

CHAPTER 25

Winter POV

I'm walking in a field surrounded by all sorts of vibrantly beautiful flowers. I have no clue where I am, but I feel peaceful and relaxed. It's confusing. I remember shooting Thomas and passing out. Had I died? Because if I had, I couldn't complain about the beauty and serenity of this place. I touch the flowers and feel the softness of their petals, smell their beautiful perfume as it drifts in the air, stare at the bees buzzing around and feel the cool breeze as it flows through my hair.

There's no pain, it's the first thing I realize and I stare down at my body, which is whole, with no sign of the gunshot in my foot or any bruises. There's no blood and I'm wearing a purple sundress that cascades down to my toes, my feet are bare and sinking into the soft green, lush grass. I'm in heaven.

I sit and begin to make little daisy chains. Time seems to have no meaning here and I figure if I'm dead then anything goes. The daisy chain goes on top of my head and I smile, lying back down on the soft grass and staring up at the clouds in the clear blue sky. I wonder about my brother and if he's doing okay, and even feel a little sorry for Johnathon, who probably felt bad for rejecting me. I don't even think about my father and what he'd done to me. It was like every emotion of mine just slowly faded away and left me feeling peaceful. If this was heaven, then it wouldn't be too bad.

"You're not dead yet," a musical voice says and I blink at the shadow suddenly blocking my sight. There's a beautiful woman in front of me with silvery gray hair and sparkling blue eyes. She's not old though, she looks

like a young woman and she's wearing a silver dress that shimmers in the sunlight, a small tiara sits upon her head.

"Then where am I?" I asked, confused, as she helped me to sit up.

"You're in between," the woman says, and I frown, still just as puzzled. She sits on the grass beside me.

"Who are you?"

She laughs and looks at me. "You will know me as the moon goddess," she says lightly, and I feel a sense of panic. She was the moon goddess. Should I curtsy or how did I address her? I began to feel dizzy.

"Just call me Selene," she says, and I give her a small smile.

"What do you mean by in between?" I asked.

"You're neither dead nor alive right now," she says and gives me a stern look. "You haven't decided which way you want to go yet."

She takes my hand. "Child, you've known a lot of pain" she exhales, her blue eyes no longer twinkling but far more serious now as I say nothing "I know you've wished yourself dead many times before, but this time you have a choice. I have seen everything you've gone through and how strong and brave you've been. But now you have to decide whether you want to live or die?"

I think about it. If I live, then I go back to feeling pain, harassment, and bullying, it will just start all over again. There was also the issue of my father. I couldn't bear to go back home. What was the point of living when it made me so miserable?

"Before you decide," Selena says to me, "I want you to know something. You might be feeling pain right now and not just the physical kind, but your life, should you choose to go back, will get better. You will find the love you deserve, even if it's with someone you least expect. You are brave, strong, and courageous. You just have to believe it. It's time you

stood up for yourself and what you want instead of pleasing everyone Winter. If you choose death, then your story and your journey are completely over. You won't ever get a chance to bond with your wolf, you'll just be gone."

I felt like crying. "No one will care if I'm gone" I blurt out.

"Your brother and your ahem mate," she says quietly, "or ex-mate is in the hospital room with you right now. Your brother is beating himself up for what's happened to you and Johnathon is doing the same. Neither one of them will leave your side. They've both hurt you, but if you're willing to forgive them, they may just show you how much they care and it might surprise you to see how much."

"I can't go back to father," I said miserably, "I just can't."

She squeezes my hand. "He's no longer their child; he can't hurt you anymore. "

"Why didn't you help me" I whispered, tears flowing down my cheeks. ". You're the moon goddess. You could have saved me."

She looks remorseful. "I cannot intervene in someone's path. As much as I would have liked to, it would have strayed you from the path you took. This experience is what helps mold you into the person you will become. Or rather what you do. "

I pull at the grass. I need time to think. But part of me has already decided, even if part of me doesn't want to, wants to stay in this in-between place forever where I never have to be hurt again. But to choose death would be cowardly, especially since I knew that Damien was waiting for me to wake up. I'm not sure what to think about Alpha Johnathon being there as well. It still hurts that he rejected me so quickly.

"What will you do?" she asks and I sigh, looking over at the meadow and feeling a sense of regret. Was this really the right decision for me?

"I choose to live" I answered regretfully and a smile lit up her face.

"You are destined for great things, Winter" she whispers "remember that when it becomes too hard or you find yourself in the depths of despair. You'll go far. "

I open my mouth, wanting to ask her when she taps me lightly on the forehead and I feel my eyes beginning to close against my will. I struggle and she merely sits there, watching me lie down and yawn. My eyelids are heavy and they close, shutting out the sunlight as I fall asleep. I feel like I'm falling from a great distance and it's surreal like I'm flying, and then suddenly there's a sharp pain in my heart and chest and I begin to open my eyes, hearing an annoying beeping sound and a familiar voice.

"She's awake."