

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 56

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 56

Bastien's POV

"You were about to mark me!"

I stumble backward, dazed as Selene's words pierce through the fog of lust. She was right, I was about to mark her.

My instincts had completely taken over, Axel was urging me to mark her as he had a thousand times before, but my old self restraint is long gone. I thought my mate was dead for three years, kissing her again was too much to resist. If I mark her, make that searing, claiming bite that will forever tie her to me and announce to the world that she belongs to me, she'd never be able to run again.

Even now, knowing how wrong it would be to mark her without her consent, I have to admit the idea is tempting. I watch my mate obsessively, taking in every facet of her expression and demeanor. She's so beautiful with her wolf alight in her eyes, a wolf that still seeks mine despite Selene's objections.

I cannot hear the call myself, but Axel certainly can, She's calling me, He insists, she needs the mark just as much as we do. She's in pain without it.

I study Selene carefully, reading anger and longing in her stunning features much more strongly than any fear or rejection. I know Axel is right just as certainly as I know the human part of Selene has no intention of giving me permission to mark her. So who should get to decide, the woman, or her wolf?

I cock my head to the side, the scent of Selene's arousal still heavy in the air. "Tell me not to." I order huskily.

"What?" Selene falters, taking a step back despite the fact that I haven't moved an inch.

"If you don't want me to mark you," I instruct slowly, "Tell me not to tell your wolf to stop begging mine for the mark."

"I- She isn't!" Selene insists weakly.

“No more lies, little wolf.” I scold, some of my pain and rage over her betrayal bleeding into the words without my permission.

“I’m not.” She shakes her head unconvincingly, then breaks, “You’re doing this! Selene accuses, looking like she might be on the verge of tears. “Tell your wolf to stop calling her!”

She can’t tell you no, because she wants it just as badly as you do. Axel rumbles. This is one of those times that having a wolf is downright inconvenient. He’s ruled by instinct, and instinct overpowers logic ten to one. Still, I can’t help but feel uncertain when her sweet voice insists otherwise.

Look at her. Axel commands forcefully, jolting my hypersensitive eyes to the she-wolf again. She looks just like she did in our early days together, so skittish and overwhelmed with feelings she’s beside herself. Every wave of agitated energy rolling off her calls to me for comforting, and that I cannot deny. Help her. My wolf orders.

Glancing over my shoulder to the slumbering pup on the couch, I make my decision. Scooping up Lila and carrying her to the first bedroom I can find, I tuck her into the thick covers and drop a string of kisses on her sweet-smelling head, feeling a rush of warmth when she smiles and coos in her sleep. Mine. Axel says.

Yes, I heard you the first hundred times. I remind him tetchily.

When I return to the main room, Selene is pacing, appearing as if she’d had to exert all her effort not to follow me. She’s wringing her hands, but when I move towards her, her eyes don’t glance back to the room where I left her pup, they’re glued on me.

“Tell me not to mark you.” I say again, “Make me believe it, Selene, and this won’t go any further.”

For a moment I think she might actually find the will to refuse me, but it would seem rejecting me now is a lot more difficult than it had been when she believed I’d forsaken her. “Why are you doing this to me?” She exclaims instead, “why couldn’t you let me go?”

“You know the answer to that.” I prowl forward, stalking her like I did the very first time we ever came together, the day she’d accused me of not being attracted to her because I’d overestimated the amount of time she needed to feel comfortable with

physical intimacy. I should have known that her wolf was not entirely gone then; she’d always reacted to me *differently* than she did others. “You’re mine, Selene. You always have been.”

When she still does not protest, I take her hand and lead her into the bathroom, closing the door behind us. I turn on the shower tap, twisting with more strength than was

necessary but unable to hold back. The steady pound of cascading water fills the room, and I listen for a moment, deciding that the distance and the noise should provide sufficient buffers to the sleeping toddler in the other room.

Turning on my mate, I pull her body into mine, “Last chance, baby.” I tell her, pulling her top over her head, “Tell me now before it’s too late.”

Shimmering orbs of blue and violet stare up at me helplessly, full of thoughts and memories too complicated to rise to the surface. Emotion clouds her lust-dilated pupils, and with a moan of defeat, Selene leans her head back against the wall and shuts her eyes, surrendering completely.

Selene’s POV

The ceiling tiles blur as Bastien’s mouth and hands assail me, melding pain and pleasure until I’m writhing in his arms. My back is to the wall and my hands are restrained above my head, wrists trapped in one of Bastien’s massive hands. A rumble of pure male satisfaction reverberates through the shower stall as he sinks his fingers between my thighs and meets the evidence of my desire. ‘Tell me again how you don’t want me.’ He purrs in my ear.

