

CHAPTER 145

Winter POV

I don't think I've stopped crying since I've seen that Kai alive and well. He had quite a story to tell, with the final result being that he made a decision offered to him by the moon goddess. I can't believe it. Part of me is thrilled that he's with me again, but another part of me feels awful that he had to make that sacrifice, to become a hybrid like myself in order to stay alive. I did this to him, but he insists it was his choice to make and he made the right one.

The ride home was fraught with tension, my mother sitting in the backseat, silently watching the scenery. Poor King Axel had been left alone, to deal with the aftermath of Vanessa and what had gone on while he had been under her spell. I wish the poor bastard luck, for he had been married to her, for well over a year. You would think he would dislike Drake, having been her son, but he didn't blame the guy in the slightest. He'd been just as much a victim to Vanessa, just in a different way. I guess he's right.

Kai's hand rests on mine as we drive, my eyes intent on the window, the music playing in the background from the stereo. His hand feels warm, his fingers tight as he clutches at me, not wanting to let me go. Not that I want him to, not after such an awful scare. For the rest of my life, I will never forget that awful moment of thinking he was dead. My stomach churns, and the nausea I'm experiencing becomes worse. Bile rises in my throat and I swallow, hoping it will stay down, but with no such luck.

"Kai" I groan "pull over, quickly,"

He glances at me and immediately pulls the car to the side of the road, as my stomach turns sour. The second the car has stopped completely; I bolt and rush to throw up in a small pile of bushes. Yuck. My stomach heaves and I gasp for breath, continuing to gag. I wipe my mouth with the sleeve of my shirt and grimace.

"Urgh" I moan, on my knees, Kai suddenly behind me, his hands gripping my hair and holding it up in case I need to be sick again. I'm thankful for the small breeze coming through, it feels somewhat refreshing.

"Are you alright?" Kai asks after a minute, one hand moving to stroke my shoulder softly "are you getting car sick?" he asks nonplussed. I'm incredulous. Surely, I can't be experiencing morning sickness so quickly? Then again, was a hybrid pregnancy different to a shifter pregnancy? Then the dawning realization, that any child of mine, would be born a hybrid as well. Would they develop faster? My mind is awl with all the possibilities and I feel faint, swaying slightly as Kai grips me hard, trying to force my body to still. I close my eyes and take deep breaths, willing all my thoughts away, focusing on the now. Eventually the light headedness and frantic racing of my thoughts dissipative.

"I'm alright" I finally tell him, awkwardly forcing myself to my feet, his hands helping me to get upright, "I guess just being cooped up in the car, made me feel a little sick" I admit. Does he even remember the fact he was under Vanessa's spell when we supposedly conceived? His facial expression makes me feel like it's been forgotten and I resolve to speak to him when we get home.

"Can we hurry this up please" my mother snarls, sounding annoyed "it's dangerous to be on the side of the road, vulnerable like this" she murmurs.

I frown at the anxiousness of her voice. She's fidgeting in the car, looking on edge. What did she think was going to happen? When we were so close to the pack?

"We're coming" I yell back at her, rolling my eyes. God, what on earth was her problem? We couldn't take a few minutes, just to relax a little before getting back in the car, for heaven's sake.

I turn and give Kai a hug, sniffing his scent in appreciation. Even being a hybrid, his scent is almost the same, just the slightest difference to him. Unlike me, he has taken to it very well, and seems to be able to access his vampire side without issue. I feel a little envious of that fact. But now, mine is just as easy, so I shouldn't be jealous.

"I love you" Kai murmurs "so much. I would become a hybrid a hundred times over, if it means never having to leave your side" he mutters, fingers stroking my hair.

"I love you" I whisper, feeling my heart thumping wildly in my chest, tingles spreading all over "never, ever. scare me again like you did. I thought I was going to die, from losing you."

He exhales and pulls me in tighter. My mother is scowling from her seat. "We need to move" she snaps icily "Christ, you can do this when you get home."

"What the hell is up with your mother" Kai hisses and I shrug.

I have no idea what's gotten into her. We reluctantly return to the car. My mother gives a huff, leaning back in her seat and pouting as I change the radio station. Kai starts the car again and raises an eyebrow, giving his own little shrug and pulling back into almost nonexistent traffic. We are, after all, using the back roads and in wilderness, sort of. It's not a route that people like to take.

"Mother" I say quietly "is there something wrong?"

She glances at me and then adamantly shakes her head. "No, we're just wasting time and I want to be in a nice comfy bed tonight" she says coldly.

It stings, that she can speak to me so rudely. I try to give her the benefit of the doubt though, perhaps she too, was feeling a bit sick? Maybe she got travel sickness?

