I was practically accepted as one of the pack.

But fitting in and belonging are two very different things. There are times I find Asphodel truly enchanting; during the equinox festivals when bonfires are set afloat through the canals, or when the marsh freezes in winter, and the entire wetlands become a giant skating rink. If nothing else, this place will always be special to me because it is where Lila was born and spent her first years, not to mention where I found my independence.

Yet deep down I know it isn’t the place I’m meant to be. I am a mountain wolf, made for evergreen forests and fresh alpine air. Asphodel’s sprawling mangroves are not my element, no matter how enchanting the glittering lagoons, soothing tides, and bountiful wildlife may be.

In secret I pine for Elysium. Despite every terrible memory the city holds for me, there is no denying one’s true nature, and mine yearns for home.

I think you’re forgetting something, princess. Luna interjects. You’re not really a Nova wolf. You’re a Calypso, remember?

Rolling my eyes, I brush off her quip. Same difference, I was born and raised there.

That’s one explanation. She purrs. *Would you like to hear another?*

I don’t even have to think about it. No.

Unsurprisingly, she ignores me. You don’t miss Elysium, you miss your mate.

Oh put a sock in it already.

Bastien’s POV

The attack is as brutal as it is ill-planned. Cavanaugh's wolves descend on me like a pack of rabid dogs, but they're no match for Aiden, Donavon and me. It's disgraceful really, that the Alpha should set his men on us without joining the fight himself. Not to mention the complete lack of sportsmanship in setting 12 wolves upon 3.

Cavanaugh leaves before the fight is over, either heading for Selene or just seeking to escape the brawl. In truth, I'm astonished by his behavior. I always liked Drake, at least, I thought I did. I've never seen this side of him before, and never imagined he would be a threat to my relationship with Selene.

He's certainly handsome enough, but he's Alpha of a far weaker pack and no great protector. Drake's greatest asset is his brain – not that there's anything wrong with that, it simply isn't enough when it comes to leading shifters.

When did Selene and Drake even have occasion to form such a friendship? Wasn't my father's birthday the first time they met? Is it possible he could have been the man she described being in love with since she was a child? I suppose it's possible, but if that was the case, why aren't they together now?

I continue running through the possibilities as the Eros wolves mount a fresh assault with reinforcements from a lower floor. Frankly, the fact that I'm able to perform my mental gymnastics amidst a bloody fight only goes to show how mismatched we are to our opponents.

Once the floor is littered with unconscious wolves, my Betas and I depart the Pack House with great haste. Selene fled hours ago, she could be hundreds of miles away by now.

"How the hell are we going to find her?" | breathe.

With a truly devious grin, Aiden pulls a sleek black cell phone from his pocket. "How much do you want to bet Selene's phone is set to share her location with Cavanaugh?"

"How did you get that?" Donavon asks in astonishment.

"The asshole was so distracted insulting you, he forgot he left his phone on his desk." My friend laughs, "Even if they don't have location sharing activated, the number is enough to track it as long as it's turned on."

"How soon can we get into it?" I question, my voice gruff from excitement rather than anger.

"It's already done." His fangs gleam in the fading sunlight, "For a smart guy, he's not very good at shielding his screen when he enters his passcode."

A wave of pure pride and sweet relief washes over me. I grab Aiden by the shoulders, shaking him excitedly. "I could kiss you!"

He shrugs me off with a chuckle, "save that for your mate."

Selene's POV

Four hours, and still no word from Drake.

Part of me worries that something's happened to him, after all the text I received promised further instructions would be provided once we were here. Surely Bastien wouldn't have killed him. I worry in my head, killing another Alpha would mean taking over their pack. It's not something one takes lightly, even at the height of passion.

I would feel safer if I could disconnect my phone, but that would make it impossible for Drake to reach me. And anyway, it's not like Bastien has my phone number. Unless of course he killed Drake and took his phone. Luna suggests,

"Oh god." I whisper, glancing down at Lila to make sure the quiet words didn't wake her. We're lying on the couch and she's sound asleep, stretched out on top of me like a ragdoll. The television plays on low in the background, doubtless the only sound for miles

fucked away in the silent hills between Eros and Vega territory, the safehouse is so well hidden I had a hard time finding it even with direction. While I appreciate that being so remote makes it more difficult to find, I'm painfully aware that the seclusion also means there's nowhere to run and no one to hear your screams if it is discovered. Well aren't you just a little ray of sunshine? Luna

remarks sardonically,

Well forgive me if bounties on our heads and vendetta-mad Alphas haven't put me in a particularly cheerful mood. I bite back.

