

CHAPTER 33

Damien POV

"I know that it seems a long-time away boys, but you really do have to think about your future" the headmaster is saying in that annoyingly nasal voice of his. I fight the urge to roll my eyes, wanting nothing more than to poke my tongue out at him. Johnathon is sitting beside me, looking just as frustrated, but the headmaster is the one person I can't go against without being suspended or expelled.

Who gives a damn about the future, I think a bit bitterly. Winters had been ruined and it had been one of my friends who'd done it to her. I wasn't stupid. She tried to hide it from me but I knew she was having nightmares every night. I heard her muffled gasps when she woke up. I still stayed outside her room every night and I knew she was annoyed by it. I guess I've gone from being a disinterested older brother to an overprotective one in a short amount of time. Who would have thought it?

"You need to think about college and where you are going. What grades are you going to need?" God, he was rambling on and on. Was he ever going to shut up? How much longer was I going to have to sit here and listen to him, for heaven's sake?

"Johnathon, have you chosen a college yet?"

"No" Johnathon answers sullenly and we share a look, one that sympathizes with the other. It's clear neither of us is particularly thrilled to be sitting in the headmaster's office.

"Damien, what about you?"

"I'm not going to college, I need to get a job", I answered politely and the headmaster seemed confused by my answer.

"You have to go to college. It will set you up with a bright future", he tells me sternly and I shrug, not caring if it's rude.

"I also need to eat and have a roof over my head" I commented dryly. Ha, take that, I think smugly to myself. He sits back and regards me thoughtfully. What does he know?

"I heard your father has disappeared," he says, trying to be delicate and failing abysmally.

"Yep, and I intend to take care of myself and Winter," I said carelessly, and he looked a bit guilty for a moment. What was that about?

"How is your sister doing?"

I blinked back the tears threatening to come to the surface. "I don't know. Sometimes she seems to be fine and dealing with everything and then other times not so much", I admit, hating myself for showing weakness in front of the headmaster and in particular Johnathon, who's hanging on my every word, his face serious and his eyes trained on me.

"Will she recover her voice?" the headmaster probes, his eyes gentle and trained solely on me. I reluctantly shook my head and saw a disappointed look on Johnathon's face. I hadn't had a chance to tell him. Alright, I did, but I'd held back from telling him because I didn't feel like it was any of his business once he'd rejected her. Not that you could tell an Alpha that directly without getting your head ripped off.

"No" I whispered and the headmaster looked saddened by the news but also not surprised. I guess I was one of the only ones who'd hoped that she would. Maybe I'd let my imagination run away from me as a means to cope.

"Look," the headmaster said, looking between Johnathon and myself, "if you both decide on a college, I can help you or the guidance counselor.

Damien, if you or your sister need help, then we can arrange for social services if that would be easier. You just have to say the words", he adds, and I stare at him, absolutely incredulous. Did he really think I would let social services take my sister from me? Over my dead body, I think fiercely, scowling at him.

"Can I leave now?" I say snidely and he blinks at me, as though wondering why I'm suddenly so angry.

"Certainly," the headmaster says pleasantly, looking at the clock. The old man had kept us in the study for close to a bloody hour with his driveling. I needed to get the hell out of there.

"Thank you," I said, forcing myself to be polite as I stood up, grimacing and shaking his flabby hand while Johnathon did the same. We leave the study in a rush, breathing in the fresh air in relief. The office had smelt damp and of cigarettes. We knew the man smoked, he absolutely reeked, but I guess when you're the head of the school you can get away with anything you want. Like I care.

I know exactly where Winter's class is, but I'm not shocked to find that she's not waiting for me. I should have sent word about the meeting but the headmaster had grabbed me on the way to her in the hallway and I hadn't been able to refuse. Johnathon gave a huff and I cast him a sidelong glance. What was his problem?

"She's long gone," he says, sounding disappointed. I rolled my eyes. He's bloody obsessed with winter and it was becoming annoying. Especially with him being an Alpha.

"Can you blame her" I snapped back in response. "I wouldn't have waited for a whole hour either. She's probably walked home" I mutter and he sighs. I couldn't hold it in anymore, I felt like I was going to explode and I turned to him in a rage.

"Listen, you need to stop with this bullshit man. You rejected Winter. Remember" I vent, not holding back ". You didn't want her and now you follow her around like a bloody puppy. It's annoying. She's my sister and I'm the one who should be protecting her."

He blinks, shocked that someone would speak to him like that. I guess no one tells you the truth when you're an Alpha, but man, could he get a hint for heaven's sake? Winter wanted nothing to do with him.

"The mate bond didn't completely sever" he mutters and my jaw almost drops to the ground in disbelief. How could that happen? The wheels began to turn in my head. "The only way that happens," I said slowly, the penny beginning to drop "is if you're not a hundred percent certain you want to reject the person." I glared at him.

"Are you telling me that you weren't a hundred percent sure? Because if that's the case, then you're going to feel everything on your side, whereas Winter won't feel anything except maybe a strong like for you."

He looks at the ground miserably and I feel a small spurt of sympathy for him. A very small one. "I know" he whispers, "I fucked up okay. I either need to reject her fully or choose her as my mate. This still being tied to her is slowly killing me."

We both give each other an understanding glance and I watch him leave, feeling more of a kinship with the Alpha, who seems to be haunted by a decision he had made.