

CHAPTER 156

Winter POV

God, I feel like absolute crap when I wake up the next morning, stumbling to the bathroom and vomiting while Kai rushes to hold my hair back from my face. I feel so nauseas and it doesn't subside even after I've finished, as I lean against the toilet bowl and curse under my breath. This is the last thing I need. I also know instinctively why I'm throwing up and it terrifies me, the notion of a baby developing in my womb, the reason it's there, how it was conceived, all of it is just too much for me to handle right now. I'm still angry at Kai, even though he was under a spell, part of me wishes he had fought harder against Vanessa. Was our mate bond that weak? Or was her power that strong? I would never fully know for sure.

Girl we are having a pup, a gorgeous little pup. Don't tell me you're not excited! Who cares how it happened. It happened, now let's deal with it. You can be as hurt as you want, but I know you want to be a mother Winter, one that's going to be a hell of a lot better than the woman you were stuck with.

But I'm still hurt Sabriel and I'm scared. What if I'm not a good mother? I wouldn't even know how to be one.

You become one on instinct. Your mother was evil, you are not, you will be fine child. We got this. We'll be the best damn mother in the world. Or at least the most loving one.

So, I forgive Kai, just like that? Like he didn't do anything wrong?

Sabriel pauses for a moment and then: If it was you, in his shoes, would you not want forgiveness for something completely out of your control? He was under a spell Winter, you know he loves you. He was willing to become a hybrid to stay with you. I think that says how much he wants to be here with you.

I hate it when you're right Sabriel, damn it.

That's cause I'm always right baby, and you know it. Now forgive the poor bastard and focus on the fact we're having a pup.

Kai gently strokes my back. It feels nice. I take deep breaths and thankfully the urge to vomit has subsided. He has a thoughtful look on his face and I feel dread rise inside of me. I know what that expression means, he knows. Sure, enough he opens his mouth and his next words are "honey, when were you planning on telling me you were pregnant?"

His hand drops by his side.

I bite my lip. "I wasn't completely sure I was" I admit "and part of me was hoping that Vanessa's spell hadn't taken effect. It's not the way I would have liked to conceive our child."

He winces as the words hit home, looking guiltily at me. "I know and I'm sorry, so sorry for it. Do you hate me?" he asks anxiously.

I shake my head, remembering Sabriel's wise and somewhat sassy words. "I did but now I don't. You were under a spell, it's not fair to blame you for that."

He looks relieved. There's a knock on the bedroom door and he scrambles to open it. I hear him murmuring something to someone and then he comes back, a smile on his face. "Sarah just brought us some fresh clothes. When we're ready, we're to go downstairs to the dining room. She gave me directions."

Fresh clothes sound like heaven. I glance at the shower and he instantly starts the water for me.

I drag my clothes off and then quickly step inside and moan. The water is heavenly and perfect, cascading down on me and onto the shower tiled floor. Kai makes a move to leave and I glance at him pointedly.

"It will be quicker if we both shower" I say calmly and then firmly "but only to shower."

He laughs and chucks his clothes off, joining me. We soap each other up and rinse off, grabbing towels. Kai turns the water off as I hop back into the bedroom and eagerly examine the clothes. I wriggle into the crimson red dress and put on what thankfully, is new underwear with tags on it. I have to go barefoot though, not wanting to wear sneakers. Kai does the same, but he's wearing trousers and a shirt and looks devilishly handsome. He runs a hand through his disheveled hair and then reaches out to take my hand.

"Shall we" he says eyes twinkling.

To my surprise it's late morning, not the afternoon as I'd presumed. Probably from having to get up in order to be sick.

Kai easily makes the way to the dining room where Prince Jasper, King Axel, Queen Arabelle and King Stefan are patiently waiting.

"Forgive us for being late" Kai says as he pulls out a chair for me.

Prince Jasper waves his hand in dismissal. "It was a very late night" he drawls "I'm surprised to find you are up so early."

I give him a small smile of thanks. King Axel smiles at both of us, his eyes twinkling. "Good morning" he says easily.

I glance around at the large table. We're all situated at the end though, sitting cozily in a group.

"King Axel I will discuss this treaty of yours, after breakfast if that suit?" Prince Jasper says grinning "mother and father, will of course. also attend the meeting."

He glances at Kai "would you two like to come as well?" he suggests " I am more than happy for you both to bear witness."

I think that sounds like a fine idea, but Kai has other plans in mind.

He takes a deep breath. "Actually, is there a hospital nearby?" Kai asks "that we could possibly go to and get checked out?"

Prince Jasper looks concerned "my apologies I did not realize you were ill. There is a wing in the castle that is used for hospital purposes that you can go to. Would you like us to delay the treaty while you are looked over?"

I shake my head, Kai doing the same. "Thank you but that's not necessary. King Axel is more than equipped to deal on our behalf" says Kai and I firmly agree.

