

CHAPTER 102

Winter POV

I can see the crestfallen look on Kai's face when I ask to go home. But what was I supposed to tell him? That when I went into the bathroom, my eyes, for a moment, looked like they were glowing red? That it was enough to upset me. It also meant I remembered Thomas and everything that went on. It's like my memories are slowly flooding back, but I can still feel Thomas's hands on me, see his fangs out of his mouth and even feel the pain as his fangs pierced my skin. Everything was so vivid, it was like I was right back there again.

I'm trying to tell myself the glowing red eyes were just a trick of the light, that it was a residue of the memories that came flooding back, but part of me isn't so sure. We get into the car, and I feel exhausted and drained. No matter how much sleep I get lately, it never seems to be enough. I'm always tired. I wonder if it's because my blood got drained. Maybe I don't have enough iron in my blood and need to get supplements?

I watch the scenery go by and feel myself drifting off. I'm barely aware of Kai picking me up and carrying me to the bedroom, but I can feel him as he cuddles close to me. I can hear his heartbeat beating it's slow, even rhythm as he pulls me tightly against him. It feels nice. I stop shivering, his body heat helping to keep me warm underneath the blankets. Soon instead of being drowsy, I'm asleep and dreaming.

I'm running. It's dark and the moon is shining overhead. I'm fast. Faster than I've ever been in my whole life, running as though my life depends on it. But it's not fast enough. Even as I flee, from danger, it finds me. His voice drifts towards me through the air as I shudder.

"Winter" he calls and although it's quiet, barely above a whisper, I hear it, my whole body stilling in fear.

"Winter" he hisses and I turn, desperately trying to find the source of the noise, my heart thumping wildly in my chest.

Where was Kai? Or Damien or Langdon. Why am I all alone? Has he killed them all? But I thought he was dead, how is he here? It wasn't possible. It can't be.

"You can't escape me" comes the whisper again as I force my body to begin moving, crashing through overhanging branches and leaping over debris. For some reason I'm in human form and I don't know why. Why haven't I shifted to my wolf form? When I try though I find I can't. But I can run really fast. Faster than a normal human.

"Leave me alone" I scream hysterically. My feet are bare and covered in scratches, blood flowing from several cuts. It has a metallic smell that makes my nose crinkle. It smells strong.

"Winter" he calls and I stop, seeing him up ahead.

It's like living a nightmare. He's standing in front of me, a wicked grin on his face, his arms held out in surrender. "You can't escape me" he says again, his voice chilling. He's so pale, so stiff. His body is covered in all sorts of injuries and it's weird that they haven't healed. I'm trying to remind myself this is a nightmare, but it seems so real. So so real.

"You're dead" I say my voice shaky "we killed you."

He laughs, throwing back his head. "But did you really?" he asks, a smile on his face, an expression of amusement as well. My throat goes dry. I'm starting to second guess everything. But we had killed Thomas, hadn't we? Nobody could go back from what we'd done to him.

"Why are you here?" I ask shakily.

His grin grows wider. "I'm here to see my handiwork" he says and I frown.

What on earth did he mean by that?

"Did you think you would really escape me, Winter?" he asks sounding bewildered "that I would just let you go without a fight."

"Why are you so obsessed with me" I shout across at him, the wind howling in the distance "what did I do to make you want me so badly?"

"You didn't do anything special; I've just always loved you" he says. My heart sinks. He's like a paranoid stalker. Was he going to stalk me in my dreams as well now? Give me nightmares that won't go away?

"Please, just let me go Thomas" I beg him, tears trailing down my cheeks "you have to let me go."

"I can't" he rasps, his eyes glowing red in the darkness, his body moving closer.

My own body is stiff, paralyzed with fear. No matter how hard I try, I cannot get my limbs to move. He reaches out and touches a strand of my hair as I make a gurgling sound. Now my own voice has betrayed me.

"You're so beautiful" he murmurs, his fingers trailing down my face, stopping at my neck.

"Please" I manage to whimper, but it doesn't stop him.

"You'll thank me one day" he whispers "you were supposed to be mine forever."

I belong to Kai, I want to shout at him, but my mouth won't move now. Instead, I'm forced to feel his clammy hands on my skin as he grabs hold of my hand and presses it against his lips. Yuck. His lips are freezing cold. His eyes are glinting with triumph.

My whole body is trembling. He can sense my fear and it makes him smile at me, his eyes staring directly into mine. They're so bright, so vivid. He stares at me; his head cocked to the side.

"One more, for old time's sake" he mutters and before I can even comprehend what it is he's getting at, he bends his head down and presses his lips against mine, forcing a kiss on me. My stomach is roiling and there's bile rising up in my throat. I'm going to puke but he stops, places a hand against my chest and smiles.