“Shut up.” I snarl, tossing my head left and right as the pleasure begins to build. Oh Goddess, it’s been so long. I think.

I expected a reprisal, just not the one I receive. Bastien’s powerful hand swats my swollen sex, causing me to whimper and jolt beneath him. He emits a dark chuckle, pressing lingering kisses along my throat as he gentles his touch and continues his delicious torment.

Already I can feel my control slipping. Bastien always had this effect on me, the unerring ability to wipe all thought from my brain with a single touch; the infuriating talent to take me to heights I can, and will, never reach on my own. I moan and bring my leg up around Bastien’s back, straining to meet the tortuous thrust of his fingers. Even as I hide behind lowered lashes, I can feel the all-consuming weight of Bastien’s gaze on my face, harsh and unforgiving in its reverence.

This is my only escape now; my only defiance. I’ve never been able to resist my mate and no matter the cartwheels Luna is performing in my heart, the new me can’t help but some small show of resistance. I discovered a strength I never knew! possessed when I left Elysium and as desperately as I need this, I’m terrified to give up that part of myself. I don’t want to go back to the way things were.

I squirm as my inner muscles clench and spasm, and Bastien’s deep voice breaks through my conflicted rapture. ‘Look at me, Selene.’ I ignore him, gasping and moaning as my muscles clench again, only to feel his pumping fingers slow to a standstill. The shock snaps my eyes open, but the sight of Bastien’s glowing silver irises mere inches

away, boring into me with an intensity I cannot allow, forces my gaze down to the point where our bodies connect. I watch my hips rock unsuccessfully against his hand, frustration at being pulled back from the edge fraying at my senses. 'Bastien, please.'

"Goddess,' He growls triumphantly. I've missed hearing my name on your lips." His nose nuzzles mine, coaxing. 'Eyes, baby.'

The message is clear, I'm not going to get what I need, until I give him what he wants. Every thought in my mind shouts defiance, but every nerve in my body screams louder, begging for release. With a grumbling moan, I raised my eyes to Bastien, hating how exposed I feel. He gazes down at me with raw adoration, the muscles in his jaw straining with the effort of holding himself back.

The moment I comply his hand begins moving again, wrenching the pleasure out of me with a merciless determination that would have brought me to my knees if the wall wasn't holding me up. As I near the edge again, my lashes start to shutter reflexively, but a sharp yank on my restrained wrists jerked them back up. There's no escaping this. I'm past all point of thought or reason, and so I let him witness every vulnerable second of my undoing.

A cry bursts from my lips and I finally crest the tidal wave of pleasure Bastien created, shuddering and shaking in his arms. Still he does not let up, continuing to taunt and tease me until I'm at the precipice of another peak. This time instead of drinking in the sight, he lowers his mouth to my neck, to those sacred veins reserved for a mate's mark – an Alpha's mark.

Luna's chants become my own, "Please, please, please.

Bastien growls in triumph, or maybe it's his wolf,

Just as I tumble over the edge, I feel his fangs pressing into my skin, preparing to bite.

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Chapter 57

Selene's POV

From the first moment I learned about the mating mark, I've always felt defective. Nevermind that the information came from a flock of bitter she-wolves, their words always rang true in my heart. If Bastien truly wanted me, he would have marked me from the beginning.

When I found out that we were truly mates, the wound deepened, like a knife driving in to the hilt with the realization that the loss of Luna had also cost me my fate. If I wasn't so broken, Bastien would have marked me whether he loved me or not; there is no other way with Alpha's, they mark what they see as theirs on principle.

There are no words to describe how worthless something would have to be for such possessive creatures to give up their stake. So that's what I was – exactly what Garrick always said: worthless.

It never mattered to me that Luna was gone. I still wanted his mark.

I still needed it.

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I just didn't understand it. I couldn't understand until Luna returned, and I realized there was still an empty pocket in my heart, one neither my daughter nor my wolf could fill. I thought I simply missed my husband, then Bastien came to Asphodel and I knew what I'd been missing all this time.

Now I'm finally on the verge of filling that void, of fulfilling the destiny the Goddess penned in my name, and it can't come fast enough. Part of me hates Bastien for failing to see my value when we were married. I want to kick, and scream that I'm the same person I've always been. But the other, stronger, part of me needs this like oxygen.

No matter how much fury I still harbor for this man, I cannot undo the threads of fate. My entire existence has been building to this point, and feeling Bastien's fangs on my flesh is enough to push me over the edge, sending me into rapture before he can pierce my skin.

One second more and it would have been done, but then a blaring alarm shatters the heated moment, a deafening screech that pulls Bastien back from my neck even as I quiver and shake in the throws of ecstasy.

