

## CHAPTER 114

### Winter POV

The pain in my head is excruciating. It's unlike any headache or migraine I've ever had before. It's so bad that I'm currently lying in bed with all of the blinds closed and curtains pulled, the darkness surrounding me so that my eyes don't hurt from the sunlight. It's like my head is pounding and I'm so incredibly thirsty. No matter how much water I drink though, it doesn't negate the thirst. I'm also incredibly hot, like I'm burning up. Maybe I've caught a virus or something, who knows. I thought shifters very rarely got sick. In fact, this is the first time I've really gotten sick like this ever. I don't want Kai to catch it, but he says he has a great immune system. In other words, he doubts he'll get it.

I'm so lonely. Since I've gotten sick, I've been avoided like the plague. But it's much more than that. There's a voice inside of me and it's not Sabriel's. This is the secret I've been harboring for days, not telling anyone. Because I'm afraid. I'm afraid of what the voice constantly tells me to do. Sabriel's voice has gone completely silent. She's stopped speaking to me and I know it has something to do with the evilness inside of me.

Kill them, kill them all Winter. They are all betrayers, can't you see that? Your brother hurt you, you must hurt him back, show him what it feels like.

Leave me alone, I don't know who you are, or what you are, but please, please just go away.

Don't you understand yet? My voice is yours, child. The thoughts in your mind that you don't dare speak of, all the bad things you think about on a daily basis.

I would never kill someone, that's a lie.

Is it? Right now, you're thinking about killing someone aren't you? The one person who has hurt you the most? You want to hunt him down and kill him for everything he did to you and your brother. You crave his death. You want him dead. Why do you feel like that is so wrong?

The voice falls silent as I give a small sob. They are not wrong. I do want my father dead. He ruined my life and Damien's. Why should he be allowed to continue to live and hurt us? But the rest of it, the rest of it frightens me. I would never wish my mate or my brother dead, no matter what they have done to me in the past. I wish I could talk to Sabriel. I give it one more try.

Sabriel, do you hear me? I'm scared. I don't know what's happening to me. I don't know what's going on. Please speak to me, let me hear your voice. I'm begging you. I don't know what I'm going to do if I've lost you forever. I miss you so much.

I'm literally begging to hear her voice. Part of me is fearful that I've lost my wolf forever. That Sabriel has vanished because I can no longer sense her at the moment. Which means I can't shift into my wolf form either. The only defense I have with my father coming. Without being able to shift, I'm vulnerable, weak, reliant on others to keep me safe. It stings and it sucks big time. Not to mention, I'm too afraid to tell Kai I've lost my wolf. Because I know he would panic, would want me to go to the hospital for all sorts of tests. He has enough stress at the moment without me adding to it.

You have more strength at your fingertips than you think Winter. You are not vulnerable, you are a hunter, a huntress, capable of so much more than what a pathetic shifter can do.

I don't want to know. I just want you to stop talking in my head. I can't deal with this right now. I want Sabriel back.

When the voice speaks again, it's harsh and brutal. Sabriel is gone, get that through your thick head. There's just me now and you're going to have to learn to get along with me or it's going to be a futile struggle between the both of us. You need to embrace your strength, your uniqueness, the fire within you. Even the parts you consider evil, are a part of you even if you try to ignore it. I am your only friend now. Deal with it Winter.

I just lie there, quietly sobbing. The voice is getting stronger, more insistent. It sounds like it's hissing constantly and it really doesn't like Kai or the others. In fact, it often comments that I should do things like push them down the stairs or poison them. The worst thing is, that the voice is so hard to ignore. Unlike with Sabriel, I can't cut it off or put a mind block up because it just breaks through. It taunts me, mocks me and calls me names. But it sounds like me and that's the part that's so frightening. Because what if the voice is me?

A knock on the door, breaks my thoughts. "Winter are you awake" Kai calls and I give a small grunt, watching as the door swings open, blinking furiously as light enters the room. He comes and perches on the bed.

"How are you feeling?" he asks concerned. He reaches out and touches my forehead. His hand jerks back in shock.

"You're burning up" he exclaims, crossing to the bathroom. I say nothing. I feel hot, but not too much. I've been hot the last few days.

I hear the sound of running water. Kai comes back out. "A nice cool bath should do the trick" he says quietly "it should help bring your temperature down at any rate."

I burrow under the covers. I don't want a cold shower right now. I don't want to leave the bed. But Kai isn't taking no for an answer. He pulls the covers off as I let out a squeal, scooping me up in his hands and carrying me to the bathroom. He stands me up and strips off my clothing while I let out a small murmur of protest. Then he picks me up and places me gently in the water.

