

CHAPTER 106

Winter POV

When I wake back up, the doctor is examining me, shining one of those damn bright lights in my eyes. I frown. I knew I hadn't been feeling well when I walked out to the grounds but I hadn't realized I would actually faint. How embarrassing. The doctor looks concerned. "Your iron is severely depleted; I can tell just by looking at you" Dr Jameson says. That's what his name badge says anyway.

"What do we need to do?" asks Kai anxiously.

"Well," the doctor pauses "I would suggest eating iron rich foods, such as plenty of red meat, spinach, but I also might suggest supplements. I feel you might have been drained when that hybrid took your blood and it's struggling to replenish itself."

Kai nods, looking grim. I just feel woozy.

"Everything else, appears to be fine and healthy. Winter, I really don't want to see you in here again" jokes the doctor as I struggle to sit upright.

"You can go home" Dr Jameson says to me "but I suggest you take it easy and rest when you can. Especially since your amnesia still hasn't gone away."

"Thankyou" I say meekly. Kai sighs.

"I'm carrying you back to the pack house' he says shortly. I frown at him. I'm perfectly capable of walking back, but something in his facial expression warns me not to push it.

"Goodluck Winter. Come back for a checkup in two weeks' time" suggests Dr Jameson "we'll check your iron levels and give you a transfusion if it's needed."

I nod and climb out of bed, my legs almost buckling beneath me. Kai's hand whips out and supports me, preventing me from sliding to the floor.

"Careful" mutters Kai admonishing me. Like I did it on purpose. I give a huff, feeling annoyed at him. I'm not some delicate piece of China that's going to break. I was getting tired of being treated like it. He scoops me up and I give a shriek, kicking and wiggling.

"Stop" he growls and I pause, my body tense as he cradles me against his chest.

I sniff involuntarily and my mouth waters. Man, he smells delicious, his scent strong and pungent. I can't get enough of it. His arms tighten around me.

"I'm taking you back to the pack house" he murmurs and I don't bother to argue. Instead, I force my body to relax against him, rather than fight against him. He looks relieved. Slowly, he walks out of the hospital room and heads towards the main entrance.

"Where's Damien?" I ask out of nowhere and he looks at me, jaw clenched tight. Apparently, Damien is a sore spot for him for some reason. But I remember speaking to Damien just before I fainted. Plus, he is my brother, apparently.

"He's waiting in the dining room for you, along with Landon" he grunts as we make our way out of the hospital and onto the grounds.

It doesn't look like much time has passed since I've fainted. At least judging by the sun's position in the sky. I curse the fact that I don't have a watch or a way to tell time. I snuggle against Kai. His body is nice and warm. He walks with me in his arms with ease, as though I don't weigh more than a feather. It's actually a nice feeling. He's quiet but he looks concerned, all of his focus on the pack house which is up ahead.

My stomach growls loudly and he chuckles. "I guess you're hungry" he laughs. I blush. But it's true. I'm starving. Suddenly ravenous. It feels like it came out of nowhere.

We enter the pack house and he walks to the dining room.

"Winter" cries Damien as Kai reluctantly puts me down, one arm snaking around my waist as I lean against him "how are you feeling."

"I feel a little weak and shaky. I didn't mean to worry anyone" I answer softly. Damien leans forward and then hesitates. He looks uncertainly at me and at Kai. I don't know what makes me do it, but I close the gap and fling my arms around him. His arms instantly go around me and he hugs me tightly to him. I breathe in his scent, recognizing it's familiar. A memory comes to me.

I'm so small. Just a little girl, who is running around the grass while her mother and father watch her. Her older brother is sitting on the ground, looking bored. I don't want to play by myself, it's boring.

"Come get me Damien" I cry. "Come play chasey."

At first, he ignores me. But my mother gently nudges him and he slowly gets to his feet. I shriek and run, Damien's footsteps behind me. I giggle and shriek, running as fast as my little legs will carry me.

"I'm going to get you" he shouts as I speed up. I dodge around trees and jump over branches, ignoring the fact that I'm getting dirt all over my dress, wanting nothing more than to play with him.

Then he tackles me to the ground and I giggle, wriggling underneath him. He grins at me. "I got you" he says and my eyes shine up with adoration at my older brother.

The memory's gone just as quickly. But it's enough for me to feel some love and tenderness towards Damien as I give a small sob and hug him. Slowly he pulls away. "Why are you crying?" he asks me slightly panicked, Kai scowling darkly at him.

I wipe the tears from my eyes. "Just a memory" I tell him softly "a nice one."

Why does he look so relieved to hear that? Kai relaxes slightly as well. My stomach lets out a loud growl, reminding Kai why we came to the dining room in the first place.

He pulls a chair out from the table for me and motions for me to sit. Langdon and Damien join me. "Have you guys eaten?" asks Kai gruffly as he gets behind the kitchen counter.

"We have, but we could always eat again" Langdon grins.

"That would be nice, all of us eating together" I beam. Kai falls silent at my look of happiness, shooting dirty looks at Langdon and Damien when he thinks I'm not looking.