His head goes on a swivel; eyes, ears, and nose all on high alert for a threat. When I finally come down from my high, the fear takes me, slowly eroding my bliss and replacing it with gut-wrenching memories of smoke-filled closets. "Fire." I gasp, shock rocketing through my body with paralyzing effect.

Lila! I think desperately, but then Bastien is shushing me gently, "It's not a fire, little wolf."

"Lila." I croak, finding my voice.

"I know," He assures me, turning off the water and pulling me from the stall. "Get dressed, I'll get her."

I immediately begin tugging on my hastily discarded clothes, not bothering to dry myself first. I follow him down the hall, dressing as I go, "What's happening?"

"I think it's a perimeter alarm." Bastien replies, pushing into the bedroom where my pup now sits up in bed, rubbing her eyes and looking close to tears. He gathers her up and eases her into my arms, "We need to get out of here."

I follow again as he pulls on his own clothes, bouncing Lila gently on my hip. "Mommy, t's too loud." She cries, burying her face in my neck

"I know angel," I croon, kissing her hair, "We're going to make it better, just hold on."

Bastien's men are already running up the drive when we exit the house, frustration clear on their faces. "We don't know what set it off, it might just be a malfunction."

"No." He growls, standing protectively over me while I buckle Lila into her car seat. "I don't trust any of this."

"Do you want one of us to stay behind to investigate?" Aiden asks.

"No." Bastien answers without hesitation, "I want every guard we have on Selene and the pup. Whatever this is, it's about

them, not us."

Yes sir." Aiden confirms, his formal words and tone hammering home the gravity of our situation.

We're on the road in minutes, my head turned all the way around to monitor the back seat as we drive, and Bastien's hand clasped firmly around mine on the center console. "You're going to make yourself sick, sweetheart." He murmurs, brushing his thumb over my knuckles and eyeing Lila in the rearview mirror.

"It's all okay now," He promises the toddler, and I realize my agitation is probably upsetting her. Pups are so sensitive to the emotions of adults, my panic can only make things worse. I turn back to face the front, gulping in heavy drafts of air.

"That's right." I lie shakily, "there's nothing to worry about."

I can feel Bastien's eyes on me, and his warm hand leaves mine. Just as I'm about to complain, the massive paw closes around my nape. "We're safe, Selene." He says in a low whisper, applying gentle pressure. "You're safe, Lila is safe."

My body relaxes slightly, surrendering to the dominant hold out of muscle memory. Bastien trained the response into me from our very first days together, using it to steady me when I spiral and defer to his strength when I feel like I have none left.

I don't need to explain what's happening to him, the way I might to Drake or another wolf. He knows what I need without asking, and I couldn't be more relieved to be with him now.

In some ways the flashbacks of the fire are worse than those of Garrick: I always associate them with losing Lila. She wasn't born yet, but she was there. She was there and she was dying with me. I clamp my eyes shut, trying to steady my pounding heart and keep the welling tears from leaving my lashes. My breaths sound more like hiccups the more I think about the fire.

Only after the pressure on the back of my neck grows borderline painful, does the suffocating heat which engulfs me fade back into the past where it belongs. "That's it," The tension seeps out of me bit by bit, my mate's touch anchoring me to the present.

Silver eyes glow at me from the passenger seat, swirling with rage, though I know it isn't directed at me. "Are you back with me?" He asks gently.

Inod, sniffing slightly and turning to the back seat again. "I'm sorry Lila bean, Mommy's just being silly."

"S'okay mommy." She advises sagely, "maybe you need a nap."

I break into a watery smile, and Bastien's chuckle fills the confined space with warmth. "Well said, pup."

The same fingers which had been driving me to the edge of sanity ten minutes ago, massage small circles at the base of my skull, "Sleep baby, and when you wake up, we need to talk about whoever called in that tip."

Third POV

The bastard almost marked her.

Lucky for me, they never saw the cameras planted around the cabin. I was able to trigger the alarm just in time, and I guarantee mating will be the last thing on their minds for a while.

Some would call it pathological to install cameras in every room, including the bathrooms, but I'm of the opinion that you can never be too safe in a safehouse. That over-precaution paid off today, and my wolf is currently full of smug pride at our foresight.

Still, that was all much too close for comfort. If Bastien's Betas hadn't set out on a new patrol when things started to get hot and heavy in the house – setting off my real perimeter alarms again – I would have been too late. When I last checked, Bastien was playing with the pup and Selene was stewing in the background. I don't know how things escalated so rapidly. but clearly their connection is stronger than I thought.

I've got to get Selene away from him, for good. At the moment the only thing standing between my success and the complete implosion of my plans is a quickie. As frustrated as I was when Bastien first learned Selene was alive, I've come to see the wisdom of letting her smash his heart to pieces rather than simply making him mourn her.