Oh relax, Luna grouses, he's almost here anyway.

"What?!" This time my voice does wake Lila, since I all but screamed in her little ear. She looks up at me in bleary-eyed confusion and I want nothing more than to soothe her and send her back to sleep, but Luna's words have to take precedence. What in the Goddess's name are you talking about? I hiss.

Can't you feel him? She inquires nonchalantly. I sensed his wolf more than two minutes ago.

How close does he have to be for you to sense hi

Before I can get the thought out, a car door slams outside, followed by three sets of heavy footsteps. I jolt to my feet, carrying Lila with me and looking frantically around the safehouse. It's an open floorplan and clearly not intended for more than one person to inhabit, given the only room with walls and a door is the bathroom

Deciding I'd rather keep Lila close to me than trying to hide her, I dart into the far corner, pushing her small body behind me and whispering, "We're going to play a game now, sweetheart. You have to be very quiet and very still. Pretend you're a statue, can you do that for me?"

She opens her mouth to answer but I hold up a finger to my lips, and she purses her lips tight, nodding in agreement. "Good girl."

The front door was locked and deadbolted, but it only takes Bastien and his Betas a moment to break past those defenses. My heart thunders in my chest, galloping and stalling in turn, unsure whether to be excited or terrified. It's not so difficult with Luna and I, it's definitely clear which one of us is happy to see him and which is petrified.

As Bastien towers in the doorway, his silver eyes glowing with barely contained fury, I realize it's all over. Everything I've worked for these past three years is already lost; every tear I've shed and sacrifice I've made has all been for nothing.

I've done everything I can to avoid ever finding myself in this precise situation, but in the end, I still landed right here: trapped in a corner, with nowhere to run.

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Bastien's POV

The first thing I see is the fear on Selene's face. Fear I hate myself for causing. She's backed into a corner, appearing so much more like the lost little wolf I pulled from a tree, than the confident woman I met today.

It takes all my strength to pull my eyes from Selene's haunted expression and survey the rest of the scene, at which point I realize why she's in the corner. The tiny body is visible even now, with pint-sized hands clutching her skirt and a gleaming pair of two-toned

eyes peeking out from behind her leg.

Mate, Axel croons with satisfaction. And mate's pup. Mine, both mine.

We don't know who that pup belongs to yet. I caution him, though I cannot help but feel drawn to the tiny creature in a way I can't explain

I don't care who she belonged to. He growls. I saw her. I like her. She's mine now.

That's not how it works. I admonish him.

Unable to assuage her curiosity, the little girl pokes her head out of hiding, and Selene stiffens reflexively. Waving off my men, I stride forward and close the door, carefully approaching the she-wolves. "Hello little one." I murmur to the child, kneeling down so that we're at eye level, even if I'm still halfway across the room. "Goddess she looks exactly like you." I revel, looking back and forth between the beautiful faces,

I've seen many pups and kissed many babies in my life, but I cannot remember ever seeing such a perfect child. It's not just that she is my mate's creation – that she is the heart and soul of the woman I adore – it's that she is pure light, pure love. Despite my misgivings, I have to agree with Axel. Mine.

A tiny voice tugs at my heart strings. "Mommy who's that?"

The gooey warmth in my belly hardens like a rock, and the reality of our situation splashes over me like a bucket of ice water. If this child is mine, Selene hid her existence from me for years. She left Elysium knowing she was pregnant, and took my baby someplace where I could not protect her.

"That's an excellent question." I state harshly, catching my mate in my crosshairs. "Selene?" Slowly unfolding until I'm standing again, I move forward. "Who am I to her?"

"A stranger," Selene designates coldly, "and what do we say to strangers, Lila?"

On cue the tiny pup lifts her chubby fingers to her lips and pulls an imaginary zipper across her mouth, pressing her lips tightly together and shaking her head once she's finished.

"That's very smart." I praise in a much softer voice than I directed at her mother. "You should never talk to strangers, but that's not what I am." Little by little, the tot is emerging from behind her mother. Interesting – most children are afraid of me at first. "I'm your mommy's mate. Do you know what that word means?"

Lila shakes her head, still clutching Selene's skirt.

"It means we're meant to be together." I say this to Selene alone. "And whatever she cares about, I care about too."

Outrage flashes across Selene's features. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Do you want me to lie to her?" I demand.

"You have no right to put those kinds of ideas in her head!" She hisses, flames dancing in her incredible eyes,

I can't recall ever feeling such rage, not towards my little wolf. With every second that passes, the more certain I am that this is my child, which means I have every right. I arch a brow at Selene. "How old are you Lila?"

