

## CHAPTER 42

### Winter POV

It's hard not to be hurt by that yet again. Another mate doesn't want anything to do with me. Was it me? Did I have some sort of personality flaw that screamed reject me? The man is called Alpha Kai and he's one of the most intimidating men I've ever seen in my life. I try not to dwell on the fact he's pretty much left me in limbo, not accepting me but also not rejecting me as a mate. Why not just get it over and done with though? Did he have plans to use me in some way? Like a mistress?

God, he's sexy though. Muscles all over and a six-pack chest. He's got light stubble on his chin and his eyes are a dark brown, almost black color. He's got scars on his face and I assume it's from claws, maybe from a rogue? It doesn't bother me one bit, but I did notice that he constantly touched them as he talked. Is he self-conscious about them? Because to be honest, I liked them. But then, the second I lay eyes on him, I liked all of him. Guess it was the mate bond. Can't exactly say I'm thrilled with him at the moment. Neither is Sabriel. In fact, she would like nothing more than to rip him to shreds for what he'd done.

Being an omega is hard work. But I suppose it's not as difficult as being a slave to one's father and brother. Maria seems nice, chattering away as she shows me to a small room. I blink in the darkness as she turns the light on and want to cry. The room is bare except for an old mattress on the floor and a chipped dresser. Not that I have any clothes to put in it, mind you. Maria seemed to follow my gaze, understanding exactly what it was I was thinking.

"I'll organize some basic clothes for you dear. We don't wear uniforms here, but I'm sure I can rustle up some old clothes from other omegas" she says, and I give a nod, feeling shy. But beggars can't be choosers. I'm not exactly into fashion either.

"Now then," she says briskly, with a bit of a wrinkled nose. I guess maybe I don't smell the best, but to be fair, I've been in the dungeon. "I think a shower might be in order first."

She leads me down to a bathroom down the hall. I open the door and look at my reflection in the mirror, taking in just how matted my hair is and how bruised my body looks all over. It's not exactly the best impression. No wonder he'd looked at me with so much disgust. Who would want a mate that looks like this?

The bathroom is minuscule, consisting of just a shower, a small basin, and a toilet. Something tells me the omegas share it.

"This is the omega's bathroom", Maria says, starting the shower to my surprise. "We all share it so make sure you knock before you enter."

I nod. It's simple enough to remember to do that. But Maria looks concerned now. "You won't be able to call out if you're in the bathroom. Maybe we need to make some sort of signal for when you're in there, like three taps on the wall or something."

That's a good idea. Somehow, I don't want to be walked in on while I'm doing my business. That would be awkward, not to mention embarrassing.

The water's heavenly and although the soap doesn't particularly smell of anything, I happily lather it onto my body, finding small bottles of shampoo and conditioner, which makes my hair feel sleek and shiny again. I'd just forced myself to step out when Maria came bustling in.

Her arms are loaded with clothes. "Here," she says, hastily handing me some to put on, "we need to go and prepare dinner for the pack."

At least I'd know where the kitchen is, I thought to myself, following behind her. Within moments, I'm standing there in an apron, chopping up vegetables and doing whatever Maria asks of me. The food gets placed onto a large dining table (when I say large, I mean easily feeds 50 people or more) for the pack members to help themselves. My stomach growls and Maria chuckles. "The omegas eat later. Pretty much whatever you can scrounge up for yourself in the kitchen. We all have odd hours and different break times, so it's what's easiest. Once everyone's finished eating, you and I will sit down and have some dinner."

Thank God, my stomach is starving. I almost drool at the thought of food.

Our mate's a real dick

Sabriel, what have I said about language?

It's true though. I can't believe he's made us an omega. He could have just rejected us and we could have gone on our merry way.

We still could

But now we have the mate bond to contend with. Winter, you know that if you go too far from your mate, you end up in excruciating pain. The only upside is that he'll feel pain as well. Stupid man.

We just have to make the best of it for now.

I wish we could spit in his food or add hot sauce to it.

I ignore my wolf who's pouting. Instead, I began to place plates down at every setting, rearranging the cutlery as I went. It's not long before I can hear the sounds of voices as pack members begin to come in and I hustle,

determined to get it done and away from everyone. It's not meant to be, however.

Just as I'm about to place the last plate down, I feel a hand caressing my butt. I flinch and remove the hand, only to hear a man chuckle behind me. I stiffen instantly.

"Aren't you a pretty little thing" he whispers in my ear as I go completely still, his hand now on my arm. I started to feel panicked, tears coming to my eyes as I trembled, wanting nothing more than to wrench my arm away, but not sure how much trouble I'd get into doing that. Or even if I would get into trouble. Surely Alpha Kai wouldn't blame me for defending myself?

"How about you and I go upstairs to my room and have some fun" he whispers, and I shudder, Maria looks at me anxiously and looks about to intervene when I hear a familiar voice.

There's a ferocious growl and everyone in the room goes deadly silent. "Get your hands off of the girl" he growls, and I close my eyes in relief as the man turns around, to face his extremely pissed-off Alpha.

"I didn't mean any harm, I just thought..."

"That you'd accost an omega and force them to be with you?" Alpha Kai says mildly, myself turning around to see his eyes flash toward me.

"Put him in the dungeon" Alpha Kai growled to some men nearby, who hastened to obey. "I won't have someone mistreating another member of my pack, regardless if they are an omega or not."

He stares directly at me. Is he angry about the situation? Because I hadn't done anything to warrant such an attack. A woman with stunning black hair and a figure that makes me envious comes into the room and throws herself into Alpha Kai's arms. He smiles, but even I can tell that it's fake.

God, my chest feels tight and I feel a spurt of jealousy as the woman gives him a long kiss, right in front of me. All I can think about is getting the hell out of here. Sabriel wanted to rip her eyes out.

He has the decency to look somewhat ashamed as he speaks to me. "You may go back to your omega duties," he says calmly, and I can't help but glower at him a little before stomping back into the kitchen where Maria gives me another task to perform.

By the time I finally crawl onto my woebegone mattress, I'm absolutely drained and all I can think about is the way Alpha Kai kissed the woman back and the way he held her. Was she the reason that he didn't want a mate? She had to be special to him. My heart hurts to think that I'm never going to be wanted by anyone and I quickly close my eyes. I knew tomorrow was going to be just as difficult, but it didn't stop me from quietly sobbing into my pillow.