I learned the hard way that grief can motivate change just as powerfully as it can inflirt nain

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#Chapter 57 Alarm

demoralizes Bastien so completely that he loses the will to go on? Well that's another thing entirely.

I'd call on Arabella for help, but the last I heard she fled the Nova territory for parts unknown. Besides, I've never truly trusted her since the fire. She wants to destroy Bastien as badly as I do, but I don't believe she's as committed to our alliance as I once thought. The more time that passes, the more I think her hunger is as much for power as it is for revenge, which makes her loyalty to the highest bidder, not the most righteous.

With a heavy exhale, I turn away from the video monitors. I need to act fast, and at this point I think there is only one thing that can drive a large enough wedge between the Alpha and his mate to force them apart permanently: Lila.

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Chapter 58

Selene's POV

We're back in Asphodel by the time I wake. My lashes part to the sight of fierce silver eyes, affection sparkling in their depths while familiar hands stroke my hair. I mumble

sleepily, stretching as Bastien coaxes me from sleep. "There she is." He purrs, turning to look down at something by my hip. "See, I told you."

I follow his line of sight, the happiness burgeoning in my chest expanding to joy when I see Lila grinning up at me, "You slept for a long time, mommy." She informs me, crawling into my lap for a cuddle. "Bashun said he put a spell on you."

"I did!" He says, 'with feigned offense, "You saw, I just lifted it."

I squeeze the beloved bundle in my arms, rocking slightly back and forth. "And why would he do that?" I ask, resting my cheek on the top of her head.

"Cuz you didn't want to take a nap." She explains simply, snuggling closer.

"And you needed one." Bastien adds seriously, watching us with a tender expression.

"Well the next time Bastien wants to put a spell on me, you bite him." I instruct Lila, "spells are bad."

She shakes her head, rejecting the notion without pause. "Not all spells."

"Oh, which spells are good?" I question, trying very hard to look at her and not the big wolf kneeling at the edge of the passenger seat.

"Ones that heal." Lila claims, looking up at me with my own eyes. "or give you nice dreams" she ponders another moment, "love ones."

"Your mommy knows all about love spells" Bastien declares, the corner of his mouth twitching upward.

My eyes narrow to slits, and I slip out of the car, carrying Lila with me. "Don't you listen to him, Lila." I instruct tritely, heading for the canal and its waiting ferry boats, flanked by my mate and his guards. "That big bad wolf is full of nonsense."

I know Bastien is making faces behind my back, because Lila giggles the entire way to the pier. She's like a tiny spring in my arms, bobbing up and down; first peeking her head up over my shoulder then ducking down again to hide.

They head straight for the prow when we board the boat, reflexively taking up Lila's favorite spot for spying fish and giant otters. on the journey. Bastien moves close behind me, his chest grazing my shoulder blades as his arms cage me on either side. His hands settle on the railing, and I don't need to look in order to guess his expression. Lila's face says it all: her precious features are uncertain at first, but quickly transform into a beaming grin.

It's the look of any wolf that comes under the intimidating Alpha's scrutiny, only most never get past the cowed deference. Not my pup, she stares into the face of danger with pure joy, thoroughly undermining my lies about her paternity. I catch Donavon appraising her smile, no doubt noting its resemblance to Bastien's.

It's surprisingly quiet as the boat takes off, and I look around for the other passengers, only to realize they aren't there. We're the only ones aboard the ferry, and all the other travelers who had been waiting on the docks remain there still.

"You didn't have to do that." I admonish Bastien, nodding towards the disgruntled clump of people.

A jolt of electricity runs through me as his lips graze the back of my neck, "I disagree."

"Mommy look!" Lila chirps happily as a fish flies out of the water before us, disappearing just as quickly, its shimmering scales still visible beneath the crystalline surface.

"I see!" I exclaim, pretending I'm not completely on edge with the huge shifter looming over me.

"Why does it jump like that?" She asks curiously.

"Maybe it was trying to come and say hello to you." I suggest.

*And now it's going to go home and tell its whole fish family about the strange creatures it saw on the lagoon today." Bastien adds, his rumbling voice making my insides turn to jelly.

I turn to flare up at him, mouthing, "stop it!"

He arches his brow, as if to say "stop what?"

Thankfully Lila is oblivious to our silent battle. "Where do fishes live when they aren't swimming?"

"Fish," I correct gently, "can live in all sorts of places: reefs, caves, even under the sand."

As with any child her age, one question quickly becomes one hundred, and I can see her gearing up for the onslaught. However, before she can find the words to express her curious thoughts, Bastien heads her off. "Oh!" He says with animation, "You know who loves fish?"

"Who?" Lila peeps immediately.

“Aiden!” From the look on Aiden’s face, this is the first he’s heard of this supposed interest, but he comes forward to take Lila anyway. She’s already rattling off questions as they stride away, and I turn on my mate.