My mate's hand whips out and closes over the child's before she can lift her fingers to answer *my* question with a patented "this mary" instead Selene scowls, her plump lip curling "She's not yours."

"Then whose is she?" I interrogate.

"Mine" Selene snarls, her wolf glowing in her eyes. Goddess she's stunning when she's angry

"Oh, you made her all by yourself?" I goad.

Look at her, Selene invites, "do you see yourself in her? Do you see even the tiniest resemblance?"

That was all the invitation I needed. I bend down and scoop up the sweet little girl before Selene can stop me. "Come here, pup." || rumble gently. "let's have a look at you."

Lila looks a bit shell-shocked for a moment, as if she wasn't prepared to leave the ground and can't quite wrap her head around her new predicament. Nonetheless, her surprise disappears quickly, replaced by unapologetic curiosity. She looks up at me with wide eyes, studying my face intently and then reaching out to feel the scruff on my cheek.

I know instantly that I'm a goner, if this little creature asked me for the moon I would try to steal it for her, no matter how impossible. Shaking my head, settling Lila more comfortably in my arms and internally swooning when she instantly rests her cheek on my shoulder. "I can't see anyone else in her either." I finally answer Selene's question, unable to disguise the reverence in my deep voice, "She's all you."

Selene looks lost herself now, her attention swinging back and forth between my face and Lila's, clearly unsure of what to do.

Lila makes the decision for her, lifting her head and staring at the floor far below before looking back to me, as if for confirmation. "T's high."

"Mmm." I hum sympathetically. If she's used to being carried around by my mate, this probably seems very high indeed. "Too high?"

Her serious expression transforms to one of pure excitement. "No, want to go higher!"

"You want to go higher?" I consider her words for a moment before agreeing, "Well I think that can be arranged."

As long as I live, I will never hear a more beautiful sound than this child squealing and giggling with joy as I toss her over my head, catching her and repeating the move until she's so exhausted from laughing that we have to find a new game.

Selene's POV

Where did it all go wrong? I lament, thoroughly indulging in a fit of self-pity as I watch my daughter riding around on the back of a huge black wolf like he's a pony. Bastien gallops around the room indulging Lila's every whim. It started with "the flying game", as it's now known, and somehow evolved and unraveled into playful chaos: wolf-back rides, play-wrestling, even a game of fetch.

That's right, the big bad Alpha of Pack Nova ran after a ball like a common dog and proudly returned it to my three year old, licking her face until she squealed and collapsed beneath the onslaught.

Of all the outcomes I considered when I pictured this moment, this is the very last thing I ever imagined. I was ready for the anger, for yelling and drawn out fights, but no amount of preparation could ever make me ready for this: for watching Lila play with her father for the first time in her life.

When the tears begin to fall I sneak away to the bathroom, thankfully unnoticed amidst the raucous play. When I first got pregnant this was exactly the kind of scene I dreamed about. Before the rejection, before Arabella and everything else, this was my fantasy.

I could curse the Goddess for doing this to me, for giving me these dreams and then snatching them away; showing me these glimpses of bliss that will haunt me for the rest of my life. I want so badly to believe our lives could actually be like this, but I know the truth all too well.

I have to stay strong, I have to keep fighting.

When I emerge, Lila has finally exhausted herself and is lying on top of wolf Bastien as if he's a giant pillow. Honestly it's an impulse I understand – how many times did he

shift to comfort me through thunderstorms, when he knew the feel of a male body would only make the flashbacks worse?

When he sees me return to the living room Bastien shifts back, passing Lila to me so he can get dressed.

“She’s really not mine?” He asks, buttoning his shirt.

“No.” I confirm icily. “She’s not yours.”

Liar. Luna hisses in my ear.

“Did you think I would harm her?” Bastien wonders aloud, “Is that why you came here? You thought I’d harm my male’s pup because it was sired by another wolf

Confusion and hurt burst out of my mouth like anger. “Why do you keep saying that?”

“Saying what?” He questions, seeming truly bewildered.

“That we’re mates.” I exclaim. “Not once in our entire marriage did you call me that.”

Let me out. Luna pleads nonsensically, I can’t take this any longer, I need him.

The Alpha looks at me incredulously. “It was the first word out of my mouth when I saw you, Selene.” His voice is like gravel. “I’ve known from day one, you’re the one who couldn’t feel it.”