"I gave you a gift" he murmurs and then in a puff of smoke he's gone, just like that. My mouth opens to scream and suddenly, I burst awake.

I press a hand to my lips, trembling. The dream or rather nightmare, had been so real. So vivid. Like I had been there and Thomas really was alive. I sit up, careful not to jostle Kai who's sleeping peacefully in the bed. I don't want to wake him, but right now I can't sleep either. I crawl out and make my way downstairs and into the kitchen. Whenever I was little, my mother would make me some warm milk when I had trouble sleeping. Right now, I wanted that comfort and luckily, the kitchen was empty.

Girl that was some nightmare. Gave me the heebie jeebies.

Me too Sabriel. What do you think it means?

It means nothing. He's dead. We killed him. You were just having a nightmare.

It felt real.

I know, but it was just a nightmare. Trust me Winter. He's gone. He can't hurt you anymore. Maybe you should talk to Kai about the nightmare?

I don't want to disturb him with something like this. It's just a nightmare; I'll get over it.

Well, it might help, but it's your decision.

I'll see Sabriel.

I place the milk in the saucepan and put it over the burner on the stove. I stir it constantly, humming under my breath. With luck this will make me sleepy again. I pull it off the stove and place it in a mug, sitting at the table and sipping away. Ahh, the stuff warms my throat and makes my belly feel pleasantly warm. This is what I needed.

My hands cup the mug tightly. My stomach growls lightly like it's hungry. But it's the early hours of the morning and to be honest I'm still tired. I focus on drinking, trying to reassure myself enough to go back upstairs and back to bed. But the nightmare stays fresh in my mind. I can still feel Thomas's clammy hands and his freezing cold lips on mine. I shudder.

I finish the milk and reluctantly place the mug in the sink. Maybe if I cuddle up to Kai again, my body will relax and go to sleep. It's worth a shot. I walk upstairs, my heart thumping in my chest. I can't believe I let a nightmare scare me this much. God, I'm such a coward. I make my way into the bedroom and Kai is sitting on the bed, looking all disheveled as my throat goes dry. He glares at me. Uh oh I guess I'm in trouble, but for what?

"Do you have any idea, how panicked I felt when you weren't in the bed next to me" he hisses. I gulp. That thought hadn't even crossed my mind. Maybe I should have woken him up to let him know where I was going.

"Anything could have happened to you" he continues to vent "you could have been out for a run and attacked by rogues, you could have hurt yourself and fallen down the stairs. You could have been kidnapped again" he almost shouts and I flinch, cringing at his words. He was really pissed. Not that I blamed him. After Thomas took me, Kai no doubt was having trouble keeping me out of his sight.

"I'm sorry" I apologize softly and he huffs, running a hand through his messy hair. He's not wearing a shirt and my eyes stare at his chest appreciatively.

"Where did you go?" he asks finally, making an effort to keep his voice calm. His eyes stare directly at me and I swallow nervously.

"I went down to the kitchen for some warm milk" I answer quietly, fidgeting with my hands.

He exhales. "Why didn't you wake me up? I would have come with you" he says annoyed.

I flush. "I didn't want to disturb you. Besides I was only going to the kitchen downstairs" I explained. He nods.

"Couldn't sleep?" he asks and my heart skips a beat. He didn't know the heart of it.

"A little" I admit. "I'm tired now though."

He sighs. He pats the bed. "Come here, let's get you tucked in" he says and I come over, letting him place me into the bed and tucking me under the bed covers.

"I'm going to go do some training" he mutters "if you feel the need to get up, then mind-link me please" he says with a grimace.

I give him a nod.

He bends down and gives me a peck on the forehead. "Get some rest" he says, walking towards the doorway and eyeing me sternly "I order you to" he adds and then leaves. I close my eyes in relief. Now I could try and get some sleep, but there was something that wouldn't leave my mind. Something that was very concerning to me. In the dream Thomas had mentioned he'd given me some sort of gift. I knew it was just a nightmare but that wouldn't stop going through my mind. I can't help wondering what Thomas had meant by gift. From my memories he hadn't given me anything, not that I remembered.

It was just a nightmare I remind myself. It didn't mean anything. Stop letting it mess with your head. Thomas is dead. There is no gift. The nightmare was just that. A nightmare. It wasn't real. There was nothing real about it. It's just something that you need to move forward from. At least that's what I was trying to tell myself. But another small part of me wonders if there was something to the nightmare, some small part of it in my subconscious that was trying to tell me something, or warn me. Either way, the nightmare was going to stick in my mind for now and the foreseeable future and I was going to have a hell of a time trying to forget about it.