“Would you stop giving my pup away to random wolves?” I snap.

“Aiden is hardly random.” He remarks dryly, “and we need to talk.”

“You’ve got to stop this.” I object, pushing at his chest. “Whether or not we know him, it’s my decision who watches my child, not yours!”

He leans forward, invading my space even more than he already was, and my back hits the railing. “You’re really going to keep pretending she isn’t mine?”

My lip curls up, and I force the words out through clenched teeth. “She isn’t.”

“We’ll see.” Bastien replies ominously.

Every muscle in my body goes taught. “What is that supposed to mean?”

“It means we’ll see.” He repeats not giving an inch, “In the meantime we need to figure out what’s going on here.”

“That’s not your concern either.” I insist, “As far as I’m concerned that alarm at the safehouse was a blessing.” One that hadn’t come a moment too soon. “You used my wolf against me, I lost control. That’s not going to happen again.”

A dark laugh rolls through Bastien’s chest, “My sweet little wolf.” He buries his face in my hair, inhaling my scent like an addict satisfying their fix. “You might be feistier now, but you’re every bit as adorable.” Despite his words, his expression is so menacing when he pulls his head up I’m afraid he might mark me right here and now.

Let him, Luna purrs.

Don’t you start. I bite back.

“Just you wait.” He goads huskily, “when that first heat hits, you’re going to be begging for my mark.”

“Not if you’re back in Elysium where you belong.” I hiss.

“I’m not leaving Asphodel without you.” Bastien declares fiercely, “and that won’t happen until we know who turned you in.”

I choose to ignore his first comment, “You’re overreacting, it was probably just some petty she-wolf who’s jealous of my relationship with Drake. I’m not exactly popular with the women here.”

“And what if you’re wrong?” Bastien presses. “Do you really want to take that chance? With your life, with Lila’s?”

Indecision paralyzes me, what if you are wrong? Luna asks.

Who else could it be? I think back.

It could easily have been for the money. She answers.

I brush off her qualms, knowing my stubbornness is more to do with Bastien than true logic. Then they aren’t truly a threat to me, are they?

But it’s Lila, comes Luna’s vehement reply.

I know – and she’s safer out of the spotlight. I reason. We’ll leave if we have to – just not with him.

I offer Bastien my best glower. “Drake will take care of me.”

His wolf is close to the surface now, drawn out by the repeated mention of the other man. “He will never take care of you the way I will and you know it.”

Our bodies are practically plastered together now, and I’m pushing down the instinct to rub myself all over him; marking him with my scent and satisfying my own needs for affection from my mate. Goddess, how I wish I could turn these feelings off – despite my tough words, I know I can’t keep this up much longer. It hurts too much to be so near him while keeping our wolves apart.

Even so, I have to stay strong – I know the way this story goes. “He’ll also never hurt me the way you did.” I challenge fervently.

Something acutely akin to pain flashes in his silver eyes, “That isn’t fair.” He replies gravely, his jaw granite. “I didn’t know what was going on with Arabella.”

“That’s some endorsement.” I scoff, “How can you tell me we’d be safer with you, when you couldn’t see what was happening underneath your own nose?”

“How could you expect me to help with your troubles when you hid them from me?” Bastien contradicts, “I’m not omniscient, Selene. I had an entire pack to run, I was mourning my father and losing my wife, I did the best I could.”

“Well your best wasn’t enough.” I’m baiting him now, but nothing else is working. “Drake’s was.” I tilt my chin up, looking him dead in the eye as I proclaim, “This is my home now, tip line or no, I’m staying here.”

Bastien huffs humorlessly, “Well I’ve got news for you, sweetheart.” He growls, closing his arms a bit tighter around me. “Whatever happens between us, I’m not leaving before I know who was responsible for this, so you’d better get used to living with me again, because I’m not going anywhere.”

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 59 - All World Beauty

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 59

Arabella’s POV

I used to hear stories about the Calypso Pack when I was young, about their beautiful territories in the far east and the unrivaled power with which they dominate the continent. From the time I was a little girl, strength has always been synonymous with their pack, and even as Gabriel grew the Nova pack to new heights, the Durands’ have never come close to challenging Blaise Denizen’s empire.

Everyone thought I loved Bastien much, but actually I never loved him. How would I love the man that caused my brother’s death? | just always pretended to love him, in order to achieve my revenge. After Bastien married the halfling, I traveled for a long time, always planning on getting to the Calypso territory and its capital, Tartarus, eventually. At the time I thought succeeding on like I could somehow make Bastien pay for Flynn’s death by living my best life.

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What utter nonsense.

A few years of wasted efforts courting other Alphas proved that much, and just when I was getting ready to travel to the Calypso territory to stage a last ditch effort, the news of the rejection spread.

