

CHAPTER 119

Kai POV

I stare at Winter, unsure if I've heard her correctly. She's twisting her hands together, biting her lip, looking at me shyly, waiting for some sort of reaction from me. I can't help but remember the first time that I marked her without her consent and flush. This time she's asking me for it, but what if it does something to her? What if it causes her pain now that she's a hybrid? Is Winter really willing to risk it in order to have her wolf back again? I have to make sure. I can't just go into this blindly. But I do feel excitement stirring in my breast at the idea of having my mark and claim back on her neck again, where it rightfully belongs.

"You want me to mark you?" I ask, repeating her words slowly and watching her reaction.

She gives a nod. "Please, it might bring Sabriel back" she whispers "and maybe it will make the vampire side less, oh I don't know" she says desperately "aggressive. Besides I miss not being able to mind-link with you" she points out. Her voice is shaky now, her eyes pleading with mine.

I still feel hesitant, even as my feet move closer towards her of their own accord.

"We don't know what marking you will do though" I say softly "are you willing to suffer whatever consequences there might be doing this?" God, help me, I'm really considering doing this. All we can do is pray that

nothing serious happens as a result. Besides, she's asking me, desperate to have Sabriel back and I can't blame her. I wouldn't know how to cope without Storm, my own wolf.

"I'll pay whatever price" she assures me, her eyes beseeching "I just want to be marked again. Claimed as yours" she adds softly, longingly. My breath hitches in my throat.

I think we should do it man. It's been bothering me that she doesn't have our mark on her neck. How are other wolves going to know she's ours?

Storm, she's going through a lot right now and you want to tell me her not having our mark is bothering you.

She said she's willing to suffer the consequences Kai, I think we should do it. At least this time, the marking will be on her terms instead of ours.

I'm worried it will do something or cause some sort of reaction. We could end up hurting her Storm. Then what?

We won't know unless we do it. I think it's worth the risk. Besides, can you really resist the fact that our mate is begging us to claim her as ours again? She's, our mate. Our mark belongs on her neck to show we are her mate.

Damn you, Storm. Why do you have to be so argumentative?

Damn the wolf for being so persistent. I slowly tug Winter up by the arm as she obediently stands, inhaling her scent and crinkling my nose. Her scent has been a little different since she changed, but it's still intoxicating to me. I bury my head in her hair. "I hope you're right about this" I murmur as she trembles beneath me "because once I've done this, there's no taking it back" I growl, my voice loaded with meaning.

She shudders. "I know" she stammers "please Kai. I want this" she whispers and I swallow hard. How can I resist her plea?

I move her head to the side, exposing her creamy skin and the nape of her neck. Where my mark used to be. I frown down at it. Storm's prancing around in my mind, encouraging me and I'm forced to block him. Slowly my canines withdraw.

"Get ready" I whisper and Winter stiffens. My head lowers down and slowly, I pierce her skin and bite down as she gives a jolt. I revel in the taste of her as I withdraw and lick the wound closed, my eyes gleaming with satisfaction that it's worked and that the mark is once again there for everyone to see.

Then Winter gives out a long, horrific scream, her legs buckling beneath her. I sweep her up and place her on the bed. Her face is flushed all over and she bucks and writhes on the bed, screaming her lungs out as I look at her helplessly. I have no idea what's going on. But I had dreaded something like this happening. I should have listened to my instincts.

"Hurts" she whimpers.

"What hurts" I say anxiously, kneeling beside the bed, desperate to do something to help her "what hurts sweetheart?"

"All over" she pants "feels like I'm burning from the inside."

I rush to the bathroom and fetch a wash cloth, soaking it in cool water and rushing back, patting her down with it. But the second it touches her she screams even louder. I drop the wash cloth. It's not going to help. Not when she's in this kind of state.

Screw this. I mind-link a doctor to come straight from the hospital. I'd take her there, but I don't want to cause her any more pain than she's already

in. Several minutes later and I'm hovering near the doorway while the doctor checks on an almost unconscious Winter. "I can't tell you what's wrong" the doctor tells me puzzled "if I have to hazard a guess though, it's either a result of her wolf trying to claw its way back to the surface or both sides fighting for dominance."

"Will the pain stop?" I ask quietly, Winter lying there, panting, sweat dripping down her face. Her whole face is contorted in pain.

The doctor shakes her head. "I can't even say if the pain killer's I've given her will help. She doesn't appear to be responding to them, but she's also not screaming as much. I wish I could tell you more Alpha Kai, but this is something that's just way out of my knowledge and experience. Hybrids are so rare, that we haven't really had a chance to study them. I apologize for not being able to help you as much as I would have preferred."

I don't blame the doctor. "Will this stop?" I ask, pointing to Winter "will it stop if one side becomes more dominant over the other?"

She looks upset. "I hope so, but there's also every chance that this will also cause her to die, if it drags on too much. Her heart could give out from the shock."

I swear and rub my eyes. I shouldn't have marked Winter, I should have known something like this would happen. Fuck. I feel like I'm slowly dying alongside her. If she dies, I won't be able to control myself. I feel helpless, a rush of guilt washing over me. Goddamnit.

"If you should need anything else, don't hesitate to mind-link me again" the doctor says, and I usher her out, thanking her silently. Langdon and Damien come rushing up. "What's going on?" Damien blurts out, paling as he sees the condition of his sister.

