

CHAPTER 120

Winter POV

I can't believe that I have my wolf back again. It's like hearing a lost best friend come back to me. Not only that but the incredible thirst and desperation for blood has abated. Like it was never really there. Sabriel is just as excited to be back.

Man have I missed you, Winter. It was like being stuck in a dank old, black cave by myself. It was no fun at all and I couldn't get through to you. I had to talk to myself and it was sooo boring.

I missed you Sabriel, so much. That other voice was horrible, kept telling me to do all sorts of horrible things to Kai and my friends.

Well, it might be gone, but you still have the vampire half to contend with, you're going to need to feed but it will be every few days or once a week now, versus every day.

I don't want to be part vampire.

I know sweet girl, but we have to make the best of a bad situation. Besides, we look good as a pale chick. Totally rocking the goth scene. I dare you to challenge Langdon to an arm wrestle. You can totally beat him.

I'll consider it.

Or Damien even. He could stand to be taken down a peg or two. Have his sister kick his ass.

I blink my eyes and give Kai a watery smile as he embraces me hard. "I can smell your scent and it's almost normal again" he murmurs to me. I crinkle my nose at that. I hadn't realized my scent had changed. I can smell his scent though and it's intoxicating. "Do you feel the need to drink blood?" asks Kai tentatively and I shake my head. In fact, my stomach is rumbling for normal food.

"Actually, I think I could use some food from the kitchen" I say shyly, rubbing my stomach with one hand and feeling sheepish.

Kai gives a loud laugh. "I can hear your stomach grumbling from here. Let's go" he suggests, taking hold of my hand and gently tugging me forward.

I glance down at myself and blush, Kai doing the same when he realizes I'm naked. I hastily get dressed, leaving Langdon and Damien in the room as we head out to the kitchen.

"What would you like to eat?" he asks, digging around.

"Do we have any doughnuts?" I ask hopefully and he wrinkles his nose, looking quite disgusted, fetching some out of the pantry. "Juice too" I request and disgruntled he brings me a glass with the container of doughnuts. I inhale the smell of them, the sweet smell of chocolate and the musky scent of the sprinkles as I take one in my hand and examine it eagerly.

"World's worst breakfast" grumbles Kai, munching away on a piece of toast. I ignore him.

I take a bite and moan loudly as the taste of the doughnut explodes in my mouth. It's delicious, sweet, seductive. I can't get enough of it and it's staying down and not coming back up. A huge bonus for me.

"It's delicious" I mumble around the food in my mouth. Kai just shakes his head at me. He has no idea what he's missing. Doughnuts are a staple breakfast food.

Langdon and Damien come sauntering in, Damien's eyes widening as he sees me eating with Kai. "You seem to be feeling better" he mutters, sitting across from me. I push the container of doughnuts towards him and he grabs one, biting into it messily. Langdon scowls and grabs himself some cereal. Clearly, he's of the same mind as Kai. Whatever. Damien's enjoying the food. I give him a wide smile.

"Well now Sabriel my wolf is back and I can eat normal food. What's not to enjoy" I say lightly as Damien gives a small chuckle.

"Don't get angry at Kai either" I warn him "I was the one who asked for him to mark me and he wasn't sure about doing it."

Damien just grunts and polishes off his doughnut, reaching for another.

"I'm glad to see you are feeling better" Langdon says to me quietly, between bites of his cereal. Kai sips slowly at his coffee, closing his eyes in bliss. I guess it is early this morning and he'd spent the night helping to take care of me. The poor guy must be absolutely exhausted. Maybe I should have suggested bed first. Too late now.

"Thank you, Langdon," I answer.

Damien's fidgeting with his hands now and looking at me uncertainly. What's going on? Surely, he's not afraid of me? I've never once attempted to do anything, even when being taken over by my vampire half. Or is he

wanting to ask me something and can't bring himself to. Finally, I can't take the sidelong glances and biting of his lip anymore.

"Whatever it is Damien can you just spit it out" I explode "you look like you have something to say, so just say it."

"Fine" he shoots back "I think it was sheer stupidity for Kai to mark you. How did he know it wouldn't kill you" he exclaims throwing his hands up exasperated.

I narrow my eyes. It's almost like he wants to pick a fight. This isn't about Kai marking me, I have no doubts it's about something else.

"I already told you that I was the one who begged Kai to do it and as you can see, I'm alive and well" I say evenly as Kai grips the table in his anger.

I begin to tap my fingers on the table top. Langdon is silent, pushing his bowl away from him and resting his head on his hands as he stares at the whole lot of us. I tense.

That boy is acting like he's got a stick up his ass, one that needs pulling out asap.