In hindsight, I probably should have ignored the rejection and come to Tartatus anyway. After all, at this point all my best laid plans have fallen to pieces. It seems no matter what I do, something is always going to go wrong.

But I'm no weakling, I'm not just going to throw in the towel and give up.

I chose the wrong ally against Bastien; one who was unwilling to go to any lengths necessary in order to achieve our goal. Somehow I don't think that's going to be a problem here.

Blaise Denizen won't have any problem getting one feeble halfling out of the way, and he certainly won't hesitate to challenge Bastien for the Nova territories when the time comes.

The only challenge now is getting on his good side, convincing him to join – or at least champion – my

cause.

It shouldn't be too hard. With the exception of Bastien, I've never met a man I could not fool into doing my bidding. This will be no different.

As far as I'm concerned, Selene's days are numbered.

Selene's POV

Drake's gaze is locked on me as we enter his office, scanning me head to toe for signs of harm then doing the same to Lila. He sends me a signaling nod, asking if I'm alright in the unspoken language we've developed over the years.

I return his nod, trying not to blush, and he visibly relaxes.

Lila, who is quickly getting spoiled by getting carried everywhere, wriggles out of my arms to toddle across the room, her plump arms outstretched as she cries, "Rake!"

He kneels down, mimicking her movement so she can run straight into his hug. "Hello munchkin!"

I glance at Bastien out of the corner of my eye, instantly noticing his white knuckled fists glued at his sides. His hands are shaking with the effort of restraining himself, his wolf clearly close to the surface as he watches Drake reunite so warmly with our pup.

I can only imagine the thoughts going through his head, and I know the safest thing would be to separate Lila and Drake. However I have the sneaking suspicion that if I cross over to join them, it will only make

"Drake," I speak the words as calmly as I can, "Bastien wants to talk to you about the bounty."

"Good." The Eros Alpha agrees, "Let's have it."

“Not in front of her.” Bastien snarls, staring at Lila.

“Very well,” Drake says, crossing over to me so he can transfer Lila to my arms. “Selene and Lila can go back to their apartment while we sort this out.”

“No,” Bastien snarls, “They know to look for them there, not to mention my lovely mate doesn’t need any more opportunities to make a run for it.”

I’m rolling my eyes, however I appear to be the only one. I’d hoped Drake would automatically take my side no matter what, but his concerned expression and solemn words indicate otherwise. “Who knows to look for them there?”

“Whoever is responsible for these,” Bastien grumbles impatiently, taking a small stack of papers from Donovan and dropping them down on Drake’s desk.

With a curt nod, Drake signals for his Beta, Hugo, to come take Lila, and I feel a stab of guilt. It seems like all I’m ever doing these days is sweeping her out of rooms so she can’t overhear things which might frighten her. I know it’s confusing for her, and it terrifies me how often it’s starting to happen.

“I don’t understand.” Drake admits once the pup is out of range. “Aren’t you responsible for these?”

“No.” Bastien answers, sending shockwaves through my body.

What does he mean no? I ask Luna.

Before she can answer, Donavon produces a separate stack. “We’re responsible for these.” Bastien clarifies, tossing the other papers beside the first. “My men have been scouring the city since dawn. They found dozens of these throughout Asphodel’s underground markets and along illicit trade routes out of the city.”

“What are you talking about?” | demand, stepping forward. “Some of these are real? Denizen’s fliers were here too?”

“Yes.” Bastien’s voice comes down like a hammer, “Somehow news of the Calypso bounty made it here before Elysium.” “And you can bet that if someone called one line, they called the other.”

“But how can they collect the reward if you don’t know who they are?” Drake presses, frustration clear in his tone.

“It has to be anonymous in the beginning so people will feel safe calling in, so they’ll feel empowered to share things they wouldn’t otherwise.” Aiden explains. “There’s a trace

on the line, yes, but that only helps if the call is placed from a standard cell phone. Ours wasn't, they used a public phone and we set up a secure line for future contact, but they haven't rung in yet. We can trace it once they do, but until then we're searching blind."

"So let me see if I have this straight." Drake begins, circling his desk with determined patience. "You have no idea who reported Selene and Lila, but you're confident they were also reported to the Calypso pack?"

My heartbeat is pounding violently in my chest. That can't be right. It would explain why Bastien has been so overcautious these past few hours, but I refuse to believe it."

"Not entirely," Bastien answers. I start to breathe a sigh of relief, but stop when my mate shifts closer to me as if afraid I might bolt. "Yes, it's fair to assume the Calypso line was also called, but we're not completely in the dark about the tipster: We know it was a man."

"Why didn't you tell me any of this?" Selene demands, not bothering to pull me aside before unleashing her temper. "You've been letting me think this was probably some jealous she-wolf, that the only danger was if they decided to try and capture us!"