"I marked her" was all I said pointing to her "and this happened. Now we could all sit here and lay the blame on me or we can do what we can to make her comfortable."

Damien glowers at me and pulls a chair up beside Winter, clutching hold of her hand. Langdon sits silently in the background, occasionally glancing at her, but giving myself and his mate privacy to be with the one we love.

"Mother" she cries out and my heart skips a beat. Damien looks at me pained. "Why" she sobs "why did you leave us."

Damien just clutches her hand even tighter. "Winter" he says quietly "Winter, I'm here for you" he promises. Her eyes are closed completely now and she's almost lifeless on the bed.

I suck in a breath. She's so pale, all over. Her skin is almost translucent. While she's not exactly writhing with pain anymore, she's barely moving and her whole body is heating up. My mark is clearly visible on her skin and I swallow, glaring at it. This could have been avoided if I had just told her no and waited to find out what would happen. This is all my fault.

"Damien" she moans and he leans over her, looking anxious. "Damien why do you hurt me" she whispers and he flinches.

"I think it's the fever, it's making her delusional" I tell him gently.

He just nods, focusing his attention on her while I sit on the other side, smoothing her hair from her face. Christ, she's burning hot. I don't dare get the washcloth after what happened last time.

'Father don't" she shrieks and Damien jolts. He swallows hard and re grabs her hand.

"Father's not here anymore" he tells her thickly "father can't hurt you anymore."

She stiffens and then her body relaxes again. Damien's voice must be getting through to her then. God, this is so painful to watch. I'm on edge and so is Damien, both of us unable to relax even slightly while Winter's in such pain.

I glance out the window. It's nightfall. The moon is glowing brightly in the sky. It's a full moon tonight, a night when shifters are stronger than usual.

"Do you think maybe we should put her in the bath or something?" Damien says a little desperately.

I look at him. "When I tried to wipe her over with a washcloth she screamed bloody murder. Otherwise, I would have done that already."

He deflates. "She's just so hot" he comments.

Suddenly she sits upright "I won't let you win" she screams out loud "I won't."

She falls back down.

Damien looks worried. "This can't be good for her body to handle."

"It's not" I tell him glumly. I feel helpless and it's a shit feeling to have. My hands clench into fists. God if there was just something I could do, rather than sit here and watch my mate go through whatever it is she's going through.

That fucking Thomas, I think to myself miserably. He's the reason she's a hybrid. If I'd known what he'd done to her, I would have killed him far more slowly and tortured him as well. He'd gotten off lightly and it stung.

Poor Winter was suffering because of that bastard and his sick obsession to have her. Who knows what else he might have done to her if we hadn't gotten there. I just wish now it was sooner. Maybe then we could have prevented this from ever happening.

There's a cracking sound and Winter screams, Damien and I jumping back as we see that her leg has changed to a wolf one. But it stays like that. Another crack, her arm changing to wolf form. She's still got her eyes closed and I'm wondering if she's even aware of what is going on. She's sobbing quietly now and my heart is breaking. Transforming shouldn't be painful, but this is her first shift after becoming a hybrid and it's not normal the way she's shifting. It's way too slow.

"Aaarghh" screams Winter as her other leg becomes a wolf one, breaking and adjusting.

Her body begins to buck and writhe as slowly her remaining limbs and body begins to break and shift into her wolf form. I blink as finally, after several long minutes of pained screaming, a wolf remains on the bed, her eyes closed, curled up in a fetal position.

I tentatively touch Winter's wolf. It's hot to the touch as well. Her eyes don't even open. I glance over at Damien. "Got any ideas?" I ask wryly.

He shakes his head and sits back down, looking at the wolf appreciatively. I admire her as well. When Winter first got here, she was a runt, a tiny little thing. But her wolf has slowly been growing and now it's almost as big as mine. Such a lovely thing to look at. Now I have to wonder though, if Winter is going to be able to shift back to human?

She slumbers. Slowly, Damien, Langdon and myself begin to fall asleep, my head resting on the bed from my sitting position. I can feel her soft fur beneath me.

I don't know how long I've been asleep for, but my whole-body springs back when I hear the sound of shifting. Damien lifts his bleary eyes and pushes his chair back as Winter's body begins to turn back to her normal human form. I touch her. Her body is now cool to the touch. Her fever has broken. Damien begins to blush as he realizes she's naked, looking away in discomfort. Langdon merely stretches from his position on the floor where he's spent most of the night observing.

Winter's eyes open and she sits up, stretching out her arms, a small smile on her face. She stands up, walking experimentally, holding out her arms and watching them with wide eyes. "Kai" she breathes "I can hear her again. Sabriel's back inside my mind and I can shift back to a wolf again. I can control my vampire side too" she almost squeals happily, rushing over to me and giving me a massive hug.

"I thought you were going to die" I said miserably and she cuddled me harder.

"Sorry" she whispered "but don't you see? Now I have both sides of me. The shifter side and the vampire side. I can be a wolf again and go for runs. I needed this, Kai. I'm sorry if I scared you though." Her voice is apologetic. I almost laugh. She shouldn't be apologizing to me, if anything I should be apologizing to her. Silly girl.

She'd done more than frighten me but I can't blame her for wanting her wolf back. One thing float in my mind though. If she's strong as a vampire, will her wolf be stronger than an Alpha's now as well?