You're not wrong. I just wish he'd spit out the problem already.

Well, you know you can make him. You don't have to sit and take his criticisms anymore girl.

What do you propose I do?

Bite him. Bite him good.

Trust you to come up with that Sabriel.

Well, I was hardly going to tell you to kiss him!

"Damien just talk to me" I say tiredly "I had one hell of a night and I'm too tired to yell at you. Why don't you just say what's really on your mind?"

He looks at me with sadness on his face. "Did our father really say that our mother was still alive?" he asks slowly "could he have been lying. Trying to psych you out maybe?"

That could be a possibility, I acknowledge to myself. But something in father's voice had rung true when he told me. The way his voice had been dripping with malice when he spoke about her, the repulsive look on his face.

"Father told me she was alive and that she was seeing someone else" I say quietly "I don't think he was lying Damien. What would have been the point? It was more like a deathbed confession, he knew he was going to die and he wanted to hit me where it hurt the most."

It had hurt. Knowing I was tortured all this time and she hadn't even been killed by rogues as he'd told me. The fact he was punishing me in place of her. It gave me nightmares and it caused my heart to hurt.

Damien stared at the table. "All these years" he mutters "all these years and he was lying to me about mother and being killed by rogues. That it was your fault. I tortured you" he said thickly, glancing up at me "and our mother wasn't even dead. I hurt you for nothing, you did nothing to deserve it." He slams a hand down on the table.

"Damien, I don't blame you. Father was a bastard who took pleasure in making us do his bidding. He's gone now. He can't hurt us anymore."

"Exactly right" growled Kai, while Langdon reached over and silently gripped my brother's hand.

"Blaming yourself is only going to cause you pain" I continue heatedly "don't let father win. Don't let him cause you any more regrets or pain." I stare Damien in the eyes. "You need to move on from father's influence."

I reach over and grasp my brother's hand. "All we can do is look to the future and leave the past behind. We can learn from it."

He holds onto mine tightly. "But Winter if our mother is still alive" he chokes out "then what do we do?"

I look at Kai who's listening intently, his arms folded over his burly chest, a grim expression on his face. Something tells me he already knows what I'm about to say.

"I want to find her" I tell Damien quietly, my eyes staring directly into his "I want to find her and get some answers. Like why she left and why she didn't take her with us. "

"We don't even know where to start" Damien points out, his eyes seeking Langdon's.

"Then we go from pack to pack" I say with determination "she has to be somewhere in this country, right? I can't see her upending everything and disappearing to another one. It doesn't seem like Father cared enough to go searching for her either. For all we know she could be like two packs away" I say excitedly.

Damien looks less enthused. "Or she could be ten packs away" he grimaces. "I don't think I want to go to every single pack in the country Winter, it just seems like a lot."

"How else are we going to find her?" I burst out frustrated.

Kai clears his throat. "I don't think you need to go from pack to pack. It's too much traveling. What we can do is ring other packs and give a general description of your mother along with her name and see if it rings a bell with anyone."

My eyes are shining at him. "You would do that?" I ask him softly.

He gives a nod. "Of course. But are you really sure you want to find this woman? She abandoned the both of you and left you in your father's hands."

"I'm sure" I tell him firmly.

"Then it's done" he says with a light shrug.

"What is your mother's name anyway?" asks Kai "Maybe we could start from there."

"It's" I start and then flounder. I can't remember, I was so young when she left.

"Elena" supplies Damien "I wouldn't bother with the last name; she's probably changed it."

"That's what I think as well. Does she look like Winter?" asks Kai.

Damien looks at me and a small smile comes over his face. "The spitting image" he says with a chuckle "only mother is older of course. "

"It shouldn't be too hard to throw out a description then" Kai says calmly "I'll go and start making phone calls now. But I'm not going to promise anything" he warns "so don't get your hopes up too much. Nothing might come of it. I just want you to be prepared."

Damien and I nod furtively.

Kai gives me a kiss on the forehead and then vanishes down the corridor that leads to the study. I watch him go wistfully. Maybe I'll go and join him in a minute. "What if we find her" Damien is saying and I blink my eyes and try to refocus on what it is, he's actually saying. What if we find her?

"Then we ask the questions we need to" I tell Damien quietly. My mind is whirling around with possibilities. Part of me though is fearful that she might have died in the meantime. If that was the case, we might never get the answers to the questions on our lips. Damien looks excited at the prospect of finding her, but I'm not. Because I don't think there's any good reasons for abandoning your children like she's done. My canines pop out of my mouth and my eyes begin to glow red. A small part of me, the hurt little girl inside, wants to kill her for what she's done.