"Until this morning I didn't know about the Calypso fliers." I clarify, "And you were the one talking about jealous she-wolves, not me."

"But you didn't correct me, you just let me go on thinking it was nothing." She exclaims.

"I've done nothing but try to make you see how serious this situation is." I bite back, frustration swelling in my chest. I don't like having this conversation in front of the others; this is between us. "If I didn't share the details it's because I didn't want to frighten you more than you already were, but don't you dare try to pretend I didn't warn you."

She quells slightly, and I reach for her instinctively, needing to soothe the distress visible on her face. However before I can make contact, the sound of the door clicking open fills the air; followed by a scent I would know anywhere.

Selene only has time to gape before my mother barrels into her, wrapping my mate in her comforting arms and whispering a hundred hurried blessings in her ear. I'm surprised she made it here so fast, and as inconvenient as her timing is, I'm thrilled to see the corner of a heavy manilla envelope sticking out of the corner of her purse.

My patience only allows for a few minutes of tearful whispers, apologies, and explanations before I step forward, pressing a kiss to my mother's cheek.

"Did you bring it?" I murmur, my gravelly voice low but not indistinguishable.

Mom looks back and forth between me and Selene, obviously hesitant as she draws the envelope from her bag. The word: Confidential, has been stamped across the top of the thick beige paper, and I watch the blood drain from Selene's face.

"Do you know what this is, little wolf?" I ask, sounding more harsh than I intended.

Her wide eyes leap to my face, undiluted fear dilating her pupils. "Bastien -" She starts, grappling for a reply but failing to find one.

If I had any remaining doubts, her reaction smooths them all away. My wolf rumbles with displeasure and outrage. I can count on one hand the number of times he has been truly angry with Selene, but I cannot blame him in this case. Not one bit.

"It's time to find out who Lila's father really is."

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate Chapter 60

Pregnant and Rejected by My Alpha Mate

Chapter 60

Selene's POV

This can't be happening.

Two minutes ago I was being engulfed by my mother-in-law's warmth and affirmations of love, now the rug has been pulled out from under me so abruptly I think I might actually collapse.

Certainly Bastien's words on the ferry had startled me, frightened me even. I suspected he intended to do something like this, the way he kept muttering 'we'll see.' But I never imagined it had already been done. I thought I had time to counteract him, to come up with a plan.

"What do you mean?" I ask hoarsely, "I already told you, she isn't yours."

"You did." Bastien acknowledges with a razor sharp tongue. "But I had a DNA sample sent back to Elysium just to be sure."

Odette looks back and forth between us, doubt marring her features. "You didn't know he took a sample from your pup?"

"No." I growl, "I did not."

My former mother-in-law swats her son's arm. "Bastien, how could you?"

"You didn't have any right to do that." Drake adds coldly, glancing towards the door where Hugo disappeared with Lila.

"I had every right." My mate combats, "An Alpha's pup is not just any child, my mate doesn't have the right to keep her from me."

"Maybe not." Odette agrees calmly, "but you don't know that she is yours. Selene is her mother, it's her decision whether or not someone takes her child's DNA."

"Is that why you sent her away when I shifted?" I demand thickly, "not to protect her but so you could steal her hair or nails or whatever else you used?"

Bastien has the grace to look offended. "Of course not." He denies, "I sent her away with nothing but her own best interest in mind – not to mention yours."

He's glaring daggers at me, and I try to remember the last time Bastien was truly angry with me.

He's been stern, disapproving certainly, even annoyed. But before we reunited in Asphodel I can't ever remember him looking at me the way he is now; with such unmitigated fury I want to crawl under the desk and hide.

He didn't even seem this livid when he found out I was alive.

Luna is whimpering in my head, tucking her tail between her legs and rolling submissively onto her back. I know his fury is hurting her, that she hates feeling as if she's failed him. Once upon a time I would have reacted exactly the same way – however Bastien isn't the only one who's angry.

My maternal instincts are raging a battle of their own, outraged beyond comprehension that Bastien violated my pup this way. Not only did he steal her DNA, he violated my trust. He took advantage of my weakness and her vulnerability.

But he's right. Luna moans, she's his pup. He has a right to know.

Not this way. I insist. Not if it isn't what's best for her.

He was always going to find out. Luna insists, and you can't deny how wonderful he is with her.

Chapter 60 She's Not Mine

People don't change. I argue, he's the same overbearing bully he's always been. He doesn't listen to what I want, he doesn't care about us – only himself.

You love him. Luna exclaims, and I need him! Our internal argument has grown so fierce I have to stop myself from physically shaking my head. It's torture to be near him, yet so far-apart. Luna continues, I don't know how much longer I can take it.