I let out a small hiss. The water is cold, and it takes time for my body to adjust to it. When I do, I lean back in the bathtub, letting my body sink right down as the water washes over me. I start to feel cooler than I have in days. Kai sits on the floor next to the tub, not caring if he gets wet. His eyes are intently watching me. I feel self-conscious.

"How are you feeling otherwise?" he asks.

Like I want to rip your head from your body, you pathetic, dumb shifter.

I have to ignore the voice, my heart thudding wildly in my chest. I need to make Kai believe that everything with me is alright.

"I'm okay" I murmur "just have a bit of a headache and a bit hot. Otherwise, I'm alright, just tired" I try to assure him.

He doesn't believe me for a second. "Winter you're not just a little bit hot, you're scalding to the touch" he says firmly "as for the headache, it's been how many days now?" he prods.

It's none of your business you stupid mutt.

"A few days" I answer weakly, trying to concentrate on Kai and not the ugly voice in my mind.

"I'm worried about you. So is Damien and Langdon. I really think that you should visit the hospital and see a doctor."

Don't let him force you. He doesn't know what he's talking about. We could hold his head under the water right now if we wanted to.

"I'll be fine. I just need to rest and recover" I tell Kai dully. I clench my hands into fists under the water.

Kai doesn't look convinced, but I shoot him a pleading look and he sighs.

"Fine, but if this continues then I will insist on you seeing a doctor. Is that clear?" he asks sternly.

Crystal clear, I think miserably. "Yes" I answer quickly.

He clears his throat. "Look I came up here to share with you that there still has been no sightings yet of your father."

What a shame. It means we have to wait some more before we kill the old bastard. Never mind, we can think of different ways to kill the man to pass the time.

"Patrol is still keeping a close eye. I hope that helps comfort you a little bit" Kai is continuing as I blink and refocus on him "I know it's not much of a comfort but at least we know he's at least another few days away."

"That's good" I say automatically. The voice snickers in my mind.

"Would you feel safer with Damien and Langdon?" asks Kai suddenly "his house is further away from the pack house and is easier to defend?"

The question should be, will Damien and Langdon feel safe with you in Langdon's house. Should we tell him that?

"Um, I would rather stay here in my bedroom" I say quickly "I feel safer with you Kai" I add, lying through my teeth. Kai looks pleased with my

answer. The poor bastard really believes what I'm saying and a fresh wave of guilt floods over me.

"Of course, you're safe with me" he answers "I just want to make sure you feel secure here."

"Well, I do" I answer quietly.

The water is more than freezing now and I stand up, shivering slightly as Kai hands me a towel to wrap myself in. I do, my teeth chattering and make a beeline back to the bedroom. I would get dressed, but prior experience has taught me that I'm about to go hot again and quite frankly I can't be bothered putting clothes on. Not this time at least.

Kai lets out the water from the bath and saunters in, looking worried. "You look like you've lost weight" he comments and I glance down at my body self-consciously. I hadn't realized, but now that he mentioned it, food had been the last thing on the agenda.

"How about I send something up" he offers and I realize that he will just get more concerned if I refuse the offer.

"I would like that" I say calmly.

He comes over and gives me a peck on the cheek. "I have to go back and do some work, but I'll check on you later alright."

"Alright" I say automatically.

"I'll send that food up" he promises. I just nod.

He vanishes out the door and I give a sigh of relief. The idea of food makes me nauseous but it wouldn't hurt to at least try to eat something. Kai is as good as his word and within minutes, there's a plate with a burger and fries, plus a coca cola by my side as I eye it. The smell is amazing and my mouth waters. It looks delicious. Slowly, almost reverently, I pull the

burger out of the bun and hold it between two fingers. I sniff. I'm almost drooling. I take a bite and almost moan with the sheer flavor of it hitting my taste buds. I devour the burger within moments, licking my lips when I'm done. The fries smell almost as good but the second I put one in my mouth; I spit it back out in disgust. It tastes like charcoal. Yuck. I wipe my mouth with my hand and send the fries scattering to the floor. I sip the coke and my stomach churns. It doesn't like it. I frown. It's coca cola for heaven's sake. Since when did I stop liking soft drink? It's perplexing. Reluctantly I place the drink back down on the bedside table. I guess I'm not drinking that either. But my body is craving something, something more and rich and flavorsome. I just wish I knew what it was. The one small hamburger wasn't enough to satisfy it. Then I glance over at the mirror above my dresser and freeze. Two glowing red eyes stare back at me.