“Stop it! You don’t get to rewrite history this way.” Lila stirs in my arms, and I carefully transport her to the bed, setting her among the plush blankets and returning to Bastien with a furious whisper. “I was there, remember? I was hopelessly, desperately in love with you for years and you merely put up with me. Do you have any idea what that felt like, to be nothing but an obligation, a weight around your neck holding you back from everything you really wanted?”

You have to let me out! Luna begs again.

Bastien’s sharp eyes bore into me, even as my own burn with tears. “Selene, what the hell are you talking about?”

“Don’t pretend like you don’t know! I—” A sharp stabbing pain in my middle bends me double, forcing a hoarse cry from my lips.

Luna!

I can’t help it. She moans apologetically, he’s calling me, I don’t have a choice.

Strong hands are on me instantly. “Selene?”

“Something’s wrong.” | gasp. “I feel... my wolf is.... it’s like she’s trying to force her way out of me?”

Emotions race across his countenance, before understanding clicks, “Have you never shifted before?”

“No—I didn’t think I could.” | groan.

“Well get ready little wolf,” Bastien’s low bass breaks through my panicked thoughts, “because you’re about to.”

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Bastien’s POV

“You’re doing this,” Selene accuses wretchedly, “Your wolf is doing this.”

What is she talking about? I demand of Axel.

She’s near her mate. Her instinct is to change. It has to happen eventually – her wolf has never been free.

I swear under my breath. I know he’s right, but the timing is terrible. I remember my first shift vividly – all wolves do. It’s a horrible process, requiring almost every bone in the body to break and reform, slow and agonizing. Thankfully shifting gets easier and easier until it’s effortless, but there’s no way to make the first few any easier. You just have to suffer through.

“It isn’t like that sweetheart. It’s just your time.” I explain apologetically. I gather up Selene and deposit her on the sofa, moaning and writhing, before moving toward the bed to retrieve Lila.

Aiden! I call through our mental link.

He appears almost instantly, and I carry Lila to him, “Selene is about to shift, I need you to take the pup until it’s over.”

“What are you doing?” Selene snarls, trying to rise from the couch and crumpling, “you’re not taking her anywhere!”

Handing off Lila, I return to my mate, pulling her up and speaking softly and urgently in her ear, “Easy Selene, he’ll take care of her.”

“No!” She insists, a mother wolf in full defense mode, “you can’t have her, she’s mine!”

“Do you really want her to see this?” I demand sternly, “She’ll be terrified.”

Selene’s brow furrows, and I can see the gears in her head spinning with confusion, emotion warring with instinct. “Don’t take her from me.” She finally begs, tears spilling from her eyelashes.

“No one is taking her from you, baby.” I vow, “You have my word, they’re just going to get her someplace safe while you shift. I’ll take you straight to her in the morning.”

“Let me hug her goodbye,” Selene requests pitifully.

Inod to Aiden, and he returns Lila to her mother’s arms for a tearful cuddle before removing her again and leaving Selene and I alone in the safehouse.

My mate curls up into a little ball, rocking herself back and forth and clamping her eyes shut. “How long is it going to take?”

I reach for her, sighing when she flinches away. “Everyone is different. If you’re lucky it will be an hour or so. If you’re unlucky... it could be all night.”

Selene whines, undoubtedly dreading the idea of such a long transformation. I don’t have the heart to tell her what she’s feeling now is only the beginning.

My stomach drops, I can’t remember ever feeling so helpless as I do now. Sitting by and doing nothing goes against the very core of my being, as does seeing someone in trouble and not being able to help.

You know how to comfort her. Axel growls.

She doesn’t want me to touch her. I growl back.

She doesn’t know what she wants right now, she hurts, make her feel better. He orders, a note of strain in his normally steady voice.

Grumbling under my breath, I reach for Selene again, this time refusing to let her evade my grasp. She tries to fight me, but every time she lashes out, a new spasm of pain cripples her, and her attacks wane. Tucking her small body against mine, I hush her protests and massage her sore muscles.

“Just breathe little wolf, it’s okay.” I promise, “I’m here. I’m not going to leave you.”

“Why are you doing this?” She asks deliriously.

What do you mean?” I inquire, inhaling her sweet scent and trying not to feeling any happiness to have her back in my arms. Yes, under any other circumstances I would be thrilled, but having her writhe in agony next to me kind of takes some of the romance out of the moment

“Why are you here?” Selene clarifies, a bit more firmly

“Because you’re my mate, and you need me” I answer casily

Before she can answer, a sickening cracking noise fills the air, and Selene’s back bows as she howls with pain “Shhh, I know sweetheart, I know it hurts.”