"Well then, I guess we should get some breakfast in our stomachs" chuckles Prince Jasper as his parents smile at us warmly. He rings a small bell that's on the table, a tinkling sound that's quite sharp to our sensitive shifter and vampire hearing.

Sarah comes in bearing a large tray of different dishes, that she begins to place on the table, but then suddenly she pauses, her body stiffening. I examine her with curiosity. She's a stunning woman, with vibrant red hair and the greenest eyes I've ever seen. Her eyes have the slightest tinge of red around them. She's tall but still quite petite, with lovely porcelain skin

and a maid's uniform on, that only enhances her incredible figure, and somewhat, to my envy, large bosom.

"Is everything alright Sarah?" asks Prince Jasper, looking quite worried. I'm impressed that he knows her name and isn't a pompous prince who doesn't care about his workers.

Kai gives my shoulder a nudge. At the table, King Axel has also stiffened, his whole body suddenly going really tense, his hands clutching the edges of the table. His claws have come out, I notice, and is causing gouges in the beautiful dining table. He's gazing down at the table, his hair over his face, so it's impossible to determine what's going on with him and why it's happened so suddenly. He lets out a low growl that startles everyone at the table, everyone that is, except for Sarah, whose eyes were widening in disbelief, her lip trembling as she bites it. I wonder why she's shaking so much.

King Axel stands up abruptly, looking upwards, his eyes pitch black. There's a possessive look on his face. Holy shit, I marvel to myself, suddenly suspicious and aware of what must be happening. The vampires on the other hand look slightly panicked. Maybe they don't do this when they find their mates?

"Ahem, King Axel, do you require some medical assistance?" asks Jasper looking at the King as though he's a bit of a madman.

Kai is just grinning widely, enjoying the show. King Stefan and Queen Arabelle look quite alarmed.

"Mine" growls King Axel suddenly, Sarah's eyes shooting towards him. She looks afraid, as he begins to make his way towards her.

His arm shoots out and he grabs hold of her arm, as her eyes begin to glow red. Then she speaks, in a small, quiet voice, but one that's powerful none the less and just as full of possession "Mine, mate" she hisses.

There's silence at the table.

"Mate" roars King Axel and then without further ado, he bends down and kisses her on the mouth, sweetly, gentle, claiming her in front of everyone as his.

Prince Jasper and his parents are in shock. Kai and I on the other hand are beaming widely, hands to our mouths. With the whole debacle with Vanessa, he deserves a second or was it third? Chance mate that loved him. I'm sure he never envisioned it would be a vampire but who cared? She was a beautiful woman, and from what I had seen of her, quite lovely and sweet. She was very polite.

"Ahem" coughs Prince Jasper, snickering slightly "would it be too much to ask you both to rejoin us at the table?"

King Axel reluctantly pulls away and then looks over at us with a guilty expression on his face, Sarah is blushing profusely, her hand still on his arm.

"I um" stammers King Axel, still holding tightly onto Sarah's arm, "do apologize for this."

I laugh. "You should never apologize for finding your mate" I declare "I think you both make a lovely couple."

"Yes, I agree" says Kai.

"Are you really mates?" asks Prince Jasper.

"We are" Sarah says softly "I guess this explains why I've never been able to find one until now, because my mate is clearly a shifter."

"We are happy for you then" King Stefan says smoothly, a wry smile on his face. His wife nods her agreement, also smiling now they've realized what's happened.

King Axel's eyes go back to normal. "I would like my mate to sit with me" he says firmly, leading her to a chair as Kai and I move down one to allow it to happen. Sarah looks uncomfortable sitting down but Prince Jasper nods and then rings the bell, another maid appearing as he issues instructions. The tray Sarah had been holding was on the end of the table, where King Axel had placed it before he kissed her, long since forgotten.

We all devoured the food when it came. Sarah incredulous and sitting quietly as she too ate, at King Axel's side at his insistence. I was sure it was a novel concept for her, but she would be queen of the werewolves if she accepted King Axel and I really hoped she did. He was such a loving man. They would be perfect together.

Finally, everyone was finished and seated back in their chairs. I had eaten lightly, fearing I may be sick if I ate too much, or ate something that made my stomach heave.

"Now, we will discuss the treaty" says Prince Jasper, getting up. Then he meets Kai's eyes and gestures him forward. I stay where I am as the two speak in hushed whispers, before Kai comes back and tenderly helps me up.

"I will check in on you both later" Prince Jasper promises "I hope all is well."

King Axel murmurs the same, as does Sarah while King Stefan and Queen Arabelle glide out of the dining room. I gather they are going to the study for the treaty negotiations.

"Thank you" Kai says easily and begins to tug me away, heading towards what I assume is the hospital wing.

"Let's go get you checked out" he murmurs to me in my ear "and let's see our baby."