

CHAPTER 45

Winter POV

Fuck, where am I? I'm slow to open my eyes, feeling pain shoot through my body with every movement. I stare at the white-washed walls and the hospital gown that I'm wearing. What the hell happened to me? Damnit, Kai has a lot to answer for, I grumble to myself, annoyed.

We lost the fight with another wolf. Don't you remember Winter?

Ouch, guess that's why I'm in so much pain.

We look good in a hospital gown though, totally rocking it.

You always look on the bright side, Sabriel.

Guess what? Kai was the one who brought us here.

Don't get your hopes up, Sabriel. He only did it because we needed medical attention. I told her bitterly.

After all, he's the reason we ended up in the hospital in the first place.

I blink against the bright light and try to sit up, causing machines to start beeping. Damnit. A man in a white doctor's coat comes running in, stopping short as he sees I'm awake. I looked at him hopelessly and motioned toward the machines with an apologetic glance.

"Calm down" he murmurs to me and I stop wriggling around. "Let me get those needles out of your arm", he adds, and I flinch as he begins to do just that. God, it stings.

"Sorry" he apologized. I just nod. I want out of this place. The sooner the better. Besides, I have omega duties to take care of.

I read his name tag. It reads 'DR JAMES.' He seems like a nice doctor and I relax somewhat. At least he has a good bedside manner.

"Winter," he says quietly, "do you know where you are? Do you remember what happened?"

I nod. It's not like I can actually say the words.

He looks thoughtful. "Alpha Kai did say you were mute" he mutters, "so I guess I'll have to do all the talking", he adds with a smile.

"I need you to stay for the next few days" he explains, "not only were you injured while sparring" he coughs, "but you're severely malnourished and underweight. Do you remember to eat while doing your omega duties?" he asks quietly.

I stop and think. It's true, I do tend to forget to eat while I'm working, most of the time, because I just want to get my work over and done with. But I hadn't quite realized just how many meals I'd been skipping until now. Maria was going to have my head when I got back.

I shake my head at the doctor sheepishly and he scribbles something down on that clipboard of his.

"Well, from now on, you're going to be eating regular meals," he tells me sternly. I gulped at the serious expression on his face and nodded frantically. I really don't want to get on a doctor's bad side.

"There's something else I want to mention" he pauses and eyes me sternly. "There are old scars all over your body that will have been made by silver. Can you tell me how you got those?" he asks and I shake my head, very adamantly. There's no way in hell I'm going to divulge how I got those scars. He seems to sense it too because he gives a long-suffering sigh.

"There's someone that's been wanting to see you. If you don't mind, I'll inform them you're awake" he says gently with a sympathetic smile at me.

What the hell's up with that? I brighten, thinking it's Maria that wants to see me. She's the only friend I've really made in the time I've been in the pack. How nice of her, I think, eagerly watching the doorway for her to come in.

"I'll be back later," Dr. James said, and I nodded, watching him go and waiting for my visitor.

It's only a few minutes later and he comes walking in. What the hell is he doing here? He doesn't give a damn about me. In fact, he's the very reason I'm in the hospital in the first place. I glared at him, even as Sabriel began to wag her tail in my mind. Where was the loyalty? My wolf was hopeless when it came to being in Alpha Kai's presence. I, on the other hand, despised him. I just want him to reject me and leave me in peace. I don't care how guilty he's feeling right now. Screw him.

He looks hesitant as he comes into the room and takes in my appearance. I'm pretty sure I look disheveled, but what did I care? It's not like I'm trying to impress anyone. Especially not him.

"Winter," he says quietly, "I came to see how you're doing."

I look away. He comes in further. "I should not have ordered you to train", he says, and I blink in surprise. Is the big bad Alpha actually apologizing? That's a first, I think sourly.

"If I'd known you were, well, a runt," he says, "I would never have even dreamed of making you spar in your wolf form."

I shrug and it seems to anger him because his eyes flash. Good, I was pissing him off. Now he knows how it feels.

"I'm apologizing," he said tightly. "Do you think you could at least do me the courtesy of looking at me?"

I stare at him and he softens, coming over and sitting beside the bed, putting his head in his hands and shaking it slowly.

"What am I going to do with you" he mutters, and I leave him be. Clearly, he's talking to himself. Was he losing his mind? Maybe all the stress is getting to him. Or he's feeling guilty. I'm guessing it's the latter.

"I'm selfish" he murmurs, looking up at me, his eyes glinting "I can't bring myself to reject you, but I also don't want to accept you as my mate either. I won't let myself be hurt ever again" he exhales, and I wonder what he's talking about.

Am I the second mate he's come across? But if that's the case, what happened with the first one? Was that why he didn't want to be hurt again? What had they done to him, to make him so afraid of having a mate? Despite myself, I feel a tad bit sorry for him. It's clear how conflicted he is, but I'm the same. Part of me hates him for doing this to me, but part of me still feels the pull of the mate bond and wants to be near him. It was pure hell.

He's eyeing me now, his eyes switching from black to normal, over and over again as I stare at him, fascinated. He seemed to be wrestling with himself. Then he stands up, knocking the chair over in his haste, his hand reaching out to grip my chin as I sit there, holding my breath. What does he want?

"So beautiful" he mutters, and I watch, wide-eyed, as he bends his head towards me and gently places his lips against mine. I jolt from the sparks, my lips opening eagerly to his, his tongue delving inside my mouth and caressing mine, his hands moving to the back of my head and gripping my hair.

It's like a lightning bolt, shooting through me and the sensation of him kissing me is pure heaven. He begins to kiss me even harder, and I move my hand to grip his hair, my mouth responding back just as hard against his. He lets out a long groan of pleasure and I find my hands moving up and down his arms. God, I want more, starting to feel my body responding and I worry that he could sense my arousal. Then again, I see his cock is erect, so I'm affecting him as well from the looks of it.

Then, just as suddenly, he moves back as though he's been scorched. His eyes are wide and beseeching as he stares at me, taking in my swollen lips and disheveled hair. I'm confused. Why was he looking so angry now? He was the one who kissed me. I didn't kiss him, he started it.

"God" he chokes out, "I should never have kissed you."

I feel deflated. That's the very last thing I want to hear from him and I feel tears forming in the corner of my eyes. He sees them and looks even more panicked.

"God, I'm so stupid" he mutters, backing away as I watch, my heart hurting "I can't believe I just did that," he says, swearing vehemently.

"I gotta go," he says, and I watch with tears in my eyes as my mate leaves the room, in a mad rush, as though he can't wait to get away from me. Could this day possibly get any worse?