“I blame you for this.” She informs me when she can breathe again. If you’d stayed in Elysium where you belong, this wouldn’t be happening.”

*That’s not very fair to your wolf, Selene ” I chastise, without venom. “Do you really think it would be fair to keep her trapped inside you forever?”

“No.” Selene keens despondently.

“Besides,” I continue, petting her hair. “If you don’t know what shifting is like, how will you be able to help Lila through it when the time comes?”

“Stop being logical when I’m trying to feel sorry for myself.” She growls.

“I’m sorry.” I repent, “You’re right, this is a terrible, horrible thing to go through and I wish I could protect you from it somehow. I’d go through it for you if I could.”

Selene’s tossing her head back and forth now, her eyes clenched shut and face glistening with sweat, “Stop being nice to me. She orders

“Why?” I question

“You didn’t want me without my wolf. She cries, seemingly out of nowhere. “I know you only want me now because she’s back.”

I release her for a moment, sitting up to study her face, unsure whether or not she's serious. Is this delirium talking? Are you out of your mind? Selene I always *wanted* you."

She shakes her head, "Stop lying."

For the first time ignoring her pain, I grab Selene by the shoulders, giving her a gentle shake. Selene, look at me

Her blue and violet eyes are glazed with pain, her pupils pinpricks despite the low light. She looks at me hopelessly, and I wish there was a way to steal these thoughts from her brain. "Selene, I have loved you from the first second I smelled you. I have never wanted anyone else. I never will."

"But Arabella—"

"Arabella is nothing!" | growl. "She's the one I care for out of obligation, not you"

"But—" Selene tries again

"No buts." I scold fiercely. "I'm speaking as your husband, your mate, and your Alpha now. I love you, and only you is that clear"

She nods mutely, but it's not good enough

"Say the words, Selene." I command.

"You love me and only me." She whispers, her normally silky voice reduced to a croak

"Good" | grumble, stroking her spine as another surge of Torment takes her "You're mine, Selene. And don't you forget it"

Selene's POV

The agony breaks like a wave on the sand, swelling higher and higher until it crests in a rush of blinding white light, then ebbs away as if it was never there in the first place. I don't know how long I rode that wave, but it's light out by the time the transformation is finally complete

Everything from last night is a horrible blur. I remember getting to the safehouse with Lila, and I certainly remember Bastien's arrival. I recall the transformation's first terrifying pangs, but things start to get fuzzy around the time Aiden looks Lila away. I'll never forget the abject anguish of the shift, the feeling of being ripped apart from the inside out, but the details in between are about as solid as air

For instance, I don't know how every pillow and duvet in the house got shredded into ribbons, leaving snowy white feathers to

blanket every visible surface in our spacious surroundings. Neither do I remember how the curtains were ripped from the windows or why the coffee table is upside down, with all its contents smashed beneath it.

I open my eyes to find Bastien curled around me in his own wolf form. The huge black beast watches me with gleaming silver eyes, and I realize that what I had first taken to be more feathers cushioning my body, is actually fur.

My fur.

A perfect white coat of downy fur covers my body from head to toe, only it's not my body – it's Luna's. I sit up suddenly, belatedly remembering that there was a point to all the torture. For the first time in my life, I've adopted the form I take in my heart; the incarnation of my soul the Goddess always intended me to inhabit.

Luna? I reach out hesitantly.

Selene. I can hear the utter joy in her voice, even though I'm struggling to balance myself on these new legs. Bastien is watching me with amusement, but he doesn't interfere to advise or coddle.

How do you feel? I ask my wolf tentatively.

Like I've never truly been alive until this moment. She breathes serenely. Then with pure mischief she adds, Are you ready to see what it's like being in the passenger seat?

Oh Goddess. I tease, please behave yourself.

No promises. She quips

A huge shape approaches on my right, and I look up at the wolf who has haunted my dreams for so many years. He towers over me even in wolf form, at least a foot taller and immensely broader. There's a knowing glint in his eyes, and exhilaration begins building in my chest before he even speaks.

All right, little wolf. His voice sounds in my head. Are you ready for your first run?

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Selene's POV

After eight years in a veritable dungeon, I thought freedom was escaping to Elysium.

After spending three years married to a man who didn't love me and obligated to help lead a pack of shifters who hated me, thought freedom was finding my independence in Asphodel.

After nearly four years of living without my wolf, I thought freedom was getting her back when I became a mother..

I was wrong every time.

This is freedom. Transforming, releasing my soul and setting her loose – that is the freedom I've been missing my entire life. Running on all fours through the rolling Vega hills with no map and no limitations, no hurdles to jump or weights slowing me down. it's adrenaline like I've never experienced.