I know. Honestly, I do. I pronounce. But this is for the best. Being apart from him isn't what hurts most, it's being with him while he breaks your heart over and over again. I can feel every eye in the room surveying me now, but I can't continue the external fight before resolving my battle with my wolf. One day you'll thank me for not letting him destroy you completely.

As Luna curls up in a defeated heap, I glower up at Bastien. "One of these days, you're going to have to admit that the only person whose interests you act in, are your own." I assert, far more confidently than I feel. "If you really cared about me or Lila, you would respect my wishes. You would trust me when I tell you she isn't yours."

Odette reaches for my hand, squeezing softly, "I've never known Selene to lie, you may want the pup to be yours, but that doesn't mean she is."

"You haven't met her." Bastien turns to Drake with a black look. "Call your man back in."

"Under no circumstances," Drake snarls, "you've crossed a line this time, Durand. This isn't your territory. Neither I, nor my men, are yours to command." He rounds his desk, standing up as tall as he can before my massive mate, "And Selene and Lila are not yours either. Not anymore."

"We'll just see about that won't we?" Bastien rumbles, brandishing the envelope.

"And how do we know that you haven't doctored that paper to show the results you want?!" Drake demands, cunningly offering me an argument for the fight which will inevitably follow the test results.

"Then you admit they'll say I'm the father?" Bastien strikes, "Not because of any doctoring, but because that pup is mine as surely as Selene is my mate. You need to get over whatever little fantasy you've built up in your head, Cavanaugh. It's over."

"That's not your decision." Drake counters. "Selene can choose her own mate, and Lila will stay here where she belongs."

"Would you two stop fighting over her like she's a piece of meat!" I all but shout, surprising both men so much they fall silent. "I don't care what those results say." I profess passionately, "Lila is mine. I bore her, I birthed her, and I raised her." As much as I appreciate Drake's help, I can't help but feeling like a pup pet dangling on their strings.

“She’s not an Eros, and she’s not a Nova. She’s a Volana.” I remind them. “And in case you hadn’t noticed, that puts her on an endangered species list that should concern you a hell of a lot more than whose sperm was faster.”

The entire world feels like it’s spinning out of control, and I cannot bear being apart from Lila any more than I can bear being trapped in this room. I look to Drake, undoubtedly appearing quite mad. “Bring her back.” I demand, “I want my pup.”

Drake complies almost immediately, recalling Hugo to the study with Lila in tow. I cross the hard wood floors to meet him in the doorway, collecting my daughter and turning on the assemblage. “This isn’t about you.” I hiss. “It’s about her.” I jostle Lila on my hip, and she wraps her arms around my neck.

“Mommy, seem mad.” She chirps.

“I am mad, my love.” I confess, cuddling her close and kissing her hair, “But not at you. Never at you.”

The Alphas, Betas and various guards stand stationary, watching and waiting for my next move. Only Odette reacts to Lila’s appearance, her lovely face filling with light as she crosses the room to meet us. She grins widely when she meets my eyes, sharing a look only mothers can understand. “She’s beautiful, Se

“Thank you.” I murmur, unable to keep my own lips from twitching upward, “I tried.”

“I think you succeeded.” Odette laughs, reaching her hand up to shake Lila’s. “Hello, my darling.” She greets my pup with the same overabundance of love she showed me when I first arrived on their doorstep, and I feel a rush of appreciation for this woman unlike any I’ve felt before. “I’m Odette.”

Unusually shy, Lila buries her face in my neck, hiding despite Odette’s warmth. I sway on the spot, crooning as I rub her back, “It’s alright, angel.” I promise. “I know there have been a lot of changes today.”

Odette tucks a strand of dark hair behind Lila’s ear. “Poor baby, we’re not giving you any time to adjust

are we?”

Lila humphs sulkily, her warm breath fluttering against my collar bone as her arms tighten around my neck, “Mm sleepy.” ...

I’m still rocking her on my feet, making soft shushing sounds and coaxing her to rest when the sound of rending paper fills the air.

I've been so distracted reclaiming my pup I'd almost forgotten about Bastien and the envelope ensuring my demise. Odette and I turn to stare as one, and the bottom falls out of my stomach.

This is it. The moment I've been dreading since Bastien appeared in Asphodel. All my hard work, all the sacrifices I made, and for what? A few years of peace, only to be stolen away by a single sheet of paper.

I won't let him take her. I won't go back to Elysium. I think desperately.

Bastien's eyes flit over the results page, his body winding up like a spring, more tense with every moment. His silver eyes jump to mine, filled with disbelief and betrayal. At first I think his reaction is simply born out of the confirmation of my lies, proof that everything I've said since we reunited is false.

Then he begins to speak, and everything I thought I knew disappears.