Kai tightens his jaw, and I can see that he's becoming very annoyed with her, but he says nothing, concentrating on the road and keeping his eyes fixed ahead. I sigh. The tension is very thick in the car now and I feel uncomfortable, watching out the window, my hand automatically reaching over to touch Kai's. He grips it and then relaxes slightly, his jaw unclenching. I smile at him, in an attempt to placate him.

Man, your mother has a stick up her ass, or what.

You are so not wrong Sabriel. She's being so damn rude. I have no clue what's up with her.

Throw something at her and tell her to lighten up.

I can't just ditch something at her. It would be just as rude.

Might make her think twice about the comments she's making. Or we could I don't know, push her out of the car while it's moving, then we wouldn't have to deal with her at all.

I'm not going to push my mother out of a moving car.

Would you be willing to let me take over and do it then? Because I really don't like her, and Winter, I don't trust that bitch, one bit. I think you need to be more cautious. She has an agenda, I'm sure of it.

I like to believe the best in people Sabriel; she's had it rough.

So have you. The difference is you aren't acting like a complete bitch

Alright, alright, let it go already Sabriel. I'll be more cautious around her, happy now?

Deliriously so.

I try not to laugh at Sabriel but the image of my mother being shoved out of a moving car, by my wolf, is enough to make me smile and stare at the window.

"We're running late" mother snaps, folding her arms like a child "damnnit Winter did you have to stop back there for so long?"

I turn and stare at her. As far as I knew we didn't have a timeline to be back. Damien, Drake and Langdon had gone before us, while we had taken the scenic route.

"Since when does it matter what time we get back?" I ask suspiciously.

She flushes. "It doesn't, I didn't mean to say that" she stammers.

But my radar is up. Something doesn't feel right. Sabriel was correct, we shouldn't have been trusting my mother in the first place. Kai sees my look and pulls over, while I throw open my door and yank mothers off its hinges as she cowers, slightly beneath me. Kai looks impressed at my strength as I throw the door to the side. I didn't care if we had to run as wolves the rest of the way, I was getting to the bottom of what mother was up to.

She shrinks back. "Care to tell me why you want to get moving so badly, or why you are worried we are late?" I hiss.

My mother shakes her head. "I'm just grumpy Winter, I didn't mean to be. There's nothing going on" she protests, but for once, my ears are picking up deceit in her voice.

"You're lying" I say quietly "I can hear it. Sabriel warned me, but I wanted to give you the benefit of the doubt. Wanted to believe that you simply wanted to be my mother, but now I know, you're here for a reason, and I want to know what the reason is" I snarl.

"I'm not lying" she shouts, as Kai grabs the door on the other side and flings it away, "you both need to calm down. This must be your vampire side taking over."

I grab her and hold her tight on the arm. "I want answers mother" I murmur in her ear as she trembles. "Now."

She pales; I notice something on the seat where I've just not so politely vacated her from. A cellphone. I didn't even know she had one. Why had she been hiding it? I grab hold of it and flick it open, but everything has been deleted. It's a burner phone, not keeping any information whatsoever in it, deleting it the second that you pressed send. My eyes narrow.

"Why have you got a burner phone" I snarl, handing it over to Kai, who looks down at it in disgust, "why would you possibly need something like this?"

Her mouth open and closes. I grip her harder, watching her wiggle in my grasp, wincing from the pain.

"Let me go" she snaps, "Winter, I am your mother" she says, trying to play the victim. Yeah right. She might be my mother, but right now I was viewing her with absolute distrust.

Kai comes to my side. "There's a black truck, coming down the road, I sense they are human, but there's a lot of them" he answers. I blink and concentrate, smelling the scent of humans, and a fair few of them approaching at a rapid pace. I also hear the sounds of guns loading. "They aren't just ordinary humans" I say as Kai nods, "they are hunters."

I fling my mother to the ground, watching with satisfaction as she screams out in pain. "The only way they would know our location, is if mother, dear, gave it to them, which I'm willing to bet she did."

My eyes glare down at her, "how could you" I spit out "to your own flesh and blood."

She gives me a look, one that is scorching and full of contempt "I would never accept a disgusting hybrid as my daughter" she spits out as Kai growls, "and the hunters will give me a lot of money for you. You're special, at least to them" she says resentfully.

"Is money all that matters to you" I scream, unable to believe her audacity.

The van gets closer. Mother stands up and smirks. "I had to pretend to care, that I was a victim, in order to get you to trust me. When I found out you were a hybrid, it was like all my dreams had come true. I sold Drake, why wouldn't I sell you? I'm not your mother, Winter, I've never wanted to be your mother. You're a means to an end, and a way for me to live a comfortable life. Maybe you should have listened to your wolf more" she sneers, while Kai's eyes begin to turn red.

The van stops, and I whirl around, getting Kai's hand, ignoring mother completely as she rushes towards it, "we're going to have to fight" I shout and he nods, "wolf or vampire?"

"Vampire" he growls "and show no mercy."