I don't care that I'm not in the forest, or that it's broad daylight. I don't care that I'm still getting used to four legs and a tail, which makes my loping strides significantly less graceful than Bastien's. The truth is that I don't have a care in the world.

Even my concern for Lila has been dampened amidst this incredible high, partly because I now recognize the wisdom of removing her from the scene of my shift, and partly because I simply cannot bring myself to feel anything but happiness in this moment.

Bastien runs alongside me, hanging back to keep pace with me rather than running miles ahead as he could. Luna couldn't be more thrilled, as far as she's concerned, the only thing better than being free, is being free with Bastien,

Her response to the Alpha has been very illuminating for me. I'm beginning to understand how the mating bond can drive shifters mad, or destroy relationships between chosen mates. If Luna had her way I would be back in Bastien's bed already, but fortunately for us, I have not forgotten our past.

He can try to rewrite our story as many ways as he wishes, but the fact remains he had his chance with me, and he wasted it

Bastien's POV

Selene's pearly white coat stands out against the deep green hills like the moon in darkened skies Watching her streak over the dales in a blur of snowy limbs, I don't even mind glowing *my* pace to run next to her She's more ecstatic than I've ever seen her,

completely lost to the thrill of freedom and finally experiencing the joy she so richly deserves

It always plagued me to know she could not shift. Every full moon run for which she was left behind, every equinox she spent at home rather than in the forest – she never complained, but I know how it hurt. After all, the instincts were still there, she just didn't have the abilities to satisfy them

So for all the pain of last night, this is so worth it. Her transformation was harrowing to say the least. When we get back I have every intention of calling my mother to thank her for seeing me through the process when I was a young teenager. If my little mate could do that amount of damage to the safehouse, I can only imagine how much of the house I destroyed

The destruction wasn't even the difficult part, it was watching someone you love go through such unbelievable agony. I'm glad I was there for her, particularly because I wasn't when she gave birth. No matter how hard I try to put the thoughts from my mind, I can't help but wonder who was there. If Lila is mine – though Selene insists she isn't – it should have been me. Even if Lila isn't mine, hope she didn't face it alone.

When we finally reach a stopping point, namely when Selene has run so far she can no longer make her legs work, she collapses in a puddle of worn out wolf, a goofy grin on her face. I settle next to her, stretching out on the cool ground and waiting for her energy to be replenished enough to head back.

It happens slowly. Little by little the elation that has dominated her aura since waking up as a wolf slips away, and I have a sense of terrible foreboding that our brief detente is coming to a close.

How much of last night do you remember? I ask, wondering if she was lucid enough to recall our argument about Arabella and matehood. I still don't understand where her misconceptions came from, or why she was so distraught. After all, she was in love with someone else throughout our entire marriage, so why did it bother her so much to think I didn't love her?

There are so many more questions left to answer, but I know one thing for certain – regardless of any misunderstandings, my mate felt unloved, and that is my fault and my fault alone. It can't be explained away or justified, I failed to make my feelings for her clear.

Not much. She replies stiffly.

Our conversation? I prompt.

I remember you telling me to let Lila go with Aiden. She offers, Thank you, by the way, after seeing the house this morning... well I'm glad she wasn't there.

Of course. I've checked with Aiden a couple of times through the night using our mental links. He always reported the same news, she's out like a light.

So you don't remember anything else? I press.

The white wolf eyes me warily, Should I?

Disappointment consumes me, I really thought we'd made a breakthrough. A few years ago I wouldn't have worried about her forgetting. I would have simply sat her down and rehashed the conversation from the start. Even if Selene was still as pliable as she'd been back then, I'm coming to realize I might not have known half as much about my marriage as I thought I had.

How many of our discussions back then were colored by rumors and misunderstandings, how did we get to such a low place that my wife would turn to Drake instead of me? How little did she have to trust me that she would run from a burning building and walk two weeks through rogue territory rather than come home.

Well, I know the answer to at least part of that. I never thought you kidnapped Arabella you know.

What? She blinks, taken aback.

I was just trying to appease the enforcers for long enough to find Bella. I explain. I knew she'd clear you once we did. The fact is wanted you under guard because I was afraid you would be the next target.

I told you I don't want explanations. Selene retorts. Then, looking curious, where did you find her anyway?

An abandoned home in old town. I share, struggling to recall those horrible months after Selene supposedly died.

Did you ever catch the person responsible? There's an odd note of sarcasm in her voice.