"Winter what do you feel like?" he asks, perusing the refrigerator and its contents.

Hmmm. I have to think. But I'm craving meat like nobody's business and the first thing that comes to mind, is what I call out. "Steaks" I say hopefully and they all look surprised.

"Steaks" Kai repeats looking taken aback. "Anything else?"

To be honest, I only want the steaks. Honestly, the thought of anything else is making my stomach churn. "Maybe some juice" I answer slowly.

"I'll just make some steaks and eggs with toast" declares Kai, shooting the other's a look "if anyone else wants something different, than they are welcome to make it themselves."

"That sounds good" declares Langdon and Damien nods fervently. Good, no one seems to be too bothered by the steaks. I have to admit it's a strange craving to have. Maybe it's the lack of iron?

I sniff appreciatively as the steaks get taken out of the fridge, my mouth watering in anticipation. Even though they haven't been cooked yet, they smell delicious. I can't wait to get my teeth into one. Langdon gets up and grabs the juice, pouring a glass for everyone.

"Here" he says kindly, pushing a glass towards me.

"Thanks" I mutter, staring at the orange juice with revulsion. It had seemed like a good idea at the time, but now that it was right in front of my nose, it was making my stomach heave. I tentatively take a sip and almost spit it out. It tastes strange, like it's gone off, but when I glance over at Langdon and Damien, they don't seem to have a problem with the juice at all. Strange. I gently push my glass to the side and glance over at Kai.

He's got the frypan ready and the eggs are cooking, toast in the toaster ready to be buttered. Now he just had to deal with the steaks. "Winter, how do you like your steaks?" he asks.

I have to think for a moment. Normally I would go for well done, but my body wants something different. Before I can even consider what I'm about to do, I call out "rare" and lean back in my chair.

If Kai thinks my decision is weird, he doesn't say anything, Langdon and Damien opting to have their steaks medium rare. Within minutes Kai's finished everyone's breakfast.

He brings mine over first and I can smell the tantalizing odor of the meat on the plate as he places it in front of me. My stomach growls loudly and my mouth begins to water. Kai gives me a peck on the cheek. "Breakfast" he growls and then gives the others their food before plopping onto a chair on the opposite side of me. I stare down at the steak in fascination. There's blood oozing underneath it. The eggs look like runny liquid and I scrape it to the side, not wanting to taste it. I nibble lightly at the toast but my stomach doesn't like the taste.

"Thank you for breakfast" I tell Kai and he gives me a small smile, diving into his own breakfast. He's given me the biggest portion of steak and I reach for the knife and fork. As soon as I press on the steak, blood oozes out. It's definitely rare, I see with satisfaction. I cut a tiny piece off and place it in my mouth, chewing slowly and almost moaning as it hits my taste buds. It's so sweet, so tender. I'm desperate for more. This time I take a slightly larger piece and plop it in my mouth, closing my eyes in ecstasy. It's so juicy. So soft. It's the best thing I've eaten in a very long time.

I begin to dive into the steak while the others eat around me.

"So, if you want to start training, how about together the two of us, go out there tomorrow morning?" Langdon.

"Are you sure?" Damien.

"Of course. You can only learn by training. Heck, I'll even train you as well." Langdon.

"That's brilliant. I can't wait." Damien.

I ignore them. All I want is this beautiful steak. When I glance down and see that I've eaten the entire piece of it, I almost want to cry. Kai shoves a small piece at me. "I wasn't sure if you would want more" he explains, his eyes on the steak that's gone. At least I'm eating I want to tell him indignantly.

Soon though, that piece is gone and I'm still craving more. But I don't know what. I stare down at the small pool of blood on the plate. I inhale and the metallic scent is strong in the air, but instead of filling me with revulsion, I feel hunger instead. Without thinking about it, I place the toast and eggs on the table top and lift the plate up in both hands, staring at the blood with fascination. I tip the plate towards my mouth and the blood slowly trickles down, into my open mouth, trailing down my throat as I swallow it all greedily. It's so good. I lick my lips. I even lick all the blood off the plate and smack my lips together.

Utter silence. That's the first thing I notice. Everyone is staring at me awkwardly. Kai of course looks like he's about to faint. I stare back, wondering what's wrong. They look like they've seen a ghost. What the hell is wrong with them? I wasn't acting that strangely, was I? In fact, now that I'm thinking about it, I feel energized, rather than weak like earlier.

Kai is the first to speak "Winter, are you feeling alright?"

"I feel great" I tell him honestly "fantastic."

Langdon and Damien are shooting Kai sidelong glances. "Um, alright, do you want to try and rest?" asks Damien.

I shake my head. "Maybe I could join in on training? Or go for a run or something?"

"I think a run would do some good" Kai agrees "but you just fainted not long ago, so how about taking it easy until I can go for a run with you?"

I pout. "Fine, I might go read a book" I say grumpily. I get up and storm upstairs. Why were they all acting so freaked out all of a sudden?