The same person who was sabotaging everything else, I expect. Breathing a heavy sigh I continue. They're still out there somewhere, still trying to pull the strings and wreak havoc, but I've gotten much better at anticipating their moves.

How can you be sure they were related? She asks in that same odd tone.

There was never a ransom, what other explanation is there but to cause terror? I reason.

She's silent for a moment, before her head cocks to the side; a worried, rather than curious expression on her furry face. Did you announce your trip here?

I shrug. The pack knows I'm in Asphodel, but they don't know why.

Selene's body twists up like a tightly wound string, Is there any way word might have gotten back that I'm alive?

Shaking my head emphatically, I elaborate, The only people that know are my sworn allegiants, they wouldn't do so without my go ahead.

But if this person is still trying to sabotage you, couldn't they have followed you here? Selene proposes. You'd be an easier target outside of Elysium.

Sweetheart, I do know how to spot a tail. I remind her, we weren't followed.

But Selene is on her feet. I want to go back.

You should take a little more time to catch your breath. I frown.

No, I want to get back to Lila. She argues. How do we get back to the safehouse from here?

Lila is fine. I assure her, Aiden says she slept through the night no problem.

Bastien, I said I want to go back. Selene urges, I don't like being this far from her, especially knowing there are still criminals running around out there trying to destroy your life.

What would Lila have to do with any of that? I latch onto the implication instantly. If she isn't mine then she shouldn't be in any danger

Oh please! Selene scoffs. You won't even believe me, why should they? Besides, as long as you refuse to accept reality, you'll react as if she is yours, which means she's good as bait regardless of her paternity.

Then the fastest way to eliminate her as bait would be for you to tell me who her father is. I suggest. Then I'll drop it and she'll be safe.

Are you really using my child's safety as a bargaining chip? She hisses. It's none of your goddess-damned business who her father is, because she is none of your business, nor am I.

A predatory thrill racing through me, I close in on my target. This is how it's going to be, little wolf. I announce, I'll tell you how to get back to the safehouse, as soon as you tell me who Lila's father is. You can tell me, or we can stay out here all day, and all night.

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 50

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Chapter 50

Chapter 50

Selene's POV

That isn't fair. I object immediately. And it isn't ethical, how can you abide bringing an innocent child into your troubles.

You mean the way you oh so ethically chose to hide your Volana daughter in a pack you know is incapable of safeguarding her, all the while knowing the Calypsos are after you? Bastien growls, genuine anger in his voice.

From the sounds of it we wouldn't be any safer in Elysium. I rebut, conveniently omitting the fact that I know we're safer here because his saboteur is far from our only antagonist.

At least in Elysium there's an Alpha capable of protecting you. He rumbles. Now come on, out with it, who is her father?

Why do you even care, Bastien? I exclaim. She's not yours so why does it matter whose she is?

He prowls forward, circling me ominously. Because until you give me another viable candidate I'm not going to believe she isn't mine. His molten eyes flash. And because if she is mine, then you're in trouble for a lot more than faking your death.

For the last time, I grind out, I did not fake my death!

Then who did? He thunders.

Probably your damned saboteur! I throw back, narrowing my eyes to slits. Or maybe it's the person who set the fire after locking me in the closet. I can't imagine they were very amused when they realized I escaped.

Bastien freezes. What are you talking about?

What, you didn't think it was an accident did you? I goad him, feeling particularly feisty in my wolf's skin. And I just magically got locked inside in the small window of time your mother was gone.

No, of course we assumed it was murder at the time. Bastien combats. I just

What? I prompt. Thought a fake body eliminated the element of foul play?

Then you saw who did it? Bastien questions urgently.

Saw them, spoke with them, the whole nine yards. I bare my fangs, and by the way Mr. Alpha Protector, that wasn't even the first time they tried to kill me.

Too late, I realize I might have bitten off more than I can chew. Bastien has gone from circling me to stalking me into the hillside. You need to start talking right now, Selene.

You have to choose. I double down. I can tell you who fathered Lila, or I can tell you who tried to kill me. Which will it be?

I want you to think very carefully, Selene. Bastien threatens, If this is really the way you want to play this?

Am I to take it that your answer is neither? I drawl.

I jump out of the way just in time to dodge Bastien's pounce, trying to put some distance between us as the larger wolf turns to follow me. And this is how you treat your mate? I say with faux disbelief. I'd hate to see how you treat your enemies.

Keep digging little wolf. Bastien purrs, making my hackles raise. He stalks me for another long moment, Is this little game of yours really more important to you than getting back to Lila?

I falter at my daughter's name, pausing just long enough for Bastien to make his move. He lunges forward and catches my scruff between his teeth, holding me in place but not applying any pressure. I wriggle and squirm but he simply pulls his head up and lifts my feet off the ground, leaving my paws bicycling in the air. Yield. He commands.

I make the most pathetic sounding whimper I can, and the big brute actually snorts. Nice try baby, you forget my wolf can sense yours' emotions. Now submit to your Alpha.

Not a chance, Drake is my Alpha.

Bastien's answering snarl is so vicious I actually do whimper now, tucking my tail between my legs and trying to curl my legs up to protect my belly. Bastien sets my paws on the ground but doesn't release my scruff.

Is Drake Lila's father? Bastien asks.

pause to think, it's the most believable answer, but it's also the one most likely to enrage him. What if he is?

Bastien's next words take me completely by surprise. Is he the one you were in love with while we were together? The one you loved for 15 years.

What? I croak dumbly.

You heard me. Bastien replies.

What in the goddess's name is he talking about? The only person I've loved for that length of time is Bastien. How would he even know about that? I don't think he remembers meeting me and even if he did, it would be quite a leap to assume I held onto any feelings for him.

I didn't even meet Drake until your Father's birthday. I assure him, You know, the time he saved my life because you left me alone with a pack of she-devils?

He ignores the accusation. Is he Lila's father?

When I don't reply, Bastien gives me a little shake, and the word tumbles from my lips before I can stop it, Yes! I exclaim, Alright? Yes, Drake is Lila's father.

His hold on my nape softens slightly, and I can feel his disappointment through our bond. Then, another feeling filters through, a slight tinge of betrayal, Did you... Was she conceived while we were together?

Of course not. I answer immediately. You would have known. You would have smelled him on me. No, unlike you, I was faithful.

Confusion unclenches the massive wolf's jaw, and I glance back over my shoulder to look up at Bastien as he thinks, What are you saying? I was always faithful to you.

You don't need to bother lying. Bitterness coats my tongue. I'm over it.

Selene, I'm not lying. Bastien claims fervently.

Oh please. I roll my eyes, You and Arabella weren't exactly subtle, the nights out, midnight rendezvous, jewelry shopping trips. The entire pack knew *you* were sleeping together.

That's ridiculous, I told you yesterday that there's nothing between Arabella and I. Bastien offers the lie so earnestly I almost think he believes it. A long time ago, I thought about marrying her, but that was before I met you.

Goddess, you must really believe I'm stupid. I shake my head, trying to stand and failing when one of Bastien's large paws lands on my shoulder, keeping me pinned beneath him. I might not have had an education, Bastien, but I'm not a complete moron.

Where is this coming from, Selene? He fairly explodes, You were victim of enough rumors that I should think you wouldn't be susceptible to believing them about others.

They weren't rumors Bastien! I cry. Arabella confirmed it to my face – multiple times!

For the first time since our argument began, Bastien backs away from me, giving me space to stand. You had to have misunderstood.

promise you I didn't. I hiss. She was very protective of your relationship. I didn't question Drake when he told me you two were going to be married, because I ran into you the day you were picking out her engagement ring.

Appearing truly baffled, he furrows his brow, that day in the mall? She was helping me pick out a necklace for you.

If that's true, then why didn't you ever give it to me? I question.

Oddly enough, my father's murder was something of a distraction. He snipes.

Bastien, she told me point blank that *you* were leaving me for her. I enunciate each word, speaking slowly to ensure my point is driven home. She's the one who told me you and I were mates, but that you chose her instead.

Selene, Bastien beseeches me, I had no idea any of that was happening. I knew she hadn't let go of the idea of marrying me, but I had no idea her jealousy was that extreme or that she would go to such lengths to separate us.

I snort, if only he knew.

What? He asks immediately.

I think you underestimated her even more than you underestimated me. I state icily, And that's saying something

By which you mean...? He prods.

For the love of the Goddess, she faked a kidnapping, Bastien! I exclaim, wishing I were in my human form so I could gesticulate.

Wait, slow down, she faked the kidnapping? He parrots unhelpfully.

And that's far from the worst. I blurt out the words before I can stop myself, She tried to push me down the stairs when she found

out...

What? Bastien asks sharply. When she found out what?

Pulling myself together with a deep breath, I pull a quick diversion. You think rumors and lies are the worst she's capable of? || insinuate, watching his wolfish expression closely. If what you're telling me is true and you really don't have a relationship with Arabella, then you've got bigger problems than saboteurs. I announce. Because Arabella is the one who set the fire that was supposed to have killed me.